

**NDP GROUP REPORT ON APPLICATION 204593 – PROPOSED CONVERSION TO DWELLINGS OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS AT NEWHOUSE FARM, ALMELEY FOR MR K HERN**

The proposal is to form one 3 bedroomed detached house and four small 2 bedroomed flats from two open fronted, steel framed, metal clad structures, both of former agricultural use. One small single storey building, not suitable for conversion, is to be removed.

The application is for Prior Approval claiming exemption from full planning consent under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and the associated Amendment Order of 2018.

The relevant provisions of the Almeley Neighbourhood Development Plan are:-

**ALM1:** Protecting landscape and views. Protecting wildlife corridors. Support of the local economy and meeting local housing needs. Being capable of accommodation within the capacity of the local infrastructure.

**ALM2:** Protecting trees , views and the landscape. Promoting biodiversity, natural habitats and local ecology.

**ALM3:** Protecting heritage assets.

**ALM5:** Quality of design and protecting the amenity of local residents.

**ALM6:** Sustainability and prevention of contamination.

**ALM15:** Traffic issues.

**ALM16 and 17:** Drainage and flood prevention.

This submission is made under the provisions of Para 10(a) of the 2015 Order.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR NDP ARE AS FOLLOWS:

ALM1: The proposal would provide 5 additional dwellings thereby assisting meeting the NDP Housing target. As the buildings are existing, the effects on landscape and views would be negligible. Additional residents would help support the local economy. The mix of dwelling size and type would accord with local housing needs. Infrastructure is more problematical as the site is accessed via a singletrack road, already carrying much large agriculture traffic as well as local domestic cars.

ALM2: The effects on local ecology and biodiversity are yet to be determined. The application makes no reference to any survey to establish the presence or absence of protected species. The conversion and removal of buildings in a relatively remote and tranquil area would be likely to remove natural habitats attractive to wildlife.

ALM3: The Grade II listed New House Barn stands on adjacent land currently in the ownership of Herefordshire Council. It is not envisaged that this proposed development will adversely affect its setting greatly.

ALM5: With the insertion of doors, windows and new external walls the appearance of the buildings would alter. The occupants of the existing retained house and Cherry Tree Farm would be closest to the development but disturbance from a residential use should not exceed that of a nearby agricultural use.

ALM6: There is a likelihood of contamination from the previous agricultural use of the buildings and risks from asbestos fibre release. The agent states that there is no onsite contamination but provides no evidence of assessment or survey to support this. It is not at all likely, given the age and use of these buildings that they have not in the past been used for the storage, mixing prior to application and handling of a variety of potentially hazardous/toxic materials which may have contaminated the site. They do have asbestos

cement sheet roofing in poor condition. Site works could disturb any deposits. A proper assessment should be undertaken together with provision of a Demolition Method Statement. The site forms part of a cluster of farm buildings including the site considered in 2016 (Application 160709). The report of 11/05/16 highlights concerns over possible contamination of both that site and this one requiring a risk assessment and, if necessary, a remediation scheme to be undertaken “in the interests of human health and to ensure that the proposed development will not cause pollution to controlled waters or the wider environment”.

The report specifically required asbestos sampling and analysis as a matter of routine. The report also highlights the need for caution given the “change to a more sensitive use”.

There have been no significant changes onsite since the above referenced report and the concerns mentioned therein remain relevant.

We again draw attention to the provisions of para 10(c) of the 2015 Order concerning consideration of part Q applications on land or buildings deemed to be contaminated.

ALM15: The site is accessed via the single track C1079 as referenced in ALM1 above. As the proposal provides up to 22 bed spaces it has the potential to generate up to 22 vehicle users. Sufficient parking should therefore be provided for this number of vehicles plus an allowance for visitors.

ALM16 and 17: No detail is given in the application of the proposed drainage. No Mains drainage is available. Normally it is a requirement that all drainage and soakaway systems sit within land owned and controlled by each householder. The relevant General Development Orders stipulate that in order to satisfy the Prior Approval requirements each plot should not exceed twice the size of the converted buildings superficial area. The above drainage and soakaway stipulation cannot, therefore, be met. Land in Almeley parish is

generally impervious below topsoil level and a development such as this proposal would require an extensive soakaway system. No evidence is provided that the Binding Rules on drainage will be adhered to.

### Other Relevant Issues

Granting of Prior Approval would prevent the proper assessments and consideration of relevant issues provided by consideration of a full planning application.

Developments in open countryside would not normally be permitted but as a Part Q Application this restriction will be over-ridden if approved.

Part W of the 2015 Order requires full disclosure of all building or other operations which implies drainage and demolition activities also. No such information is given in this application. W (3) of the Order states that under these circumstances an application can be refused.

Although not purely a planning matter we wish to draw to the attention of the Authority the following:

- 1: The four flats all have party walls and floor/ceilings creating a risk of noise and fire transmission between units. Sound and fire insulation between flats should therefore be of a high standard.
- 2: In the event of fire steel framing and structural steel work, if not adequately protected, loses structural strength and rigidity risking collapse of a building.
- 3: Any exterior and interior cladding to flats should have adequate fire resistance/retardant qualities.

ALMELEY NDP GROUP