

**FULL APPLICATION - CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO HOLIDAY COTTAGE, ON LAND ADJACENT TO B5056, OPPOSITE HISTORIC LEAD ORE HOUSE, WINSTER - (NP/DDD/0120/0101/SC)**

**APPLICANT: MR WILD**

**Summary**

1. The application seeks permission to convert a traditional stone barn to short-term holiday accommodation. The key planning considerations are the principle, potential effect on the agricultural character and setting of the barn and consequently the wider landscape impact of the development. In this case, the principle and the impact of the scheme are considered acceptable and the application is recommended for approval.

**Site and Surroundings**

2. The development site is located around 0.5km from the centre of Winster, on the eastern side of the B5056, beyond the southern edge of the village. The site contains a traditional 1½-storey stone agricultural building sited around 40m from the road and constructed of limestone under a roof of stone and red clay tiles to the front and Staffordshire blue and red clay tiles to the rear. The building has a simple and humble appearance, with few external openings or distinguishing features. Vehicular access to the site is over an open grassed area between the road and the building, which according to the Parish Council is Common Land. The building is surrounded by farmland and is visible from a nearby public footpath that runs east to west approximately 30m north of the site.

**Proposal**

3. Planning permission is being sought to convert a traditional field barn to short-term holiday accommodation. This is effectively a re-submission of a previous application that was withdrawn due to lack of heritage information. This now has been addressed in the current proposal.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

1. **Standard 3-year time limit.**
2. **Compliance with submitted plans and details.**
3. **Removal of PD rights for external appearance & extensions etc.**
4. **Conversion within shell with no rebuilding.**
5. **Scheme to be submitted for grey water recycling and no occupation until operational.**
6. **Design and materials.**
7. **Holiday occupancy restriction.**
8. **Historic Building Recording.**
9. **Lighting scheme to be submitted and agreed prior to occupation.**
10. **No Caravans or other domestic paraphernalia shall be stored on the site.**
11. **Protected species mitigation measures.**
12. **Additional landscaping to be submitted to and agreed prior to occupation.**

**Key Issues**

4. The principle of the development, the potential impact on the valued character and appearance of the barn and its setting within the surrounding landscape, neighbourly amenity and highway safety.

### **Relevant History**

5. 2019 - NP/DDD/1018/0993 - Conversion of vacant barn to holiday let – Withdrawn, due to lack of a heritage appraisal to properly assess the scheme.

### **Adjacent sites**

6. 2019 - NP/DDD/1219/1306 - Re-instatement of a small agricultural building for use as a hay/dry feed store and potential animal housing when required - Refused.
7. 2015 - NP/DDD/1014/1068 - Conversion of agricultural barn to provide single local need affordable dwelling – Granted on appeal.

### **Consultations**

Highway Authority – No objections, subject to the following condition; *‘Before the first occupation of the holiday let, space shall be provided for the parking and manoeuvring of visitors’/clients’ vehicles, laid out, surfaced and maintained throughout the life of the development free from any impediment to its designated use’.*

Parish Council – *‘...It was resolved that as there were no significant changes from the previous application (NP/DDD/0118/0993) an objection should be made with along the lines previously submitted. The objection was based on’:*

*the architectural and historical importance of the building.*  
*the integrity of the Rope Makers House and the adjacent field.*  
*the proposed conversion of the building to a holiday let which would be harmful to the open countryside in which the building is located.*  
*the use of the building as a holiday let would further increase the number of holiday lets in the vicinity.*  
*the current access which would not sustain an increase in vehicle use.*

Natural England - No objection.

PDNPA Archaeology – States that on the whole, the level of harm to the significance of the building itself would be minor and could be adequately mitigated by condition requiring a scheme of building recording.

### **Representations**

Two letters of objection have been received and summarised as follows:

- Barn conversions should only be allowed if a strong local need were proven.
  - Design and appearance of the development is harmful.
  - Impact on landscape as barn is highly exposed.
  - Potential archaeological impacts.
  - Vehicular access would have to go over common land.
  - Field should not be divided as it would lose its historical association with the former ropery business.
8. There are also a number of objections from residents to the previously withdrawn scheme that have not responded to this application. However, the views are very similar to the ones submitted and do not bring up any further significant planning considerations that have not already been presented.

## **National Planning Policy Framework**

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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."
12. 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.
13. 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.

## **Core Strategy**

14. 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.
15. 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.
16. DS1 - *Development Strategy*. States, that recreation and tourism development is acceptable in principle in open countryside.

17. 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.
18. RT2 - *Hotels, bed & breakfast & holiday accommodation.* States, that the change of use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit will be permitted.
19. 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.
20. CC1 - *Climate change mitigation and adaptation.* Sets out that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources. Development must also achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions.

### **Development Management Policies**

21. 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.
22. 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.
23. DMC10 - *Conversion of a heritage asset.* Conversion 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.
24. 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.
25. DMC11 - *Safeguarding, recording and enhancing nature conservation interests.* 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 site, 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.

26. 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.
27. DMC12 - *Sites, features or species of wildlife, geological or geomorphological importance or all other sites, features and species*. development will only be permitted where:(i) significant harm can be avoided and the conservation status of the population of the species or habitat concerned is maintained; and(ii) the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh any adverse effect

## **Assessment**

### **Principle of development**

28. 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.
29. The building subject to the application is a good example of an historic but simple field barn and is clearly a traditional building. We consider it to be a non-designated heritage asset. The broad principle of the conversion to holiday accommodation is therefore acceptable. 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.

