
8. FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION OF BARN TO LOCAL NEEDS DWELLING ADJACENT TO THE B.5056, WINSTER (NP/DDD/0815/0796, P.691, 424118/359436, 21/08/2015/KW/CF)

APPLICANT: MISS E GOULD

Site and Surroundings

The building is a fairly substantial detached barn situated in an isolated and exposed position adjacent to the B5056 road, about 1km south of Winster. It is situated within a gently sloping field, about 16m to the west of the B5056, at right-angles to the main road and occupies a prominent position in the landscape, particularly when approaching the site along the B5056 in both directions.

The barn has a low two-storey form and is constructed mainly of random-coursed natural limestone under a natural blue slate roof. It has a fairly simple robust appearance, but has a pleasant symmetrical frontage with three door openings on the ground floor and three small 'vent slit' openings within the upper wall section. The external corners of the barn are dressed with dressed, natural gritstone quoinwork and the gable ends are provided with natural gritstone copings. The door and window openings are provided with dressed natural gritstone quoinwork surrounds and there is an attractive full-length first floor door opening in the screened west gable wall. The barn also has some attractive internal features with dressed gritstone plinth walls to the cattle stalls and a kingpost truss roof construction.

It is therefore considered that the barn is of significant architectural and historic merit with features that elevate the building above that of a humble field barn. Together with its landscape setting, these factors are sufficient for it to be classed as 'valued vernacular' building within the terms of the authority's Core strategy policy HC1 C and the barn forms part of a pleasing composition in the landscape that makes a significant contribution to the character and scenic beauty of its landscape setting.

Proposal:

The application proposes the conversion of the barn to local needs dwelling for the applicant who presently lives with her parents at Sacheveral Farm 1km to the west, and her partner who presently lives at Pikehall.

The submitted scheme proposes the conversion of the barn to a two-bedroomed local needs dwelling. The accommodation is provided over two floors with the central part of the first floor space left as a void over the ground floor sitting room. The overall usable floor area excluding the void area is 94m², which just exceeds the size of a 5 person local needs dwelling (87m²).

The scheme proposes no new openings in the walls. Two rooflights are proposed in a central position the southern roofslope with a smaller single rooflight on the northern roofslope, serving the bathroom.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the revised application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- 1. The barn occupies a prominent, exposed and isolated position in this part of the White Peak landscape that should be safeguarded because of its intrinsic scenic beauty. The current proposals would fail to meet achieve this objective and the proposed residential conversion of the barn would spoil the character and setting of the barn by the introduction of a domestic use and associated developments in this sensitive location. The proposals would therefore be contrary to Core Strategy**

policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, L1 and L3, saved Local Plan policies LC4 and LC8, and national planning policies in the Framework.

Key Issues

1. Whether the proposed development meets the terms of the Authority's Core Strategy and Local Plan policies in relation to the provision of affordable local needs dwellings.
2. The potential impact of the proposed dwelling conversion on the character and setting of the barn and the surrounding landscape.
3. Ecological issues.

History

June 1974 – Refusal of outline planning consent for the renovation and reconstruction of the barn to a dwelling. It was refused on landscape grounds in view of its isolated and prominent position in open landscape.

December 2014 – Authority officer response to the agent following the submission of a pre-application enquiry seeking advice on whether the principle of the conversion of the barn to a dwelling would comply with the Authority's Core Strategy and Local Plan policies. This response was given following a site meeting.

The subsequent officer advice to the agent was that the barn was a strong, robust building of architectural and historic merit, which contributed to the character of the surrounding landscape. However, because of its prominent position in an open landscape officers advised that the introduction of a residential use into the building would seriously impact upon the internal and external character of the building itself and its wider landscape setting.

Officer's acknowledged the strong local need case advanced in support of the proposal, however, it was considered that this did not, in this case, outweigh the strong landscape impacts of a residential use being introduced into this building.

