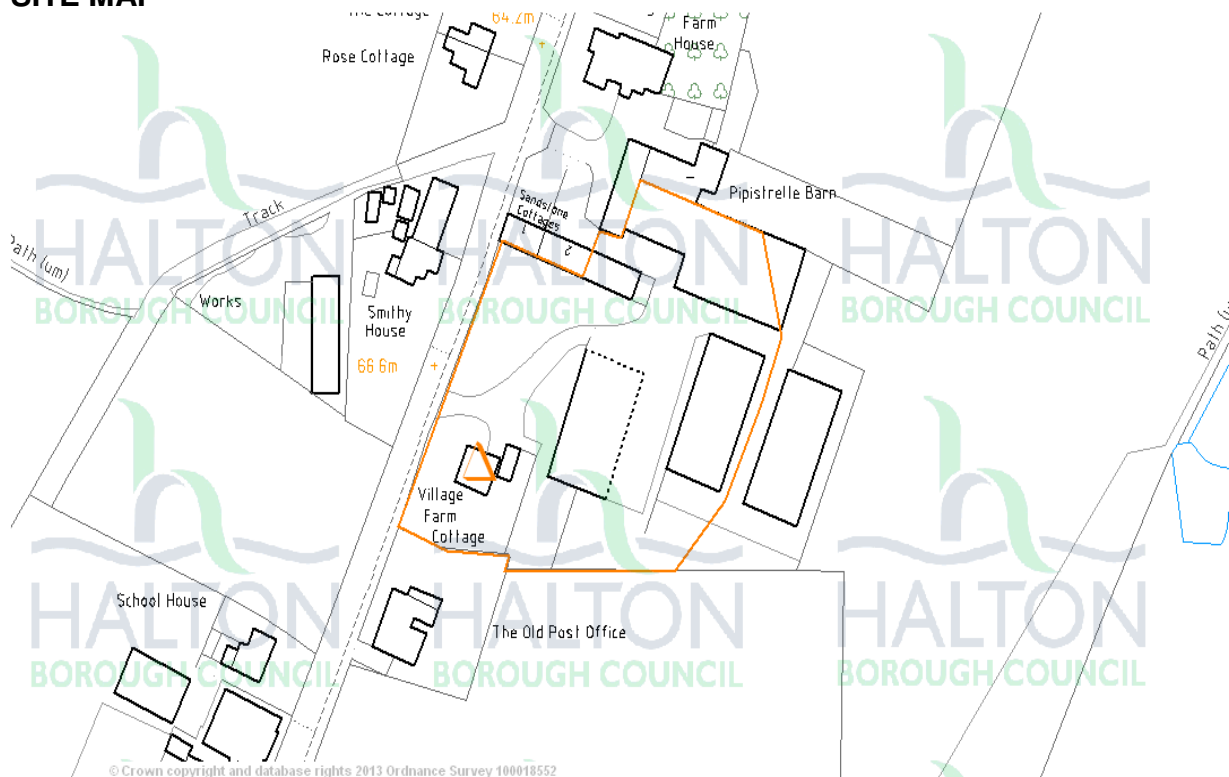


<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	13/00088/FUL
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Village Farm, Chester Road, Daresbury WA4 4AJ
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Proposed demolition of existing Village Farm Cottage & agricultural buildings, development of 12 No. new dwelling sand refurbishment of existing barn
<b>WARD:</b>	Daresbury
<b>PARISH:</b>	Daresbury
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b>	Pauline Shearer
<b>AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):</b>	Thomas Jones & Sons Ltd
<b>DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:</b>	
Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)	Green Belt (GE1) Conservation Area (BE12) Area of Special Landscape Value (GE23)
<b>DEPARTURE REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	Yes
<b>REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	2 neighbour comment
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Approve

**SITE MAP**



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## **1. APPLICATION SITE**

### The Site and Surroundings

This is a 3.5 hectare site situated within the Daresbury Estate to the east of Chester Road in the village of Daresbury. The existing group of agricultural buildings and the residential dwelling are known as Village Farm and Village Farm Cottage respectively. The site lies in the Green Belt and within the Daresbury Conservation Area.

