

APPLICATION NO.	P15/V0366/FUL & P15/V0224/LB
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION & LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
REGISTERED	18.2.2015
PARISH	LONGCOT
WARD MEMBER(S)	Simon Howell Elaine Ware
APPLICANT	Mr John Castle
SITE	Roadside Farm Barns The Green Longcot, SN7 7SY
PROPOSAL	Proposed conversion of existing Barns to a single dwelling Roadside Farm Barns, The Green, Longcot, SN7 7SY (as amended by plans and Planning Statement addendum submitted on 2 June 2016)
AMENDMENTS	June 2016 – Amended layout including reduction in partitions and roof lights
GRID REFERENCE	427290/190974
OFFICER	Holly Bates

SUMMARY

Planning committee voted to defer this application from the meeting on 3 August 2016, in order to seek removal of the triangular high level window in the northern gable of the barn. This request was made to the agent for the application and in consultation with the applicant, has been declined primarily because it is felt the bedrooms would not achieve a sufficient level of amenity if the window were removed.

Therefore, the proposal presented here is the same as presented on 3 August 2016. An additional cross-section plan to further clarify the position of the window is to be submitted before planning committee and will be updated at the meeting.

Officers remain of the opinion that the window, because the sill height would be more than 1.7metres above finished floor level, would not result in harmful overlooking or loss of privacy and therefore refusal on this basis is not justified or reasonable.

These applications for the conversion of a grade II listed barn into a single dwelling are presented to committee as the parish council object.

The main considerations are:

- The impact of the proposal on the listed building;
- The impact of the proposal on the amenities of neighbouring properties and future residents; and
- Highway safety.

The applications are recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Roadside Farm, now two cottages and known as Roadside Farm Cottages, is a grade II listed building and the attached barn subject to this application is noted as an integral feature of the this building.

- 1.2 Located within the village of Longcot, the barn is situated to the rear of the existing cottages and is accessed via The Green to the south of the site. Neighbouring residential properties surround the site.
- 1.3 The site is not located within a conservation area, national landscape designation or flood zone. The site is washed over by the Lowland Vale, a local landscape designation.
- 1.4 A site location plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The applications seek planning permission and listed building consent to convert the barn into a single, three bed dwelling. Amenity space, waste and recycling storage, and parking would be provided.
- 2.2 Amended plans have been submitted during the course of the application to address concerns raised by the conservation officer relating to the fabric of the listed building.
- 2.3 The application site was subject of a refusal and subsequent dismissed appeal in 2014 for the conversion of the barn into three individual residential units.
- 2.4 The composite application plan is **attached** at Appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Below is a summary of the responses received to both the original plans and the amendments. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

3.2

Longcot Parish Council	<p>Object for the following reasons:</p> <p>Listed Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The barn and the cottages should be seen as one property and not be developed separately; • Heritage assets must be preserved; • Ask that the conservation officer is consulted; • Addendum statement contradicts itself. <p>Parking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very concerned about parking issues for the context of the site as a whole, including converted cottages and new dwellings; • There is no provision for garaging for Roadside Farm Cottages.
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	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage conditions are required as per Longcot flood policy; • A bat conservation plan should be put in place.
Neighbours – Object	<p>Two letters of objection from the same neighbouring property, Yewcote, have been received, raising the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlooking and loss of privacy; • Amendments do not address concerns raised by Longcot Parish Council, which are supported, in relation to heritage and parking.
Conservation Officer – Vale of White Horse	<p>The architect has taken on board comments from Conservation/ Design and in my view the proposals are now supportable subject to the following conditions (conditions listed in section 8.1 of this report).</p>
Local Highway Authority – Oxfordshire County Council	No objections.
Countryside Officer – Vale of White Horse	No objections , subject to informative to have regard to the requirements of legislation regarding wild plants and animals.
Contaminated Land Officer – Vale of White Horse	No objections , subject to condition requiring a phased contaminated land assessment.
Archaeologist – Oxfordshire County Council	There are no archaeological constraints to this application.
Drainage Engineer – Vale of White Horse	No objections , subject to a condition requiring the submission of a sustainable drainage scheme.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P14/V0627/FUL & P14/V0628/LB](#) - Refused (16/05/2014) - Refused on appeal (16/10/2014) Conversion of derelict barns to three residential units.