The agent was advised that if a formal planning application was submitted, this should be accompanied by information supporting the local need case, and the provision of financial costings to accommodate the residential conversion, which should include the provision of sewage facilities and undergrounding of services. The agent was also requested to investigate the possibility of accommodating the dwelling within the traditional farm building complex at Sacheveral Farm, which could be assimilated more easily into the landscape than the preferred option.

May 2015 – Application submitted for the conversion of the barn to a local needs dwelling. This was subsequently withdrawn by the agent in order to address the concerns of the Authority's officer and the parish council, and to ensure that support of the local community was registered and taken into account.

Consultations

External Consultees

County Council (Highway Authority) – No response to date

District Council – No response to date

Natural England - The proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected sites. Natural England have not assessed this application and associated documents for impacts on protected species, but request that the Authority refers to their Standing Advice on protected species.

Parish Council – The meeting resolved to recommend the application for approval on condition that improvements can be achieved through the introduction of glazing bars and all external woodwork is painted an appropriate colour rather than the use of dark stain.

Internal Consultees

National Park Authority (Landscape Architect) – Recommends should be refused because of its impact on the visual and landscape character of the area. for the following reasons:

The barn is situated in the Limestone Plateau Pastures landscape character type of the White Peak landscape character area. Some key characteristic of which are:

- A rolling upland plateau
- Pastoral farmland enclosed by limestone walls
- Isolated stone farmsteads and field barns

Specifically “This is a landscape of isolated stone farmsteads and scattered stone barns, mostly dating from the period of Parliamentary Enclosure in the late 18th and early 19th centuries...” The overall strategy for the White Peak is: “Protect and manage the distinctive and valued historic character of the settled, agricultural landscapes, whilst seeking opportunities to enhance the wild character and diversity of remoter areas”

The Landscape Guidelines for the White Peak state that throughout the Limestone Plateau Pastures landscape Character type; Protect and Maintain historic field barns is a priority. Specifically:

“... Isolated field barns are a special cultural feature in the White Peak, especially in the Plateau Pastures. Where they can no longer be maintained in agricultural use, careful consideration needs to be given to appropriate alternatives. Changes to the building or its surroundings should be avoided, especially where these are not in keeping with the rural character of the landscape. Conversion to residential use would be particularly inappropriate in a region where settlement is strongly nucleated in small villages.”

In respect of the current proposal, the barn is a prominent landscape visual feature within this part of the White Peak. Due to the nature of the landform the barn is seen in isolation within the landscape, no other agricultural buildings being seen, within the immediate viewpoint. Some of the proposals such as roof lights, domestic curtilage and parking areas have an impact on the building clearly defining it as a domestic property. This is further exacerbated by the barns proximity to the road. It is clear from the Landscape Strategy that the development of isolated residential buildings is inappropriate for this landscape character area where settlement occurs in nucleated villages.

The proposal should, therefore, be refused on the impact on the visual and landscape character of the area.

National Park Authority (Archaeologist) – Recommends refusal of the current application for the following reasons:

The field barn proposed for conversion has an entry on the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (MPD2426), and was recorded during the PDNPA’s archaeological survey of Ivonbrook

Grange Farm in 1997 (feature 15). It is a well-made two storey barn pre-dating 1840 on historic map evidence. There was a small enclosure attached to the west side of the barn which has now been removed. The Historic Landscape Character of the area is recorded as post-1650 enclosures (Parliamentary Enclosure Award).

This field barn makes a significant contribution to the landscape character of the locality. In general, however, conversion to residential use is not an appropriate way to conserve these structures in their landscape. Buildings of this nature should be maintained for agricultural use, an approach which has been recognised by Natural England in its funding for the conservation of field barns as part of the Environmental Stewardship initiative. The current proposals will introduce landscape clutter around the simple field barn structure by altering the entrance to create visibility splay and adding a new curtilage wall, parking and garden areas.

The Government has withdrawn advice on the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings in relation to National Parks in recognition of the potential this has to irreversibly change the valued landscape character of these places. It therefore seems inappropriate that a development of this nature should be put forward for approval at this point.

