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**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
(SECTIONS 62 & 327A)**

**PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS)
REGULATIONS (ARTICLE 3A)**

**COLEMANS FARM, TOOT HILL ROAD, GREENSTED, ONGAR,
ESSEX, CM5 9QN**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**CONVERSION AND ADAPTATION OF FORMER MILKING
PARLOUR TO FORM TWO BEDROOM DWELLING WITH
GARDEN, BOUNDARY FENCING, PARKING AND
LANDSCAPING.**

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The application building lies within the historic curtilage of the grade II listed Colemans Farmhouse and has done so since before 1948. It must therefore be considered as part of the listed building. Proposals for the alteration of a listed building require listed building consent by virtue of Section 7 of the Listed Buildings Act 1990.

1.2 Regulation 3A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations requires all applications for listed building consent to be accompanied by a design and access statement.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 The development context has been assessed through analysis of ordnance survey maps, aerial photographs, site visits, a photographic survey, a digital survey of the existing site and buildings and research of the planning history of the site. An annotated set of photographs and an aerial view are enclosed at **APPENDIX A.**

2.2 The application site lies at the end of an unnamed single-track dead end lane that leads south-east from Toot Hill Road at Clatterford End. At its end is a byway, which joins Mutton Row to the north of Stanford Rivers.

2.3 There are about 2,300m² of existing buildings at Coleman’s Farm. These consist of the listed farmhouse, various older vernacular buildings, several larger more modern barns and a detached bungalow.

2.4 The listing description is as follows: -

TL 50 SW STANFORD RIVERS CLATTERFORD END 4/192 Colemans Farmhouse GV II House. C16 or earlier. Timber framed, part plastered and part weatherboarded. Red plain tiled roof with 2 storey crosswing to left and 1 storey and attic house to right. Red tiled porch with plank and muntin door to right of crosswing. Crosswing with C19, 3 light window ground floor and a small paned casement with a plaster, 2 centred drip hood over. 2 gabled dormers with bargeboards and 3 light windows, 3 light and 2 light windows to ground floor with mouldings over windows. Louvre to right. Off-centre red brick chimney stack.

2.5 A timber framed former barn adjacent to the house has been converted to a one-bedroom dwelling (EPF/1380/00 & LB/EPF/1081/). The application building is attached to the northern end of this building.

2.6 It is a former milking parlour which has been redundant since the 1978. It has two main sections. The larger southern section has a floor area of about 147m² and consists of a timber frame on a brick plinth with the studwork walls clad with horizontal timber boarding. It has a pitched roof clad with corrugated asbestos sheets. Attached to its northern end is a smaller section of about 25m². This is built in blockwork and is rendered. This section has a similar roof to the main section, but a lower ridge.

2.7 The application building is not mentioned in the listing description, but the main section is probably 19th Century, with the smaller blockwork section dating from the 20th Century. Viewed from the lane the continuum from the former barn near the farmyard entrance through the two sections of the application building represents part of the organic growth of the farm over the last 150 years or so, and is worthy of preservation for that reason, as well as for its traditional, vernacular form. The application building should be regarded as part of the listed building as it is within the historic curtilage of the farmhouse, and should therefore be subject to listed building control.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 A single storey dwelling is proposed. The main entrance would be towards the southern end of the eastern elevation. To the left of the entrance hall would be two bedrooms, one with an en-suite bathroom. To the right would be a bathroom, utility room, study and lounge. The blockwork northern section would be converted to a kitchen. Parking spaces and a garden would be to the north of the building.

4.0 PROPOSED USE

Local Plan Policy

4.1 The relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan are generally in accordance with Central Government advice in PPGs 2 & 15 and PPS7.

4.2 Local Plan policy GB8A says proposals for the conversion of existing rural buildings must comply with a number of criteria. The relevant criteria in this case are that: -.

- The building must be permanent and substantial, capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction and in keeping with its surroundings in terms of form, bulk and general design.
- The proposed use must not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.
- The use and its traffic should not have a significant detrimental impact on the character or amenities of the countryside.

4.3 The policy gives preference to the re-use of buildings for employment generating purposes such as recreation, tourism, industry and storage. However proposals that would result in a significant amount of vehicle parking, commuting or open storage will be refused. Sustainable design and construction techniques are encouraged.

4.4 The supporting text of policy GB8A in paragraph 5.35a recognises the inherent good sense in making use of existing buildings rather than replacing them with new ones. *“In sustainability terms”, it states, “it is generally preferable that existing buildings have an appropriate use, rather than remaining unused and falling into disrepair or dereliction.”*

4.5 Paragraph 5.37a says that the potential impacts of traffic generation, noise, fumes, dust, illumination and security measures on the private amenities of existing dwellings in close proximity will need to be assessed when judging the appropriateness of the proposed use.

