

8. FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION OF BARN TO HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION AT THE OLD BARN SMITHY LANE PARWICH (NP/DDD/0124/0037)

APPLICANT: MR AND MRS GOSLING

Summary

1. The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of a traditional agricultural building to short term holiday accommodation at The Old Barn, Smithy Lane, Parwich.
2. The application proposes the conversion of the existing building and the creation of a new defined curtilage with parking area.
3. It is concluded that the proposed conversion would broadly conserve the significance and character of the building and surrounding landscape, with arising harm being outweighed by the benefits or bringing the building in to a viable use and promoting tourism in the locality, in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy and the statutory purposes of the National Park.
4. The application is recommended for approval.

Site and Surroundings

5. The site comprises the Old Barn, located on Smithy Lane, Parwich, c.600m north-west of the village centre.
6. The building comprises a single range situated on the north-east side of Smithy Lane and at the southern end of an open field bound to the east by Pike Hall Lane and to the west by a further field.
7. Opposite the road to the south of the site is Townhead House, a mid-18th century house, which is Grade II Listed.
8. The building is non-designated, identified on the Derbyshire HER as a constituent part of a Farmstead at Townhead House and is situated within Parwich Conservation Area.

Proposal

9. The application proposes the conversion of a barn to holiday accommodation.
10. Parking would be provided for two vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION:

11. That the application is APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Statutory time limit**
- 2. In accordance with amended plans**
- 3. Conversion in shell only**
- 4. Agree landscaping scheme**
- 5. Agree external lighting**

6. Agree biodiversity enhancement measures

7. Design details

8. Underground service lines

9. Removal of permitted development rights

10. Climate change mitigation measures

Key Issues

12. The principle of the conversion to holiday accommodation; the impact upon character, appearance and significance of heritage asset; the impact upon landscape character; the impact upon residential amenities; the impact upon protected species, the impact upon highway safety and climate change mitigation.

History

13. There is no relevant planning history to this application.

Consultations

14. Highway Authority (Derbyshire County Council) – No objections

15. District Council – No response at time of writing

16. Parwich Parish Council – *At a meeting of Parwich Parish Council on the 17th of January it was agreed by a majority vote that this application should be supported on the grounds that it will preserve a historic building and compliment the housing stock in the village.*

17. PDNPA Archaeology – *I suggest that a revised scheme with a smaller number of bedrooms (1 or 2) would help to reduce both the number of rooflights and the glazing needed to the apertures on the front elevation, as well as the need to insert a second floor to the full length of the building. Such a revised scheme could work better with the structure of the building and I am mindful of the requirement of NPPF para. 201 to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of a heritage asset and any aspect of planning proposal.*

Should the application reach a point where the level of harm is considered acceptable with respect to the planning balance, then a conditioned scheme of building recording is recommended to mitigate the harm identified above.

18. PDNPA Ecology – *There is no protected species report submitted with this application. The Design and Access statement refers to our exemption categories ‘recently re-roofed buildings (last 10 years)’ as a reason for not providing a survey report. We can confirm that this is an exception category and a protected species survey is therefore not required. The photographs of the building indicate that the exterior elevations and roof are relatively well maintained.*

Provision of bird nesting boxes at the site would be welcome. These would compensate for loss for any nesting opportunities associated with the conversion. This could be secured by a suitable condition:

Following completion of works two nest boxes shall be erected. The location and type

of nest box shall be agreed in advance with the Authority.

Representations

19. Five letters of representation from four individuals have been received to date in objection to the application. The reasons given are summarised below:
- a) Highway safety concerns
 - b) A proliferation of holiday lets in the area, despite a need for social affordable housing
 - c) Residential amenity from overlooking
 - d) Concerns regarding drainage and sewage
 - e) Ecological concerns

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

20. 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. These 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 park authorities 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.
21. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration and carries particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date.
22. 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.
23. Para 182 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.

Main Development Plan Policies

Core Strategy

24. 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 conservation and enhancement of the National Park's landscape and its natural and heritage assets.

25. GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.
26. Policy DS1 details the development strategy for the National Park.
27. L1 identifies that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.
28. L3 requires that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal significance of archaeological, artistic or historic asset and their setting, including statutory designation and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest.
29. 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.
30. RT2 outlines development related to hotels, bed & breakfast & holiday accommodation. It states that the change of use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit will be permitted.
31. 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.

Development Management Policies

32. 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.
33. 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.
34. 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.

35. 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.