If this proposal does receive planning consent it is recommended that there be a full historic building record made of the building and wider site before any conversion takes place. In this case the following condition should be attached:

No development shall take place until a Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing, until all on-site elements of the approved scheme have been completed to the written satisfaction of the local planning authority, and until the provision to be made for analysis, reporting, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

The Written Scheme of Investigation shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme and provision for post-investigation analysis and reporting
3. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
4. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
5. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organization to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation"

National Park Authority (Ecologist) – No overriding objections to the proposals subject to conditions, for the following reasons:

The building has been identified as suitable for bat roosting and nesting birds. A bat survey has been undertaken.

A site visit was conducted by the PDNPA ecologist. The ground floor area was examined for evidence of bat usage and breeding birds. On entering the barn a pair of swallows were observed within the roof space, a nest in the south east corner of the barn showed fresh signs of construction with a layer of damp mud, indicating the birds are likely to be attempting to breed within the barn, the barn also contains numerous old swallow nests and nests likely to be from songbirds such as pied wagtail.

The barn is of traditional stone construction, with wooden trusses supporting a blue slate roof, waterproof membrane has been installed on one half of the roof, the rest is open and the undersides of the slates were visible. There are numerous large cracks in the walls, gaps above

windows/doors and holes leading into the cavities, these present suitable roosting areas for bats particularly crevice dwelling species such as *Pipistrellus* sp, a number of these cavities contained no cobwebs. A small number of bat droppings were recorded on the internal walls of the barn in both the central area and in the northwest corner. No inspection of the first floor sections was undertaken.

The submitted bat report now includes emergent bat surveys, which observed that no bats were seen emerging from the barn, however, a small number of bats were observed foraging around the barn. The recommendations in the submitted bat report suggest provision for bat boxes and access points into the wall cavities to provide alternative roost locations for hibernating bats.

The barn is used by breeding swallows extensively and therefore provision should be made to provide alternative nesting opportunity for this species by the inclusion of nesting space via a suitable roof void or eave, preferably on the gable end of the building. These bat and bird enhancement and mitigations measures can be accommodated through the attaching of appropriate ecological conditions.

Representations

17 individual letters of support have been received in connection with this application, one of these is from a Staffordshire Ward councillor and another is anonymous. 12 of these letters are from Winster parish residents and adjoining/ nearby parishes. These make the following representations:

- The Gould family have always lived and farmed at Sacheveral Farm and it is extremely important that in rural areas the next generation are able to remain local so they can help with the family farm, thus bringing advantages and support for the services provided in local villages, and schools who's numbers continue to fall.
- The local house prices are just not affordable for local people who are being pushed out of the area, unless they are able to build new houses or convert barns in family ownership.
- Converting the barn to a local needs dwelling seems a much better alternative than letting it fall down as so many in the area already have. As the barn is very visible from the road, this would mean that if it did fall into disrepair it would be very noticeable and a real shame given the craftsmanship that went into building the barn.
- The barn is no longer suitable for modern agricultural purposes and its condition is deteriorating. It needs an alternative use before it joins the number of derelict disused barns in the area.
- The remains of the derelict barns in this area cause more harm to the landscape than a smart barn conversion would.
- Since the barn is already there, the landscape itself is not being significantly changed by this application.
- Already in the area there is a power station down the road from the barn which has a new metal building; there are the overhead cables and the Carsington wind turbines are also visible from the barn.

Main Policies

Relevant Core Strategy policies include: GSP1, GSP3, GSP4, DS1, HC1, HC2, L1, L2, L3, HC1, T1 & T7

Relevant Local Plan policies include: LC4, LH1, LH2, LC17, LT11 & LT18

National Planning Policy Framework

Policies HC1 of the Core Strategy and LH1 and LH2 of the Local Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. This is because these policies set out the relevant criteria for assessing proposals for the re-use of existing buildings to meet local need.

It is considered that there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework with regard to the issues that are raised. This is because the Framework continues support the re-use of existing buildings specifically for affordable local needs housing in small rural communities that would not normally be made available for the provision of open market housing subject to normal planning considerations.

Notwithstanding this general support for principle of the provision of affordable housing to meet local need, the Framework also states that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance forms one of the 12 core planning principles within the Framework.

