



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2025

by **N Bromley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/W/25/3367303

Hayes Gate Farm, Star Bank, Oakamoor, Staffordshire ST10 3BN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mark Mellor against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- The application Ref is SMD/2025/0006.
- The development proposed is erection of an extension to ancillary accommodation.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs from Mark Mellor against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has been received. A separate response to that application will be made in due course.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appellant's agent has confirmed that the applicant's name on the original planning application form was incomplete. Consequently, the agent has confirmed the appellant's full name, which is included in the banner heading above.
4. Since the appeal was submitted, a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC)¹ has been granted by the Council on the site. The LDC confirms that 'Development permitted by, and according with, planning permission ref. SMD/2019/0453, namely: Conversion of stone barn and farm building to provide for their use as additional and ancillary living accommodation and covered parking for the dwellinghouse granted planning permission on the 11th of June 2019 (ref SMD/2019/0187).', is lawful.
5. While I observed during my site visit that works to convert the building have not yet been commenced, I have dealt with the appeal on the basis that the proposed development is for an extension to the building which has a lawful use as ancillary living accommodation.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding landscape; and
 - protected species, specifically bats.

¹ Council Reference: SMD/2025/0277

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal building comprises a detached, single storey, stone outbuilding set within a cluster of former agricultural buildings now in residential use. The building is located towards the rear of the site, accessed from the road by a long drive.
8. Located within the open countryside, the appeal site and the surrounding landscape has a prevailing rural character, largely comprising open fields with an abundance of trees. Buildings are sporadic and include traditional stone barns and modern farm buildings, as well as residential dwellings. A series of public rights of way (PRoW) are located close to the appeal site and pass the outbuilding to the side and rear.
9. The stone outbuilding has a traditional form and appearance, and it adds value to the landscape. Despite its location towards the rear of the site, set partially behind the converted barn, it is a focal building within the site, which draws attention to it from the road. The building is also visible from a number of vantage points in the locality. Particularly the adjacent PRoW.
10. With a generous width and spacious footprint, the proposed extension would be a noticeable addition to the original building. In combination with its height, although slightly set down from the original building, the proposal would be a sizeable extension.
11. The use of appropriate facing and roofing materials would aid the appearance of the proposal but the large, oversized window on the front elevation would emphasise the size and width of the extension. Therefore, even when the wider conversion works are completed, the proposal would not be sympathetic to the appearance of the original building.
12. The unsympathetic design and size of the proposal would result in the building being more visually dominant within the landscape. Therefore, even though views of the proposed extension would be largely obscured by the unsightly breeze-block wall which encloses the courtyard, it would nonetheless be visible above the wall and between the adjacent buildings. Particularly from the access point onto Star Bank, and from other vantage points further along the road and the adjacent PRoW.
13. Overall, the size and appearance of the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the original building and there would be harm to the landscape.
14. Consequently, for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding landscape. Therefore, it would not accord with Policies SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020 (the Local Plan), which together and amongst other things, seeks extensions that are appropriate in scale and design, which protect and where possible enhance the landscape and add value to the area.
15. My attention has also been drawn to Policy H1 of the Local Plan, which relates to new housing development. As the proposal does not relate to a new house it would not conflict with that policy.

Protected species

16. Reference has been made to previous ecology surveys carried out at the site. The most recent being a Bat Activity Survey, November 2023 and a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA), carried out in December 2024.
17. The Bat Activity Survey confirms that the building contains roosting bats. As such, a Natural England Bat Mitigation License would be required to legally permit the proposed works.
18. The PBRA establishes that an adjacent building, referred to as 'Barn 2', represents a high roosting potential for bats. However, the PBRA is clear that further surveys are not proportionate and due to the dilapidated condition of that barn, bat roosts are likely to be of low conservation significance. As a consequence, the PBRA recommends that a Non-Licensed Method Statement is appropriate, to coincide with the Natural England Bat Mitigation License for the works to the appeal building. This could be secured by a suitably worded planning condition, which would provide the necessary protection.
19. The Council suggest that the proposal would place ongoing and inevitable pressure on the removal of Barn 2 to improve the outlook and amenity space. However, even though that scenario is not unlikely there is no substantive evidence to suggest that would be the case, and as Barn 2 does not form part of the proposed development, I have afforded the matter limited weight.
20. For the above reasons, and on the evidence before me, I conclude that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to protected species, specifically bats. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with Policy NE1 of the Local Plan, which amongst other things, requires development to protect habitats and species.

Other Matters

21. Although the proposal would help to facilitate the restoration and redevelopment of the site as a whole, it should not come at the unacceptable expense to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding landscape.
22. I note that the Parish Council have raised no objections and that the proposed extension would provide additional ancillary living space for the occupiers of the host dwelling. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm identified.
23. I acknowledge the appellants frustrations with regard to the Council's handling of the planning application. Nevertheless, I have considered the proposed development on its planning merits.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

N Bromley

INSPECTOR