

**11. FULL APPLICATION – ALTERATIONS AND CHANGE OF USE OF TRADITIONAL RURAL BUILDING TO FORM 3 HOLIDAY LETS, THE HOMESTEAD, MAIN STREET, BIGGIN (NP/DDD/1218/1145 TS)**

**APPLICANT: THE BARLOW FAMILY TRUST**

**Summary**

1. The application is for the conversion of a non-designated heritage asset to holiday accommodation. This is supported in principle by policies RT2 and DMC10. The development would sufficiently preserve the character of the building. Converting it to domestic use would not result in any harm to the landscape character of other valued characteristics of the National Park in this particular setting and location. The application is recommended for approval.

**Site and Surroundings**

2. The application site is a former barn that lies to the northern side of Main Street in Biggin. It is set back from the road by about 70 metres and there are intervening residential properties. The barn has a L-shaped form and is predominantly two storeys but also has a small single storey extension to the western elevation. It is constructed from limestone walls with gritstone detailing.
3. The property was converted to business/industrial use in the 1960s and was last in use for storage. The building has however been vacant for several years and has been damaged by fire.
4. Residential properties lie to the south of the site. Open land lies to the north and east. There is an existing former agricultural building that has more recently been used for business purposes to the west of the site.

**Proposal**

5. Planning permission is being sought to convert the former barn to form three holiday lets.
6. The application initially sought consent to convert the building into four units of accommodation but the scheme has been revised to take account of our concerns relating to the amount of subdivision and the required external alterations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Time limit for commencement.**
2. **Development to be carried out in accordance with the amended plans.**
3. **Use restricted to short-term holiday let only.**
4. **Removal of permitted development rights for extensions and alterations.**
5. **Control of the extent of residential curtilage.**

6. **Window and doors to be timber with details to be approved.**
7. **Building to be converted within its shell and with no rebuilding other than a replacement roof on the single storey element.**
8. **Boundary treatments to be approved.**
9. **Bat mitigation measures to be implemented.**
10. **Scheme of carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures to be approved and then implemented.**

### **Key Issues**

7. The impact on the valued character and appearance of the barn and its setting within the surrounding landscape.

### **History**

2006 – An application to convert the building to 3 dwellings was refused for the following reasons (summarised):

- The site is outside of a settlement and residential development is only acceptable if it is to meet a genuine need for affordable housing. No such case had been put forward.
- Harm to the appearance of the former barn.
- Loss of a local employment site.
- Conflict between proposed residential use and neighbouring transport depot.

2008 – Appeal against the Authority's refusal of the above application was dismissed. The key points of the Inspector's decision are discussed in the assessment section further below.

2018 – An application to convert the building to two open market dwellings was withdrawn.

### **Consultations**

8. Highway Authority – No objections subject to a condition for the parking and turning areas to be laid out before the building is taken into use.
9. Parish Council - *'Members of Hartington Nether Quarter Parish Council met to discuss the above application and after due consideration feel unable to support this proposal due to over saturation of holiday accommodation in the parish/surrounding area. Members would like to see affordable housing developed at this location and would like to know why the previous application for rental/local needs has been changed to an application for holiday accommodation here.'*

*Members also queried the address being the Homestead as properties known as 1 and 2 the Homestead already exist further down the same street and this may lead to future confusion.'*

1. PDNPA Archaeology – initially objected due to the lack of assessment of the heritage significance of the building.

The applicant subsequently undertook and submitted a heritage assessment of the building. Our Archaeologist provided the following additional comments:

*“Consultation of records available to the Peak District National Park Authority indicate that the buildings that are the subject of this application are a non-designated heritage asset are likely to be of historic and archaeological interest. The buildings are identified in the 2016 Historic England Historic Farmstead Project and is recorded in the Peak District National Park Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record (MPD13351) and Derbyshire Historic Environment Record as an extant 19<sup>th</sup> century outfarm of a regular courtyard of L-plan, where all traditional farm buildings remain extant. It indicates that the buildings have high heritage potential. Outfarms are farm buildings, either singular or small groups of buildings, usually set around a yard., typically use for sheltering cattle and the storage of hay, fodder and other crops, or a combination of these activities.*

*Following previous consultation comments a Significance and Heritage Impact Statement has been submitted in support of this application. This demonstrates that the building is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century combination barn that changed to a business use in the 1960s and underwent some changes to its internal and external fabric.*