Paragraph 132 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Paragraph 115 in the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks along with the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.

Assessment

Issue 1 - Whether principle of the proposed development meets the terms of the Authority's Core Strategy and Local Plan policies in relation to the provision of affordable local needs dwellings.

In assessing the principle of this proposal the key policies in relation to the provision of affordable local needs dwellings are Core Strategy policies HC1(A), and Local plan policies LH1 and LH2. In addition to this Core Strategy policy HC1 C I is also of relevance to this proposal.

Policy HC1(A) of the Core Strategy and Local plan policies LH1 and LH2 allow for new residential development through the conversion of an existing building of traditional design and materials in the countryside, where it addresses eligible local needs and provides homes that remain affordable with occupation restricted to local people in perpetuity.

This is also provided that the five criteria stated in Local Plan policy are met. These five criteria are as follows.

- i. there is a proven need for the dwelling;
- ii. the need cannot be met within the existing housing stock;
- iii. the intended occupants meet the requirements of the National Park Authority's local occupancy criteria (policy LH2);
- iv. the dwelling will be affordable by size and type to local people on low or moderate incomes and will remain so in perpetuity; and

- v. the requirements of Policy LC4 are complied with.

Local Plan policy LC4(a) says where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is of a high standard that respects, conserves and where possible it enhances the landscape, built environment and other valued characteristics of the area. Local Plan policy LC4(b) goes on to say, amongst other things, particular attention will be paid to scale, form, mass and orientation in relation to existing buildings, settlement form and character, landscape features and the wider landscape setting.

These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'), which says at Paragraph 55 that local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. The National Planning Practice Guidance does not contain any further information on assessing need

Assessment of Need/Affordability

The applicant presently lives with her parents at Sacheveral Farm 1km to the west. She and her partner are forming a household for the first time. The applicant and her partner have strong connections with the local area, the applicant having resided in Winster parish in excess of the 10-year requirement to meet the Authority's local qualification criteria for persons setting up a household for the first time.

The applicants have been actively seeking a property in the locality to allow them to get on the property ladder. However, following a review of properties for sale in the locality, these are well in excess of their budget.

The agent also states that there are no suitable buildings available for conversion at the Sacheveral farmstead. There is a small traditional farm building attached to the farmhouse, which is presently in use for agricultural storage. This has been inspected by the Authority officer, who concurs that as it is still in agricultural use, it is not currently available to provide the residential accommodation currently being sought.

The agent states that the barn is currently in family ownership and has been valued at £25,000 in its current state. The conversion costs including the provision of underground mains electricity supply and provision of a private package sewage treatment plant are estimated to be in the region of £120,000, including the remedial works to the barn structure, with the applicant's partner carrying out the majority of the construction works himself. Although the barn appears to be in a reasonable structural condition, there are some visible cracks in the internal stonework below the roof trusses and some evidence of inadequate structural support for the roof structure. The westernmost kingpost truss frame has snapped at its base and is being supported via Acro props.

Further information has been submitted by the agent from a building contractor, which states that there is cracking of stonework in the roadside gable end, a new roof is required and timber roof frames need repairs and replacement and several cracks in the internal stonework. Their conclusion is that after close inspection of the building, if the building repair work is not carried out within the next 18-36 months, major damage to the building will occur.

The accompanying supporting information does not confirm that the applicant is willing to accept the Authority's standard S.106 legal obligation relating to local need/affordability, however, the Authority officer has since received verbal confirmation that this would be the case.

In respect of the size of the proposed local need dwelling, the submitted scheme proposes the conversion of the barn to a two-bedroomed local needs dwelling. The accommodation is provided over two floors with the central part of the first floor space left as a void over the ground floor sitting room. The overall usable floor area excluding the void area is 94m², which just exceeds the size of a 5 person local needs dwelling (87m²). Given that this a barn conversion, it is considered that the additional 7m² of floorspace is within acceptable parameters, subject to a planning condition being attached to retain the first floor void space. The retention of the void space would also allow the full-height space and the internal character the original barn to be appreciated.

