

7. FULL APPLICATION – CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL BARN TO SINGLE (C3) 3-BEDROOM DWELLING WITH ASSOCIATED WORKS INCLUDING ACCESS AT LAMB HILL BARN OFF TROUBLEWOOD LANE, LOW BRADFELD (NP/S/0326/0286) HF

APPLICANT: CHARLOTTE WILLIAMSON

Summary

1. The application proposes conversion of an existing field barn to a residential dwelling with associated works including access. The barn is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Officers consider the development to be part retrospective.
2. The Authority's policies support the conversion of heritage assets to a residential market use where the use would conserve or enhance the asset and where such a use is necessary to achieve conservation / enhancement.
3. However, the conversion is considered to result in significant harm to the setting of the barn and the wider landscape including its quiet agricultural character, as a result of the introduction of a domestic use including associated access in what is an extremely prominent, elevated and isolated location in the landscape above Low Bradfield.
4. The proposed development would therefore not conserve the setting of the barn or wider landscape and the proposals are contrary to Policies GSP1, GSP3, L1, L3, HC1, DMC3, DMC5, DMC10, DMT3 and DMT8 of the development plan, and the Conversions SPD.
5. The application is recommended for refusal.

Proposal

6. The application seeks to convert Lamb Hill Barn to a three bedroom open market dwelling. Proposals include living / dining space, a kitchen, toilet, utility and study at ground floor, and three bedrooms, one with en-suite, and separate bathroom at first floor.
7. A new window is inserted into the kitchen area on the west elevation. The existing cart opening would be infilled with a hit and miss slated hardwood timber panelling with a panel to hide the floor construction behind. Windows and doors would be timber.
8. The existing stone slate roof is proposed to be repaired. The stone façade is to be repaired and re-pointed in lime mortar.
9. The site is to be accessed via a long access track approximately 130m long which rises a considerable height between the existing track which links to with Lamb Hill, and the barn. The track would have a twin track design with limestone.
10. The application proposes an access to continue around the west edge of the barn with parking situated to the north east between the barn and trees. The submission indicates garden would be contained to the rear (north east) courtyard area of the barn.

Site and Surroundings

11. Lamb Hill Barn is an existing gritstone field barn, understood to be 19th Century and situated in open countryside on steeply sloping agricultural land east of Low Bradfield, in an elevated and prominent position. The site is within the slopes & valleys with woodland landscape character type (LCT).

12. The barn has partly deteriorated with the stone slate roof partly collapsed. All window and door openings are currently empty. There are picking holes to the south, east and west elevations.
13. Public Right of Ways (PRoW) run east to west further south of the site, and south to north further west. There is an existing loose surfaced track leading to the field in which the barn is sited which connects with Lamb Hill further south.
14. Whilst there is a rough 130m long track currently present on site, officers consider this to be unauthorised development with there being no compelling evidence to suggest a track was previously present. The applicant does not consider the track to be unauthorised.
15. The barn lies outside of and some 190m east of the Low Bradfield Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be REFUSED for the following reason:

1. **The proposed dwelling does not achieve the conservation and / or enhancement of a non-designated heritage asset, and it does not meet any other exception for new housing in the National Park, contrary to Core Strategy Policy HC1 and Development Management Policy DMC10.**
2. **The proposed development would result in unacceptable harm to the setting of a non-designated heritage asset and to the character and appearance of the landscape, and that harm is not outweighed as part of the planning balance. The development is contrary to Core Strategy Policies GSP1, GSP3, L1 and L3; Development Management Policies DMC3, DMC5, DMT3 and DMT8; the Conversions SPD and NPPF.**

Key Issues

16. The principle of a market dwelling and its impact on the character, appearance and significance of the barn, its setting, the landscape, ecology, trees and highways.

History

17. 53082: Pre-application enquiry regarding change of use of barn to market dwelling.
18. 25/0119: Enforcement case opened November 2025 regarding creation of an unauthorised track leading up to the barn. Officers were advised an application for the track would be submitted, although the applicant did not consider the work unauthorised.

Consultations

19. Bradfield Parish Council: No response received.
20. Natural England: No response received.
21. Peak District National Park Authority Ecology: The 0.22 habitat unit deficit arising from development would be achieved by off-site provision. There is no statement to justify the level of biodiversity net gain provision or explain how design has considered biodiversity gain hierarchy. The red line area provides limited on-site gain opportunities.

The submitted protected species survey is acceptable and confirms presence of multiple bat roosts. A Natural England licence is required prior to development proceeding. The mitigation and enhancement measures proposed by the survey report are acceptable.

