

Planning Report May 2022

Application Reference – 22/01530/FUL

Address of Proposal - Stoke Hill Mine, Midford Lane, Limpley Stoke, Bath, BA2 7GP

Proposal - Conversion and extension of office to form a single dwelling. Erection of two new build dwellings and associated works.

Type of Application - Full Application

Planning Constraints - Agric Land Class 1,2,3a, Colerne Airfield Buffer, Contaminated Land, Housing Development Boundary, LLFA - Flood Risk Management, MOD Safeguarded Areas, Neighbourhood Plan, Policy CP8 Green Belt, Policy CP9 Affordable Housing Zones, Policy M1 Minerals Safeguarding Area, Policy M2 Minerals Allocations, Policy NE1 Green Infrastructure Network, Policy NE2 AONB, Policy NE5 Ecological Networks, Policy NE5 Strategic Nature Areas, SSSI - Impact Risk Zones

Related Property - Buildings By Stoke Hill Mine, Midford Lane, Freshford, Bath,

Key Points –

- The site is just inside the Northern Settlement boundary and described as infill by the applicant. It is however questionable whether it should be considered infill. Greenbelt Policy GB2 states:

2.115 Whilst HDBs are not the same as a village boundary, in the case of villages within the Green Belt they are primarily defined in a way so as to be infill boundaries i.e. they exclude those parts or edges of the village where development could not be regarded as infill. This is within the context of the Core Strategy definition of infill which in relation to housing is “the filling of small gaps within existing development e.g. the building of one or two houses on a small vacant plot in an otherwise extensively built up frontage, the plot generally being surrounded on at least three sides by developed sites or roads”.

The site is though only surrounded on two sides by developed sites.

The following statements are made in the Neighbourhood Plan:

The Plan does not imply that all land within the Village Settlement Areas is necessarily appropriate for development.

- The proposal is for one 4 bedroom house and two 5 bedroom houses. The neighbourhood plan identified a shortage of 1 and 2 bedroom homes.

Only 20% of the housing stock in both villages now comprises 1-2 bedroom houses, compared to 40% nationally, and over 40% of the housing stock

Elderly residents might benefit from more 1-2 bedroom houses in the housing mix and their relocation to smaller and more manageable housing would free up larger housing for growing families.

3.4.03 *Given the existing imbalance of the housing stock and the stated housing need, the Plan contemplates that the proposed planning and development policies will bring forward modest sustainable development which is responsive to local need and sufficiently flexible to offer a range of housing accommodation.*

- Our understanding is that the existing parking area next to the office building is also used by workers in the stone yard. If so, no provision has been made for the relocation of these parking spaces.

Comments –

- The site is only 50m from the entrance of Stoke Hill Mine which is known to support important protected roosts for greater and lesser horseshoe bats. The Ecological appraisal provided recommends that further surveys are conducted to evaluate the impact of the proposal on these bats.
- Lighting assessments have also been provided and the applicant states a ‘sensitive lighting scheme will be developed’. Despite this, given the size of the proposal it seems inevitable that the development would impact negatively on the bats.
- The access for the new dwellings would be shared with the adjacent stone yard which large lorries use regularly apparently. Given the proposed are family homes this is a safety concern particularly for any children that may inhabit the proposed dwellings. Highways have not yet commented.

Recommendation

Object on grounds of –

- The proposal is not considered as infill and does not preserve the openness of the Greenbelt. It does not therefore comply with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The proposal does not respond to the local need identified in the Neighbourhood Plan for 1 and 2 bedroom homes or offer a sufficiently flexible range of housing accommodation. It does not therefore comply with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Detrimental impact on important legally protected greater and lesser horseshoe bat roosts.

Comment

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