

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
20/00034/FUL	Full Planning Application	Demolition of existing barn and erection of dwelling with detached garage and change of use of agricultural land to garden land with associated landscaping.	Land West of Woodfield, Honeydon Road, Colmworth	09/02/2020	20/00034/FUL

Three members of Staploe Parish Council considered this application and agreed that there was no need to call an extraordinary Parish Council meeting to discuss it as similar applications had been discussed by the Parish Council in full meetings on two previous occasions and the only change has been to reduce the size of the curtilage. Staploe Parish Council would like to object to this development for the following reasons:

1. This development is outside the Settlement Policy Area for Colmworth and there is no Settlement Policy Area for Staploe Parish. Therefore, it is development in open countryside. Saved policy H26 of Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002 states that planning permission will not be granted for housing in open countryside except as provided for under policies H27 (agricultural workers), H28 (replacement dwellings). or H30 (affordable housing to meet local needs) which has been replaced by Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan 2008. None of these policies are relevant in this case so we believe it should be regarded as development in open countryside.
2. We accept that the applicant already has permitted development rights under Class Q regulations to replace the barn with a dwelling, but this assumes that the dimensions will remain the same and the garden / curtilage is limited to an area equivalent to the footprint of the existing building and there are no ancillary buildings. It also assumes that the development will only require building operations to install or replace windows, doors, roofs or exterior walls.
 - a. In this case the proposed dwelling has been reduced by a tiny amount but is still almost double the size (190% at 171m²) vs the original barn which was 90m². The size of the garage has been significantly reduced to approximately 56m². However, no ancillary buildings are permitted so this is not relevant. The built footprint including the garage is still **253%** of the size of the original barn at 227.48 m²
 - b. The garden has now been reduced but is still larger than the footprint of the building and requires change of use of part of an agricultural field to garden. Class Q permits a garden the size of the footprint of the original building i.e. 90m². The proposed garden is approximately 940m² including the footprint of the house. We believe it is important to maintain the character and appearance of the countryside and safeguard it from unsuitable development. By enlarging the residential curtilage and introducing domestic uses to land which was previously agricultural, the garden extension could have a significant visual impact and gradually lead to urban characteristics (for example, sheds, fences and hardstandings, etc.) being introduced to an area whose open and attractive landscape qualities are highly valued. Concerns about the urbanisation of this rural area have been

exacerbated by the fact that a very high close boarded PVC fence has been erected by the owner of the property along the eastern boundary of the property and to the rear of Woodfield on what is still classified as agricultural land. The Parish Council would suggest that this fence is completely out of place in this rural environment and is not an appropriate boundary for an agricultural field or a garden in a rural area. We note that a post and rail fence is proposed in this plan.

- c. The applicant has applied to build a 2-bay garage. Whilst this is considerably smaller than the original proposal Class Q provisions do not provide for any ancillary structures.
- d. We believe there is some uncertainty regarding the structure of the existing barn. We believe further structural works are likely to be needed in order to comply with building regulations if it was to be converted to a dwelling. As this is not permitted under Class Q we believe that the Class Q development may not be possible and therefore this further undermines any claims of a fallback position. We would suggest that the Borough Council request a structural survey before any Class Q development takes place.

3. Martin Tidy referred to Traylesfield Farm, Ravensden 17/02140/FUL in his policy comments. In that appeal decision point 10 states:

“Given that permission already exists for a dwelling on the appeal site, given that dwelling is substantively the same as that proposed in the appeal scheme, and given preparations have been made to relocate the storage functions of the existing barn, I consider there is a greater than theoretical possibility that the development already approved might take place. Given the similarity of the two schemes,I consider the fallback position in this case a significant material consideration to justify a departure from the development plan policies identified above.”

The fact that the Class Q scheme was substantively the same as that proposed in the appeal scheme made the fallback position a material consideration. In this case the proposed development is 253% of the footprint of the Class Q scheme so we do not believe that the fallback position is a material consideration.

4. Therefore, we do not believe that the proposed dwelling is an improvement on the development proposed under Class Q and it is much more extensive than the Class Q proposals at 253% of the size so it should be assessed as a new dwelling in Open Countryside which we would oppose on the grounds of policy H26 referred to above.

Fisher German pointed out that we did not oppose the extension of Topham End Farm Barn which is also in Honeydon Road and which was also developed using Class Q. However, the extension amounted to a 40% increase in the size of the property, there were no outbuildings and the site has been developed in a manner which is more in keeping with a rural area.

Best wishes,

Lucy Crawford