Supplementary Planning Documents

36. Peak District National Park Authority Design Guide (2007): The Design Guide states that, when considering a conversion, the building in question should be of sufficient historic or architectural merit to warrant its conversion. Factors such as location, size and character of the building and its means of access will all be assessed. The guiding principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting should be respected and retained.
37. Peak District National Park Conversion of Traditional Buildings SPD (2022): The SPD provides detailed guidance on the principles to be considered when proposing the conversion of traditional buildings. This is set out as 6 key principles:
- a. Understanding the building and its setting
 - b. Working with the existing form and character
 - c. Following a conservation approach
 - d. Creating responsive new design
 - e. Using appropriate materials and detailing.
 - f. Conserving and enhancing the setting.

Assessment

Principle of the development

38. DS1 allows for the creation of dwellings and holiday accommodation, preferably by re-use of traditional buildings. Policy HC1 supports the conversion of valued vernacular buildings to open market housing if it is required in order to achieve conservation and/or enhancement of the buildings or enhancement within designated settlements. 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.
39. The building subject to the application is a traditional historic field barn building and considered a non-designated heritage asset. The broad principle of the conversion to holiday accommodation is therefore acceptable. Policy DMC10 supports conversion of heritage assets to residential uses providing that they are achievable without changes that would adversely affect their character, heritage significance or setting – including enlargement, subdivision, or other alterations to form and mass, inappropriate new window openings or doorways and major rebuilding.
40. The application proposes a holiday let use. However, policy HC1 supports conversion of buildings such as this to market housing in principle. It does not require a sequential assessment of other uses where the use as unrestricted housing would achieve the buildings' conservation and be acceptable in other regards. Imposition of a holiday occupancy condition would therefore only be necessary if use as market dwelling was considered to have unacceptable adverse impacts. The following report assesses impacts of conversion as proposed on the building and its setting, as well as other material impacts.

Design

41. Policy DMC10 relating to conversion of a heritage asset requires that works to the building to facilitate conversion conserve and or enhance the character and significance of the heritage asset.
42. The building to which the application relates is a one and a half-storey barn. The building is rectangular shaped, constructed with random rubble limestone walls sitting under a dual pitched roof covered with 'Staffordshire Blue' plain tiles.
43. The two end elevations are mostly plain, with 'pitching holes' at first floor level. The front (west) elevation has 4 door openings, 2 of which having been partially infilled to form window openings. The rear elevation has one central door opening and a small window opening which is blocked up. The building is not currently in use, but was originally utilised to house cattle and hay storage, with the cow stalls still present inside the building.
44. The building appears to have been altered at some point, including rebuilding of the south gable end with a differing arrangement of apertures than existed previously, with a single taking-in door within the middle of the elevation replaced with two 'window sized' openings. It is regrettable to have lost the original detailing of this gable, which reduces the significance of the building. As a result of the recent works to the building the southern bay of the building has two elevations internally lined with blockwork, a blockwork cross wall to separate from the northern room and a modern concrete floor. The roof of the structure is entirely modern, albeit generally reflective of the original pitch, roofline, and materials.
45. The building incorporates two lean-to out buildings, one on the north gable constructed of red brick walls and corrugated sheet roof and the other on the rear constructed of block walls with no roof. These would be removed as part of the scheme of conversion.
46. Minor amendments to the proposals have been sought and submitted during the course of the application. As amended, the scheme works within the shell of the existing barn. Proposed alterations to the building would consist of; the removal of the lean-to extensions, re-opening of infilled door openings, two new conservation style rooflights, both limited to the rear roof slope, a new flu pipe, and the provision of new timber doors and windows, finished with a grey/green paint.
47. The modern brick and blockwork structures that survive in a ruinous or semi-ruinous state to the north and rear elevations detract from the legibility of the original form of the building. The removal of these would be considered an enhancement to the building.
48. The other interventions listed above work within the buildings existing fabric, and would be sympathetic to its character.
49. Overall, it is considered the design of the conversion would conserve the character and appearance of the building and its setting within the surrounding landscape. Consequently, the scheme is considered acceptable in accordance with policies RT2, L1, L3, DMC3 & DMC10 in these respects.

Impact upon Landscape Character

50. The existing building is a barn of traditional design and appearance. It occupies a roadside plot at a bend on Smithy Lane. There are open fields on all non-road sides, with sporadic tree cover. The ground rises to the north and west. The barn is located

outside of the village of Parwich, within the edge of the designated Conservation Area.