[P13/V1089/HH & P13/V1006/LB](#) - Approved (10/07/2013)
Proposed first floor rear extension and alterations

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2011**

The development plan for this area comprises the adopted Vale of White Horse local plan 2011. The following local plan policies relevant to this application were ‘saved’ by direction on 1 July 2009.

Policy No.	Policy Title
GS1	Development in Existing Settlements
DC1	Design
DC5	Access
DC6	Landscaping
DC7	Waste Collection and Recycling
DC9	The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
H12	Development in Smaller Villages
HE4	Historic Buildings
HE5	Historic Buildings
HE10	Archaeology
NE9	The Lowland Vale

5.2 **Emerging Local Plan 2031 – Part 1**

This is not currently adopted policy. Whilst the local plan has been through examination the full Inspector’s report has not been received and objections to it remain unresolved. The emerging local plan policies therefore carry limited weight for decision making. The relevant policies would be:-

Policy No	Policy Title
Core Policy 1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core Policy 3	Settlement hierarchy
Core Policy 4	Meeting our housing needs
Core Policy 20	Spatial strategy for Western Vale Sub-Area
Core Policy 37	Design and local distinctiveness
Core Policy 39	The historic environment
Core Policy 42	Flood risk
Core Policy 44	Landscape
Core Policy 46	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- Design Guide – March 2015

5.4 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012**

5.5 **National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (PPG)**

5.6 **Neighbourhood Plan**

There is no neighbourhood plan for Longcot.

5.7 **Environmental Impact**

This proposal does not exceed 150 dwellings and the site area is under 5ha. Consequently the proposal is beneath the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and this proposal is not EIA development and there is no requirement under the

Regulations to provide a screening opinion.

5.8 **Other Relevant Legislation**

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The relevant planning considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- Principle of the development;
- Impact on the listed building;
- Neighbour amenity; and
- Highway safety.

6.2 **Principle of development**

The application would re-use an existing derelict structure and bring back into use a listed building; both of which are principles supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposal would also contribute an additional dwelling to the council's five year supply of housing. The application site is located within a sustainable position within the village, within walking distance of many of the village's services and facilities, including the primary school, church and bus stops.

6.3 As such, the principle of converting the barn and its location within the village are supported by the NPPF and local planning policies.

6.4 Planning permission and listed building consent has previously been refused (and subsequently dismissed at appeal) to convert the barn into three separate dwellings. In her report dismissing the appeal scheme, the Inspector gave a number of reasons. One of which was that no case had been made that the level of development proposed was required in order to secure the conversion of the barn.

6.5 The conversion of the barn in principle was not in itself specified as a problem, but the level of development (three dwellings) and the changes proposed to the barn and its setting in order to facilitate it was not deemed acceptable.

6.6 **Impact on the historic fabric and setting of listed building**

The NPPF places substantial weight on the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets. It requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Local plan policies HE1, HE4 and HE5 seek to preserve and enhance conservation areas and seek development sympathetic to the special historic and architectural interest of listed buildings.

6.7 In her report dismissing the appeals, the Inspector highlighted seven main reasons that the previous proposal was unacceptable in relation to the historic fabric of the barn and the setting of the barn:

- Subdivision into three units would harm the open spatial character of the barn and its attractive internal and external rubble stone walls;
- A new structural roof over the existing roof supported by concrete block walls was not justified and would be essentially modern in execution and character, at

odds with the traditional character of the building;

- Removal of the curved cross braces supporting the two cart bay trusses would harm the structural integrity and historic interest of the two bays;
- A proliferation of unattractive domestic items externally (e.g. multiple gas metres, flues, vents and roof lights) would harm the simple agricultural character of the barn;
- The level of development proposed was unlikely to be satisfactorily accommodated on the site without significant harm to the open uncluttered setting of the barn;
- Provision of a dwarf wall and ramped access to the proposed dwellings (units 1 and 2);
- The application was not accompanied by any supporting information describing the significance of the heritage asset, as required by the NPPF.