4.6 According to paragraph 5.38a when granting planning permission the Council may seek to secure benefits for the surrounding countryside to mitigate any aspect of the proposals. The clearance of part of a group of buildings is one example of the type of benefit that will be sought.

4.7 Paragraph 5.39a says the traffic from the new use must be safely accommodated on the road network and not result in harm to the environment of the area or the character and appearance of a protected lane.

4.8 According to paragraph 5.43a where proposals for the conversion of a listed building in the Green Belt: *“...would be essential for, or contribute significantly to, ensuring a viable future for the building, or for maintaining it in good order, this*

could constitute or contribute to the very special circumstances which can justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.”

4.9 Policy GB9A deals specifically with residential conversions but applies only to “*buildings worthy of retention*” elsewhere described as “*vernacular rural buildings*”. For the residential use of such a building to be acceptable in principle: “*it should be clearly proven by the applicant that business re-use in line with policy GB8a is unsuitable.*” Supporting paragraph 5.64a says: “*Where the Council considers it appropriate, applicants will be required to submit a statement, with an application, which must demonstrate that a reasonable attempt has been made to achieve employment-generating activities in accordance with policy GB8a. The statement must explain why the building is not suitable for business re-use, e.g. poor vehicular access, design or its location.*”

4.10 Policy GB9A also requires that changes proposed to the building must not adversely affect their character or setting. Examples include “*new curtilages, boundary treatment (including walls and fences), windows, door openings and chimneys*”.

Suitability of Building for Re-Use

4.11 Inspection of the building will clearly reveal that it is permanent and substantial and its form, bulk and general design are in keeping with its surroundings. The roof covering, although not particularly attractive, is reasonably watertight and the structure underneath has therefore been protected from damp penetration. There is no sign of any structural movement and the essential structural fabric of the building is in an obviously good state of repair.

4.12 The most recent use of the building was as a milking parlour, but no dairy herd has been at Coleman’s since 1978. Dairy herds are now a rarity in Essex

and the remaining 150 acres at Coleman’s is used for arable crops and grass. The holding is of a size such that it is unlikely to remain viable in the future. The application building is therefore redundant.

4.13 It also an attractive vernacular building, listed by virtue of being within the historic curtilage of Coleman’s farmhouse and contributing to the history and character of the site. Without a viable new use it would fall into disrepair and may become derelict. Thus there is a strong planning policy presumption in finding an appropriate new use for this building.

Suitability of Residential Use

4.14 There is a strong case against employment generating uses as the local road network is inadequate for large vehicles, which would almost inevitably arise whatever commercial use is proposed, and because commercial uses are likely to prove a very poor neighbour to the existing residents at the site.

Local Road Network

4.15 Coleman’s is only two miles from the heart of Ongar, but the local lanes are narrow and twisting and unsuited to vehicles larger than cars. In addition sections of Toot Hill Road to the north and west of Coleman’s are designated as protected lanes. The access road into the farm from Clatterford End is also a narrow single track lane with an attractive wide verge.

4.16 If the barn were used for industrial or storage purposes it is likely that some large vehicles would visit the site, for which the local lanes are inappropriate.

4.17 If the barn were used for office or recreational purposes it is likely that the barn would generate a fairly large volume of car traffic so that there would be an

increasing likelihood of cars waiting on verges for other cars to pass, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the lanes

4.18 A small dwelling is the use that offers the best balance between the need for a viable use to preserve the listed building and the need to avoid generating commercial vehicles or large numbers of cars.

Impact on Neighbours’ Amenities

4.19 There is little farming activity at Colemans. The farm buildings that remain are used for storage of hay and machinery. There are very few farm vehicle movements. The introduction of commercial activity and traffic to the application building would be a sharp turn for the worse. The building adjoins an existing dwelling and is opposite the garden of Temple Cottage, where the applicant’s elderly mother-in law lives. Its commercial use would be likely to cause noise and disturbance harmful to neighbours’ amenities.

5.0 AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Given the size of the building, the relatively small extent of curtilage available, and the need to keep the level of activity generated at the site down to a minimum, a two-bedroom dwelling is appropriate.

6.0 LAYOUT

Amenity Space

6.1 To the north of the building is an area of hardstanding on which a building once stood. This area is occasionally used for the parking of vehicles and partly provides an access into the doors of the adjoining agricultural building.

6.2 Although it is on the edge of the farm complex, on the opposite side of the lane, the private garden of Temple Cottage abuts the open farmland there. The private garden of Coleman’s Farmhouse similarly abuts open farmland to the south. Thus the juxtaposition of private gardens and open farmland is characteristic of the site.

6.3 In this case an area of concrete hardstanding would be broken up and the majority would be grassed. It would not be appropriate to erect a boundary wall or close boarded fence. Instead the intention is to erect a post and rail fence and a new hedge (to match the garden of Temple Cottage). At the northern end of the garden there are existing trees, which provide an existing landscaped setting for the garden.