*Nevertheless the agricultural origin of the buildings remains legible particularly in the form, location and size of the openings in the external elevations. Internally, all fixtures and fittings related to agricultural use (e.g .troughs, cratches and stalls) have been lost, but the separation of functions between different parts of the building is apparent in the internal masonry walls, with this element of the historic planform surviving. The 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations are clearly legible as such. The building is therefore of historic interest.*

*The core significance of this non-designated heritage assets lies in its:*

- Surviving historic fabric – retains the legibility of the historic function and retains concealed archaeological evidence relating to the historic development and use.*
- The location, form and size of historic openings – which retains the legibility of the historic use and function of the building.*
- Traditional agricultural character – this demonstrates its agricultural origin and function*
- Traditional materials – which are characteristic of the area.*

*The conversion of the farm buildings to residential use with the current scheme will in permanent and irreversible harm to aspects of the core significance of this non designated heritage assets. I do not object to the principle of conversion, but with the current scheme represents a level and scale of harm that is unacceptable. A more sympathetic conversion that conserves the significance of the buildings could be achieved.*

*The damaging aspects that are of particular concern with respect to the level of harm are:*

*Use of rooflights – a number rooflights are proposed in the north and west elevation. These are domestic and out of character for a traditional farm building. A reduction in internal subdivision (see below) could remove the need for these.*

*The extent of sub-division required to create four separate units, particularly in the loft areas would harm the significance of these spaces, traditionally open along the length of the loft and to the roof with large proportions. This is contrary to national guidance on the re-adaptive re-use of traditional farm buildings*

*Complete loss of the internal planform – the current scheme requires the removal of all internal masonry walls, the last surviving parts of the internal planform that reflects the historic division of function and space, and a the stair and one that the modern extension on the west elevation is built on to). This would harm the historic interest of the building.*

*New openings and loss of visibility of historic openings – in addition to the proposed rooflights, a number of new openings are proposed, these are in areas of solid wall fabric where no openings existed historically. These changes would confuse the archaeology of the building and the legibility of its historic form and function from its external features and elevations, harming its historic interest. A number of existing and historic openings are not be used and are proposed to be blocked.*

*Relocation of the stone steps and entirely new door opening in the gable of the south elevation where historically there wasn't one – this causes permanent harm to the historic interest of the building by confusing the archaeology of the building and the legibility of its historic form and function from its external features and elevations harming its historic interest.*

*The proposed scheme with respect the subdivision of the building, the layout of the individual units, the use of existing openings and the need for new openings and rooflights, appears to have done very little to either understand or work with the surviving historic features and fabric, and is harmful to the significance of this heritage asset. The scale of harm is not acceptable.”*

The above comments were based on the original proposal to convert the building to four units. The applicant subsequently revised the scheme to reduce the number of units to three and amend the extent of the internal and external alterations.

2. Natural England - ‘Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected sites.’

PDNPA Ecology – Initially noted that the submitted information sets out that a bat roost has been found but no mitigation measures had been provided. This information is required to positively determine the application. The applicant subsequently submitted a scheme of bat mitigation measures and this is discussed in the relevant section of the report further below.

## **Representations**

10. No third party responses have been received. .

## **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

11. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales: Which are; to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to; seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks.

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been revised (2019). This replaces the previous document (2012) with immediate effect. 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 particular Paragraph 172 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
13. Section 16 of the revised NPPF sets out guidance for conserving the historic environment, Paragraph 189 states "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."
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and the Development Management Policies (DMP), adopted May 2019. These Development Plan Policies provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. In this case, it is considered there are no significant conflicts between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and government guidance in the NPPF.

## **Main Development Plan Policies**

### **Core Strategy**

17. GSP1, GSP2 - *Securing National Park Purposes and sustainable development & Enhancing the National Park*. These policies jointly seek to secure national park legal purposes and duties through the conversion and enhancement of the National Park's landscape and its natural and heritage assets.
18. GSP3 - *Development Management Principles*. Requires that particular attention is paid to the impact on the character and setting of buildings and that the design is in accord with the Authority's Design Guide and development is appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park.
19. DS1 - *Development Strategy*. States that recreation and tourism development is acceptable in principle in open countryside.

20. L3 - *Cultural Heritage assets or archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance.* Explains that development must conserve and where appropriately enhance or reveal the significance of historic assets and their setting. Other than in exceptional circumstances, development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause harm to the significance of any cultural heritage asset or its setting.
21. RT2 - *Hotels, bed & breakfast & holiday accommodation.* States that the change of use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit to holiday accommodation will be permitted.
22. L1 - *Landscape character and valued characteristics.* Seeks to ensure that all development conserves and enhances valued landscape character and sites, features and species of biodiversity importance.
23. E1 – Business development in towns and villages sets out that the National Park Authority will safeguard existing business land or buildings, particularly those which are of high quality and in a suitable location. Where the location, premises, activities or operations of an employment site are considered by the Authority to no longer be appropriate, opportunities for enhancement will be sought, which may include redevelopment to provide affordable housing or community uses.

#### Development Management Policies

24. DMC3 - *Siting, Design, layout and landscaping.* Reiterates that where developments are acceptable in principle, policy requires that design is to high standards and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape. The siting, mass, scale, height, design, building materials should all be appropriate to the context. Accessibility of the development should also be a key consideration.
25. DMC5 - *Assessing the impact of development on designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting.* The policy 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 and details the exceptional circumstances in which development resulting in such harm may be supported.
26. DMC10 - *Conversion of a heritage asset.* Sets out that conversion of a designated or non-designated heritage asset will be permitted provided it can accommodate the new use without changes that adversely affect its character, including enlargement, subdivision, or other alterations to form and mass, inappropriate new window openings or doorways and major rebuilding, and that any changes conserves or enhances the heritage significance and its setting in accord with policy DMC5.
27. DMC11 - *Safeguarding, recording and enhancing nature conservation interests.* Sets out that proposals should aim to achieve net gains to biodiversity or geodiversity as a result of development and that details of appropriate safeguards and enhancement measures for a site, feature or species of nature conservation importance must be provided in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan. For all sites, feature and species development proposals must consider amongst other things, the setting of the development in relation to other features of importance, historical and cultural.
28. DMR3 - *Holiday occupancy of self-catering accommodation.* States that where self-catering accommodation is acceptable, its use will be restricted to holiday accommodation for no more than 28 days per calendar year by any one person.

29. DMT3 - *Access and design criteria*. Requires that a safe access should be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it. Whilst DMT8 - *Residential off street parking* sets out that off-street parking for residential development should be provided and the design and numbers of parking spaces associated with the residential development respects the valued characteristics of the area.
30. DME3 identifies sites that are to be safeguarded for industrial and employment use.
31. The Authority has adopted three separate supplementary planning documents (SPD's) that offers design guidance on householder development namely the Design Guide, the Building Design Guide and the Detailed Design Guide on Alterations and Extensions.

## **Assessment**

### **Principle of Development**

32. Previous applications for conversion of the property to residential use have been refused. The most recent being in 2006 with a subsequent appeal dismissed in 2008. It should be noted that these applications and decisions preceded all current local and national planning policy and guidance.
33. Having said that, the question of the heritage importance of the building is an issue from the previous application and appeal that remains relevant to the current application.
34. In 2006, the Authority took the view that the building was not of vernacular merit. However, the inspector found that the building is "of significant architectural merit". The Authority's Archaeologist has set out the reasons why the building is of historic interest. Given the evidence of architectural and historic significance, the building is clearly a non-designated heritage asset.
35. DS1 allows for the creation of holiday accommodation preferably by re-use of traditional buildings. Policy RT2 specifically allows for the change of use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit, except where it would create unacceptable landscape impact in open countryside. The NPPF also supports the provision of sustainable tourist facilities in rural areas. The broad principle of the conversion to holiday accommodation is therefore acceptable.
36. However, policy DMC10 makes it clear that applications for conversions of non-designated heritage assets must be achievable without changes that adversely affect its character, including enlargement, subdivision, or other alterations to form and mass, inappropriate new window openings or doorways and major rebuilding, and that any changes conserves or enhances the heritage significance and its setting. These matters are discussed further below.
37. The Parish Council do not support the application and have expressed a preference for affordable local needs housing. The conversion of the property to a mix of open market and affordable housing would be likely to be acceptable in principle. Any affordable housing would be subject to our local occupation criteria and secured as such with a legal agreement. This option was discussed at the pre-application stage with the applicant's agent but it is understood that the applicant is not in agreement with our local occupancy criteria and therefore pursued an application for holiday accommodation instead.

### **Loss of employment site**

38. Under the 2006 application, one of the reasons for refusal related to the loss of the building as an employment site. The Inspector upheld the Authority's concern in this regard, noting that:

*“The appeal building is a barn currently used for the storage of agricultural Products, and incorporates a sales office connected with that use. Policy E4 of the adopted Peak National Park Structure Plan does not normally permit development that would lead to the loss of existing business premises, except where an employment purpose is not compatible with other development plan policy. There is good reason for this approach. The supporting text for the policy explains that the loss of industrial land or buildings and associated employment opportunities could lead to pressure to identify new sites for such uses, which might be at odds with the National Park's overriding conservation Aims. I have no reason to conclude that the existing use of the property is not Compatible with other development plan policy. While the barn is close to Some dwellings, the relationship appeared to me to be a satisfactory one. I conclude that the building is in an appropriate and active economic use at Present and find that the proposal is at odds with Policy E4.”*

39. The structure plan has been replaced so policy E4 of it is no longer relevant. The relevant policies are now policies E1 of the Core Strategy, policy DME3 of the Development Management Policies document and guidance contained within the NPPF that sets out that the unnecessary safeguarding of land should be avoided.
40. Policy E1 sets out that existing business land or buildings will still be safeguarded, particularly those which are of a high quality and in a sustainable location. Policy DME3 identifies particular sites that meet this criteria that will be safeguarded. The application building is not one of these sites.
41. The application is accompanied by a statement from an estate agents that sets out that there is unlikely to be demand for this building from a business user. The site has been vacant for several years.
42. In light of the change in local and national policy and guidance, along with the evidence that has been submitted to demonstrate that there is unlikely to be demand from a business user, it is now accepted that this site should not be safeguarded for business use. There is no conflict with policy E1, DME3 or the guidance within the NPPF in this respect.

### **Impacts of the development on the character, appearance and significance of the building**

43. Policy DMC5 requires that an appropriate level of information is submitted to inform an assessment of how the development will affect the heritage asset. As initially submitted, the application did not contain sufficient information to inform an assessment of the significance of the heritage asset and how the development would affect it. A heritage statement was subsequently submitted to address this.
44. From the heritage assessment and the advice of our archaeologist, the significance of the building can be summarised as follows:
- Surviving historic fabric – retains the legibility of the historic function and retains concealed archaeological evidence relating to the historic development and use.
  - The location, form and size of historic openings – which retains the legibility



- of the historic use and function of the building.
- Traditional agricultural character – this demonstrates its agricultural origin and function
- Traditional materials – which are characteristic of the area.

It is therefore important that any conversion scheme works to preserve these features.

45. As initially submitted the scheme was to convert the building to four holiday let units. This required a significant amount of subdivision, removal of internal masonry walls and unsympathetic external alterations to provide openings to the four units. This scheme would have caused an unacceptable harm to the character of the building that would have outweighed the benefit of bringing it back into beneficial use.
46. The scheme has been amended so that it is for three units of holiday accommodation. This allows the conversion to work much better with the existing internal walls and plan form of the building.
47. In addition, the external alterations are now sensitive to the historic character of the building. Existing openings are to be reused and the inappropriate roof lights and new openings have been omitted.
48. It would have been preferable for the single storey extension to the western elevation to be removed, rather than reused with the addition of a pitched roof as proposed. However, it is considered that the scheme overall is acceptable.
49. Whilst there would inevitably still be some degree of harm to the historic character of the former barn through its conversion to domestic use, it is now considered that the level of harm would be low and is outweighed by the benefits of securing a beneficial use for it that accords with our policies and helps to achieve our second purpose of promoting understanding and enjoyment of the National Park.

#### **Impact of the development on the setting of the former barn and the wider landscape**

50. The Authority's '*Historic Farmstead Character Statement*' identifies, that field barns are an important part of the Peak District's landscape, they are highly characteristic and strongly contribute to local distinctiveness, even more so when combined with the distinctive pattern of dry stone wall enclosures, reflecting the development of this historic landscape. The Statement also identifies that farm buildings that are detached and remote from a main farmstead have been subject to high levels of change both within the Peak District and nationally, with a 57% loss of such features from the Peak District landscape. This makes those that survive even more precious.
51. It must be acknowledged that whilst the building clearly has an agricultural past, it is not set in its previous historic landscape. The building is set within a yard that has been used for business purposes for many years and is in close proximity to another premises that has been used for commercial purposes in recent years. It is also adjacent to residential properties (with the expected domestic paraphernalia) to the south. The curtilage of the building is quite distinct from the open fields to the north and east. The yard area to the eastern side has been in regular use for outdoor storage and this has a detrimental impact on the character of the barn and the wider landscape. The proposal represents an opportunity to improve this. The proposed curtilage for the holiday lets does not include all of the existing yard, and part would remain as it is now, but a significant proportion of the existing yard would be returned to grass.

52. Given the above, the barn is not in a location that makes its setting particularly sensitive to the harm that can be caused by domestication of a site and the introduction of parking, gardens and other associated domestic paraphernalia. The site is quite different to a field barn located in an open agricultural landscape in this respect.
53. As such, there would be very little harm to the building arising from its conversion to domestic use for holiday accommodation.
54. Furthermore, the proposed holiday let use allows for sensitive use of the outdoor space. Because the proposal is for holiday let use, the outdoor space can remain communal and does not need to be carved up in the way that is likely to be necessary if the proposal was for permanent dwellings. The submitted plans show the use of post and rail fencing, which would not be acceptable. This can be easily remedied however though a condition that requires boundary treatments to be approved and then implemented.
55. The scheme proposed to have parking mainly concentrated in the yard to the front of the building and the space to the east, that is currently a storage yard, laid to grass without any subdivision. Rather than harming the setting of the building, it is considered that the scheme would enhance it over and above the previous business use of the site.
56. It is therefore considered that the harm to the historic character of the barn would be minor and would be outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into beneficial use and improving the setting of the building. The scheme therefore accords with policies RT2 and DMC3 and DMC10 in these respects.

### **Amenity Impact**

57. The nearest neighbouring residential properties are sited around 35m to the south of the site. This distance is sufficient to ensure there would be no harm to amenity through the introduction of holiday accommodation use at the site.
58. Under the application refused in 2006, concern was raised about conflicts between residential use at the site and business use of the neighbouring depot building to the west of the site. However, the Planning Inspector did not share these concerns, noting that:  
  
*“I do not find that the appeal building's proximity to the adjacent depot, counts against the proposal. The appeal building relates mainly to the side of the depot, whereas the depot's main doors are at the front. There is no significant curtilage to the depot facing the appeal building. Consequently there would be little interaction between the commercial and residential uses, other than the sharing of the access. The gardens to the dwellings would be to their rear, away from the depot. I conclude that, should use of the property as a transport depot resume, it would not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of the proposed dwellings.”*
59. Given this, a case could not be made that holiday accommodation would not be compatible with the neighbouring business use. It should also be noted that holiday accommodation would not necessarily require the same level of amenity standards as a permanent dwelling in any case.
60. Overall, it is considered that holiday accommodation is an appropriate use of the site that would not cause harm to the amenity of any neighbouring users and residents and would not conflict with any established land uses in the locality. The application accords with policy DMC3 in this respect.

### **Highway Impact**

61. The existing access from Main Street would be utilised and sufficient parking is proposed in a manner that would not be harmful to the character of the building or the wider surrounding area. The Highway Authority has confirmed that there are no objections. The scheme accords with policies DMT3 and DMT8.

### **Ecology Impact**

62. A Protected Species appraisal had been carried out. This identifies that the barn contains a bat roost. Bat mitigation measures have been provided. Subject to the bat mitigation strategy being implemented the impact on protected species would be acceptable and this requirement should be secured by condition. The application accords with policy DMC11.

### **Environmental Management**

63. An Environmental Management and Mitigation statement has not been provided. The scheme would provide an opportunity to incorporate energy efficiency measures as required by policy CC1, therefore, a condition requiring a scheme to be approved and then implemented is recommended should the application be approved.

### **Conclusion**

64. The proposed development would sufficiently conserve the character of the non-designated heritage asset and would bring in back into appropriate and beneficial use. The scheme would not give rise to any unacceptable harm. The application is recommended for refusal.

### **Human Rights**

65. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.
66. List of Background Papers (not previously published)
67. Nil

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