

APPLICATION NO.	P12/V2021/FUL and P12/V2049/LB
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	16 January 2013
PARISH	WATCHFIELD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Simon Howell Elaine Ware
APPLICANT	Mr David Ridgway
SITE	41 High Street Watchfield, SN6 8SZ
PROPOSAL	Conversion of existing barn into two bedroom residential property
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	424513/190238
OFFICER	Laura Hudson

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These applications relate to 41 High Street, Watchfield which is a grade II listed building within the centre of Watchfield village. The existing property is a large stone built dwelling fronting the High Street with parking and garden to the rear. The property once stood in much larger grounds, however the curtilage has been subdivided in recent years and two new dwellings built to the rear.
- 1.2 There is an existing curtilage listed barn to the north-west of the main house which is stone built with a corrugated roof. The barn and associated area of garden is currently separated from the main house by an unauthorised close boarded fence.
- 1.3 The site is currently served by a separate access to the main house after a new access to the south of the main house was constructed to serve the relocated garage.
- 1.4 The applications come to committee as Watchfield Parish Council objects.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The applications seek planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion of the curtilage listed barn to a single dwelling. The proposed single storey dwelling would contain two bedrooms, a kitchen/living area and a bathroom.
- 2.2 The proposed dwelling would be served by the existing site access and includes parking for at least two cars and turning within the site.
- 2.3 The application proposes to infill the existing open front of the barn with timber boarding and glazing to create windows to the bedrooms and French doors to the living area. The proposed bathroom window would utilise an existing door opening. No additional openings are proposed in the building.
- 2.4 Extracts from the applications drawings are **attached** at appendix 1.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Watchfield Parish Council – Object. Concerns over the status of the site access, impact on the setting of the listed building, over-development of the site, and the installation of an unauthorised fence. Their full comments are **attached** at appendix 2.

- 3.2 County Highways – “The application proposes the conversion of a barn into a two bedroom dwelling accessed via an existing entrance from the High Street. Closure of this access was conditioned as part of a previous approval for the existing property. It is acknowledged that this condition has never been met, but this consultation must focus on the merits of the current proposal. I have no concerns regarding the use of the access for the converted barn. Visibility is good and width is suitable for a single dwelling. An appropriate parking and turning area is also proposed. Given the above comments I have no objections subject to conditions.”
- 3.3 Conservation Officer – No objections subject to as much of the existing structure being retained as possible. Conditions recommended requiring details. Concern over the close boarded fence which detracts from the setting of both listed buildings.
- 3.4 Countryside Officer – The existing building is unsuitable for use by bats and there is no evidence of use by any other protected species. No objections.
- 3.5 One letter of objection has been received from a local resident raising concern that a previous planning condition has not been complied with requiring the access to be closed, the reduction in garden for the existing house would have a harmful impact on the character of the area, the setting of the listed building would be harmed, the erection of a fence between the two properties is unauthorised, and the building does not seem large enough to accommodate a two bedroom dwelling.
- 3.6 One letter of comment has been received from a neighbour stating that providing there is no change permitted to the height or width of the existing building, and the current plan seems to show that, then there is no reason to object to the current proposal.
- 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 4.1 [P11/V2513/LB](#) - Approved (08/12/2011)
Amendment to consent 10/01246/LBC to amend location of garage (works already carried out) and construction new vehicular access and alterations to boundary wall
- 4.2 [P11/V2512](#) - Approved (08/12/2011)
Amendment to permission 10/01224/FUL to amend location of garage (retrospective) and construction of a new vehicular access and alterations to boundary wall
- 4.3 [P10/V1246/LB](#) - Approved (09/09/2010)
Erection of double garage with office above, construction of new vehicular access and alterations to boundary wall
- 4.4 [P10/V1224](#) - Approved (09/09/2010)
Erection of double garage, construction of new vehicular access and alterations to boundary wall
- 4.5 [P08/V1719](#) - Approved (28/10/2008)
Demolition of existing garage, rebuild garage in new position, new vehicular access and alterations to boundary wall

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies:*

Policy H11 lists Watchfield as one of the larger villages in the district suitable for new residential development on sites capable of accommodating up to 15 dwellings within the built-up area of the village and subject to criteria including the impact on the character of the area.

Policy DC1 requires new development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings.

Policy DC5 requires safe and convenient access from the public highway and appropriate parking provision.

Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.

Policy HE4 refers to development within the setting of listed buildings stating that permission will not be granted unless the proposal respects the characteristics of the building in its setting including any visual, functional, historic or architectural relationship.

Policy HE5 refers to development involving alterations, additions or extensions to a listed building stating that they will not be permitted if the proposal is unsympathetic to the building's special architectural or historic interest or if it fails to retain features that contribute to its character.

Policy HE7 refers to proposals for the change of use of listed buildings or land and buildings within its curtilage stating that permission will not be granted if the new use cannot be accommodated without any adverse effect on features of special architectural or historic interest and the proposal will not be harmful to the building's appearance or character.

