

APPLICATION NO: 25/00637/FUL **CASE OFFICER:** Maxine Wishart

WARD: Whiston & Cronton **PARISH:** Cronton Parish Council

LOCATION: Dragon House Farm , 370A Cronton Road, Cronton

PROPOSAL: REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING DOORS, WINDOWS AND FRONT VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS GATES, ERECTION OF BIN STORE ENCLOSURE AND 1.35M HIGH FENCING AND ACCESS GATE TOGETHER WITH RETENTION OF 2 NO. AIR CONDITIONING UNITS TO SIDE OF DWELLING

Site Description

The application site comprises a dwelling house (former farm workers barn) and associated land to the rear located off Cronton Road, Cronton. The site is located within designated Green Belt. An agricultural storage barn associated with the property is located along the western boundary of the site.

The property is located off a private driveway accessed off Cronton Road which also serves other neighbouring residential properties comprising of a detached dwelling to the north-east (370 Cronton Road) and 2 no. semi-detached dwellings and their associated car parking area to the north and north-east (376 & 378 Cronton Road).

To the north of the site on the opposite side of Cronton Road there are other residential properties. Further beyond the property and its adjacent neighbours, to the east, south and west sits agricultural land. A Public Right of Way (PROW) is located to the rear of the application site with an access point at the side No. 370a Cronton Road.

Background History

The proposal relates to an existing converted barn. Planning permission was granted in November 2007 for the conversion of a barn to a dwelling, extensions to the sides and change of use of part of a barn to stables (07/00912/FUL) The conversion and associated development was completed and occupied, however the as built development differed from the approved development and a subsequent permission was granted in 2010 (09/00086/COU) which included the extension to the western side being used as an annex for occupation by a family member ancillary to the dwelling.

Proposal

The application seeks the replacement of the existing green uPVC doors and windows, changes to vehicular and pedestrian access gates at the site frontage, the erection of a bin store and a new section of fencing within the site together with the retention of 2 no. air conditioning units to the side of the dwelling.

In terms of the replacement windows and doors, planning permission is normally not required to replace windows and doors on a dwelling with 'like-for-like' units or those of a similar appearance, provided the property is not a listed building and, in some cases, not located within a conservation area. It must therefore be considered whether this work included in the application would materially affect the external appearance of the

dwelling and as such is development.

Section 55(1) of the Act defines 'development' as '*the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of a material change in the use of any buildings or other land.*' Section 55(2), however, goes on to clarify at subsection (a)(ii) that the carrying out of operations which do not materially affect the external appearance of the building shall not be taken to involve development of the land.

As way of background, it would appear that the windows inserted at the time of conversion comprised either dark brown or black timber. These appear to have been replaced sometime between April and October 2021 with 'sage' Green uPVC windows. The replacement green windows were not subject to a planning application. However, as they were inserted more than 4 years ago these windows are immune from enforcement. The matter for consideration here therefore is whether the proposed 'cream' windows and cladding would materially affect the external appearance of the building as exists.

The High Court in *Burroughs Day v Bristol City Council* [1996] 1 PLR 78 clarified how to interpret whether works "*materially affect the external appearance of a building*" under section 55(2)(a)(ii). It was held that it is the effect on the external appearance and not just the exterior which must be considered; and that the effect on the external appearance must be judged in relation to the building as a whole and not by reference to a part of the building taken in isolation.

The elevations of the host dwellings are visible from a number of vantage points. The windows occupy large areas of the elevations and are an integral part of the design. The cladding is on a prominent projecting gable to the front of the dwelling. These features contribute to the building's visual character. A measure of subjective judgment is therefore required when deciding whether the replacement windows or external cladding materially affect the external appearance of a building as a whole.



Google Streetview April 2021



Google Streetview October 2021

Having regard to the above it is considered, as a matter of fact and degree, that the proposed alterations would materially affect the external appearance of the building and are thus not excluded from the definition of development by way of s55(2)(a)(ii). The

proposed works comprise development within the meaning of s55 of the Act for which planning permission is required.

Condition 7 of the planning permission for the conversion and extension of the former farm building to residential (09/00086/COU) removes permitted development rights and as such other development within this application which would not normally require permission is also included.

Consultations

Cronton Parish Council - No Comments Received.

Highway Authority - No objections.

Environmental Health - No objection in principle subject to a condition in relation to the control of noise from air conditioning units.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 10 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice. No representations have been received.

Planning History

APP. NO: 07/00210/COU
PROPOSAL: Change of use of former farm workers' barn into residential dwelling including two storey extensions to both side elevations and change of use of part of existing barn to form 3 no. stables
DECISION: Refused
DECISION DATE: 21 June 2007

APP. NO: 07/00912/FUL
PROPOSAL: Change of use of former farm worker's barn into residential dwelling inc. 2 storey extensions to both side elevations and change of use of part of existing barn to form 3 no. stables. re submission of refused application 07/00210/COU.
DECISION: Granted
DECISION DATE: 11 December 2007

APP. NO: 09/00086/COU
PROPOSAL: Change of use of former farm worker's barn to form 1 no. residential dwelling with two storey annex accommodation including two storey extensions to both side elevations and change of use of part of existing barn to form 3 no. stables.
DECISION: Granted
DECISION DATE: 20 May 2010

APP. NO: 21/00165/FUL
PROPOSAL: Erection of 1 no. agricultural storage barn for personal use.
DECISION: Granted
DECISION DATE: 27 April 2021

APP. NO: 23/00025/FUL

PROPOSAL: Removal of condition no. 5 attached to planning permission 21/00165/FUL (erection of 1 no. agricultural storage barn for personal use) to allow for the agricultural storage barn to remain permanently

DECISION: Granted

DECISION DATE: 24 April 2023

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles
CS5 - Green Belt
CS20 - Managing the Borough's Historic Environment
CS26 - Waste Management

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

H8 - Extensions and Alterations to Residential Properties
G7 - Alteration, Extension or Replacement of Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt
DQ2 - Security in the Built Environment

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD (2010)
Householder Development SPD (2016)

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this

application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating with the applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Green Belt. The principle of the residential use in the Green Belt was established through the planning approval granted in 2007 to change the use and extend the property for residential use (Ref: 07/00912/FUL) and through the later approval involving the change the use of and extension to the former farm workers barn to form a residential dwelling and change of use of part of existing barn to form 3 no. stables (Ref: 09/00086/COU).

The issues therefore are the impact of the scheme as proposed and for retention, on THE Green Belt, visual and residential amenity and whether there are any highway safety implications.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that *‘when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.’*

The NPPF (para. 153) says that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of a list of exceptions a) – h) apply. One such example includes *‘...c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building...’*

Due to the nature of the proposal the proposed works would not result in significant alterations to the Green Belt and would not result in disproportionate addition out of character with its setting and is therefore in accordance with part (c).

Design and Visual Amenity

The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The importance of high-quality responsive design also forms a central component of the policies of the development plan and local guidance. Local Plan policies CS2 and CS19 combine to ensure that new development enhances local character and quality of space.

The Council’s general approach to planning applications for domestic extensions and other “householder” proposals is set out in Saved UDP Policy H8. To summarise, the policy requires that all extensions or alterations to residential properties are of a high level of design, not disproportionate in scale, in keeping with the area, respect neighbours’ amenity and provide for safe and convenient access and parking without

unacceptable loss of amenity.

Saved Policy G7 criterion 1 a) requires that the form and materials of the development would respect the appearance of the existing dwelling and its setting, and preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Retention of 2 no. Air Conditioning Units

The application description and plans have been amended since the application was submitted to include for the retention of the 2 no. Air Conditioning Units (ACs) as they have subsequently been installed. The units are seen against the eastern facing gable elevation, one sitting atop the other.

The gable elevation faces the site of 370 Cronton Road, although there is existing planting along the common boundary with the site which screens the units from view. The units are utilitarian in their design however they are positioned in a discrete location at the side of the dwelling. The units are white set against the white rendered finish of this part of the dwelling. Given the siting, distance from the street and that there are gates to the site frontage, it is considered that this prevents them from appearing incongruous.

Replacement Windows and Doors

The application proposes the replacement of existing Chartwell Green (RAL 6021) uPVC windows and doors with new windows and doors which would be uPVC coloured Bibury Stream (CWD003). The colour proposed is a 'stone' colour which is more subtle than the 'sage' green coloured windows which appear to have replaced dark brown / black windows.

It is not proposed to alter the apertures or the design of the green windows which appear to have been inserted sometime between April 2021 and October 2021.

Horizontal Timber Cladding

The application proposes the replacement of existing horizontal timber overlap cladding finished black on the front projecting gable feature of the dwelling; replaced by Millworks Southern Grandis hardwood horizontal timber boards – colour Planed OrganoWood®

The existing black timber horizontal overlap cladding would be replaced with a lighter natural wood finish cladding. When assessing the suitability of cladding for a barn conversion within the Green Belt it is important to ensure that the development integrates sensitively with the rural landscape. The existing black cladding reflects a traditional rural and agricultural aesthetic helping the building appear more recessive. By contrast, lighter finishes typically read as more domestic and are more visually prominent within a rural setting. It is therefore necessary to consider whether the proposed cladding would preserve the building's former agricultural character rather than it constituting a cosmetic alteration that increases its visual prominence.

The existing property comprises a mix of materials, with the main building finished in brick and the side extensions rendered white. The adjacent development of two detached dwellings (converted from 4 terraced dwellings) is predominantly finished in a light cladding and includes a prominent light-coloured rendered projection to the front elevation which is highly visible from the street. Having regard to this existing context, it would be difficult to justify a refusal of this element of the proposal in this instance based on the lighter colour of the cladding.

Timber Fence and Gate to Side of Dwelling

In addition to the aforementioned design policies, saved Policy DQ2 requires

developments to be designed to provide good levels of security.

The proposed timber fencing panel and gate would comprise of horizontal hardwood slat timber finished with a light natural colour ('Planed Organowood') located to the side of the dwelling at the eastern end of the building. They would span 2.7m across an existing access path and have a height of 1.4m.

Bin Store

The proposed bin store would be located to the eastern side of the dwelling. It would be constructed of natural coloured timber and measure 2400mm (w) x 950mm (d) x 1200mm (h). The store would be screened behind the proposed side fence and gate

Vehicular and Pedestrian Gates

It is proposed to replace existing wrought iron gates with a maximum height of 2.4m (vehicular) and 2.2m (pedestrian). These would be replaced by natural coloured hardwood gates with a maximum height of 2.03m (vehicular) and 1.58m (pedestrian) which is set at a higher ground level than the adjacent vehicular access. It is not proposed to alter the gate piers that support the gates.

Other properties in this residential cluster are also served by wrought iron gates. The proposed gates would be solid hardwood with simple form. The gates would adjoin existing brick piers and railings fronting Cronton Road. The existing gates currently provide a degree visibility into the site and the proposal would see a shift to a solid form and the visual impact of this transition a material consideration. The replacement gates would eliminate permeability and reduce the open transparent nature of the site frontage. The existing gates and those proposed are both in Officer opinion of a suburban design and the solid gates proposed would be visible from the street.

The main issue here then is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. The proposed gates would be set in from Cronton Road by approx. 19.5m at the end of a private driveway serving the host dwelling and neighbours at 370, 376 and 378 Cronton Road. The site set in the context of existing modern housing on the adjacent site which also has solid fencing to the rear, highly visible from the street. Other properties on the opposite side of Cronton Road comprise of a wide range of house types circa 130's to later bungalows circa 1960's. Given the built context and the degree of set back from the street it is considered that the replacement gates would not appear overly prominent or incongruous from the street or neighbouring properties

Overall, the proposed external alterations and other works would not cause unacceptable harm to the openness of the Green Belt or to the character of the host property or surrounding area. The proposed development complies with the principles of the NPPF Saved Policies G7, H8 and DQ2 of the UDP and Policies CS2, CS5 and CS19 of the Local Plan.

Highways

The Local Highway Authority has assessed the proposal in terms of access and visibility and raises no objection. The Highway Authority is satisfied that visibility splays will not be obstructed and that the proposal will not create unacceptable highway safety risks or adverse impacts on the highway network. The Highway Authority requests that an informative relating to potential damage to the highway is added to any permission granted.

The proposed development accords with the NPPF and Policies CS7 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan:Core Strategy.

Residential Amenity

The application seeks the replacement of the existing green uPVC doors and windows, changes to vehicular and pedestrian access gates at the site frontage, the erection of a bin store and a new section of fencing within the site together with the retention of 2 no. air conditioning units to the side of the dwelling.

No. 370 Cronton Road

The air conditioning units are sited on the side elevation facing the common boundary with this property and approx. 17m from the rear elevation of this neighbour.

It is not considered that other development on the site would have harmful impacts on the amenity of the occupiers of this property. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has no objection in principle to the proposal based on the noise information which supports the application, subject to a condition controlling the noise limits of the equipment which can be secured if permission is granted.

Subject to the above condition it is not considered that the development would result in adverse impacts on the occupiers of this property.

Nos. 376 and 378 Cronton Road, Cronton (formerly Nos. 372 – 378)

Given the above mentioned factors relating to noise control of the air conditioning units it is considered that there would be no unacceptable detrimental impact on these neighbours due to noise.

Other development proposed on the site would not, in Officer's view, lead to harmful impacts on the amenity of these residents.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that subject to the limitation of the noise levels from the air conditioning units through the imposition of a condition, the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and as such complies with the NPPF, Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Local Plan and Saved Policies ENV2, H8 and G7 of the UDP.

Heritage Assets – Archaeology

Policies CS19 and CS20 sets out how Knowsley will protect, conserve and enhance the Borough's historic environment, including its heritage assets, townscape character, conservation areas, archaeological resources, and buildings or structures of historic interest.

Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies an archaeological site on the adjoining site of Dragon House Farm, 370 Cronton Road which is immediately adjacent to the driveway of this application site. The archaeological interest relates to the former site of Dragon House. *"A cement rendered brick two storey house...Suggested date 18th century with later 18th century renovation... A building is shown in this area on Yates' map of 1786. (3) Greenwood's map of 1818 shows a group of three buildings in this area. (4)Hennet's map of 1829 shows two buildings to the west of a short lane running southwards. (5)The Tithe map of 1843 shows two buildings on this site and records them*

as No. 231, a house and garden owned by Bartholomew Bretherton and occupied by James Swift. (6-7) The 1st edition 6" OS map of 1849 labels it as Dragon House. It was demolished in the late 20th century...Period 1786-2000"

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires that the level of heritage information required should be proportionate to the asset's significance. No original building fabric survives and the erection of a new dwelling on the adjoining site has already been constructed so any remaining significance is minimal. Given the above and that the proposed works are limited in nature and would require very limited, if any ground works, in this instance, it is Officer's view that further assessment, such as a Heritage Impact Statement, would be disproportionate.

The proposed development is considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF and Policy CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy. which seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets.

Conclusion

The proposal fall within NPPF paragraph 154(c) and, for the reasons set out in the report, would preserve openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and is therefore not inappropriate development. The development would be acceptable in appearance and highways and access matters are acceptable with no objection from the Local Highways Authority. Suitably conditioned, there would be no detrimental impacts on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Subject to the condition set out in the report, the development complies with the NPPF and :Local Planning Policies.

Recommendation

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) Fixed plant and machinery associated with the development shall be designed to a level that is at least 5dB(A) below the existing L_{A90} background noise level as measured during the relevant time period. Any tonal, impulsive and/or irregular noise would be addressed by imposing a penalty as per the methodology set out in BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound. Noise limits for fixed plant are to apply at a position 1 metre from the closest affected window of the nearest noise sensitive property.

Reason: To safeguard local residents from noise and disturbance, and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), Policy CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy, adopted January 2016 and Saved Policy ENV2 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
29/01/2026	-	-	LOCATION PLAN
13/01/2026	25.045-003	A	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
13/01/2026	25.045-101	A	EXISTING AND PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATIONS
13/01/2026	25.045-102	A	EXISTING AND PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATIONS
13/01/2026	25.045-103	A	EXISTING AND PROPOSED REAR ELEVATIONS
13/01/2026	25.045-104	A	EXISTING AND PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATIONS
13/01/2026	25.045-202	A	PROPOSED DETAILS 02
25/11/2025	-	-	FUJITSU AIRSTAGE AIR CONDITIONING (A0EG24KMTA) SPECIFICATION
25/11/2025	25.045-201	-	PROPOSED DETAILS 01

Signed Case Officer¹:

M Wishart

Signed Authorising Officer²:

Jo Sheridan

Date:

29/01/2026

¹ I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

² I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

Informatives

NOTE FOR APPLICANT: The applicant's attention is drawn to the following comments:

- 1 The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Mining Remediation Authority on 0345 762 6846 or if a hazard is encountered on site call the emergency line 0800 288 4242.

Further information is also available on the Mining Remediation Authority website at:
Mining Remediation Authority - GOV.UK

Standing Advice valid from 1st January 2025 until 31st December 2026

- 2 **Damage to the Highway**
The applicant is reminded that it is an offence to allow materials carried from the site to be deposited on, or cause damage to, the highway as a result of dirty wheels, plant, or poorly loaded vehicles. The Council may recover costs or take enforcement action under Sections 131, 148 and 149 of the Highways Act 1980.