6.8 This current proposal is to convert the barn into one dwelling only. This is a significant reduction in the intensity of residential development which overcomes the Inspector's concerns for the following reasons:

- A single dwelling enables the retention of the open character of the barn by reducing the amount of sub-division required. The amended plans submitted during the consideration of the application maximise the open plan nature of the ground floor, utilise existing walls and minimise the insertion of new features that would partition the space;
- The first floor is confined to the northern most end of the barn, enabling a void to be left above the hallway and kitchen area, opening this area up further;
- The amended plans have also sought to reduce the number of partitions at first floor level by reducing the number of bedrooms and decreasing the size of the upper floor area;
- The application does not propose the insertion of a new structural roof as previously. The existing barn roof will be retained in-situ, and repaired like-for-like. New insulation and a replacement slate tile roof finish are the only alterations now proposed for the roof;
- In response to the parish council's query about contradiction in the submitted documentation, the proposed works to the roof are explained and this is followed by a contingency strategy as to what would occur if any elements of the roof required repairs. This can often occur in re-developing listed buildings, and the conservation officer has also recommended a condition requiring like-for-like repairs where these are necessary;
- The number of roof lights has been substantially reduced; only two are now proposed on each of the east and west elevation roof slopes (four in total). This allows for a more simple and uncluttered roof form;
- The reduction in the number of dwellings proposed from three to one also reduces the amount of external domestic items allowing a more uncluttered setting;

- The dwarf wall and ramped access does not form part of this proposal and is conditioned to be removed (work has already been carried out);
- A design access and heritage statement (and addendum) that describes the significance of the heritage asset has been submitted with this application.

6.9 The conservation officer has carefully reviewed all of the submitted information and after requesting amended plans to address her outstanding concerns, is able to support the proposals subject to conditions which are included in section 8 of this report.

6.10 Officers are of the opinion that this amended proposal has addressed all of the reasons for refusal and dismissal of the previous applications in relation to the impact on the historic fabric of the listed building and the setting of the listed building. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with local plan policies HE1, HE4, HE5 and DC1 of the adopted local plan 2011, Core Policies 37 and 39 of the emerging local plan 2031, the NPPF and PPG.

6.11 **Neighbour Amenity**

The NPPF requires (paragraph 17) that development should always seek a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land. Local plan policy DC9 also seeks to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, dominance and loss of light amongst other considerations.

6.12 In dismissing the previous appeals the Inspector highlighted the following concerns with the proposal:

- The living conditions of the future occupiers of the proposed dwellings and the existing cottage unit 2 would be harmed both in terms of good quality external amenity space and the loss of privacy and disturbance.

6.13 The amended application has addressed this point by:

- The reduction in the number of dwellings proposed from three to one enables a larger area of amenity space to be provided and a reduction in conflict between windows, doors and garden areas used by different households;
- The proposed new dwelling would have access to both a private area of amenity space to the north of the building and to the existing communal amenity area to the west shared by 1 and 2 Roadside Cottages;
- The agent for the application has confirmed that this western area is a communal amenity space. Existing overlooking of this shared space already occurs from the rear facing windows and doors to 1 and 2 Roadside Cottages. This means that the additional windows inserted into the west elevation of the newly convert barn would not result in a substantial difference to the existing situation. This is similar to other communally shared areas found with many flats and apartments. Therefore officers are of the opinion that refusal on overlooking grounds could not be justified.
- The proposed dwelling would have its own area of private amenity space, providing an area large enough to meet the needs of the single three bed dwelling and overcoming the Inspector's concern in this regard.