51. The barn sits opposite an occupied Grade II Listed dwelling, but is otherwise surrounded by fields, at a low ground level compared to the surrounding topography. There are other similar buildings along Smithy Lane. There is a public footpath running north west to the west of the barn. The building is clearly visible from this.
52. In the wider landscape the converted barn would only be visible from nearby due to the sloping topography of the site, obstructing longer range views.
53. The proposed development seeks to simplify the layout and material use at the site, removing later additions in materials which are out of keeping with the local vernacular style and character of the Conservation Area. The development of the land around the barn as curtilage would, inevitably have some domesticating impact on the setting of the barn and the rural landscape. However, that impact is lessened by virtue of the existing enclosure around the site, the position of the building at the edge of the settlement where other domestic and urban features also populate the setting, and the fact that the building is open only to short-range views. As such, the harm arising from the curtilage creation is relatively low, and would not harm the valued landscape character of the surrounding area to any significant extent.
54. It is considered reasonable and necessary to remove permitted development rights for alterations, extensions, outbuildings, boundary treatments and solar panels because it is considered that the conversion scheme is acceptable on the basis that it conserves the character of the traditional building. Uncontrolled alterations and extensions are likely to cause harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

Impact upon Residential Amenities

55. Outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight are fundamental considerations when altering or extending a property. This is to ensure that habitable rooms achieve a satisfactory level of outlook and natural daylight, there is adequate privacy and outdoor private amenity space and that no overbearing or harmful overshadowing of neighbouring property results.
56. The nearest neighbouring property is Townhead House, 10.5m to the southwest of the Barn. Concerns have been raised by the occupants of Townhead House with regard to overlooking.
57. The occupation of a field barn which has been uninhabited and unused for some time would likely give rise to a sense of being overlooked for nearby dwellings. However, given the location of the windows, the distance and orientation towards Townhead House and the thickness of the barn walls, which limit angles of view from within the barn, it is not considered that conversion of the barn to a dwelling would give rise to an unacceptable impact on the privacy or general amenity of Townhead House.
58. The proposals would not alter the size, scale or massing of the barn and therefore there would be no effect in terms of the structure being potentially overbearing or overshadowing.
59. Consequently, the proposal accords with policies GSP3 & DMC3 in respect of the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Impact upon Highway Safety

60. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposal.

61. Access to the site would be made via the existing, partially surfaced, access track leading from road, past the northern end of the barn to the rear of proposed holiday unit. Level access into the holiday unit from the parking area will be created and to the ground floor areas.
62. The proposal would comply with Policy DMT3.

Impact upon protected species

63. The barn has been recently re-roofed and the Authority's Ecologist confirms on that basis a protected species survey is not required. The development is unlikely to have any adverse impact upon protected species or their habit or on designated sites in accordance with policies L2, DMC11 and DMC12.
64. There are however opportunities to incorporate enhancements for species through the provision of bat and bird boxes as part of the development and appropriate landscaping could provide enhancement to habitat on site. This can be secured by an appropriate planning condition.

Climate Change Mitigation

65. Policy CC1 requires that new development makes the most efficient and sustainable use of land, building and natural resources and achieves the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency.
66. A sustainability statement has been submitted in support of this application outlining the relevant measures to be implemented.
67. The floor, walls and roof of the barns would be insulated to the increased building regulations levels, and thermally efficient glazing would be used. The existing doors would be replaced with glazed doors to allow natural light into the buildings and reduce the reliance on electrical lighting.
68. Materials used in the conversion of the barn would be sourced from local builders' merchants and local tradesmen would be used to carry out the works in order to minimise the transport implications of the conversion works.
69. The barn would be heated by an efficient oil-fired boiler and the applicants are considering the installation of solar panels on the roof to reduce the use of mains electricity. This does not form part of the current proposals however, and would likely be an inappropriate addition given the character of the building; the removal of permitted development rights for alterations to the dwelling if the application was to be approved would ensure such development remained under the Authority's control.
70. Low energy lighting would be installed internally and externally to reduce the use of electricity. Water butts would be provided to collect rainwater from the roofs to be used for irrigation of gardens.
71. With regard to the above, and given the limitations posed by the historic building, the proposals are considered acceptable in meeting the climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements of policy CC1 in these respects, subject to a condition to secure them.

Conclusion

72. Whilst there would be some minor harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, the proposed scheme would retain the historic agricultural character

and appearance of the building, whilst proposing a viable and beneficial use, which in turn would provide some enhancement to the existing building, thereby making a positive contribution to the setting of the building in the wider landscape.

73. There would be no unacceptable impact on any nearby residential amenity, or highway safety.

74. In terms of the need to restrict the property to holiday accommodation, impacts on the building, its setting, highway safety, and residential amenity would be largely the same whether the building were converted to open market housing, or to holiday accommodation. Given conversion to open market housing complies with adopted policy a condition limiting occupation to holiday use only is not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

75. The application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to appropriate conditions.

Human Rights

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

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

77. Nil

78. Report Author: Rachael Doyle – Assistant Planner: South Area.