### **Siting, design & materials**

30. The guiding principle behind the design of any conversion is that the character of the original building should be retained. Policies within the development plan makes it clear, that applications for conversions of non-designated heritage assets must be achievable without such 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. Whilst the barn is not listed, it does possess some historic and architectural merit and therefore considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.
31. The proposal is to create one 1-bedroom holiday barn. The conversion of the unit would use the existing openings with no new opening required (aside from two small conservation rooflights). Other works include, re-laying the whole roof with natural blue slate and some repointing with lime mortar to the existing buildings fabric. In addition, new cast iron guttering and downpipes would be used, new simple glazed infills to the small existing openings and full glazing to the existing door openings, each door opening would include timber shutters.

32. Externally, the appearance of the building would change little, with the proposed holiday accommodation use offering a visual enhancement, by maintaining the agricultural character and appearance of the simple and traditional outbuilding. Internally, the accommodation would comprise of an open living/dining area and bathroom at ground floor, with a staircase leading up to a bedroom at first floor. Two small conservation rooflights and a flue pipe would be inserted in the rear roofslope of the building.
33. In this case and without any further physical changes to the external appearance of the building required, it is considered the proposed conversion and design would maintain and preserve the character and appearance of the building and its setting within the surrounding landscape. In these respects, the scheme is considered acceptable in accordance with policies L3, DMC3 & DMC10 in these respects.

### **Potential landscape impact of the development**

34. The site is enclosed with traditional dry-stone walls, with a timber access gate at the entrance to the field. A small area of parking/hardstanding would be provided close to the entrance to the site, with a narrow footpath leading from the vehicle hardstanding to the front door of the building, both the hardstanding and path would be laid with limestone chippings. To the rear of the building would be a small lawn graded down from the field. The remainder of the outside space would be kept as a wild flower meadow.
35. The barn itself is contained within a field beyond the southern outskirts of the village and can be clearly seen from the main road and along the public right of way to the north of the site. However, the building is set back around 40m from the roadside and there is another converted barn sited around 55m to the south of the development site, with some small agricultural structures and several mature trees between them, which together give the locality a less than isolated appearance.
36. In this case, it is considered that with conditions requiring a lighting scheme to be submitted and agreed, no domestic paraphernalia such as caravans to be brought on site, the removal of Permitted Development Rights for extensions and changes to the external appearance of the building and a landscaping scheme requiring a native tree and shrub mix. It is considered the proposed conversion would have a reduced visual impact on the site and therefore on the wider countryside setting. Consequently and subject to the above conditions being implemented, the scheme would be considered acceptable in siting and landscape impact terms, in accordance with policies GSP3 and L1 respectively.

### **Potential impact on nearby residential amenity**

37. The nearest neighbouring property is Mossy Mere Barn', sited around 55m to the south of the development site. Due to the degree of separation of this property from the development, it is considered there would be no harm to the amenity or quiet enjoyment of the occupants of this or any other residential properties in the locality. Consequently, the proposal accords with policies GSP3 & DMC3 in respect of the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

### **Potential Highway impacts**

38. The Highway Authority raise no objections subject to the following; '*Before the first occupation of the holiday let, space shall be provided for the parking and manoeuvring of visitors'/clients' vehicles, laid out, surfaced and maintained throughout the life of the development free from any impediment to its designated use*'. Subject to this being conditioned accordingly, the scheme is considered acceptable in highway terms, according with policies DMT3 & DMT8 respectively.

### **Potential impact on Protected Species**

39. No bats were recorded roosting on site during the survey works and consequently there is no compulsory requirement for mitigation. However, in order to enhance the ecological value of the site and in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, it has been suggested that a bat roosting feature is added as part of the re-development.
40. In this case, it is considered a built in stone bat box could be integrated into the building. In this case a condition would require this to be sited high on the south facing gable away from any areas of light spill. In addition a Barn Owl box would be conditioned to be erected prior to occupation on a nearby tree and at least 4m from the ground. Subject to this it is considered the scheme would accord with advice on enhancing ecology values in the NPPF and the Authority's development Management Policy DMC12 in these respects.

### **Environmental measures**

41. According to the agent, local tradesmen would be used in the construction of the barn and materials sourced locally where possible in order to keep the environmental footprint low, these are not matters which can be made subject of planning conditions. Internally all water fixtures and fittings would, be fitted with water saving devices such as low flush toilets. Greywater harvesting is proposed for flushing the w.c and this can be the subject of planning conditions. The applicant's agent is also contemplating the installation of an air source heat pump for heating and an update on this will be provided verbally when the report is considered.
42. With regard to the above, the proposals are considered acceptable in meeting the climate change mitigation and adaption requirements of policy CC1 in these respects.

### **Other issues**

43. Access to the site is from the main road and over a section of common land. In this case, the applicant has no plans to alter or engineer the existing right of way. However, should this be the case at any point in the future, a footnote would be appended to the decision notice reminding the applicant of his duties under the Commons Act 2006. That all necessary notices would be appropriately served, which in this case would be to Winster Parish Council as the Local Authority which has been conferred the power to protect the Common.

### **Conclusion**

44. In conclusion, the proposed scheme would help retain the historic character and appearance of the building, whilst proposing a viable and beneficial use, which in turn would contribute to the setting of the building in the wider landscape. Moreover, there would be no adverse impact on any nearby residential amenity, highway safety or protected species. Consequently, the application is considered constitutes a sustainable form of development and is therefore recommended for approval subject to appropriate conditions.

**Human Rights**

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

46. List of Background Papers (not previously published)

47. Nil

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