Conditions and footnotes recommended in respect of securing mitigation and enhancement measures for bats and birds, nesting bird checks and timescales, requirement for a Natural England licence, advice regarding roof membranes and bats, sensitive lighting for bats, and provisions relating to wild birds.

22. Sheffield City Council Flood Team: No objection.

23. Sheffield City Council Highways: Whilst the access is far from ideal, given that this is existing a refusal of the application may prove difficult to justify. The personal injury accidents for the most recent 5 years indicate and there has been 1 slight injury accident but this does not appear to be associated with the access.

The condition of the access and representations made to this effect is noted. It would be appropriate for some improvement works to the surface of the access for the initial 15m from the highway – this could be conditioned.

24. Sheffield City Council Planning: No response received.

Representations

2 letters of objection received raise the following points:

- Concern over limited publicity of the application;
- The development would have unacceptable impact on historic and landscape character due to isolated location and elevated position;
- Concern over vehicular access including that no access was ever present, and that such barns do not typically have such an access;
- Heavy vehicles have damaged access track to Mill Farm and concern with safety of access to the highway;
- Negative impact on ecology including owls, bats, herons and rabbits;
- Reference to recent construction of new drain and access track following sale of barn;
- Concern the property will be rental with other rental properties locally and low demand;
- Alternative use such as camping barn would be more positive.

4 letters of support are received and raise the following points:

- Support re-use of the barn which is unsuitable for modern farming and needs conserving;
- The design of the conversion is appropriate to the setting and historic character;
- The access has been recently improved and will be further improved by the proposal;
- No external lighting means no impact on dark skies;
- Support for sustainability measures proposed
- The site is not at risk of flooding;
- There will be no harmful impact on amenity;
- There is a need for housing and the site is in a sustainable location close to schools;
- Spin-off economic benefits to local contractors.

2 general comments have been received:

- Request that regard is given to the safety of the lower access track which serves another property and has been degraded by heavy machinery during installation of land drainage, levelling of land and installing of track following purchase in 2024. Mitigation could be achieved through restrictions on weight of plant and machinery or upgrading of access;
- Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust:
 - Do not oppose the principle of development but request appropriate bat and owl surveys are undertaken prior to determination.
 - Report indicates removal of grassland June 2023 – April 2025. It is unclear this habitat's distinctiveness was correctly assessed. It is assessed as core habitat in the Nature Recovery Network and forms part of the Government's commitment to attain

30% land to be 'good for nature' by 2030. Less than 5% of Sheffield has reached this target. Loss of this habitat undermines national nature recovery objectives.

25. It is noted that a site notice was displayed on the highway near to the main site access for a period of at least 21 days, meeting the legislative requirement for consultation.

Main Policies

26. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP3, DS1, L1, L2, L3, CC1, CC5, HC1

27. Relevant Development Management policies (DMP): DMC3, DMC5, DMC10, DMC11, DMC12, DMC13, DMT3, DMT8

Supplementary Planning Documents

Conversions (2022)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

28. 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: 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 they carry out these purposes, they also have the duty to; seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities in National Parks.
29. The NPPF is a material consideration and carries particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. Paragraph 189 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.
30. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy (2011) and the Development Management Policies (DMP) (2019). The development plan provides 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 the NPPF.

Assessment

Principle of Development

31. DS1 states in the countryside, conversion or change of use for housing, preferably by re-use of traditional buildings is acceptable. HC1.C(I) states that in the National Park provision will not be made for housing to meet open market demand. Exceptionally, new housing is acceptable where in accordance with policies GSP1 and GSP2, it is required to achieve conservation and / or enhancement of valued vernacular buildings.
32. DMC10 states for the purposes of HC1.C(I) valued vernacular includes non-designated heritage assets. In addition, it must be demonstrated that conversion to a market dwelling is required to achieve the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of the significance of the asset and the contribution of its setting.
33. The application site comprises an existing gritstone field barn located in open countryside east of Low Bradfield. The Heritage Statement indicates the barn was originally constructed in the mid 19th Century and was in possession of a local farming family until its sale to the applicant in 2023. Limited changes to the footprint are identified with exception of a small lean-to section believed to be added between 1855 and 1891.