Notwithstanding the above omissions, it is considered that sufficient information has been submitted to comply with criteria (i)–(iv) of the Authority's local Plan policy LH1 and the applicant's circumstances also easily meet the criterion (ii) of Local Plan policy LH2, which relates to the definition of people with a local qualification. In these respects, it would not be appropriate to consider conversion of the barn to an open market house to meet general demand under the provisions of HC1(C) despite the barn being of vernacular merit because the submitted application demonstrates that the impetus of open market values are not required for the conservation of the barn.

However, the proposal still has to comply with the requirements of criterion (v) of LP policy LH1, which states that the requirements of LP policy LC4 must be complied with. This requires the development to conserve, and where possible enhance the landscape, built environment and other valued characteristics of the area. These issues are examined in detail in the following section of this report, which deals with the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the current proposals.

Issue 2 - The impact of the proposed dwelling conversion on the character and setting of the barn and the surrounding landscape.

Local Plan policy LC4(a) says where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is of a high standard that respects, conserves and where possible it enhances the landscape, built environment and other valued characteristics of the area. Local Plan policy LC4(b) goes on to say, amongst other things, particular attention will be paid to scale, form, mass and orientation in relation to existing buildings, settlement form and character, landscape features and the wider landscape setting.

Local Plan policy LC4 is now also supported by the more recently adopted policy GSP3 of the Core Strategy which says development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings that are subject to the development proposal. GSP3 goes on to say, amongst other things, particular attention will be paid to:

- A. impact on the character and setting of buildings
- B. scale of development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park
- C. siting, landscaping and building materials
- D. design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide

GSP1 states that all development in the National Park must be consistent with the conservation purpose of the National Park's statutory designation and where national park purposes can be secured, opportunities must be taken to contribute to the sustainable development of the area.

GSP2 says that opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon but proposals intended to enhance the National Park will need to demonstrate that they offer significant overall benefit to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, and they should not undermine the achievement of other Core Policies.

L1 says that development must conserve and enhance the valued characteristics and landscape character of the National Park in accordance with the priorities for landscape conservation set out in the Authority's Landscape Strategy and Action Plan.

LC8 and L3 otherwise set out further guidance relating to any new use of a traditional building with vernacular merit. L3 states, amongst other things, that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal the significance of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic assets and their settings, including other heritage assets of regional or local importance or special interest. Local plan policy LC8 reinforces policy L3, and states, amongst other things, that the new use should not lead to changes to the building's curtilage or require new access or services that would adversely affect its character or have an adverse impact on its surroundings.

It is considered that the current application does not meet the requirements of these policies in the Development Plan for the following reasons:

The barn is a prominent landscape visual feature within this part of the White Peak. Due to the nature of the landform the barn is seen in isolation within the landscape and no other agricultural buildings are seen in its setting from any immediate viewpoint or more distant vantage points. In this respect, officers concur with the views of the Authority's Landscape Architect that what makes this barn unique is that it stands in isolation separate from any farm buildings, most farm buildings in the area both modern and traditional are associated with a farm complex.

The relevant guidance in the Authority's Landscape Strategy and Action Plan for the White Peak state that throughout the Limestone Plateau Pastures landscape Character type protecting and maintaining historic field barns is a priority saying specifically:

"... Isolated field barns are a special cultural feature in the White Peak, especially in the Plateau Pastures. Where they can no longer be maintained in agricultural use, careful consideration needs to be given to appropriate alternatives. Changes to the building or its surroundings should be avoided, especially where these are not in keeping with the rural character of the landscape. Conversion to residential use would be particularly inappropriate in a region where settlement is strongly nucleated in small villages."

In this case, the barn sits in an isolated location in an open pastoral landscape. It is visible from close views from the adjacent road and from the wider landscape when approaching the barn in both directions along the B5056. Consequently, it is considered that the proposed conversion of the barn to a dwelling would have a significant adverse impact, not on only the character and immediate setting of the barn itself, but also on the scenic beauty of its wider landscape setting when considering the guidance in the Authority's Landscape Strategy and Action Plan.

