

FULL APPLICATION - CHANGE OF FARMHOUSE TO HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS AT DALE HOUSE FARM, CHAPEL STREET, MONYASH - (NP/DDD/0220/0127/SC)

APPLICANT: MR ALAN ROBERTS

Summary

1. The application seeks permission for the conversion of the traditional farmhouse with an extension and alterations to accommodate holiday letting. The key considerations are, the principle, the potential impact on the character and appearance of the host property and the privacy and amenity of neighbouring dwellings, the wider locality and highway safety. In this case, the impacts are considered acceptable and the application is recommended for approval.

Site and Surroundings

2. Dale House Farm consists of a traditional two storey farmhouse, with two holiday cottages attached and an array of associated outbuildings, which together form around a courtyard area. The property is sited within a fairly large plot in open countryside to the north of the village of Monyash, at the junction of Chapel Street and Blackwell Lane. The nearest neighbouring dwelling is 'The Grange' a grade II listed property sited around 200m to the south of the development. The property and associated land lies outside of the village Conservation Area. A public right of way runs in a north south direction around 130m east of the site at a higher level. According to the Authority's Landscape Character and Action Plan, the site rests within the 'Limestone Village Farmlands', which it describes as a small-scale settled agricultural landscape, characterised by limestone villages, set within a repeating pattern of narrow strip fields bounded by drystone walls.

Proposal

3. Consent is being sought, to change the use of the main farmhouse to holiday letting, including an extension and associated parking. Amended plans have since been submitted showing design changes to the extension and clearer parking arrangements, these amended plans now form the basis of the current application.

RECOMMENDATION:

4. **That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**
 1. **Standard 3-year time limit.**
 2. **Compliance with amended plans and details.**
 3. **Design and materials.**
 4. **Holiday occupancy restriction.**
 5. **Parking spaces to be provided.**
 6. **Lighting scheme to be submitted and agreed prior to occupation.**

Key Issues

5. The principle of conversion and extension and the impact on local amenity and highway safety.

Relevant History

6. 2019 - NP/DDD/1019/1081 - Change of use of Dale House into single self-catering accommodation - Withdrawn owing to insufficient information to properly assess the impact of the proposal on the non-heritage assets and the potential landscape harm.
7. 2002 - DDD1102548 - Change of use from Tack room and hay loft to self-catering accommodation - Granted.
8. 1992 - WED0392148 - Change of use of part of dwelling into holiday cottage - Granted.

Consultations

9. Highway Authority - No objections, subject to the accommodation not being taken into use until parking space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the revised/approved plans. The garage/car parking space(s) to be retained and not used for any purpose other than the garaging of private motor vehicles associated with the residential occupation of the property and that no gates or other barriers on the access other than those already existing shall be erected.
10. Parish Council - *'...the PC are appreciative in the changes to the plans however they would like to object on the following grounds:-*
 - *Potential increase in noise in this small residential village due to large number of occupants at any one time.*
 - *Concern about the increase in traffic along this rural lane and surrounding area.*
 - *The PC would like to see an increase in screening due to increase in light pollution etc.*
 - *The PC still believes that the area is over saturated with multi occupancy rental properties.*
11. PDNPA Archaeology – *'This supporting information demonstrates that the harm to the significance of these buildings resulting from the physical changes resulting from proposed development is very minor. This alongside the fact that the one unconverted agricultural range is now not part of the development proposals means that there are no further archaeological comments or concerns with this development'.*

Representations

12. There have been 21 letters of representation, totalling 18 objections and 3 of support. The content of which are summarised as followed:-

Objections to the scheme.

- Overdevelopment of the site to the detriment of the village dynamics.
- Generate more traffic.
- Noise and disturbance/light pollution.
- More affordable housing needed not holiday letting.
- No significant contribution to local economy.
- Village is saturated with this type of accommodation.
- Not in keeping with the local environment or heritage of the village.
- No landscaping proposed.
- Road safety concerns.
- Taking out of circulation another family home.
- Further erosion of residential property.

Support for the scheme.

- Ideal for holiday use.
- Limited provision for large family groups in the village.
- In walking distance of local amenities.
- Local businesses rely on visitors.
- Brings additional jobs to the village.
- Negligible impact regarding additional traffic.

