

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V2728/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	6.1.2014
PARISH	BOURTON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Simon Howell Elaine Ware
APPLICANT	Guy's and St Thomas' Charity
SITE	Manor Farm Bourton Swindon, SN6 8HU
PROPOSAL	Conversion of traditional building to 2 dwellings. Development of a pair of semi detached properties. Removal of redundant farm buildings. (as amplified by Structural Survey and agents letter and amended by plans received 27 February 2014.)(as amplified by additional Newt Assessment received 23 April 2014.)
AMENDMENTS	Yes
GRID REFERENCE	422713/187283
OFFICER	Miss S Green

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site is located in Bourton, a small settlement to the west of Shrivenham. There is the main centre of the village and then a small ribbon of development which leads to a cluster of housing known as Lower Bourton. The site is located in Lower Bourton. A location plan is **attached** at appendix 1. The site consists of agricultural barns and buildings next to a row of houses. Along the frontage there is a traditional stone barn, with more typical modern agricultural barns located towards the rear of the site.
- 1.2 The site is at the end of the row of houses and as such is surrounded by open countryside. To the north of the site is the main great western railway line and A420, from which the site would be visible from.
- 1.3 The application is referred to committee due to an objection from the parish council.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the removal of all the modern agricultural buildings, except one to the very rear of the site. The traditional barn is proposed to be converted into two four-bedroom dwellings. Two new three bedroom semi-detached dwellings would be built between this barn and the adjoining houses where a dutch barn currently stands. The retained barn would remain in agricultural use. Copies of the plans showing the existing barns and the proposals are **attached** at appendix 2.
- 2.2 The design and access statement sets out that Manor Farm is part of a larger agricultural holding, acting as a secondary base for the operations of Lower Marsh Farm. The farming activity that takes place at Manor Farm has largely been relocated to the main Lower Marsh Farm site to the south of Bourton. This is part of the wider strategy from the applicant to consolidate its farming assets to enable more efficient viable enterprises.
- 2.3 The scheme has been amended following feedback from officers with regard to the design of the houses and the changes proposed to the barn. The application is

accompanied by a structural survey of the barn to be converted and the relevant ecological surveys. Further information has also been submitted with regard to environmental health's comments on odour and the potential impact of the agricultural use of the retained barn. A great crested newt working method statement has also been subsequently submitted following concerns raised by third parties. The full application can be viewed on the council's website at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| County Public Rights of Way Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not appear to directly affect any recorded Public Rights of Way. |
| Thames Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With regards to sewerage and water infrastructure capacity would have no objection• In response to comments from parish and locals – development would have negligible impact upon the water supply infrastructure as the size of the development is relatively small. Adds next to nothing in terms of waste flows. No evidence of incapacity in area that this site would make worse. |
| County Archaeologist | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No archaeological constraints to scheme |
| Forestry Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No strong views• Several adjacent to the site but none that will be affected by proposals. |
| Landscape Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No objection as visual improvement. Need sensitive design of boundaries with regard to the rural edge. Will require carefully detailing. |
| Drainage Engineer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No objection subject to condition |
| Architects Panel | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Original plans – barn conversion: review details roof material and treatment of gable ends. New buildings: review details, looks suburban out of keeping with rural setting. |
| Highways Liaison Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In highway safety terms raises no significant concerns. Existing access points already provide sufficient visibility considering low speeds observed on this lane. Existing vehicular cross overs may need upgrading to an appropriate standard.• Suggest conditions |
| Conservation Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Original plans: Demolition of dutch barn will enhance the site. Proposed conversion can be achieved sympathetically. Long range of rooflights on road elevation should be totally removed to retain low key rustic form. No objection to rear rooflights. Support application subject to details• Amended plans: No further observations |
| Environmental Health Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Original plans: Two concerns: close proximity of sewage treatment facility and odour concerns. Barn adjacent to be |

