

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P14/V2894/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	24.12.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	LETCOMBE BASSETT
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	St John Dickson
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mrs Davenport
<b>SITE</b>	Court Farm House, Letcombe Bassett, Wantage, OX12 9LR
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Erection of a new single storey energy efficient dwelling (as amended by drawing nos.299-P-203 P2, 299-P-204 P2, 299-P-002 P2, 299-P-102 P2, 299-P-103 P2, 299-P-201 P2, 299-P-202 P2 Received 23 March 2015).
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	437268/185021
<b>OFFICER</b>	Melanie Potter

---

## SUMMARY

The application seeks planning permission for a new single storey dwelling to the south of Court Farmhouse which is a grade II listed building. There is also a grade II listed barn within the site which will become ancillary to the proposed new house.

The application is referred back to committee having been deferred at the committee meeting on 4 March 2015 to clarify comments made by the conservation officer and to negotiate with the applicant regarding the subdivision of the plot.

The main factors to consider are the impact of the proposal on the character of the area, conservation area and AONB, and the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed buildings.

The proposal has been amended since the previous committee meeting in the following ways:

- The proposed new dwelling has been moved slightly further to the south so that the listed Farmhouse has a larger garden/curtilage
- The dividing wall between the plot of the listed Farmhouse and that of the new dwelling has been amended so that the wall of the new house forms part of the boundary and the dividing wall extends from the western corner of new dwelling. It is now a curved wall, providing a softer appearance.
- The planted screen between the listed barn and the listed Farmhouse has been extended to provide more privacy between the two buildings.

It is considered that the amendments have addressed the conservation officer's concerns and therefore the application is now recommended for approval.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Court Farmhouse is a grade II listed building on the southern side of the main road running through Letcombe Bassett. To the south west of the main farmhouse is a grade II listed barn which has been converted to ancillary accommodation.

1.2 The site is within the Letcombe Bassett Conservation Area and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A site location plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

2.1 The proposal is to erect a single storey, energy efficient dwelling at the southern end of the plot for the current owner of the farmhouse to live in. The plot will be sub-divided so that the converted barn becomes ancillary to the new house.

2.2 The proposed new dwelling is contemporary in design and has two bedrooms, lounge, kitchen and dining area, as well as a bathroom and en-suite. It will largely be of a rendered finish with areas of timber cladding and have a flat green roof. It will be constructed to a high level of environmental performance.

2.3 The proposal has been amended to address the conservation officer’s concerns. The amendments are as follows:

- The proposed new dwelling has been moved slightly further to the south so that the listed Farmhouse has a larger garden/curtilage
- The dividing wall between the plot of the listed Farmhouse and that of the new dwelling has been amended so that the wall of the new house forms part of the boundary and the dividing wall extends from the western corner of new dwelling. It is now a curved wall, providing a softer appearance.
- The planted screen between the listed barn and the listed Farmhouse has been extended to provide more privacy between the two buildings.

2.4 The existing access to the north of the site will be retained and extended behind the barn along the western edge of the site. Two parking spaces and a turning area on adjacent land will be provided (in addition to the existing parking area which will be retained for the existing farmhouse). The application plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

2.5 Minor alterations to the listed barn are also proposed which are the subject of a separate but related application for listed building consent (P14/V2895/LB).

**3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

Letcombe Bassett Parish Meeting	<p>Fully support.</p> <p>Letcombe Bassett has a parish meeting rather than a parish council which is to say that there are no elected parish councillors, just a chairman who gathers comments/votes from the residents of the village. The Chairman wrote to all the villagers about this case (approximately 60 households) and received 17 responses. 15 were in support and 2 against.</p> <p>In summary, the parish meeting support the proposal because they consider that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “the proposal will not present a material detriment to the village”</li> <li>• “would not detract from the setting of Court Farmhouse”</li> <li>• “could not be said to present a materially adverse affect on the looser development pattern of this area of the village”.</li> </ul>
---------------------------------	---

Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 22 April 2015

	<p>They comment that there is precedent in the village for this type of development at Holborn Farmhouse where the detached barn was sold into separate ownership from the listed farmhouse. With regard to access arrangements, they request that the access improvements be carried out in relation to the new dwelling at High Bank.</p> <p>Those that objected to the proposal raised concern that permitting this development may undermine the protection against future development within the village, and noted that the parking arrangement necessitates acquisition of a small area of land from the applicant's neighbour.</p> <p>A further letter of support was received from the Parish Meeting following the second consultation on the amendments.</p> <p>The parish meeting's full comments are <b><u>attached</u></b> at appendix 3.</p>
Conservation Officer	<p>The Conservation Officer objected to the original proposal for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adverse impact on the settings of the grade II listed farmhouse and grade II listed barn by the subdivision of the long, narrow historic plot and severance of their historic function and association. This affects their architectural, historical and associative significance</li> <li>• The proposed dividing wall and close proximity of a single storey dwelling with a sizeable footprint do not make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, counter to NPPF paragraphs 126 and 131</li> <li>• The proposal for a new dwelling and wall dividing a historic plot containing a farmhouse with its linked barn, fails to enhance or better reveal the significance of the two grade II heritage assets and their settings within the conservation area. The character/appearance of the conservation area is neither preserved nor enhanced.</li> </ul> <p>In order to address these concerns, the applicant met with the conservation officer and planning officer on 12 March 2015. Based on discussions held at this meeting, the amendments outlined above were made. The conservation officer's final comments on these amendments will be provided in the addendum report and presented at the committee meeting on 22 April 2015.</p>
Highways Authority	<p>No objection subject to condition.</p> <p>Recommends conditions relating to the parking and turning area.</p>
Drainage Engineer	<p>No objection subject to condition.</p> <p>The initial Holding objection has been removed following the submission of a foul drainage assessment form FDA1, subject to a condition requiring full details being submitted and approved.</p>
Thames Water	<p>No objection.</p>

	Recommend an informative is added to any planning permission granted relating to water pressure.
Countryside Officer	No objection.  The proposal does not affect any recorded Public Rights of Way.
County Archaeologist	No objection.  Initially a watching brief was recommended. However, following a reassessment of the site, the County Archaeologist has confirmed that there are no archaeological constraints to the site.
8 Neighbour comments	There have been 8 neighbour responses, which can be summarised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 neighbours support the application because the proposed house is an unusual/sympathetic design which is unobtrusive. There is already precedent in the village for subdividing barns from farm houses.</li> <li>• 1 neighbour objects to the proposal because the design is inappropriate in the context of the AONB, Conservation Area and listed buildings. The subdivision of the barn and farm house is not desirable and it will set a precedent for future development in this area.</li> <li>• 1 neighbour does not object in principle, subject to appropriate materials, suitable access arrangements and the density of development does not undermine the setting of the church.</li> </ul>

#### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

##### 4.1 [P14/V1845/PEM](#) – Pre-application advice (07/10/2014)

New single storey home built within the garden of the existing property. \*SITE MEETING\*

[P14/V1379/HH](#) - Approved (01/08/2014)

Installation of woodburner and flue in the barn.

[P14/V1226/LB](#) - Approved (01/08/2014)

Installation of woodburner and flue in the barn.

[P13/V2539/PEO](#) – Pre-application advice (18/12/2013)

Woodburning stove and chimney to be installed in listed barn. \*SITE MEETING\*

[P04/V0543](#) - Approved (18/05/2004)

Conversion of barn to accommodation ancillary to dwelling. External pool and patio.

[P04/V0435](#) - Approved (27/04/2004)

Erection of a garden shed and summer house.

[P03/V1124](#) - Approved (21/08/2003)

Alterations to dwelling, workshop and outbuildings. Erection of garage block.

[P03/V0641/LB](#) - Approved (03/06/2003)

Renewal of section of floor boards and section of roof timbers. Installation of solar tube in thatch.

[P03/V0416/LB](#) - Approved (22/04/2003)

Replacement of existing first floor window (north elevation).

[P02/V1805/LB](#) - Approved (11/02/2003)

Kitchen extension to replace existing lean-to. Replacement staircase, internal alterations, and two new windows.

[P82/V0843](#) - Approved (09/03/1983)

Conversion of part of existing barn to form 'Granny Annex', for ancillary use to main residence.

## 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

### 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

Paragraphs 126 – 141 deal with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

### 5.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), 2014

### 5.3 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements

H12 - Development in the Smaller Villages

HE1 - Preservation and Enhancement: Implications for Development

HE4 - Development within setting of listed building

NE6 - The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

### 5.4 Draft Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031, Part 1 Core Policies:

1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

3 – Settlement Hierarchy

37 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

39 – The Historic Environment

40 – Sustainable Design and Constuction

42 – Flood Risk

44 – Landscape

The draft Local Plan Part 1 is not currently adopted policy and this emerging policy and its supporting text has limited weight as per paragraph 216 of the NPPF. Greater regard therefore is to be given to the NPPF in line with paragraph 14 and where relevant, the saved policies (listed above) within the existing Local Plan.