National Planning Policy Framework

13. 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.
14. 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 Para: 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.
15. In addition, 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."
16. Whilst Paragraph 193 states, that when considering the impact of a proposed development 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.
17. In this case, within the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and the new 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

18. 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.

19. 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.
20. DS1 - *Development Strategy*. States, that recreation and tourism development is acceptable in principle in open countryside.
21. RT2 - *Hotels, bed & breakfast & holiday accommodation*. States, that the change of use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit will be permitted.

Development Management Policies

22. 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.
23. 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.
24. DMH7 - *Extensions and alterations*. States, that extensions and alterations to dwellings will be permitted, provided that the proposal does not detract from the character, appearance or amenity of the original building, its setting or neighbouring buildings.
25. 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.
26. DMH7 - *Extensions and alterations*. States that extensions and alterations to dwellings will be permitted provided that the proposal does not detract from the character, appearance or amenity of the original building, its setting or neighbouring buildings.
27. DMT3 *Access and design criteria*. States amongst other things, 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*. Says, 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.
28. The Authority has also adopted three separate supplementary planning documents (SPD) that offers design guidance on householder development namely the Design Guide, the Building Design Guide and the Detailed Design Guide on Alterations and Extensions. This guidance offers specific criteria for assessing the impacts of householder development on neighbouring properties.

Assessment

Principle of Change of use

29. Policy DS1 allows for the creation of holiday accommodation, preferably by re-use of traditional buildings. Whilst Policy RT2 specifically allows for the change of use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit. The NPPF also supports the provision of sustainable tourist facilities in rural areas.

Proposed change of use

30. The existing farmhouse is considered a heritage asset and currently used as a 5 bedroomed dwelling (with two existing holiday cottages attached). The current scheme would see the main farmhouse changed to 10 bedrooms, each with its own facilities. The living accommodation would be over two floors. On the ground floor would be two entrance halls, three bedrooms with en-suite facilities, lounge seating area and a kitchen/dining area set within the proposed new extension. A bin storage area and WC would be incorporated into the existing single storey outbuilding. Two separate staircases would allow access to the first floor accommodation, which would comprise a further 7 bedrooms with en-suite facilities. Externally the existing garaging would remain and the redundant stable block used as storage for oil tank (if required), cycle storage, garden maintenance and linen store. Space for at least 13 vehicles has been provided for within the site.
31. In this case (not including the new extension) the change of use would occur entirely within the shell of the existing farmhouse, with no requirements to alter the external appearance of the property. Internally, layout changes to the rooms would be required to make better use of the space for the intended holiday accommodation, however, these would have limiting impact on the original fabric of the building. Consequently, it is considered the change of use is acceptable and accords with policy RT2, DMC5 & DMH7 in these respects.

Principle of extension and alterations

32. There are no objections in principle to extending a dwelling, subject to satisfactory scale, design and external appearance and where development pays particular attention to the amenity, privacy and security of nearby properties. In accordance with policies DS1 & DMC3 in this instance.

Proposed extension

33. The Authority's design guidance states, that extensions should harmonise with the parent building, whilst respecting the dominance of the original. In this case, the new extension would enclose an area of yard between the side wall of the main house and a detached single storey outbuilding, with an existing high boundary wall forming the rear wall of the extension. The roof would be flat and would incorporate an extensive green roof system, incorporating an array of rooflights. A set of bi-fold doors set in walling to match the existing dwelling, would form the front elevation facing into the courtyard. The extension would provide additional living accommodation in the form of a kitchen and dining room space.
34. In this case, it is considered that the contemporary style approach, concealed between two buildings and a high garden wall, would be appropriate, by allowing the two distinct design elements to be read separately. Therefore complementing and helping to conserve the traditional character and appearance of the main property. Consequently, the proposed extension is considered acceptable in scale, form, design and use of materials, in accordance with policies, DMC3 & DMH7 in these respects.

Potential amenity impact on neighbouring properties and the wider locality.

