

10. FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION OF BARN TO ONE OPEN MARKET DWELLINGHOUSE AND ONE AFFORDABLE DWELLINGHOUSE – BARN AT CARR LANE, WETTON (NP/SM/0719/0729, MN)

APPLICANT: MR B GARSTANG - TRUSTEES OF DEVONSHIRE MAINTENANCE FUND

Summary

- The proposed development seeks to convert a field barn in to two dwellinghouses – one open market, and one affordable dwelling to meet a local need.
- We have weighed the public benefits of the development against this harm, as required by planning policy, and conclude that the identified harm would outweigh the public benefit.
- Accordingly, the application is recommended for refusal.

Site and surroundings

1. The building subject to the development proposal is a barn located a short distance beyond the southern edge of the village of Wetton, in a field to the east of Carr Lane.
2. The building is in generally good condition and is constructed of coursed gritstone under a slate roof. It is two storey with coped gables and a limited number of openings.
3. The barn is set well back from the road, and is surrounded by fields to each side. The village car park and toilet block are sited approximately 30m northwest of the building, on the opposite side of Carr Lane. Just to the west of the toilet block lies a dilapidated barn, which has recently been granted planning permission for conversion to holiday accommodation. There is a small copse of trees around the edge of the carpark and toilet block, but the landscape is otherwise open fields in this location.
4. The site is just within the Wetton conservation area.

Proposal

5. The proposed development seeks to convert a field barn in to two dwellinghouses – one open market, and one affordable dwelling to meet a local need.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The development would result in alterations to the building and domestication of the building's setting that would harm its historic agricultural character, contrary to policies L3, DMC3 and DMC10. This harm is judged to outweigh the public benefits of the development, meaning that it is also contrary to policy DMC5 and to paragraphs 172 and 197 of the NPPF.
2. The development would result in harm to the historic agricultural character to the Wetton Conservation Area contrary to policies L3, DMC3 and DMC8. This harm is judged to outweigh the public benefits of the development, meaning that it is also contrary to policy DMC5 and to paragraph 172 and 196 of the NPPF.

3. **The development would result in domestication of the landscape in this location, harming its agricultural character, contrary to policies L1 and DMC3, and to paragraph 172 of the NPPF.**

Key Issues

- Whether the barn is suitable for conversion to one or more dwellinghouses under the Authority's housing policies in principle
- The impact of the development on the heritage interest, character and appearance of the building
- The landscape impacts of the development

History

2019 – Planning permission granted for the conversion of a barn to the north west of the application site to holiday accommodation.

Consultations

6. **Highway Authority** – No objections subject to the development not being brought into use until parking space has been provided and surfacing has been agreed.
7. **Parish Council** – The Parish Council supports this application which will provide two homes for local needs.
8. **Authority's Senior Archaeologist** – Advise that it is likely that a residential conversion will harm the significance of the heritage asset through the loss of historic fabric and features, changes to the agricultural character of the building, and loss of legibility of historic agricultural functions.
9. However, they advise that the heritage statement is not of a sufficient standard to allow a proper assessment of the level of harm to be made. They advise that it does not meet the requirements of NPPF paragraph 189 because it does not describe the significance of the affected heritage asset using appropriate expertise to a level of detail proportionate to the significance of the asset, and the minimum requirements that the local Historic Environment Record should be consulted. Further, they state that it does not set the appropriate regional context or follow the approach of the Peak District Historic Farmstead Assessment Framework, which would usually be recommended for such assessments.
10. Therefore, on initial assessment they object to the application due to a lack of information, and seek that it be supported by an appropriate assessment of the significance of the historic farmstead and traditional farm building.
11. Based on what has been submitted and is otherwise apparent though, they advise that at this stage the concerns from an archaeological perspective are:
12. The loss of the internal layout including the stalls, which may be of significance. The survival of the plan form of cow houses and stalling is rare. The Peak District National Park Farmstead Character Statement and Historic England's Listing Selection Guide for Agricultural Buildings both emphasise that very few cow house interiors of 19th century or earlier date survive because of the 20th century hygiene regulations requiring new floors, stall arrangements etc. to be installed. More usually, cow house interiors have been replaced with 20th century arrangements and it is on the external elevations that tell the story of the earlier function and use of these spaces.