34. Based on the age, architectural interest and historic and evidential significance of the building associated with its use as a traditional agricultural field barn, officers agree that the building is a non-designated heritage asset.
35. The principle of conversion to an open market dwelling has the potential to be acceptable under HC1 and DMC10, provided the development would achieve conservation and / or enhancement of the asset which is a key requirement to justify the exception of an open market dwelling under HC1.
36. Paragraph 3.103 of the DMP also states: *“The traditional field barns of the Peak District represent a valued feature of the historic landscape and where these are more remote from existing building groups and roadside walls they represent the biggest challenge for conversion schemes. This is because when they lie deep in historic field systems, the buildings and setting are more susceptible to harmful change and loss of character. The Landscape Strategy and Action Plan provides guidance on the protection and maintenance of historic landscape character including historic field barns stating that ‘changes to the appearance of either the building or its surroundings should be avoided’”.*

Impact on Character and Appearance

37. Policy DMC10.A states that conversion of a heritage asset will be permitted provided:
 - (i) it can accommodate the use without changes that adversely affect its character;
 - (ii) the building is capable of conversion, the extent of which would not compromise the significance and character of the building; and
 - (iii) the changes brought about by the use and associated infrastructure (such as access and services) conserves or enhances the heritage significance of the asset, its setting, and valued landscape character and built environment; and
 - (iv) the new use of the building or any curtilage created would not be visually intrusive in its landscape or adversely impact other valued characteristics.
38. In all cases under DMC10, attention will be paid to the impact of domestication and urbanisation brought about by the use on the landscape character and built environment.
39. GSP1 requires development to be consistent with National Park legal purposes and duty. L3 requires development to conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings.
40. DMC5 states development of a non-designated heritage asset will not be permitted if it would result in harm to, or loss of, the significance, character and appearance of a heritage asset, unless the development is considered to be acceptable by the Authority following a balanced judgement that takes into account the asset’s significance.
41. L1 states development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character, as identified in the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan, and other valued characteristics.
42. The site lies in open countryside where it occupies an elevated location on the hillside. It is considered to be extremely prominent from numerous public vantages, including from New Road and Mill Lee Road to the south and south west, and from Hoar Stones Road 1km south west. The site is also visible from PRoWs at closer range.
43. Regarding the conversion, the structural report indicates the building is capable of conversion without significant re-building and largely within the existing shell. Re-use of the existing roof materials is supported although it is unclear if this is intended given the plans suggest re-use, whereas the structural report states replacement due to condition.
44. The conversion to the shell of the building, as proposed, appears to be generally sensitive, with the drawings showing re-use of existing openings which responds to the

Conversions SPD (5.15) which states every effort should be made to re-use existing openings and that the interior layout should be adapted to make best use of openings.

45. The one exception is a new window on the west elevation to serve the kitchen, which instead of being open plan appears to be self-contained. The new opening would remove historic fabric and alter the pattern and evidence of what openings are historic. There doesn't appear to be justification for an opening given the internal layout could be adapted so the kitchen is open plan and benefits from light from the arched opening. This could be omitted by condition.
46. Hardwood materials for windows and doors is appropriate, as are materials referred to in the Design & Access Statement including re-used roof materials, lime mortar re-pointing and glazing to picking holes. Precise details could be conditioned.
47. Subject to omission of the new window and additional details being appropriate, the conversion within the shell is considered to conserve the building. However, the character, appearance and significance of the barn does not just extend to its shell, and careful consideration is required to the impact of development on its setting.
48. Parking and bins are north east of the barn. The Design & Access Statement suggests the same location would be used for domestic garden, albeit this is not clearly defined on the drawings. It is acknowledged the siting is the most appropriate location available to minimise views from across the valley to the south, however notwithstanding this and introduction of planting, officers remain concerned that parking would be visible particularly in the winter in what is a prominent, elevated and isolated location.
49. The post and wire fencing would separate the barn from the wider field, disrupting its open and historic relationship with the wider land, resulting in a degree of harm to the barn's setting. As the extent of residential curtilage is not defined on the drawings, there are concerns areas within the fence line would become domesticated.
50. Whilst the application states no external lighting is proposed and that this could be controlled by condition, officers experience is that this is rarely the case on any residential development due to safety requirements generally raised regarding safe access at night. There are serious concerns about introducing a residential use in such an isolated setting due to the potential of domestic creep and landscape degradation over time.
51. There would in any case be lighting and clear domestic activity associated with the internal use of the barn and its openings, which would introduce additional light and signs of domestic activity within the wider valley during darker hours, in an isolated position.
52. Finally, the barn is accessed by a curving track some 130m long, which extends across a significant rise in topography. Whilst the submission states the barn will utilise an existing access, officers consider the existing track present is unauthorised.
53. The site was marketed in October 2022 during which photographs did not appear to show an access present. Photographs held by the Authority show an area of land had been cleared in January 2024, however whilst in the same area as the track now present, there did not appear to be a track present. This position is reflected in photographs contained in the Bat Survey Report conducted September 2025, and the Biodiversity Net Gain Report states "*grassland removal to accommodate the proposed access track was undertaken between June 2023 and April 2025, as per satellite imagery*". Representations state a track was not previously present and is of recent construction.
54. There is now a formal track present with hardcore laid over. This in officers view comprises development (an engineering operation) that is unauthorised. For balance it is noted the applicant does not consider the work to comprise development as they