### 5.5 Design Guide (2015) Principles:

DG44 - Parking

DG51 – Scale  
DG52 – Form and massing  
DG55 – Boundary treatments  
DG57 – Roofscape  
DG62 – Materials  
DG63 – Amenity  
DG64 – Privacy  
DG76 – Landscape character and setting  
DG77 – Landscape  
DG79 – Scale, form and massing  
DG81 – Boundary treatments  
DG82 – Parking  
DG84 – Green roofs

## 6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Principle of Development

- 6.1 The general locational strategy of both the adopted Local Plan 2011 (policy GS1) and the emerging Local Plan 2031 is to concentrate development within the five main settlements and allow small scale development within the built up areas of villages, provided important areas of open land and their rural character are protected. In terms of a hierarchy for allocating development this strategy is consistent with the NPPF, as is the intention to protect the character of villages.
- 6.2 Letcombe Bassett is classified as smaller village and as such, policy H12 of the adopted Local Plan would apply. This permits new housing development of up to 4 small dwellings within the built up area of the village, provided it would not harm the form, structure or character of the settlement.
- 6.3 However, both the adopted and emerging local plan hold very limited material planning weight in light of the lack of a five year housing supply. Consequently the proposed works should therefore be assessed under the NPPF where there is a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is seen as the golden thread running through the decision making process. Having a deliverable five year housing supply is considered sustainable under the three strands. Therefore, with the lack of a five year housing supply, the proposed works are acceptable in principle unless any adverse impacts can be identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of meeting this objective.

### Sustainable Development

#### *Background*

- 6.4 Consideration must be given as to whether this proposal accords with the definition of sustainable development, which comprises three strands being social, economic and environmental. The NPPF makes it clear that these are mutually dependent and gains should be sought in all three areas simultaneously.

#### *Social and Economic*

- 6.5 The site is located within one of the district's smaller villages with a limited range of services and facilities, including a church, mobile library and bus service to Wantage. Although this would not be a sustainable location for large housing developments, the

addition of only one dwelling is considered to be consistent with the size of the settlement and would not cause significant or demonstrable harm.

*Environmental role*

- 6.6 The proposed dwelling would be built to a high environmental performance through the use of high performance glazing, airtight construction and high levels of insulation. However, it could have an adverse impact on the sensitive landscape and therefore a balanced judgement must be made as to whether or not the proposal is sustainable development in environmental terms.

Impact on the character of the area

- 6.7 It could be argued that this site is outside the built up area of the village and the erection of a new dwelling in this location would detract from the loose knit character where the settlement gradually merges into the countryside. Concern has been raised by one local resident that this could set a precedent for further development in this area.
- 6.8 However, this particular dwelling has been designed to be a relatively low building with a green roof. Given the change in land levels it will also be built partly into the existing slope as shown on drawings 299-P-201-P1, 299-P-203-P2 and 299-P-204-P2. Furthermore it sits quite comfortably within the plot which is already quite well defined and partly screened by existing vegetation.
- 6.9 The proposed materials are a combination of render and timber, with large glazed windows on the west and southern elevations, and a green roof. These are considered to be appropriate in this rural location but given the sensitive siting of the proposed dwelling within the conservation area and AONB and adjacent to listed buildings, it is considered reasonable to request samples of materials to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing.
- 6.10 Furthermore, to preserve the open, unspoilt nature of the site, it is considered reasonable to impose a condition restricting permitted development rights. This gives the local planning authority control over the construction of extensions and outbuildings.
- 6.11 Based on the reasons outlined above, and subject to suitably worded conditions, it is not considered that this application could be refused because of its impact on the character of the area, character of the conservation area or impact on the AONB.

Impact on the setting of the listed buildings

- 6.12 Policy HE4 of the local plan seeks to ensure that development does not harm the setting of listed buildings. As outlined above, the conservation officer has raised concern over the subdivision of the plot, the severance of the listed farmhouse from the listed barn, and the position of a new dwelling with a sizeable footprint in close proximity to the listed buildings.
- 6.13 Following the previous planning committee, a meeting was arranged with the applicant, conservation officer and planning officer, with the aim of overcoming the conservation officer's concerns. A positive way forward was agreed. This involved making amendments to the scheme to move the proposed dwelling further from the listed farmhouse and to amend the proposed dividing wall, all to increase the relative size of the plot of the listed farmhouse to safeguard its setting.