35. Dale House Farm is located approximately 0.6km from the centre of the village, with the nearest neighbouring property 'The Grange' sited around 200m to the south. Whilst it is recognised, that the farmhouse could be used more intensively than a single private dwelling, it is considered the proposed holiday accommodation would not generate significant levels of noise and disturbance to warrant undue concern, as the area is already heavily used by visitors and existing businesses. As such, the holiday accommodation use would be compatible with this location.
36. Externally, noise sources would mainly be from vehicles arriving and leaving the property. In this case, it would be considerate that check in/check out times would not continue late into the evening. Indeed there are two holiday cottages already on the site, which have been running for a considerable number of years without any objections. Moreover, the site comprises an enclosed courtyard and is fairly well screened from the highway, with mature trees and hedging. In this regard, the proposed use of Dale House Farm as further holiday accommodation in this countryside location, would not add a significant amount of noise or disturbance to the nearest neighbouring property, or any other residential properties in the locality. Consequently, and subject to a condition to minimise light pollution at the site, the scheme accords with policies GSP3 & DMH7 in respect of the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and the wider locality in general.

Potential Highway Impacts

37. A sufficient number of parking spaces would be provided in association with the use, these would be located entirely within the site. The Highway Authority have raised no principle concerns, subject to the accommodation not being taken into use until parking space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the revised/approved plans. The garage/car parking space(s) to be retained and not used for any purpose other than the garaging of private motor vehicles associated with the residential occupation of the property and that no gates or other barriers on the access other than those already existing shall be erected. Consequently, subject to the above being conditioned, the proposed scheme would be acceptable in highway safety terms, in accordance with policies DMT3 & DMT8 in these respects.

Potential impact on Protected Species

38. A Bat and Bird Presence/Absence Survey report was carried out in August 2019. The report found no impacts on local bat colonies within the detached barn on site and no bat roosts present within the structure of Dale House Farm itself. In this case, there would be no requirement to provide any bat mitigation measures.

Other issues

39. Both the Parish Council and a number of objectors had raised concerns, regarding the over saturation of self-catering accommodation in the area, with loss of residential property and the lack of affordable need being provided. For some clarification on these points, the following explanation is offered.
40. From a policy perspective, there's no requirement to assess such applications under the Authority's housing policies should an applicant want to change the use of a traditional building to holiday accommodation. Whilst it is acknowledged the property could accommodate dwelling units, policies do not say that permanently occupied dwelling units take precedent over holiday accommodation, and therefore applicants should not be discriminated against based on subjective opinions on the mix of accommodation available to residents and visitors in the area.

41. Moreover, our housing policies simply give applicants the option to create dwelling units from buildings of heritage significance, it doesn't say this is the preferred use for such buildings. Consequently, the policy position is, that market forces generally determine the demand for holiday accommodation, so it cannot be argued that there is already too much. In terms of purposes and duty, the Authority cannot prioritise permanent dwelling units over holiday accommodation, if we consider holiday accommodation furthers the second purpose, whilst also helping the economic wellbeing, which it appears to be achieving in this case.

Environmental Management

42. According to The agent, the main two storey building is presently heated by an oil-fired boiler situated within the walled patio area. This would be removed and a more efficient boiler installed. It is also proposed to install 8 solar panels to the south facing roof slope of the two storey building, as shown on the amended roof plan, providing further energy. The extension would be highly insulated with high performance glazing used. In addition, energy efficient internal lighting and solar powered external lights would be utilised. The development would also include 4 electric vehicle charging points, to be located within the garage and adjacent to parking spaces. The agent further states, that the whole site has its own surface water drainage system, which feeds into nearby soakaways which then provide water to the vegetation and trees. Water efficiency would be introduced on all en-suite facilities where possible.
43. The site is situated around 0.6km from the centre of the village, and can be easily reached by walking or cycling. In this case, the agent has stated, that the site would include a lockable cycle store which would be located within the existing stable block. Guests would also be informed how to travel to and from the site sustainably, with further information on rail travel, cycle and walking maps/routes and public rights of ways. With regard to this, it is considered the above generally accords with Policy CC1 in these respects.

Conclusion

44. It is concluded that the proposed change of use and new extension would be acceptable in both principle and design and would have no adverse effect on nearby residential amenity or highway safety, according with relevant policies in the Development Plan and the NPPF. Consequently, the scheme is recommended for approval, subject to appropriate and reasonable conditions.
45. Human Rights
46. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.
47. List of Background Papers (not previously published)
48. Nil
49. Report Author: Steve Coombes, Planner.