reference a historic track was present, however officers are not aware of any compelling evidence to support this position.

55. Whilst the applicant proposes a twin track design, any track required to extend the height and distance up to the barn to serve a new residential use would have a significantly harmful impact on the open character of the landscape as it is a significant and incongruous encroachment of urban development some 130m in length and rising considerably in height. This forms a visually intrusive and harmful feature in the landscape appreciated from numerous vantages including up to 1km away.
56. The track would alter and harm the unspoiled agricultural setting of the historic barn, with field barns typically being quiet and humble features in the landscape. Given the raised and isolated position of the barn, it is not considered even with sensitive design, that this harm could be overcome through an alternate access design. Nor is the proposed limestone surfacing appropriate in the local area which has gritstone geology.
57. The introduction of a residential use is not considered to conserve or enhance the setting of the non-designated barn, contrary to Policy HC1.C(I) and the proposal would therefore not meet the exception for a new market dwelling in the National Park, as it does not achieve conservation and instead results in harm to heritage.
58. The proposal also conflicts with DMC10 as changes brought about by the use including access would not conserve or enhance the historic significance of the barn, its setting or valued landscape character, and the new use is visually intrusive in the landscape. Conflict similarly arises with the Conversions SPD in this respect which advises proposals should be sensitive to the character of external spaces both close to the building and more widely, consideration of which includes access arrangements (5.94).
59. The issues identified with the design and impact of the development on the setting of a historic barn and the landscape character result in conflict with GSP3 and DMC3, heritage policies L3 and DMC5, and landscape Policy L1. The development does not conserve or enhance the National Park's scenic beauty or heritage, contrary to GSP1.

Ecology

60. The submitted bat survey report confirmed presence of three common pipistrelle day roosts and one Myotis species likely to be a whiskered bat. Development has the potential to impact protected species and the Authority's ecologist advises a Natural England licence would be required to proceed with development. The proposed mitigation and enhancement including bat boxes, safe roofing membrane and fitting of access slates alongside sensitive lighting is acceptable.
61. Subject to the obtaining of a licence and implementation of mitigation and enhancement measures, the development is acceptable with regard to protected species.
62. The Authority's ecologist considers that based on the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment it is not possible to achieve BNG gains on site.
63. The Wildlife Trust raise concern that whilst grassland removal occurred June 2023 - April 2025 to accommodate the access track, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate original habitat and its distinctiveness was correctly assessed, as the area is recorded as core habitat on the Nature Recovery Network meaning habitat is of high ecological value in positive condition, and its loss undermines a national nature recovery objective.
64. In this respect, Paragraph 6 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act (relating to BNG) states if a person carries on activities on land on or after 30 January 2020 not in accordance with planning permission or as specified by other regulations,

and those activities resulted in lower biodiversity value of onsite habitat, then the pre-development biodiversity value should be taken as that immediately before the activities.

65. However, as the application includes an access track which officers consider to be unauthorised, it is considered the application is part-retrospective and such development is not currently subject to the statutory requirement for BNG. It is however material that the development results in loss of on-site habitat of potential value, and appropriate mitigation and enhancement would be expected under current policy.
66. Officers are satisfied the development has achieved enhancement in regard to protected species. There could be scope for further ecological enhancement via condition through final landscaping detail which could be conditioned. It is concluded development is acceptable with regard to ecology including protected species, enhancements and Policies L2, DMC11 and DMC12, subject to condition.

