

Woodfield House
Madingley Road
Coton
Cambridge
CB23 7PH

31 March 2017

Dear Members of the Planning Committee

Planning Committee 5 April 2017, Agenda Item 7 – Sadler Barn, Land North of Whitwell Way, Coton.

We write to you as applicants of the above application that you will consider at Planning Committee on 7 April. The officer's recommendation is one of refusal because of the impact on the Green Belt. We wish to make the following points in support of our application and provide you with background information that we consider officers have not given sufficient material weight to in coming to their conclusions.

- We started works for conversion of the barn in compliance with the Prior Approval for change of use of the agricultural barn to a dwelling in July 2016. During the conversion we were advised by our structural engineer that the original steelwork would not meet building regulation requirements. It was always our intention to build in accordance with the Prior Approval and the barn was not to be demolished to erect a new building. We attach a letter from our structural engineer's which shows that we were not aware of the original steel structure's inadequacy until we were part way through the conversion works. We had assumed that as the works were wholly internal and within the envelope of the building that we were not breaching the prior approval consent. This was a genuine error on our part which we have sought to rectify.
- Officers consider that the replacement of the internal steels mean that we had started a new build for a dwelling and therefore we had to apply for planning permission.
- The house would be the same as that approved by the Prior Approval, it will be the same size and have the same materials, which we have gone to some lengths to retain and reuse. Officers have previously agreed in writing a new roof material. We have also taken considerable care in carrying out the works to retain the existing mature Ash tree on the site.
- Officers consider the house to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 89 gives exceptions which include 'the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces'. The house would be in the same use as residential that was allowed through the grant of the Prior Approval. The house would not be materially larger than the original barn. We therefore urge you to consider that it is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore complies with the NPPF.

- Officer's also consider that the house would have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The building would not be materially larger than the existing and this is acknowledged by the officer in her report. The curtilage of the building is the same as that of the barn, which is limited and we propose a post and rail fence with native hedgerow around the site to continue the established hedgerow along Whitwell Way similar to field enclosures in the area. The small increase to the footprint of the building is to accommodate a cycle and bin store which is of benefit and is located adjacent to the building. With the retention of the mature Ash tree and the new hedge the 'associated residential paraphernalia' that officers refer to on the impact of openness of the Green Belt will be very limited and no different to that which would have been expected under the Prior Approval.
- We point out that the site was already developed land with the original barn on the site. The house would have no more impact or cause no material harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Please see the photographs of the barn and conversion below.
- The Officer's third reason for refusal considers that we have failed to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the in-principle objection and other identified harm to the Green Belt. We urge you consider that there would be no material harm to the Green Belt caused by the house than that of the conversion approved under the Prior Approval and that this is a special circumstance due to a genuine error during the conversion works.
- There have been 10 letters of support for our application from local residents who have given reasons including that is a sympathetic use, is of the same scale as the barn, that it would enhance the street and that it would not intrude on the Green Belt and is appropriate for Coton.
- Our son Stuart Sadler has set out the background to our personal circumstances as to why the proposals to convert the barn came about, which was submitted as part of our application. We attach his statement for your information.

Irrespective of whether the house was provided under the Prior Approval or this planning application the result would be one house. If permitted, there will be no material difference in the house than if the conversion works had been fully carried out in accordance with the Prior Approval. We cannot see what the harm would be in granting planning permission for our application.

We urge you to take a pragmatic approach in considering our application taking into account the very unusual situation which we believe justify very special circumstances. Thank you for your time in reading this and we hope that you will support our application.

Yours faithfully

John and Wendy Sadler

Enc.

1. Letter from GA Gawn Structural Engineers
2. Planning statement by Stuart Sadler



Original barn



Conversion