



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 17 June 2025

by **Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 July 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Y3425/W/25/3359180

Barn A, Moat Farm, Church Lane, Gayton, Staffordshire ST18 0HL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Harrowby Estates against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/39034/PAR.
 - The development proposed is change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/Y3425/W/25/3359181

Barn B, Moat Farm, Church Lane, Gayton, Staffordshire ST18 0HL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Harrowby Estates against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/39037/PAR.
 - The development proposed is change of use of agricultural building to three dwellinghouses (Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion.
-

Appeal C Ref: APP/Y3425/W/25/3359182

Barn C, Moat Farm, Church Lane, Gayton, Staffordshire ST18 0HL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Harrowby Estates against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/39038/PAR.
 - The development proposed is change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion.
-

Decision

1. Appeals A, B and C are allowed and prior approval is granted under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (the GPDO) for:
 - Appeal A – The change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion at Barn A, Moat Farm, Church Lane, Gayton, Staffordshire ST18 0HL in accordance with the application 24/39034/PAR subject to the condition that the development must be completed within a period of 3 years from the date of this decision in accordance with Paragraph Q.2(3) of the GPDO.
 - Appeal B – The change of use of agricultural building to three dwellinghouses (Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion at Barn B, Moat Farm, Church Lane, Gayton, Staffordshire ST18 0HL in

accordance with the application 24/39037/PAR subject to the condition that the development must be completed within a period of 3 years from the date of this decision in accordance with Paragraph Q.2(3) of the GPDO.

- Appeal C - The change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion at Barn C, Moat Farm, Church Lane, Gayton, Staffordshire ST18 0HL in accordance with the application 24/39038/PAR subject to the condition that the development must be completed within a period of 3 years from the date of this decision in accordance with Paragraph Q.2(3) of the GPDO.

Applications for costs

2. Applications for costs associated with Appeals A, B and C were made by Harrowby Estates against Stafford Borough Council. These applications are the subject of a separate decision.
3. Applications for costs associated with the above appeals were also made by Stafford Borough Council against Harrowby Estates. These applications are the subject of a separation decision.

Preliminary Matters

4. I understand that Barns A, B and C are potentially covered by deemed consent following applications that were not determined within the proscribed time limits. I do not, however, have sufficient evidence before me to confirm that the schemes before me are the same as those previously granted deemed consent. I have, therefore, considered Barns A, B and C as not benefiting from extant permissions in my assessment below.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - Whether a vehicular access could be provided for Appeals A and B;
 - The highway impacts of each appeal; and,
 - The noise impacts of Appeals A and B on the living conditions of future occupiers at Barns A and B.

Reasons

Provision of Access

6. The submissions with Appeals A and B include a site outline that covers the other barns, parts of surrounding paddocks and the private road between Church Lane and Moat Farm. It is clear from the other submissions that this is not the proposed curtilage for Barns A and B which are shown elsewhere. As such, while the proposed vehicular access tracks would extend beyond their respective curtilages, they would still be within the associated appeal sites.
7. Appeals A, B and C all show separate, complete vehicular accesses that, irrespective of which appeals were to be allowed, would individually provide a route from a barn to Church Lane via an existing track. These accesses would,

should multiple appeals be allowed, override each other, but this does not mean that each appeal provides only a segment of the complete route.

8. The provision of a vehicular track is not covered by Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the GPDO. However, Schedule 2, Part 2, Class B does permit the formation, laying out and construction of a means of access to a highway that is not a trunk road or classified road where it is required in connection with development permitted by any Class within Schedule 2.
9. The proposed accesses would be directly associated with and required by the conversion under Class Q. They would also sit within the appeal site area and would not connect to a trunk or classified road. As such it would be possible to provide accesses under Appeals A and B for their respective dwellings. Although the tracks would be useable by the proposed dwellings, the extent of the tracks outside of the curtilages would remain in the existing agricultural use.

Highway Impacts

10. Church Lane is a narrow road which, on the approach to the appeal site entrance, is bounded by hedgerows to either side. Although there are some properties, and the village hall, along this stretch of Church Lane, the main bulk of the village is beyond the junction to the appeal site. There are no pavements or street lights along Church Lane, or along the private road leading to the appeal site.
11. I note the Public Right of Way along the private road from Church Lane to Moat Farm. However, given the rural nature of the area it is unlikely that there would be more than a very limited level of pedestrian activity along this track or Church Lane. Any walking or cycling is likely to be focused on recreational journeys rather than to commute or reach services and facilities.
12. Appeals A and C would each provide 1 new dwelling while Appeal B would provide 3. Mindful that the appeal site is immediately adjacent to a settlement with a number of existing dwellings, a church and community hall, the increase associated with any of the appeals individually or collectively would not be significant. This is especially so given that the private road already serves four barns, a number of fields, and a large dwelling at Moat Farm. The proposed schemes would not, therefore, individually or collectively, affect highway safety as a result of increased traffic movements. This includes for pedestrians using Church Lane or the Public Right of Way.
13. Although Church Lane is covered by the national speed limit, both parties agree that the actual speeds of vehicles using the road are considerably lower. I am content that this lower speed would ensure that vehicles entering or exiting the shared track would not be at undue risk of conflict with those traveling along Church Lane. Moreover, while the private road may not allow vehicles to pass each other, the mouth of the junction could accommodate two vehicles. Similarly, the junction mouth serving the proposed tracks under Appeals A, B and C would also provide a passing place. Given the likely small number of movements associated with the proposals, this would be sufficient to protect highway safety.
14. Taken both individually and collectively, Appeals A, B and C would not result in any unacceptably harm to highway safety, including to pedestrians, stemming from the increased movement of vehicles and the intensified use of the junction.

Noise Impacts

15. Motor vehicles can result in disturbance to nearby properties through engine noise, especially when manoeuvring or reversing, the opening and closing of doors and from radios.
16. In the event that Appeals A and B were both allowed, and the associated conversions carried out, vehicles serving the dwelling at Barn A would travel past the side elevation of Barn B. Vehicles associated with the dwellings at Barn B would also manoeuvre and park to the front of the properties in Barn B. The future occupiers of the dwellings at Barn B would, therefore, be at risk of disturbance.
17. The proposed track serving Barn A would loop around the side of Barn B on three sides. It is, however, only the side elevation of Barn B where the track would be close to the building and windows. Given the separation distance, it is likely that some noise would be experienced in the proposed dwelling closest to the track. However, it would be transient and limited given the short length of this stretch and that it would serve only one dwelling. In light of the above, I find that any impact on Barn B from the use of the track serving Barn A would be modest and comparable to that expected where properties are close to each other. Any impact would also only occur where both Appeals A and B are both carried out.
18. The plans associated with Appeal B show the proposed parking closely located in front of the three dwelling. At such a close proximity the proposed parking would likely result in disturbance to future occupiers stemming from manoeuvring and parking. However, I am mindful that parking spaces close to properties and neighbours are not unusual and that any movements would be modest given the number of proposed properties. Moreover, the curtilage space serving the three properties contains sufficient space and, from the submitted plans, flexibility, for future occupiers to park further away from neighbouring properties. Appeal B would not, therefore, result in an unacceptable standard of living conditions for future occupiers.
19. Appeals A and B would not result in a poor standard of living conditions for the future occupiers of Barn B as a result of noise impacts.

Other Matters

20. I note concerns that hedgerows are being eroded by the heavy flow of traffic along the road network around the appeal site. I have not been provided with substantive evidence to demonstrate this and, moreover, find that the appeal appeals would not, alone or together, result in such an increase in traffic as to further damage these hedgerows.
21. The sustainability of the location for a conversion under Class Q is not one of the prior approval matters listed under Q2.(1) of the Class and so is not a determinative matter in this case.
22. No substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed dwellings could not be supplied with a sufficient level of electricity. I note resistance to improving the local network but this is not within the remit of this appeal.
23. With regard to the proposed conversions and their associated works, whether taken individually or collectively, the above appeals would not unacceptably affect

the rural, agricultural character and appearance of the surrounding area and landscape.

24. The appeal sites covering the above appeals are within Flood Zone 1 and are surrounded, primarily, by permeable surfaces. I do not, therefore, find that the proposed dwellings would be at any undue risk from flooding. I also have no reason to believe that suitable waste drainage could be provided as part of the conversion works to the three barns.
25. The appeal sites of the above appeals modestly encroach onto an Ancient Scheduled Monument. However, no development is proposed in this location. Historic England were consulted and provided no objections to the appeals. Having regard to my statutory duty, I am satisfied that the relationship of the appeal proposals to this heritage asset would have a neutral effect upon its setting. Harm to the significance of the nearby heritage asset would therefore not occur. It is noteworthy that the Council did not raise the impact on the nearby heritage asset as a concern in its decisions.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeals A, B and C should be allowed and prior approval granted for each.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR

Appendix 1

List of those who have appealed

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal A	APP/Y3425/W/25/3359180	Harrowby Estates
Appeal B	APP/Y3425/W/25/3359181	Harrowby Estates
Appeal C	APP/Y3425/W/25/3359182	Harrowby Estates