Highways

67. Representations raise concerns regarding the site access, its safety and impact of works undertaken to date on the condition of the initial section of existing track that extends from the highway. They also raise that the access is shared. These responses have been brought to the attention of the Highways Authority (HA) who notes the comments but considers that as the access is existing and whilst not ideal, a refusal on highways grounds would be difficult to justify including following a review of accident history. They do however advise a condition to improve the surface of the access for the first 15m.
68. Officers also recognise the concerns raised by representations, however the Highways response is a significant material consideration and based on the level of intensification occurring to the existing access it is concluded the development is acceptable on highways grounds subject to condition as recommended by the HA. There is also sufficient car parking available to serve the development in line with Authority standards.
69. Whilst no objection is raised with regard highway safety, as addressed earlier in the report, the access track required to serve a residential use and parking are considered to harm the setting of the barn and valued characteristics. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DMT3 and DMT8 in respect of impact on valued characteristics.

Other Matters

70. The application form states there are no trees within the build area, however there are a number of trees in proximity to the site, including one identified as T1 on the submitted drawings with parking encroaching into the root protection area. The Authority's tree officer states an arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan are required to satisfy Policy DMC13, and indicates such details could be conditioned.
71. NPPF footnote 63 confirms a flood risk assessment is required in Flood Zone 1 where land may be subject to other flood sources and a more vulnerable use is proposed.
72. The site is at low risk of surface water flood risk and introduces a 'more vulnerable' residential use. It is material however that the local flood risk officer does not object, and on balance it is not considered proportionate to refuse the application on absence of flood risk information as the development would not undertake works such as new built volume considered likely to result in concern associated with surface water. The proposal is acceptable in this regard and Policies CC1 and CC5.
73. With regard sustainability measures, the submission refers to provision of air source heat pump, low energy lighting and appliances and use of natural ventilation. Representation also raises support for these measures, which comply with CC1. Given the concerns with

introduction of a dwelling in this location however, with energy requirements arising as a result of a new dwelling, the benefits of these fittings are afforded limited weight.

Planning Balance

74. DMC5 and paragraph 216 of the NPPF require a balanced judgement to be reached in considering impacts on non-designated heritage assets, to include regard to the scale of harm and the significance of the asset.
75. Whilst the heritage asset in this case is non-designated and of local significance, significant harm is considered to arise towards the setting of the asset and its significance. Significant harm also arises towards the National Park landscape.
76. NPPF paragraph 189 confirms the conservation and enhancement of landscape, scenic beauty and that National Parks *have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues*. Furthermore cultural heritage in National Parks should be given *great weight*.
77. L3 requires there to be *exceptional circumstances* to justify harm to cultural heritage assets, including non-designated assets. Harm to cultural heritage and landscape would also conflict with the first statutory purpose of the National Park.
78. Whilst the proposal would provide a new market dwelling, HC1 is clear that provision will not be made for housing solely to meet open market demand in the National Park, with the exceptions to new housing being where development achieves the conservation of a heritage asset. It is concluded the development would harm, rather than conserve, a heritage asset and would not meet that exception. The English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 is clear that National Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing and do not provide general housing targets for those areas. Provision of a new dwelling is therefore afforded limited weight.
79. Suggested enhancement to the access track is not afforded weight as officers consider the existing track to be unauthorised. Other material considerations raised, such as sustainability measures, economic benefits, location near to schools and ecological enhancements, are not considered to outweigh the harm arising to heritage and landscape which are afforded great weight. Officers do not consider there to be any other compelling material considerations outweighing the harm or policy conflict identified.

Conclusion

80. The proposed conversion of Lamb Hill Barn to a residential dwelling with associated works including access would result in unacceptable harm to the setting of the barn (a non-designated heritage asset) and the wider landscape. It is therefore not considered the proposed dwelling would achieve the conservation of a non-designated heritage asset, contrary to the exception to new market housing under HC1.C.
81. While the principle of conversion is set out in HC1 and DMC10, the DMP recognises that locationally there are some areas of the National Park which are more sensitive and that conversion can bring about a level of domestication and urbanisation which is incompatible with the conservation of the National Park's special qualities, namely the undeveloped open countryside character and appreciation of the historic landscape.
82. In this case the introduction of domestic features such as garden, post and wire fencing, parking, bin storage, associated non-natural surface materials, lighting and the very long access track all serve to diminish the natural and historic characteristics of the landscape.

83. Overall officers consider the development would not conserve or enhance the setting of the non-designated barn, or the wider landscape, contrary to GSP1, GSP3, L1, L3, DMC3, DMC5, DMC10, DMT3, DMT8, the Conversions SPD and NPPF paragraph 189.

84. The harm arising towards a non-designated heritage asset is not considered to be outweighed as part of the planning balance, contrary to DMC5 and NPPF paragraph 216.

85. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Human Rights

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

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil