

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL – 28 MARCH 2013

SPEAKING REQUESTS:

APPLICATION NO.	TITLE	REQUESTS TO SPEAK IN OBJECTION	TIME ALLOCATED	RIGHT OF REPLY OR SPEAKERS IN FAVOUR	TIME ALLOCATED
APP 2 12/02643/FUL	Elm Hall Farm, Main Road, Astwood			MS J Lampert (Applicants Agent)	Up to 3 Mins

Written representations overleaf

- D Coles Architects in respect of APP 02 12/02643/FUL
- Mr B Topsom in respect of APP 03 12/02672/FUL
- Councillor D Hopkins in respect of APP 04 12/02171/FUL



David Coles architects

architecture

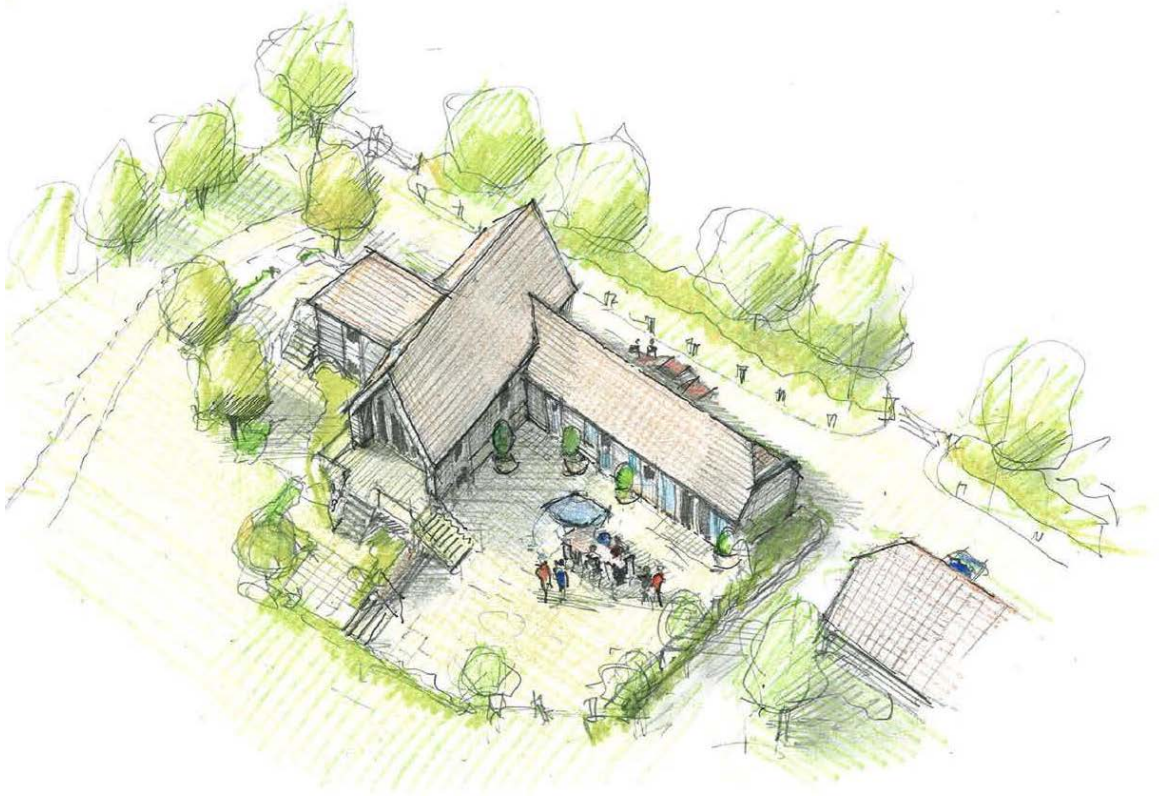
planning

project management

interior design

graphics

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**Elm Hall Farm, Main Road,
Astwood for North Crawley Estates**

PANEL MEETING 28TH MARCH 2013

Members of the Development Control Panel
Panel meeting 28th March 2013

To all,

Application number 12/02643/FUL for conversion and renovation of the existing main barn and attached single storey outbuilding into residential dwelling and erection of garage/external store/home office on the footprint of previous buildings on the site Elm Hall Farm, Main Road, Astwood for North Crawley Estates.

I refer to the Development Control Panel report for this proposal and I would be grateful if you would consider the following points made in response to that agenda report. The proposal is for the reuse of an existing barn and the use of a small area of footprint of earlier buildings, to provide a dwelling, ancillary garage, workshop and home office.

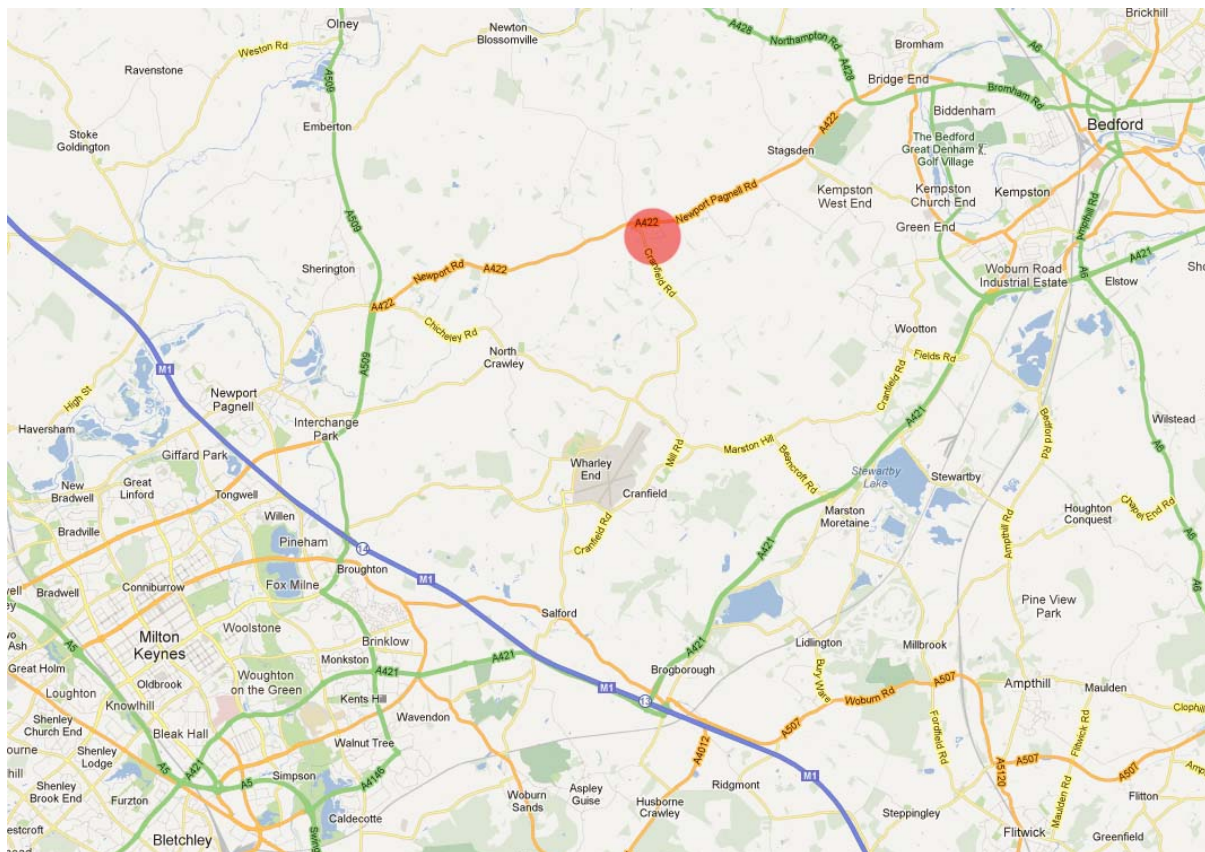


Figure 1.01 Site Location

The location is shown on the attached site location (fig 1.01) and the aerial photograph (fig 1.02), provided with this letter. The barn is clearly an important feature of the site and is located opposite existing dwellings that have been allowed to be developed in Main Road over the last 50 years.



Figure 1.02 Ariel View

Whilst it is recognised that the Council chose not to include the Main Road dwellings and this barn when they arbitrarily drew the village envelope 40 years ago, the houses and the barn always have been and remain, an integral part of the village: the barn is an important feature of the rural and social history of the village. It seems bizarre that the renovation of this barn hangs upon an arbitrary line drawn 40 years ago. The village has changed radically since that time.

The barn is not listed (nationally or locally, nor is it on a council list of heritage assets) and it is not located within the Conservation Area. We therefore believe it is unreasonable of the Council's Historic Buildings Officer to claim that the application should have been supported by "an assessment of the building's historical significance".



Figure 1.03 Site Context

It should be noted that a full analysis of the existing site context (fig 1.03), site analysis, the character of the surroundings (fig 1.04), an assessment of the history of the building (fig 1.05) and its suitability for conversion has been provided in the Design, Access and Justification Statement that accompanied the application.



Figure 1.04 Character of Surrounding Buildings



Figure 1.05 Elm Hall: a photographic timeline

This DAS statement provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there will be no detrimental impact to the character and integrity of the barn through its conversion to a dwelling. Indeed, the only way the barn will survive is if it is restored and reused in a viable way. The barn is an existing structure which is integral to the village. If the application site is considered as being within the “open countryside”, then the guidance in section 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) allows for special circumstances where development would represent the optimal viable use of the building which is viewed as a historical asset in the countryside and when the re-use is of a redundant building that would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

Given the relationship of the site to the other dwellings in Main Road, and the village, and given the intention of section 55 to allow the viable reuse in such a building, even if located in open countryside, the proposals should be acceptable.

The guidance of section 55 is entirely appropriate to the current application because:

- The barn is an existing historic feature, set within the village street and opposite existing housing.
- It is of a character and style that is suitable for conversion to a dwelling.
- The applicants have considered and indeed explored the possibility of using the barn for commercial purposes. The building and site have been marketed for sale or rent with a commercial agent, but it is understood that no interest was expressed. These details have been submitted as part of the application.
- As there has been shown to be no alternative, our proposal would allow the reuse of the building for a dwelling that would enhance the immediate setting.
- This proposed reuse would secure the building’s future.

The proposals (fig 1.06 & 1.07) do not amount to substantial rebuilding, nor does the approach or the design amount to a new building.

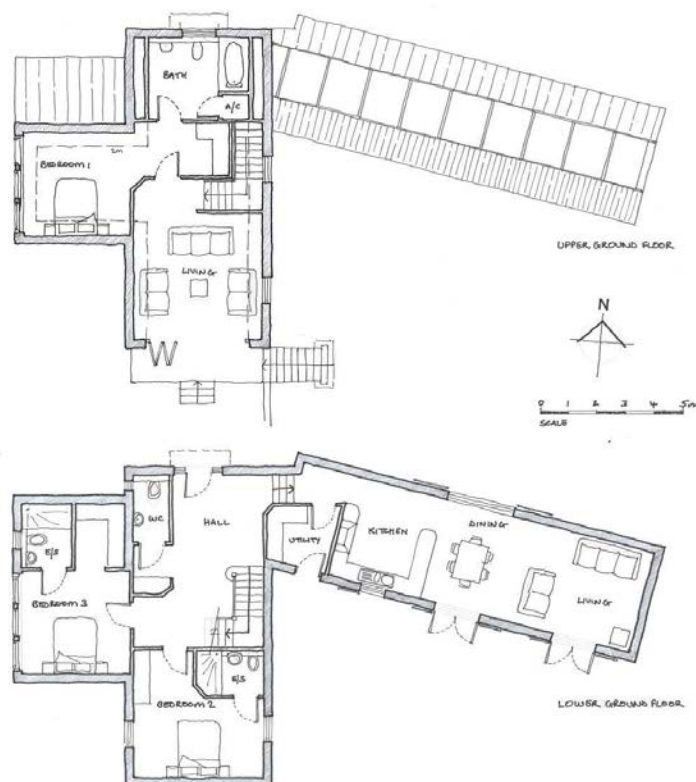


Figure 1.06 Proposed Floor Plans



Figure 1.07 Proposed Elevations

The proposed garage workshop and home office are new build, but they are to be provided on the footprint of original outbuildings. The uses proposed for this outbuilding are most appropriate; home office use is encouraged as being a sustainable form of employment within the NPPF and the Council's existing Local Plan.

Consideration of the Council's policies is provided within the submitted Design, Access and Justification Statement and it is concluded that the proposal would comply with the Council's policies and, in particular with policy S10 where the objective is categorically stated as being to 'protect the countryside and to concentrate new development within and adjoining existing settlements'. We submit that this proposal is perceived as being within the existing settlement, by virtue of its position in Main Road, with housing opposite and to the rear.

To allow the conversion of this existing redundant rural building will not set a precedent for any other proposed development outside the village envelope of Astwood. This is a unique situation and should be judged on its own, positive, merits. The application has received letters of support from three local residents.

The proposal is also in accordance with Policy E5, as a re-use of a rural building. Policy E6 supports the introduction of new buildings in the countryside for employment purposes; this is exactly the purpose of the proposed home office and the flexible living accommodation in the restored existing building.

Councillors are invited to visit the site and consider the setting in Main Road.

The scale of the existing building will be unchanged. The building is removed from risk by conversion to a dwelling.

There are many precedents in our planning area of significant barns receiving a planning consent in order to give them an economic use and save them from deterioration and eventual collapse. One of the most relevant parallels is the barn at Brook End, North Crawley. This is located in 'open countryside', yet the planning application was successful and granted with number 01/01463/FUL.

I would be grateful if you would read the attached email (Appendix A) which I sent to the Planning Officer and copied to Councillor Mclean on 26th February, in which I set out our response to her initial concerns.

The proposal represents no demonstrable harm. It is sustainable in social, economic and environmental terms and so, I believe, the presumption should be in favour of allowing this scheme to proceed.

In these special circumstances, we respectfully invite Members to grant planning permission, subject to appropriate conditions.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleagues.

Yours sincerely

DAVID J COLES BA(Hons) BArch RIBA
For and on behalf of North Crawley Estates

Appendix A

Dear Katy

We understand from your email of 25 February that you are concerned about the compliance of our proposals to policies S10 and E5.

We believe we have dealt with these policies in our Design, Access and Justification Statement.

Policy S10 refers to applications within the open countryside and is in place to 'protect the countryside and to concentrate new development within AND adjoining existing settlements'. Our proposals relate to existing farm buildings that adjoin the existing settlement boundary of Astwood. Furthermore, historical data shows the main barn and associated outbuildings were an integral part of the village – this is shown in Appendix 1 and 2 contained within the submitted Design, Access and Justification Statement.

Policy E5 refers to the re-use of rural buildings, which is exactly what our scheme sets to achieve. The current barn is derelict and a blot on the landscape of this otherwise pretty village. Letters received by MKC demonstrate that local residents support proposals to redevelop the building, this will dramatically improve its appearance and the setting. We are not developing the new dwelling beyond the footprint of the existing barn (as suggested in your email) nor increasing the current ridge height. We acknowledge that the garage is additional built area, albeit on the site of previous buildings. The garage also accommodates a home working space to create a more sustainable living / working home. We do not see how we are in contravention of Policy E5.

Although Policies S10 and E5 are saved as part of the Milton Keynes Local Plan, they are out of date and so should attract only minimal weight. Guidance from the NPPF, which encourages sustainable development within the open countryside, carries substantial and increasing weight.

The scheme does not represent any incursion into the open countryside and we understand that villagers like the design (I was at the Parish meeting). Their concern appears to be that it will set a precedent. This is, of course, a misplaced concern; the proposal is unique to the village (reuse of an existing traditional building) and, in any case, each application should be judged on its own merits.

You suggested, in your email, that we withdraw the application and submit a pre app enquiry. We did have several pre app discussions and a site visit with Richard Sakyi, although he didn't confirm our discussions in writing. Hence, we wrote to Richard on 16 March 2011; this email is included in appendix 3 of the Design, Access and Justification Statement. We proceeded with the application accordingly as we believe we should be able to rely on the advice given.

We understand that the Council approved a similar barn conversion outside the village envelope in Brook End, North Crawley, following a planning committee site visit. This gives weight to our suggestion that the proposal should go before the planning committee or panel. We are mindful that the Council have made an allowance of 40 windfall homes per year (200 over 5 years) from small sites in the rural area and that this number is likely to increase in the emerging Core Strategy. This site would go a small way to satisfying this allowance.

To conclude, we believe the scheme represents no demonstrable harm; indeed it is beneficial to the village and its wider context.

The proposals have been demonstrated (in our submission) to be sustainable in social, economic and environmental terms – which should lead to a presumption in favour of the scheme. We therefore urge you to recommend approval, or at least to allow the proposal to be considered at committee / panel.

Please let me know if you need any further information or clarification.

Kind regards

David Coles

Whilst the village supports and appreciates the work that Willen Hospice does there have been several letters sent to the planning department expressing concerns over the parking in Milton Road in response to this current application.

The nature of Hospice care has changed considerably since its inception. Nowadays it appears to be moving towards offering a preferred choice of care in patients own homes and this also involves their carers and helpers who themselves need to be given advice on how to look after their patients.

This change has created an increased numbers of carers and volunteers attending the Hospice on a daily basis for teaching purposes resulting in an increase in demand for parking. The preferred place being adjacent to the official car park number three and resulting with many cars numbering at least eighteen parking in the most narrow part of Milton Road.

You will see from the photographs sent to the Planning Department the problems it causes.

The nature of the objections to the proposed development at Willen Hospice is to highlight the present dangers caused by the volume of parking around the entrance to the existing car park number three. Particularly as it causes a blind spot for the vehicles departing from the car park, oncoming traffic and the people exiting from the adjacent red way leading from the lake.

Finally the reduced width to the road at this point makes it difficult and sometimes impossible for large vehicles to pass and as an example the driver of the refuse collection lorry had to find the owners of the parked cars to have them moved so that he could pass and this took some time. Fortunately this was not life threatening but had it been a fire engine unable to attend a fire the delay could have made it very serious.

Therefore before granting permission for this proposed development we feel that the parking issue must be resolved.

Mr Barry Topsom
11 Milton Road
Willen Village
MK15 9AD

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12/02171/FUL

Until quite recently the "car Park" referred to in the report and located to the northern side of the application site was a very attractively kept garden and its use by the previous retail store (the butchers) was very limited. The take away food outlet which is the subject of the application will mean many vehicles coming and going in quite different patterns to the previous use, and I would suggest, will represent a considerable hazard to the traffic on the double roundabout and pedestrians walking past.

I would be grateful if these comments could be reported to the panel.

David Hopkins
Danesborough ward
MK Council