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- retained in agricultural use. Would need to know types of proposed future use and if there would be any odourous or noisy activities
- Additional information: satisfied that areas of concern have been investigated and so not appear to be significant. Satisfied they will not cause any issues with new residents of proposed development.
- Environmental Health - Contamination
- Potential range of contaminants from agricultural land. Suggest standard contaminated land condition
- Building Control (verbally)
- Have visited site and reviewed structural survey
 - Barn is capable of conversion
- Countryside Officer
- No evidence of bats or barn owls was found from within existing agricultural buildings. Evidence of nesting swallows was found in the stone barn and therefore recommended in mitigation 2 artificial swallow nesting platforms are erected in retained agricultural building.
 - In response to the Great Crested Newt working method statement – satisfied with statement. Suggest condition to be added.
- Bourton Parish Council
- Objection
 - Not a sustainable location. Very few facilities within village. Likely any occupiers will be largely reliant on the use of the private car. Not advisable to walk to Shrivenham as no footpath exists between villages
 - IHSP policy was a flawed policy the parish did not support
 - Dwellings cannot be described as small and is not within existing built up area.
 - Nothing to stop coming back in for detached dwelling to rear and negating affordable housing provision.
 - Applicants impression this is a redundant site and out of use is misleading
 - Dwellings would need legal access over the Bridleway.
 - Prevailing winds from sewage plant will not be helpful
 - Water and sewerage system in village is at capacity. Water pressure is frequently unacceptably low. Site is subject to flooding
 - Cause substantial harm to character and appearance of Lower Bourton, creating an urban feel, not enhance setting of conservation area
 - Take into consideration the presence of Great Crested Newts
- Neighbour Approve (1) Manor Farm
- Would tidy up area which is unattractive whilst providing accommodation which is much needed. Have lived here for thirty years. Bourton Grange have converted assorted buildings into letting accommodation – is more attractive and no way detrimental in appearance of views. Have seen 2 new builds in our time, one in The Cottage and other Apple Tree. One allowed a local son to return to live in Lower Bourton. Only comment would be nice to have some affordable houses for people

- brought up here to afford to rent or to buy.
- Neighbour Object
(2)
Appletree Cottage
- Development will put strain on existing fragile infrastructure, such as water supply, drainage, increases to water table, electrical supply. Plans do not detail visitor parking. Would not be possible to enter retained barn. Would be through developed site. no mention about what happens to the stables. If allowed will redress rural community to one of semi-rural development having a devastatingly negative impact on the pure rural aspect of the lane which would be permanently lost for future generations.
 - Owners of stables have found great crested newt in the water at the rear of the stables.
- Bourton Grange
- Sewage works right next to development site, continuous flooding from natural spring, low water pressure in the village, area of concern is situated in conservation area, further development would have detrimental effect on village – 100% increase in density, down a bridle path and unadopted road, barns and outbuildings are used for storage of hay, pigs, cattle and sheep. Developers have offered farmer new buildings which proves farmer does need and use buildings. Services are stretched to the limit

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P85/V2356](#) - Approved (18/12/1985)

Temporary siting of a caravan for agricultural worker.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

DC1 - Design

DC13 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off

DC14 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

GS7 - Re-use of vernacular buildings outside settlements

H13 - Development Elsewhere

HE1 - Preservation and Enhancement: Implications for Development

L10 - Safeguarding and Improving Public Rights of Way

The National Planning Policy Framework, published in 2012, has replaced all previous PPGs and PPSs. Central to the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving proposals that accord with an adopted local plan, or where relevant policies of the adopted local plan are out-of-date, to grant planning permission for sustainable development unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. The National Planning Practise Guidance, published in March this year, supports the NPPF.

The weight to be attached to policies of the adopted local plan vary depending on their individual degree of consistency with the NPPF. As the council does not have a five year housing land supply, the housing supply polices of the adopted local plan generally have little weight. However, of all the housing supply policies, policy H13 has

more weight because it is partially consistent with the NPPF policy on supporting for sustainable development in rural areas.

Also relevant to this application are the Bourton Conservation Area appraisal and the adopted residential design guide SPG

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main planning considerations are the following:

6.2 Principle

Policy GS7 of the adopted local plan supports the conversion of traditional rural buildings as long as they are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major rebuilding and would not adversely affect the character of the area. The council is supportive of the conversion of traditional buildings as they contribute to the local landscape and history of the area. This is balanced against the fact that they are more likely to be located in rural areas away from the most sustainable locations. The NPPF encourages developments that generate significant movements to be located where the need to travel is minimised and use of sustainable transport modes is maximised. However it also supports limited development in rural areas where it will assist the vitality of rural communities. The NPPF at paragraph 55 is supportive of new housing in rural areas where it involves the re-use of buildings and leads to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

6.3 The traditional barn on the site is considered worthy of retention. A structural survey has been submitted with the application and a building control surveyor has reviewed it and visited the site. In her opinion the building is capable of conversion and so would meet the principle test in policy GS7. Subject to design considerations, discussed below, the conversion of the barn into two dwellings is therefore acceptable in principle.

6.4 Policy H13 supports limited new infill housing in Bourton, specifically one or two small new dwellings within the built up area of the settlement. Effectively granting planning permission for the barn conversion to residential use creates a small 'gap' between the converted barn and Old Manor Farm Cottages to the east, which, in your officers' opinion, would be an infill plot as defined in policy H13. In this regard officers have taken a pragmatic approach towards the application, as the applicant could easily apply to convert the barns separately and then afterwards apply for the new housing. This application is applying for both developments to be undertaken as one comprehensive development which has some advantages in terms of ensuring a coherent landscaping scheme across the entire site for example.

6.5 In the latest village hierarchy assessment, updated in 2014, Bourton is recorded as having a place of worship, a mobile/visiting library, a village hall, a daily bus service and proximity to an employment site. It is recognised that Bourton is not one of the most sustainable locations within the district. A balance has to be struck between allowing very limited development in areas which would help to support rural communities and preventing larger developments that would cause significant harm in terms of transport movements. This development is small and, in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF, involves the re-use of a building that enhances the immediate setting. Consequently officers consider the proposal is acceptable and accords with policy H13 and the aims of the NPPF when taken as a whole.

6.6 Design and scale

The site lies at the end of the row of houses and is surrounded by open countryside. There is some vegetation behind the paddocks to the rear. It is also adjacent to the

village conservation area which adjoins the site's eastern boundary.

- 6.7 The NPPF seeks developments to be of a high quality design and that they should not harm the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas. Policy DC1 seeks developments should not result in harm to the character of the area and policy HE1 seeks that proposal affecting the setting of conservation areas should preserve or enhance the established character or appearance of the area.
- 6.8 The design of the development was reviewed by the council's conservation officer and also the council's architects' panel. The plans have been amended to reflect their comments. The original design for the new dwellings did not relate to their location and had little reflection of the existing houses they would be seen in context with. They have been amended to have lower eaves lines and to include dormers within steeper roof pitches. Details such as the chimney have been added. It is considered that the amended elevations are a much better reflection of the adjacent houses. The range of rooflights proposed along the front of the barn have been removed to retain its simple rural feel. The openings generally follow the existing openings in the barn and the internally the traditional frame will be open and visible. The existing asbestos roof would be replaced with plain tiles..
- 6.9 The removal of the dutch barn and the sympathetic conversion of the traditional barn is supported by the conservation officer and will in her opinion enhance the site. The ridge lines of the development decrease down from the existing houses, with the new houses lower than the existing houses and the barn lower again. The new houses are set back slightly more than the existing properties. Overall the set back and step down in ridge heights is considered appropriate at this end site on the edge of the village. It is not considered the proposal will be harmful to any longer range views or the setting of the adjacent conservation area. The boundary treatments will be important and should reflect the rural location. These can be ensured by the suggested landscaping condition. Subject to this, there is also no objection from the landscape officer.
- 6.10 Overall the proposal is considered to accord with policies DC1, DC6 and HE1 of the local plan, and the NPPF.
- 6.11 Impact upon amenity
The new dwellings would be over 14m from the existing properties of Old Manor Farm Cottages to the east. This is considered enough separation distance for the development to not feel overbearing upon this neighbour. The dwellings do have a secondary bedroom window in the side of the rear gable. This would be around 13m from the neighbour's boundary and would not look directly into the rear elevation due to the angle of the dwellings in relation to each other. Similarly the opposite identical window on the other side would be around 12m away from the boundary with the converted barn and is offset with the side glazing. Any mutual overlooking that may arise likely would not be detrimental to the amenity of the future occupiers of the development.
- 6.12 The environmental health officer raised an initial concern with regard to potential odour from the sewage treatments works to the west and potential odour and noise from the retained agricultural barn to the rear of the site. However given the distance to the sewage works (approximately 140m), evidence of no experienced problems from existing residents, and the fact that the agricultural barn will be used predominantly for the tipping and storage of grain and will generate very few movements to the site, environmental health officers are now satisfied that there will be no harm to the amenity of the future occupiers.

- 6.13 The development therefore accords with policy DC9.
- 6.14 Access and parking
The county highway officer has reviewed the proposals. He comments that the lane serves relatively few dwellings and a farm. The existing access points already provide sufficient visibility considering the low speeds he observed on the lane. The vehicular crossovers may need upgrading to an appropriate standard with the unused sections being re-instated with grass verge. The appropriate level of car parking for the development is being provided. A condition is suggested to ensure that the car ports are retained for parking and not adapted to other purposes. The scheme therefore does not raise any highway safety issues. Details of the materials for the boundary adjacent to the road and access can be ensured as part of the landscaping condition.
- 6.15 The proposals have been reviewed by the county rights of way officer. He states that a public bridleway way No 7 runs from the site boundary line westerly past the sewage treatment works finishing at Acorn Bridge. It will not be directly affected by the development however any parking of lorries or vehicles along the track to the east (north of the application site) could obstruct access to the bridle way. He advises that informatives are added to the permission to advise the applicant that no materials or structures should be deposited on the path and that any damage to the surface caused by the construction traffic will be the responsibility of the applicants or their contractors to put right.
- 6.16 Ecology
The application was submitted with a bat and barn owl survey report which have been reviewed by the countryside officer. No evidence of either species were found from within the existing agricultural buildings. Evidence of nesting swallows was found in the stone barn and therefore he recommends that in mitigation two artificial swallow nesting platforms are erected in the retained agricultural building to the rear of the site. A condition is suggested to ensure this.
- 6.17 During the application, officers were made aware that a great crested newt, a protected species, was found to the rear of the stables. The majority of the habitats on the site are hardstanding or subject to heavy disturbance and are likely to be unsuitable for the species. There are some areas where they could shelter but there are no breeding habitats on the site. The countryside officer did visit the site when he made his comments. Nevertheless the agents have submitted a Great Crested Newt Working Method Statement which sets out how any potential harm that may rise to newts which cross the site will be avoided during the construction phase. The countryside officer is satisfied with the submitted statement and its implementation can be ensured by the suggested condition.
- 6.18 Other issues
The standard contaminated land condition is suggested due to the agricultural use of the site. There is potential for a range of contaminants to be present on the site. It is therefore reasonable and necessary for the condition to ensure any such issues are identified and addressed adequately to ensure the safety of the proposed development.
- 6.19 Concerns have been raised that there are issues with the water pressure and sewage capacity in the area. Thames Water have been consulted and these queries were put to them specifically. In their response they state that they assess the impact of a development upon local infrastructure by taking onto consideration the size of the development and calculate consumption figures based on this. This development would have negligible impact upon the water supply infrastructure. In terms of waste

they state 'the site is relatively small and adds next to nothing in terms of waste flows (0.18l/s). Have seen no evidence of 'sewage flooding', the last report of an issue was in Feb 2013 as it was a blockage. No evidence of incapacity in the area that this site would make worse. The council's drainage officer also raises no objection to the scheme and suggest a sustainable drainage scheme for the site is submitted and implemented. This is ensured by the suggested condition.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The conversion of the barn is considered acceptable and would retain its traditional character in accordance with policy GS7. The two new houses would constitute an infill plot between the converted barn and the existing houses, and therefore would accord with policy H13 and the aims of the NPPF as a whole. Overall the design of the development is considered acceptable and, subject to the conditions, it would not have an adverse impact upon the wider landscape or setting of the adjacent conservation area.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions;

- 1) Commencement of development – 3 years**
- 2) List of approved plans**
- 3) Materials for stone walls of barn to match existing**
- 4) Samples of materials for barn roof and new houses to be submitted for approval**
- 5) Details of artificial swallow nesting boxes to be submitted**
- 6) Works to carried out in accordance with great crested newt working statement**
- 7) Access and parking to be in accordance with plan**
- 8) Car ports to be retained for parking**
- 9) Details of landscaping scheme to be submitted**
- 10) Landscaping scheme to be implemented**
- 11) Details of Sustainable drainage scheme to be submitted**
- 12) Contaminated land condition**

Author: Sarah Green
Contact No: 01491 823273
Email: Sarah.Green@southandvale.gov.uk