13. The domestication of this area of agricultural landscape needs to be considered. The development of the barn into a permanently occupied dwelling house will harm both the agricultural setting of the barn, which positively contributes to its significance, and will harm the area of historic landscape within which the ruined barn is located. With respect to the historic landscape, currently as a historic field barn it has an agricultural use and is integrated within its surrounding agricultural landscape, and it owes its existence and position to the way this landscape, enclosure and farming practice has developed from the medieval period onwards. The introduction of a residential and domestic use into this location within this historic landscape where there are no other dwellings nearby, with everything this entails (domestic curtilage and paraphernalia, parking, provision of services, light pollution, movement of vehicles, provision of a bin store etc.) would introduce elements that are out of place, incongruous and harmful to this heritage asset.
14. Hay and fodder lofts are large spaces of open character, and are significant for their open character and long sight lines. The current proposals would harm this character and significance with the level of subdivision proposed.
15. The level of subdivision and the number of units proposed requires the insertion of new apertures including two new window opening through historic fabric, and the additional of at least one domestic style rooflight. Domestic style rooflights are domestic in character and out of keeping with a building of agricultural building. The new window openings would harm the legibility of the historic function of the building and its spaces through the external elevations.
16. The Archaeologists full comments can be viewed on the Authority's website.
17. **Natural England** – No objections.

Representations

18. One letter of representation has been received, supporting the application on the basis that new uses for such valued vernacular buildings need to be supported, because the development represents a sensitive evolution of the building, and because the works would provide local employment.

Main policies

19. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L2, L3, HC1, CC1.
20. Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMC10, DMT8.
21. National planning policy framework
22. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. It was updated and republished in July 2018. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and saved policies in the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the NPPF.

23. Paragraph 172 of the NPPF states that ‘great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.’
24. Paragraph 189 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
25. Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
26. Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
27. Paragraph 197 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
28. Paragraph 198 continues that local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
29. Paragraph 199 advises that local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible⁶⁴. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.
30. Development plan
31. Core Strategy polices GSP1, GSP2 and GSP3 together say that all development in the National Park must be consistent with the National Park’s legal purposes and duty and that the Sandford Principle will be applied where there is conflict. Opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon and development which would enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park will be permitted. Particular attention will be paid to impact on the character and setting of buildings, siting, landscaping and building materials, design in accordance with the Design Guide and the impact upon living conditions of local communities. Core

Strategy policy GSP4 highlights that the National Park Authority will consider using planning conditions or obligations to secure the achievement of its spatial outcomes.

32. Core Strategy policy DS1 outlines the Authority's Development Strategy, and in principle permits the conversion of buildings to provide housing.
33. Policy HC1 of the Core Strategy sets out the Authority's approach to new housing in the National Park in more detail; policy HC1(C) I and II say that exceptionally new housing will be permitted in accordance with core policies GSP1 and GSP2 if it is required in order to achieve conservation and/or enhancement of valued vernacular or listed buildings or where it is required in order to achieve conservation or enhancement within designated settlements.
34. It goes on to state that any scheme proposed under CI or CII that is able to accommodate more than one dwelling unit, must also address identified eligible local need and be affordable with occupation restricted to local people in perpetuity, unless:
35. III. it is not financially viable, although the intention will still be to maximise the proportion of affordable homes within viability constraints; or
36. IV. it would provide more affordable homes than are needed in the parish and the adjacent parishes, now and in the near future: in which case (also subject to viability considerations), a financial contribution¹⁰² will be required towards affordable housing needed elsewhere in the National Park.
37. Core Strategy policy CC1 requires development to make the most efficient and sustainable use of land and resources, to take account of the energy hierarchy, to achieve the highest standards of carbon reduction and water efficiency, and to be directed away from flood risk areas.
38. Core Strategy policy CC2 states that proposals for low carbon and renewable energy development will be encouraged provided that they can be accommodated without adversely affecting landscape character, cultural heritage assets, other valued characteristics, or other established uses of the area.
39. Development Management Policy DMC3 requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects, and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place. It also provides further detailed criteria to assess design and landscaping, as well as requiring development to conserve the amenity of other properties.
40. Policy DMH1 addresses new affordable housing, stating that A. Affordable housing will be permitted and outside of Core Strategy policy DS1 settlements (which this site is) by conversion of existing buildings provided that there is a proven need for the dwellings and that any new build housing is within specified size thresholds, the upper limit of which is 97m².
41. Policy DMH2 considers the first occupation of any new affordable housing, requiring that in all cases, new affordable housing must be first occupied by persons satisfying at least one of the following criteria:
 - (i) a person (and his or her dependants) who has a minimum period of 10 years permanent residence in the Parish or an adjoining Parish inside the National Park and is currently living in accommodation which is overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory; or

- (ii) a person (and his or her dependants) not now resident in the Parish but having lived for at least 10 years out of the last 20 years in the Parish or an adjoining Parish inside the National Park, and is currently living in accommodation which is overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory; or
 - (iii) a person who has an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of 10 years residence in a Parish inside the National Park, the essential need arising from infirmity.
- 42. Policy DMH3 leads on from this, addressing second and subsequent occupation of affordable housing (called 'the occupancy cascade'). This states that each and every time a previously occupied affordable home becomes vacant, owners and managers of affordable housing must, as stated in the Section 106 Agreement that it is necessary to enter in to when obtaining planning permission for affordable housing, follow the cascade mechanism until an eligible occupant is found.
- 43. For privately owned and managed affordable housing including self-build units, the cascade mechanism requires that owners and managers must:
 - (i) sell or rent an affordable home to a person (and his or her dependants) with a minimum period of 10 years permanent residence over the last twenty years in the Parish or an adjoining Parish; or
 - (ii) a person who has an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of 10 years' residence in the Parish, the essential need arising from infirmity.
 - (iii) after a minimum period of 3 months, widen the search to include (in order of preference) those in the Parish or an adjoining Parish with residency of the previous 5 consecutive years, and those who meet the local occupancy criteria (10 years) in the next adjoining Parishes.
 - (iv) after a further month (minimum 4 months total) widen the search to include those who meet the local occupancy criteria (10 years) in the whole of the National Park.
 - (v) after a further 2 months (minimum 6 months total) widen the search to include those who meet the local occupancy criteria (10 years) in parts of a split rural Parish lying outside the National Park or rural Parishes entirely outside the Park but sharing its boundary.
- 44. DMH3 also states that the property should be advertised widely at the price advised by the District Valuer and prepared at the time marketing is required, or any other body appointed by the Authority for such purposes or, in the case of a rented property, at the target rent at the time. The Parish Council, Housing Authority and Housing Associations working in the area should be advised of the vacancy as soon as houses become vacant.
- 45. Finally, it notes that where a Parish is split by the National Park boundary, only those people living within the National Park part of the Parish should be eligible initially.
- 46. Policy DMH11 addresses legal agreements in relation to planning decisions, as provided for by Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. As a result, these are known as Section 106 Agreements. The policy states that in all cases involving the provision of affordable housing, the applicant will be required to enter into a Section 106 Agreement, that will:
 - (i) restrict the occupancy of all affordable properties in perpetuity in line with policies DMH1, DMH2 and DMH3; and
 - (ii) prevent any subsequent development of the site and/or all affordable property(ies) where that would undermine the Authority's ability to restrict the

occupancy of properties in perpetuity and for the properties to remain affordable in perpetuity.

47. Development Management Policy DMC5 provides detailed advice relating to proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, requiring new development to demonstrate how valued features will be conserved, as well as detailing the types and levels of information required to support such proposals. It also requires development to avoid harm to the significance, character, and appearance of heritage assets. It explains development resulting in harm to a non-designated heritage asset will only be supported where the development is considered by the Authority to be acceptable following a balanced judgement that takes into account the significance of the heritage asset.
48. Development Management Policy DMC8 addresses Conservation Areas, requiring development in them, or affecting their setting or important views into, out of, across or through them, to assess and clearly demonstrate how the character or appearance and significance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced.
49. It notes that applications should be determined in accordance with policy DMC5 and the following matters should be taken into account:
 - (i) form and layout of the area including views and vistas into and out of it and the shape and
50. character of spaces contributing to the character of the historic environment including important
51. open spaces as identified on the Policies Map;
52. (ii) street patterns, historical or traditional street furniture, traditional surfaces, uses, natural or manmade features, trees and landscapes;
53. (iii) scale, height, form and massing of the development and existing buildings to which it relates;
54. (iv) locally distinctive design details including traditional frontage patterns and vertical or horizontal emphasis;
55. (v) the nature and quality of materials.
56. It also states that development will not be permitted if applicants fail to provide adequate or accurate detailed information to show the effect of their proposals on the character, appearance and significance of the component parts of the Conservation Area and its setting.
57. Development Management Policy DMC10 addresses conversion of heritage assets, permitting this where the new use would conserve its character and significance, and where the new use and associated infrastructure conserve the asset, its setting, and valued landscape character. It also notes that new uses or curtilages should not be visually intrusive in the landscape or have an adverse impact on tranquility, dark skies, or other valued characteristics.
58. Development Management Policy DMT8 states that off-street parking for residential development should be provided unless it can be demonstrated that on-street parking meets highways standards and does not negatively impact on the visual and other amenity of the local community. It notes that the design and number of parking spaces must respect the valued characteristics of the area, particularly in conservation areas.

Assessment

Principle

59. Policy DMC10 permits the conversion of non-listed buildings to dwellinghouses in accordance with policy HC1 in principle where they have been demonstrated to be non-designated heritage assets.
60. In this case the application has been accompanied by a heritage assessment confirming that the building pre-dates 1809. The heritage assessment is lacking in some regards – see the consultation response of the Authority’s Archaeologist - and the following section of this report, below. However, we agree with the report’s conclusion that the barn has historic value for its role in the development of Wetton as an agricultural community, and for its links to the Chatsworth estate. It is also of a design and appearance that is representative of such historic buildings within the area.
61. On this basis, the building is concluded to be a non-designated heritage asset, and its conversion to a permanent dwellinghouse would comply with policies DS1 and policy HC1 in principle.
62. Policy HC1 requires that, in the case of conversion of a building to more than one dwelling, the development must also address local housing needs. The submission proposes one of the two properties to be an affordable dwelling to meet local need.
63. In terms of the need for affordable housing in the area, we are not aware of a housing needs survey having been undertaken in Wetton Parish. Housing needs data is also not available for most of the Parishes adjoining Wetton. However, the adjoining Parish of Waterhouses does have a survey dating from 2105, which identifies 6 households as being in housing need, with a specific need for one two-bed house and two three-bed houses. Whilst the survey is now 4 years old, in the absence of other evidence we are satisfied that there is a housing need in the adjacent Parish and so the development complies with policy DMH1. We also conclude that the development of one two-bed affordable property at this address would not provide more affordable homes than are needed in the parish and the adjacent parishes, now or in the near future, as policy HC1 seeks to avoid.
64. The floorspace of the proposed affordable dwelling would be approximately 55m², and so would be well below the upper threshold of 97m² that planning policy stipulates as the maximum acceptable size for affordable dwellings.
65. On this basis, conversion of the building to one open market dwelling and one affordable local needs dwelling would comply with policies DS1, HC1, DMC10, and DMH1.
66. This would be subject to a legal agreement securing the property as an affordable dwelling as detailed by policy DMH11. Without this, the property could not be considered to be affordable housing in the terms set out in the Authority’s planning policies. The applicant’s agent has advised that they are prepared to enter in to such an agreement.
67. As the barn is only suitable for conversion to housing under policies HC1 and DMC10 due to its heritage interest, if permission was granted it would be necessary to remove permitted development rights for extensions, alterations, and outbuildings because each of these have the potential to significantly harm or alter the significance of the building, undermining the reason for permitting its conversion in the first place.
68. Any conversion of the building must also comply with the conservation provisions of DMC10.

69. This is considered in the following sections of this report.

Impacts of the development on the character, appearance and significance of the building, its setting, and the landscape

70. The Authority's Archaeologist notes that the building is a fine example of a traditional field barn, appearing to have been built as a cow house with fodder storage over in a loft.
71. The Peak District National Park Historic Farmstead Character Statement (FCS) forms part of the suite of guidance for development of historic farmsteads within the Park. It provides guidance on the character and significance of the Peak District's traditional farmsteads and buildings, and is an evidence base for decision-making and development in context.
72. This identifies field barns as an important and highly characteristic part of the Peak District's heritage and landscape, that they are highly characteristic, and that they strongly contribute to local distinctiveness. This is particularly true where they are combined with the distinctive pattern of dry stone wall enclosure reflecting the development of the historic landscape, as occurs in this location.

73. Impacts of external alterations

74. The conversion is proposed within the buildings existing shell, with no extensions proposed.
75. Three new openings are proposed however – one to the rear at ground floor, one to the gable end at first floor, and one new rooflight to the rear roof plane. The proposed subdivision to two dwellings has increased the need for these additional openings, as it restricts the possible layouts in each half of the building. The Authority's archaeologist advises that new window openings would harm the legibility of the historic function of the building and its spaces through the external elevations. Adopted design guidance advises that new openings should be kept to a minimum when dealing with conversion of historic buildings. In this case, an alternate scheme of conversion would be likely to require less new openings, and so the development fails to keep new openings to a minimum and results in harm to the building, contrary to policies L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC10.
76. Two flues are also proposed through the roof of the building. We would question whether, in practice, practicalities and building regulations would allow these to be as modest as proposed. In any case, even as proposed they are out of keeping with the building's agricultural character, harming its appearance contrary to policies L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC10. If the application was to be approved then it would be recommended that these be omitted by condition.

77. Impacts of internal works

78. Whilst the building is not listed, it is apparent that the internal layout and features are unusual in their preservation and are therefore important examples of their type – as discussed further below. Particular consideration therefore needs to be given to the impact on these important characteristic of the building that conversion would have. They are part of the building's heritage significance and as a result we do have to consider the impact of development upon them under the provisions of both local and national planning policy.

79. As proposed, existing internal historic features and plan form would be lost, including pre-20th century cow stalls and hay cratches, internal recesses, and surviving elements of a historic roof structure with hand sawn timbers. The Authority's Archaeologist advises that the submitted heritage statement is not sufficient to allow a full understanding of these and the contribution they make to the building's significance. They advise that it does not meet the requirements of NPPF paragraph 189 because it does not describe the significance of the affected heritage asset using appropriate expertise to a level of detail proportionate to the significance of the asset, and the minimum requirements that the local Historic Environment Record should be consulted. Further, they state that it does not set the appropriate regional context or follow the approach of the Peak District Historic Farmstead Assessment Framework, which would usually be recommended for such assessments.
80. They therefore object to the application on the grounds of insufficient information being available to make a full assessment of the extent of harm to the heritage assets significance.
81. The Archaeologist makes clear though that they do have concerns regarding the potential loss of the identified features in any case.
82. New subdivision – most notably at first floor level – would also be introduced, eroding the historic open plan that is characteristic of such buildings. The Authority's Archaeologist notes that the survival of the planform of cow houses and stalling is rare, with the Peak District National Park Farmstead Character Statement (FCS) and Historic England's Listing Selection Guide for Agricultural Buildings both emphasising that very few such interiors of 19th century or earlier date survive. On this basis the internal layout changes would result in some harm to the building's heritage significance.
83. Residential use is always likely to require some internal subdivision of space that would alter the character of buildings such as this. However, the decision to subdivide the building in to two units increases the need for this in this instance. As a single dwellinghouse subdivision of the space could be greatly reduced, and retention of some internal features may also be possible.
84. Given that a less harmful alternative could be achieved, this weighs against the proposal in the planning balance.
85. Landscape and setting
86. As noted previously, field barns are specifically identified as an important part of the Peak District's landscape by the FCS, they are highly characteristic and strongly contribute to local distinctiveness.
87. They allowed the land to be managed remotely without the need to move stock and produce to the main farmstead and are illustrative of agricultural management practices and their changes overtime.
88. This importance and their position outside of settlements makes them particularly sensitive to changes to their setting, which can harm both their character and that of the landscape.
89. The Authority's adopted Landscape Strategy categorises the landscape character of this area as 'Limestone village farmlands', and identifies the pastoral farmland enclosed by drystone walls and the repeating pattern of narrow strip fields originating from medieval open fields as key characteristics of this landscape.

90. In this instance the site – whilst not far from the village car park and toilet block building – is very clearly of this character as is the wider countryside beyond.
91. The site is also very open, with clear views of it afforded on approach from the north, south, and west.
92. It is proposed to provide gardens and parking to the front and northern side of the building, with a further strip of curtilage running around the rear and southern side of the building.
93. This would have a high impact on the setting of the building. The parking of domestic vehicles alone - typically up to four and potentially more at times if the occupiers of the dwellings were to have guests – adjacent to the building would be entirely at odds with its agricultural appearance.
94. The same can be said of the creation of what would be a large area of garden immediately in front of the barn; domestic maintenance, activity, and paraphernalia would all change the setting to be of domestic appearance. Because of the very open nature of the site, it is not possible to provide the required outdoor spaces in an area that is well screened.
95. As a single dwelling these impacts would be unacceptably high given the prominence and size of this area, but the proposal to split the property two increases the likely impacts further. Whilst the space in front of the buildings is shown to remain open it is likely that occupiers may seek to treat ‘their side’ of the curtilage differently. This would harm the appearance of the building as a single barn, further reducing the legibility of its former plan and function.
96. These changes would all have a high adverse impact on the character of the barns setting, and would consequently significantly harm its significance and character, contrary to policies L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC10.
97. These impacts would not be limited to within the site itself either, or even to short distance views, but would be apparent from some distance on approach towards the site from any direction.
98. The site is within the Wetton conservation area – a designated heritage asset. The adopted Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the area of the application site as being significant in landscape terms because it provides the foreground to the village from the south and west. That foreground is strongly agricultural in character, helping to establish that Wetton is historically a farming community.
99. This is echoed in the comments of the Authority’s Archaeologist, who states that *“with respect to the historic landscape, currently as a historic field barn it has an agricultural use and is integrated within its surrounding agricultural landscape, and it owes its existence and position to the way this landscape, enclosure and farming practice has developed from the medieval period onwards. The introduction of a residential and domestic use into this location within this historical landscape where there are no other dwellings nearby, with everything this entails (domestic curtilage and paraphernalia, parking, provision of services, light pollution, movement of vehicles, provision of a bin store etc.) would introduce elements that are out of place, incongruous and harmful to this heritage asset.”*
- 100 It is therefore concluded that the development would result in less than substantial harm to historic and current landscape character of the conservation area , and to the rural

character of the landscape more generally. This is contrary to policies L1, L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC8.

101 Summary and planning balance

102 The development would result in the following harm:

- Domestication of the building's setting, resulting in harm to its significance and agricultural character, and to the character and appearance of the landscape, including less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- Erosion of the legibility of historic function due to additional external openings, resulting in harm to the building's significance;
- Permanent loss of internal historic features and subdivision, resulting in loss of significance and historic character.

103 Policy DMC5 and the NPPF set out that it is necessary to weigh this harm to the conservation area against the public benefits of the proposal.

104 The NPPF additionally requires that in relation to the harm to the building itself, as a non-designated heritage asset, there is a need to reach a balanced judgement that has regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset,

105 The harm to the conservation area and the building itself as a heritage asset, weighed against any public benefit that may arise are considered together below.

106 The benefits of the scheme extend to the provision of housing, including a single affordable dwellinghouse to meet a local need, securing a future viable use for the barn, and providing a modest amount of short-term (potentially) local employment during construction. We give these benefits some weight.

107 However, the conversion of the building – whilst providing it with a viable future – would do so at a high cost to its significance; one that could seemingly be reduced or avoided through a different scheme of conversion. Some weight is given to the fact the interior of the building benefits from no protection through the planning system and could be altered independently from the current proposal at any time.

108 The landscape in this location specifically is an important part of the historic landscape and retains a strong agricultural character. This is the main significance of the application site in terms of its inclusion in the Conservation Area. This would be a significant adverse impact on the appearance and legibility of historic character. This weighs heavily against the proposal.

109 Having taken all of the above in to account, it is concluded that the public benefits that the development would result in would not outweigh the heritage harm arising from it and the proposal is therefore in conflict with policies DMC5 and DMC10, as well as the historic environment policies of the NPPF.

110 In terms of reaching a balanced view on the proposal more widely – i.e. a view taking account of more than just the adverse impacts on the heritage assets – all of the matters above are still material of course, and weigh against supporting the development.

111 Further to this, and as already identified in relation to the Conservation Area, the development would result in harm to the historic landscape character of the area. This harm does not just alter the legibility of the historic landscape, but also alters and detracts

from the present rural character of the landscape in this location. The National Park has the highest level of landscape protection afforded to any UK landscape through national legislation and national and local planning policy.

- 112 Accordingly, the development would also be contrary to policies L1, DMC3, and the landscape protection provisions of the NPPF.

Ecological impacts

- 113 The application has been accompanied by a bat report, which concludes that the site is used by low numbers of foraging and commuting bats, and that the barn is s being used as a day roost by a single brown long eared bat.
- 114 The report recommends mitigation measures for the loss of habitat – which it concludes to be low – including the provision of bat access tiles, ridge tiles, and boxes.
- 115 Subject to securing the recommended bat and bird mitigation and enhancement measures the proposal would conserve the ecological interests of the site as required by policy LC2.

Amenity impacts

- 116 Due to the position of the building away from any other residential property the proposed development would not result in any loss of privacy, any additional disturbance, or otherwise affect the amenity of any other residential property, complying with policy DMC3.

Highway impacts

- 117 The development would introduce four parking spaces within the site. This is sufficient to meet the parking needs for the two properties proposed.
- 118 The site access has good visibility in each direction, and the highway authority have raised no objections to the proposal.
- 119 We therefore conclude that the development would have acceptable highway impacts and would comply with DMT8.

Service provision

- 120 Details of power and water supply to the site have not been submitted with the application. It would be important for these to be routed underground to ensure that they did not further impact on the character of the site and setting of the building. In the case of approval a condition would be required to secure this.

Environmental management

- 121 An environmental management statement has been submitted, essentially stating that the development will be sustainable due to being a conversion of an existing building and because it would need to comply to building regulations.
- 122 It makes no mention of additional energy efficiency measures that have been considered, or whether the applicant has looked at the potential to introduce renewable energy measures.

- 123 If the application had been concluded to be acceptable in other regards then further discussion on this point would have been undertaken, or additional measures could have been secured by condition. As things stand however, the development is concluded to be contrary to policy CC1.

Conclusion

- 124 We conclude that the proposal fails conserve the character and appearance of the building and those of the landscape, including the conservation area.
- 125 The application also includes insufficient heritage assessment for the impacts on the building's interest as a heritage asset to be fully assessed. Based on what has been submitted and what is apparent however, it can be concluded that the development would result in some significant harm to the heritage asset.
- 126 We have weighed the benefits of the development against this harm as required by planning policy, and conclude that the identified harm would outweigh them.
- 127 For these reasons the proposal conflicts with policies L1, L3, DMC3, DMC5, DMC8, and DMC10, as well as the historic environment policies of the NPPF.
- 128 Further, the development fails to demonstrate that it has sought to make the most efficient and sustainable use of land and resources, to take account of the energy hierarchy, to achieve the highest standards of carbon reduction and water efficiency. This is contrary to policy CC1.
- 129 There are no other policy or material considerations that would indicate that planning permission should be granted.
- 130 We therefore recommend that the application be refused.

Human Rights

- 131 Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

- 132 Nil

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