### Planning History

The site currently has mixed uses following earlier planning permissions for the erection of agricultural buildings; erection of a dwelling; and the conversion of former agricultural barns. Currently, the site contains two large agricultural sheds; one dwelling house; and one unused former barn, an access to Village Farm and coniferous landscaping. The planning history in relation to the agricultural use of Village Farm is 05/00992/FUL for an agricultural livestock building. For the dwelling house, 2/12149 gave planning permission for the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling. An application to remove the related agricultural workers tie condition (No.4) 11/00370/S73 was subsequently withdrawn. In addition the site includes one former barn which is attached to another previously converted barn, planning permission 92/00023/FUL. The most recent applications directly relating to this application are; 11/00394/FUL for 9 dwellings which failed to address key issues in design and layout and was subsequently withdrawn; 12/00197/FUL for 10 dwellings with landscaping was approved in July 2012.

## **2. THE APPLICATION**

### Proposal Description

This current proposal seeks to replace the current agricultural sheds and dwelling house of Village Farm Cottage with a residential development of 12 dwellings with associated garages, car parking and landscaping. It should be noted that 11 of the dwellings are new build and the twelfth unit comprises the conversion of the existing agricultural building at the end of the previously converted Sandstone Cottages.

## **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states

that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

#### Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

BE2	Quality of Design
GE1	Control Of Development in the Green Belt
GE4	Re-Use of Buildings in the Green Belt
GE23	Area of Special Landscape Value
PR14	Contaminated Land
TP6	Cycling Provision as part of New Development
TP7	Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
TP12	Car Parking
TP17	Safe Travel for All

#### Halton Core Strategy (2012)

CS6	Green Belt
CS13	Affordable Housing
CS18	High Quality of Design
CS20	Natural and Historic Environment
CS21	Green Infrastructure

#### Relevant SPD's

New Residential Development SPD; Designing for Community Safety SPD; Draft Open Spaces SPD are of particular relevance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Regional Spatial Strategy are material to the consideration of this application.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

The application has been advertised as a departure and as land affecting a Conservation Area by a site notice displayed near to the site, a press notice and the nearest affected occupiers of the adjacent properties were notified by letter.

HBC Highway – No objection in principle.

HBC Open Spaces – No objection.

HBC Environmental Health – No objection.

Daresbury Parish Council - No comments received.

Environment Agency – No comments received.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Conservation – Comments to be reported verbally to Committee.

#### **5. REPRESENTATIONS**

Two objections have been received from one local resident and a resident of Moore in relation to:- out of keeping with the conservation area; not enough car parking space; garages would be used for storage; 12 houses is inappropriate within the boundaries of the conservation area and existing environment; garden are too small and out of character; increase in traffic on Chester Road; on road parking will conflict with school children walking to school.

One resident has written in to support the scheme on the basis that barn adjacent to his property is removed on this scheme and that the scheme allows the feature of Village Farm Barns to be maintained.

Any further comments received will be reported verbally to Members at Committee.

#### **6. ASSESSMENT**

The main issues arising from this proposal are:- Impact on Green Belt; impact on Area of Special Landscape Value; impact on residential amenity; impact on the Daresbury Conservation Area; Ecological issues; transport and highway safety; Affordable Housing.

It should be noted that aside from the issue of affordable housing, all other issues have been addressed previously during the determination of the 2012 planning approval.

## Impact on Green Belt

The site is located in the Green Belt and as such the related Green Belt policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan, Core Strategy and NPPF apply.

The National Planning Policy Framework contains guidance which generally favours sustainable development in the Green Belt for limited infilling in villages and limited redevelopment of previously developed sites. The main emphasis for the latter is for the proposed scheme to not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the previous buildings and use.

NPPF is material in the consideration of planning applications, alongside the adopted Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Halton Unitary Development plan. In this case the applicant was advised that the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and asked to provide very special circumstances that may outweigh any harmful effect on the green belt. This issue was dealt with in detail on the application approved in 2012 and the very special circumstances agreed on that application are essentially the same as those provided by this current proposal in summary as follows:-

1. The openness and attractiveness of the green belt would be improved;
2. The landscape would be enhanced with a 25% of the total site area being returned to agriculture;
3. There would be a significant reduction in footprint, built form and mass;
4. The proposals would have less impact on residential amenity than the use of the site as a working livestock farm or for new economic development. The removal of the workshop would also be beneficial to the adjoining neighbours; and
5. Reduction in traffic conflict and parking congestion for the school and villagers.

In qualitative terms, the loss of the large and functionally designed agricultural barns/buildings and the associated use of these buildings, the reduced farm vehicle movements and the removal of a modern farm house, it is considered to improve the character of what is essentially a residential village and conservation area.