- 6.14 Discussions also took place regarding the relationship of the listed farmhouse and the listed barn. The conservation officer was concerned that, through the proposed splitting the ownership of the barn from the farmhouse, the historic association of the buildings would become diluted over time through changes introduced by different owners. For now the applicant proposes an informal treatment of posts with planting to define the plot boundary between them, to which the conservation officer does not object.
- 6.15 Although the historic association of the farmhouse and barn is an important aspect of the appreciation of the heritage assets, officers consider that the potential future changes that may occur through different ownerships is not a sufficient reason in itself to amount to significant and demonstrable harm. In any event, normal permitted development rights for erecting a fence, wall or other means of enclosure do not apply within the curtilage of a listed building. Consequently planning permission will be required if any such structure is proposed to divide the farmhouse and barn in the future. This gives to the local planning authority the control to prevent an unsympathetic fence or wall.
- 6.16 Following the amendments, the proposal is not considered to cause substantial harm to the setting of the heritage assets and therefore complies with policy HE4 of the Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

#### Access

- 6.17 The existing access to the north of the site will be retained and extended behind the barn along the western edge of the site. Given the characteristics of the carriageway, vehicular traffic and speeds are likely to be low and the proposal is unlikely to result in any significant intensification of transport activity at the property.
- 6.18 Two car parking spaces and a turning area are proposed to the west of the barn so that vehicles can exit the site in a forward gear. According to the design and access statement, the car parking spaces and turning area will be gravel to allow water to drain through to the soil.
- 6.19 In consultation with the highways liaison officer, these proposals are considered to be acceptable, subject to conditions. This is because the proposal is unlikely to have any significant impact on the highway network and as such, complies with policy DC5 of the adopted Local Plan 2011.

#### Drainage

- 6.20 The application is supported by a foul drainage assessment form FDA1. In consultation with the council's drainage engineer, there is no objection to the proposal subject to a detailed drainage scheme for foul and surface water being submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

#### Impact on neighbouring properties

- 6.21 The only neighbouring property to be directly affected by the proposal is Downs View Cottage, to the east of the proposed dwelling. There are no windows proposed in this side elevation and there is existing vegetation that will act as screening. The proposed dwelling is low in height and as such, it is not considered that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the neighbouring property in terms of a loss of privacy or visual intrusion.
- 6.22 The new dwelling is approximately 26m away from Court Farmhouse and the new



masonry wall will protect the privacy of the occupiers of the new dwelling and the existing farm house. There are no windows on the northern elevation of the new dwelling and therefore there are no issues of overlooking the rear garden of the existing Farmhouse.

- 6.23 Given the proposal to separate the barn from the farmhouse, it is important to consider the relationship between these buildings in terms of overlooking. Although there will be potential for some overlooking, it is not considered to be so harmful to warrant refusal of the application on this basis.
- 6.24 This is because the views between the windows will be at an angle, they are at least 10m apart (and generally speaking much further than that), and most importantly the barn is only used for ancillary purposes and not as a permanent separate residence.
- 6.25 Furthermore, it is proposed to block up two of the ground floor windows of the barn and erect a planted screening wall which is 2 – 2.7m in height consisting of timber posts with planting. A condition is recommended to require details of this planted screening wall to be submitted and approved, and implemented prior to occupation of the new dwelling.
- 6.26 Based on the reasons outlined above, it is not considered that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and as such, complies with policy DC9 of the adopted Local Plan 2011.

#### Archaeology

- 6.27 The proposed development lies within the historic core of the settlement. Initially a watching brief was recommended due to the potential for the development to disturb buried deposits. However, following a reassessment of the site, the county archaeologist has confirmed that there are no archaeological constraints to the site.

#### Trees

- 6.28 There is a large beech tree to the south of the existing barn and an apple tree to the north of the proposed dwelling. Both of these trees are to be retained and will not be directly affected by the proposal.

### 7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Due to the sensitive design of the proposed new dwelling, it is not considered to have an adverse impact on the character of the area, AONB or conservation area. Following amendments, the proposal is not considered to cause harm the setting of the listed buildings. The access is considered to be acceptable and the proposal does not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties. As such, the proposal complies with policies DC1, DC5, DC9, HE1, HE4 and NE6 of the adopted Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

### 8.0 RECOMMENDATION

**To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 Time limit.**
- 2 Approved plans.**
- 3 Materials (samples).**
- 4 Slab levels.**
- 5 Drainage details.**
- 6 Boundary details.**

- 7 Access, turning and parking in accordance with plan.
- 8 Permitted development restriction on extensions and outbuildings.

**Author:** Melanie Potter, Planning Officer  
**Contact number:** 01235 540546  
**Email:** melanie.potter@southandvale.gov.uk