5.2 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 14 and 49). Paragraphs 34 and 37 encourage minimised journey length to work, shopping, leisure and education, and paragraphs 57, 60 and 61 seek to promote local distinctiveness and integrate development into the natural, built and historic environment. Paragraph 109 requires development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

5.3 *Residential Design Guide (2009)*

Paragraph 4.7 of the residential design guide refers to the conversion of agricultural buildings emphasising the importance of their structural integrity and stating that if substantial rebuilding or extension is required it is unlikely that planning permission would be granted. The primary objective in conversions must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building, and the re-use of existing openings to gain light and ventilation is encouraged.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The main issues to consider in determining these applications are; i) the principle of the proposal and its impact on the character of the area; ii) the impact of the proposal on the historic character and appearance of the barn and setting of the listed building; iii) access and parking considerations; and iv) impact on neighbouring properties.
- 6.2 The applications propose the conversion of a stone vernacular barn located to the rear of 41 High Street, Watchfield. The site is well within the built-up area of the village and is surrounded by existing residential development. Given this and its location to the rear of nos. 41 and 43 High Street, the site is not visible from any main public vantage points. The building is in a reasonable structural condition and a structural survey has been submitted as part of the application demonstrating that the conversion can be carried out without significant re-building or alteration. The principle of the proposal, therefore, is considered acceptable.
- 6.3 The building is curtilage listed and, therefore, listed building consent is required for its conversion. The proposed dwelling would be accommodated entirely within the existing structure and the existing openings utilised to create windows and doors. Internally, the proposal includes the creation of two bedrooms with the addition of partition walls, and the bathroom requires only a small opening through an existing internal wall to create the door. Therefore, subject to conditions requiring the submission of some further details, it is considered that the character and appearance of the building would be preserved.
- 6.4 The proposal includes the sub-division of the existing curtilage of 41 High Street to create separate private gardens for the two properties. The location of the barn and its associated garden area is slightly offset from the main house to the north-west. This area, therefore, does not contribute significantly to the setting of the main listed house. In addition, the original grounds of the listed building have been somewhat eroded by the development of two new houses to the rear, which has already altered the historic relationship of the barn to the main house and adjoining land. The separation of the barn and associated land from the main house, therefore, will not have such a harmful impact on the setting of the main house to justify refusal. The council's conservation officer has raised no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions.
- 6.5 It is recognised that the barn has already been separated from the main house by the erection of a close boarded fence along the boundary. This fence is unauthorised. Whilst the proposal to sub-divide the plot is considered acceptable, the existing fence is not considered an appropriate boundary treatment. A condition, therefore, is recommended requiring the fence to be replaced with a stone wall or similar, details of which need to be submitted for approval (see recommended condition 9).
- 6.6 The proposed dwelling would be served by the existing site access which formerly served as the only access to the main house. In permitting a previous scheme for the construction of a garage building to the rear of the main house and new access to the south of the house, a condition was imposed requiring the closure of the existing access. That condition has not been complied with. It was requested by the County Engineer to avoid an unnecessary additional access serving the same property. By sub-dividing the site as proposed, the existing access, which has good visibility and sufficient width, would serve only one property. On this basis, the County Engineer has raised no objections to the proposal.
- 6.7 The site is surrounded on all sides by existing residential properties. The proposal does not involve any changes to the form and size of the barn. Therefore, despite being located on the site boundary, it will not have any greater impact on neighbours

than the existing barn. All of the proposed windows face into the site away from neighbouring properties and are at ground floor level. Whilst the neighbouring properties face towards the proposed garden area, the land is already residential curtilage, therefore it is not considered that the situation for future occupants would be any worse than for the existing residents of the main house. This impact could not justify refusal.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The building is capable of being converted without extensions or significant alterations, the site is within the built-up area of the village, the proposed conversion works would not harm the historic character or fabric of the building, and the County Engineer does not object on highway safety grounds. The proposal, therefore, complies with the local plan, the NPPF and the residential design guide.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 **It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:**

1: TL1 - Time limit

2: Approved plans

3: MC2 - Materials (samples)

4: MC9 - Building details, including windows, doors, vents and flues

5: CN8 - Submission of details – any alterations to the timber frame

6: LS1 - Landscaping scheme (submission)

7: LS2 - Landscaping scheme (implement)

8: MC24 - Drainage details (surface and foul)

9: Prior to the first use or occupation of the new development, the existing close boarded fence along the south-eastern site boundary between the existing and proposed dwellings shall be removed and replaced with a stone wall or similar, details of which shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

10: Prior to the use or occupation of the new development, the parking area/spaces and turning space shall be constructed in accordance with the details shown on approved drawing reference "site layout". The parking and turning areas shall be constructed to prevent surface water discharging onto the highway. Thereafter, the parking and turning areas shall be kept permanently free of any obstruction to such use, and the visibility splays at the access shall be permanently maintained free from obstruction to vision.

8.2 **It is recommended that listed building consent is granted subject to the following conditions:**

1: TL4 – Time limit

2: Approved plans

3: MC2 - Materials (samples)

4: MC9 - Building details, including windows, doors, vents and flues

5: CN8 - Submission of details – any alterations to the timber frame

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