- 6.14 The neighbouring property to the north-west, Yewcote, has raised concerns with regards to overlooking. A site visit has also been carried out to fully appreciate the impact of the proposal. A high level triangular window is proposed to be inserted into the upper gable end of the barn conversion facing north. While this direction does face the rear garden of Yewcote and would be in close proximity, the proposed window would be more than 1.7m above finished floor level which is an acceptable height to ensure no harmful overlooking would occur. In addition, the double doors to be inserted into the north elevation would be at ground floor level, not resulting in any overlooking of neighbouring properties.
- 6.15 Officers are of the opinion that this amended proposal has addressed all of the reasons for refusal and dismissal of the previous applications in terms of amenity. Given that the western amenity area is a communal space, officers do not consider that refusal of the proposal for one additional dwelling would be justified.
- 6.16 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with local plan policy DC9 of the adopted local plan 2011, the NPPF and PPG.
- 6.17 **Highway safety**
Adopted local plan policy DC5 requires safe access for developments and that the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development safely. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states: "Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe."
- 6.18 The Inspector, in dismissing the previous appeals, accepted that there would be sufficient space for parking for all of the three proposed properties and therefore could not conclude that the development would harm the safety of highway users. Her concern was with the setting of the listed building.
- 6.19 This proposal also would provide sufficient space for parking for the proposed dwelling. Two parking bays with sufficient room to manoeuvre would be provided and the county council highways liaison officer has confirmed that he has no objections to the proposal.
- 6.20 The reduction in the required number of spaces and their location at the northern end of the site away from the direct setting of the barn also addresses the inspector's concern regarding the setting of the building.
- 6.21 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with local plan policy DC5 of the adopted local plan 2011, the NPPF and PPG.
- 6.22 **Other matters**
The site is not located within a flood zone and the council's drainage engineer has raised no objections to the principle of converting the barn to residential use, subject to detailed proposals for the surface and foul water drainage of the site to be submitted by condition.
- 6.23 All other technical matters can be addressed by way of planning conditions and informatives, including contaminated land and ecology.
- 7.0 **CONCLUSION**
- 7.1 Significant weight is placed on the preservation of the listed barn and its setting by way of the proposed conversion which retains the majority of the fabric of the building, its open spatial character and uncluttered setting. Officers are of the opinion that the newly

created dwelling would have sufficient amenity space and the development would not harm the amenities of any of the neighbouring properties. Parking and access arrangements are safe and convenient for the dwelling.

7.2 Overall the development is considered to amount to sustainable development and crucially is considered to overcome the inspector's reasons for dismissing the previous appeals.

7.3 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is not engaged as the building is grade II listed. However the proposal does not conflict with any specific policies in the NPPF which indicate that development should be restricted, as officers consider that the proposal is sympathetic to the special historic interest of the building and its setting.

7.4 Consequently, the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions identified in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 below.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 **P15/V0366/FUL**

That planning permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:

- 1 : Commencement of development within three years**
- 2 : Approved plans list**
- 3 : Roof materials in accordance with sample submitted (natural slate)**
- 4 : Phased contaminated land assessment to be submitted**
- 5 : Sustainable foul and surface water drainage details to be submitted**
- 6 : Access, parking and turning in accordance with the approved plan**
- 7 : Roof lights to the west elevation to be more than 1.7m above floor level**
- 8 : Removal of PD rights for any extensions or external alterations.**

Informative regarding compicance with ecology legislation

8.2 **P15/V0224/LB**

That listed building consent is granted, subject to the following conditions:

- 1 : Commencement of development within three years**
- 2 : Approved plans list**
- 3 : Roof materials in accordance with sample submitted (natural slate)**
- 4 : Window and door joinery details to be submitted**
- 5 : Lime mortar pointing sample panel to be provided and photo sent**
- 6 : Details of the freestanding interior structure to be submitted**
- 7 : Details of the bin store to be submitted**
- 8 : Any renewal of timbers must be carried out like-for-like (materials and construction)**
- 9 : Confirmation of existing paint to be removed from the quoins windows and doors**
- 10 : Confirmation of removal of concrete walls within the barn**
- 11 : Confirmation of removal of low brick walls and ramped access to barn**

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