It is considered that, although it conflicts with UDP policy GE1 in that it is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, very special circumstances have been proven justifying that the proposed scheme would have a reduced impact on the Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies limited infill in Green Belt villages as appropriate development. When considered against the Green Belt policies contained in the NPPF, it is dependent on the definition of what limited infill allows. When comparing this scheme with the extant approval, it should be noted that one of the 12 units, forming the barn is a conversion of an existing, falls within the remit of appropriate development in the Green Belt as it is the re-use of an existing building. It is considered therefore that the principal of allowing this scale of development in the Green Belt should be consistent with the decision taken to allow the extant approval as the schemes are

essential the same in scale and basic form. On balance the proposal is acceptable Green Belt development.

Conditions are proposed to require future occupiers of the dwellings to apply formally to the Council for any extensions or outbuildings to their properties to enable control over any potentially harmful future development that could be undertaken through permitted development.

### Area of Special Landscape Value

The proposal is located in an area of Special Landscape Value and has protected trees along the boundary with Chester Road. The application was accompanied by the required arboricultural statement. The proposal will result in the removal of existing conifer trees and large agricultural buildings which currently do not contribute to the distinctiveness associated with the landscape. The existing TOP's on the site frontage will be unaffected and incorporated into the development.

The Open Spaces officer has advised that the trees to be removed as proposed are acceptable and has advised on the immaturity of others on the southern boundary which could be removed. He has suggested that there be a greater emphasis on the retention of the hedgerow along the southern and frontage boundary. The applicant has been requested to provide plans to show how this will be done and conditions will be added to ensure that this is achieved.

The western boundary will benefit from tree and hedge planting to ensure that this interface with the open Green Belt land is softened and the transition from residential development to agricultural land does not result in harm to the Area of Special Landscape Value.

In addition, conditions will be added to control the protection of the frontage protected trees and all other trees and hedges on the site to be retained as part of the scheme. Any enhancement or new planting will be required to be replaced within a five year period if die back or damage occurs.

On this basis it is considered that the proposal will improve the visual appearance of the site and minimise any harm to the surrounding Area of Special Landscape Value.

### Impact on Residential Amenity

The site is located in an established mainly residential area and has existing properties on the northern and southern boundaries. To the south the nearest affected property is that of The Old Post Office, a detached dwelling. The nearest proposed units are plots 1 and 2 which have over the 21m separation distance between the proposed rear windows and the conservatory to the side of The Old Post Office. All other interfaces within the scheme are successfully achieved and meet the residential development guidelines of the Council.

The site to the north adjoins Pipistrelle Barn, a barn conversion. The scheme includes the removal of a large brick built workshop associated with the agricultural use of the land, which is attached to Pipistrelle Barn and its replacement with two smaller garages for the use of the occupiers of the proposed plots 10 and 12. The remaining space will form the private garden area for plot 12. This will result in the removal of what is a large, unattractive building which can only be an advantage to the area character. It should be noted that the structural requirements for the demolition of the barn will be subject to building regulation requirements.

### Impact on the Daresbury Conservation Area

The applicant engaged in productive pre-application discussions with the Council's Conservation Consultant the result of which is in essence, the submitted scheme. The Conservation Consultant has commented that the layout of the site, the form of the buildings, the elevation treatments and architectural detailing should now ensure a development that can be accommodated within this distinctive village, little altered since the Victorian estate improvements of Lord Daresbury, without harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The design of the houses draws accurately on the references seen in the estate villages of Daresbury and Preston on the Hill, and show an understanding of their proportions, massing and detailing.

The scheme for the conversion of the remaining agricultural unit is now also improved, in essence retaining most of the original fabric and adding a contemporary extension enclosed within the high sandstone yard walls; existing openings are fully utilised throughout.

Conditions are recommended in relation to specific requirements for materials, landscaping and boundary treatments; specific requirements incorporating a method statement, in relation to the conversion of the barn; Parts 1 and 2 (e.g. extensions; outbuildings; boundary treatment) of the GDPO be withdrawn, thus ensuring that any future proposals for alterations and extensions that would otherwise be permitted development are brought within the scope of planning control.

### Ecological Issues

The proposal includes the redevelopment and conversion of the existing agricultural building at the end of Sandstone Cottages and the removal of several agricultural buildings, including two large open sided barns and one brick built enclosed building, attached to existing barn conversions and the removal of a dwelling house which has been empty for some time. The applicant has provided a bat survey to show investigations for evidence of the presence of bats in those buildings.

The Council's nature conservation advisor has been asked to comment on the survey and those comments will be presented verbally to Members.