Neighbours’ Privacy

6.4 This is a single storey dwelling, so the windows at ground level on the northeast elevation of the proposed dwelling would not afford a view over the hedge of Temple Cottage. Cars would be parked some distance from Temple Cottage and should not cause any disturbance.

Parking Provision

6.5 Two parking spaces are proposed adjacent to the northern end of the building.

7.0 SCALE

7.1 The size of the proposed dwelling is governed by the size of the existing building. No changes to the size or height of the building are proposed.

8.0 APPEARANCE

8.1 The existing timber frame would be repaired and, where possible, existing external boarding would be re-used. Otherwise it would be replaced and stained black. The blockwork northern section would be repaired and re-rendered. The corrugated asbestos sheeting would be replaced with red clay tiles.

8.2 On the existing roadside elevation there are four high level windows and a sliding door on the main section and a larger window and a roller shutter door on the northern section. One entirely new opening is proposed at the northern end of the main section and one would be entirely closed up in the northern section. Four of the other window openings would be enlarged to provide three larger windows and a door, and two openings (the sliding door and roller shutter door) would be reduced in size. The windows would be inserted between the existing studwork and would be in scale and proportion with the building.

8.3 On the northern elevation the existing window opening would remain to serve the proposed kitchen. A new opening would be provided for a pair of French doors for access from the lounge to the garden. On the western elevation the existing sliding door opening would be closed up. The other five window openings would be enlarged to provide four windows and a door.

8.4 There are a large number of openings in the existing building in a regular arrangement along both sides of the building. The proposed conversion would repeat this arrangement and is therefore in keeping with the character of the existing building.

8.5 In accordance with the suggestion in paragraph 5.38a of the Local Plan it is proposed to demolish the existing barn, which lies alongside the northern edge of

the farm complex. This has an area of about 240m² and is redundant. This would result in a significant increase in the openness of the Green Belt.

9.0 LANDSCAPING

9.1 The site of the demolished building would be broken up and planted with native tree species to provide an even more effective screen for the northern edge of the farm complex, which would improve the appearance of the countryside and Green Belt. A native species hedge would also be planted around the perimeter of the proposed garden.

10.0 ACCESS

Accessibility

10.1 Although access to public transport is limited, the site is not remote, being only 2 miles from Ongar Town Centre. Public footpath access to Coleman’s is very good. A path leads directly from the site eastwards to Marden Ash at the southern end of Ongar.

10.2 The byway, which leads southwards from the site, connects to the Three Forests Way, which offers a separate route into Marden Ash.

10.3 To the north of the lane at Clatterford End further footpaths, including part of the Essex Way, connect with various points along Ongar High Street.

10.4 Ongar itself offers a range of shops and services, including a Sainsbury’s supermarket, and connections for buses to Brentwood, Chelmsford, Harlow and Epping (services 7, 500, 501 & 521).

10.5 Toot Hill is about 1 mile to the west of the site, where the 147, 381 & 382 bus services connect with Epping and Harlow.

Inclusiveness

10.6 All external and internal thresholds are level and, being a single storey dwelling, all facilities are available on the ground floor. All doorways would be wheelchair accessible. The dwelling could easily be adapted over time to accommodate occupiers with a variety of physical impairments and disabilities.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The application building is permanent and substantial and its form, bulk and general design are in keeping with its surroundings.

11.2 Furthermore it is part of a listed building. It has a vernacular form and appearance and makes a positive contribution to the history and character of Colemans’s Farm. It is therefore worthy of preservation.

11.3 It would be adapted to residential use without harming its vernacular character and appearance.

11.4 Coleman’s is not a sustainable development location, but neither is it remote from services and facilities, being only 2 miles from Ongar Town Centre.

11.5 The local lanes are narrow and twisting, and some sections are “protected”. They are not suited to commercial traffic or large volumes of car traffic.

11.6 Conversion to a small dwelling offers an appropriate balance between providing a viable new use to enable the building to be preserved, without

generating traffic and activities unsuited to the location and likely to cause noise and disturbance to neighbours.

11.7 The provision of a small private garden enclosed by a native species hedge would be in keeping with the existing character of the farm complex.

11.8 The demolition of an existing redundant barn of 240m² would significantly open up the Green Belt and provide an opportunity to plant an attractive landscape screen to the north of the farm complex.

11.9 For all these reasons I consider that the proposed development complies with Local Plan policies GB8A and GB9A and would be an appropriate development in the Green Belt.

PHOTOS OF APPLICATION SITE



1. Coleman's Farmhouse listed grade 2.

2. View south along lane towards entrance to Coleman's Farmhouse with end of application building to right of picture. Adjoining buildings have consent for residential conversion.



PHOTOS OF APPLICATION SITE



3. View from lane showing both sections of application building.

4. Northern section of application building viewed from lane.



PHOTOS OF APPLICATION SITE



5. Redundant building at northern end of farm complex (240m²) to be demolished.

6. Entrance to byway at end of lane.