### Transport and Highway Safety

There are no objections in principle to the redevelopment of the site, subject to the proposal meeting the technical highway requirements of the Council's Highway Engineers. The scheme provides acceptable levels of car parking and servicing arrangements for future occupiers, again similar to the scheme already approved. Members will be updated verbally on any issues arising as a result of consultation.

### Affordable Housing

Since the approval of the extant planning application, the Core Strategy is now adopted and is material to the determination of all planning applications. As a result an additional policy consideration is CS13 and the need for residential schemes over 10 units or 0.33 ha to provide affordable housing on site at a ratio of 25% of the total unit provision.

The applicant has been asked to address this issue in relation to this particular proposal and these comments will be reported verbally to Members.

It is considered that this scheme is in essence a direct replacement of that approved already through the 2012 extant permission for 10 dwellings, but with an improved quality in design and ensuring the conversion of the existing barn as integral to the scheme. The earlier approval was not based on the need to comply with Policy CS13 as it pre-dated adoption of this policy. Given the viable fall-back position contained in the extant 2012 approval, it is considered that in these particular circumstances, that limited weight should be given to the application of CS13 and that there is little value in pursuing compliance with this policy in this case. The scheme is considered an improvement on the extant approval in relation to design of the dwellings and in including the barn conversion as integral to the scheme and the Council would as a result, prefer to see this latest scheme, rather than the extant approval, implemented on site.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

The principal of the redevelopment of this site was dealt with satisfactorily through the extant approval for 10 dwellings, when it was defined as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Given the similar number of dwellings and size of the land area, this proposal is treated as inappropriate development and has been advertised as such. UDP, Core Strategy and NPPF policy supports inappropriate development if very special circumstances are proven that outweigh potential harm, as is shown in this case and outlined above. Consequently, the proposal complies with policies GE1 and GE4 of the Halton UDP, CS6 of the Core Strategy and the Green Belt policy of the NPPF. The proposal will have only a minimal impact on the surrounding Area of Special Landscape Value and many of the existing landscape features, such as protected trees and hedgerows, will be retained and enhanced thereby complying with policy GE23. The loss of the existing agricultural facilities will enhance the Daresbury Conservation Area and the proposed scheme complements the existing layout and traditional building



design of the village, in this regard UDP Policy BE10 and Core Strategy Policy CS20 is complied with.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

Delegated authority is given to the Operational Director Policy, Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair, to approve the application subject to referral to the Secretary of State, S.106 for the provision of a financial contribution towards off-site public open space and the future control of the adjacent stone barn and the following planning conditions:-

## **9. CONDITIONS**

1. Standard 3 year period for implementation (BE1)
2. Drawing Numbers (BE1 and BE2)
3. Materials to be approved to include: samples and sample panels of materials of external construction; brick bond and special bricks to be agreed; details of eaves, verge and ridge to be provided ; details of dormers to be provided at a scale of not less than 1in10; details of wall openings including heads, cills and setbacks; windows and doors to be in painted timber and details to be provided at a scale of not less than 1 in 5; agreed external colour scheme; details of roof lights to be agreed; cast rain water goods; foul water goods be run internally; details of meter boxes, flues, vents; agreed scheme of hard and soft landscaping, including external lighting scheme, samples of proposed hard landscaping materials, and boundary treatments. (BE2 and BE10)
4. Materials in relation to the conversion of the Barn to include: agreed schedule and method statement for repairs, renovation and structural works ; agreed areas of repointing and any stone repair, raking out to be carried at by hand tools, agreed lime mortar to be placed by pointing irons and sample panels to be prepared; replacement stone to match in colour, hue, grain size and dressing - samples to be provided; details of proposed insulation methods to the roof to be provided with agreed verge and eaves and ventilation details: full drawn details at 1 in 10 and materials schedule for extension within walled yard. (BE2 and BE10)
5. Tree Protection ( BE1 and BE10)
6. Replacement Tree Planting (BE1)
7. Landscaping Scheme (BE1)
8. Boundary Treatment including appropriate buffer to east (BE22 and GE1)
9. Wheel Cleansing Facility and Management Plan ( BE1)
10. Construction Hours (BE1)
11. No additional windows other than those approved (BE1)
12. Permitted Development Restriction Extensions & Outbuildings (BE2, BE10 and GE1)
13. Permitted Development Restriction Boundary Treatment to property frontages (BE10 and GE1)
14. Permitted Development Restriction no hardstanding (BE1 and GE1)
15. No conversion of garage to habitable room (BE1, BE10 and GE1)

16. No use of garage for business or commercial use (BE1, BE10 and GE1)

## **10. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

As required by:

- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.