Furthermore, officers acknowledge that the physical building conversion scheme is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing barn and involves no new openings (except for the three additional rooflights) and a restricted curtilage contained by new sections of drystone walling. However, it is considered that the building is in such an exposed and prominent position that that the changes to the barn through the introduction of a residential use into the building, such as the glazing of openings, the separation of the barn from the field through the creation of the enclosed residential curtilage, and the activities generated around the barn would significantly and adversely impact upon the character and setting of the barn and the surrounding landscape.

Some of the proposals such as roof lights, domestic curtilage and parking areas would also have an impact on the building clearly defining it as a domestic property, which would detract from its intrinsic character. This is further exacerbated by the barns proximity to the road. It is clear from the Landscape Strategy that the development of isolated residential buildings is inappropriate for this landscape character area where settlement occurs in nucleated villages.

In this case, even at a distance, the visual effect of the works proposed, together with that of vehicles parking at the site and using the access, would be clear. Moreover, the domestication of a building that occurs from a residential use and associated domestic paraphernalia are difficult to control by condition and the domestication of an isolated field barn would have a significant and adverse impact on the landscape setting of the barn. Therefore, the character and appearance of the area and the valued scenic qualities of this part of the White Peak landscape would be significantly harmed by the proposed conversion of the barn and the proposed conversion would detract from the valued characteristics of the local area.

For these reasons it is considered that even though there is a strong and convincing justification for the principle of the conversion of the barn to a local needs dwelling, the proposal would still be open to strong landscape objections and would be contrary to Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, L1 and L3, saved Local Plan policies LC4 and LC8. These policies and the Authority's adopted supplementary planning documents are considered to be consistent with the Framework because they promote and encourage development proposals that would be of a high standard of design and sensitive to the valued characteristics of the National Park.

Paragraph 115 in the Framework also states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks along with the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage. The proposals in the current application conflict with these objectives and therefore conflict with the statutory purpose of the National Park's designation. In these circumstances, landscape conservation must take precedence over the duty placed on the Authority to seek to foster the social and economic welfare of the local community and consequently; the current application is recommended for refusal.

Issue 3 – Ecological issues

Core Strategy policy L2 and Local Plan policy LC17 state, amongst other things, that development must conserve and enhance any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance and where appropriate their setting. National planning policies in the Framework promote and encourage the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.

The building has been identified as suitable for bat roosting and nesting birds. A bat survey has been undertaken. A site visit was also conducted by the PDNPA ecologist at the time of the previous application. The ground floor area was examined for evidence of bat usage and breeding birds. On entering the barn a pair of swallows were observed within the roof space, a nest in the south east corner of the barn showed fresh signs of construction with a layer of damp mud, indicating the birds are likely to be attempting to breed within the barn, the barn also contains numerous old swallow nests and nests likely to be from songbirds such as pied wagtail.

Therefore, in the first instance, provision should be made to provide alternative nesting opportunity for this species by the inclusion of nesting space via a suitable roof void or eave, preferably on the gable end of the building if permission were to be granted for the current application.

As set out in the above report, the barn is of traditional stone construction, with wooden trusses supporting a blue slate roof, waterproof membrane has been installed on one half of the roof, the rest is open and the undersides of the slates were visible. There are numerous large cracks in the walls, gaps above windows/doors and holes leading into the cavities, these present suitable roosting areas for bats particularly crevice dwelling species such as *Pipistrellus* sp, a number of these cavities contained no cobwebs. A small number of bat droppings were recorded on the internal walls of the barn in both the central area and in the northwest corner. No inspection of the first floor sections was undertaken.

Consequently, the Authority's Ecologist advised that in order to establish the current extent of bat usage of the building a further bat activity survey was required to ascertain what species of bat are present within the roost and the nature of their use (i.e. feeding, breeding or hibernating). The bat report submitted with this current application now includes emergent bat surveys, which observed that no bats were seen emerging from the barn, however, a small number of bats were observed foraging around the barn. The recommendations in the submitted bat report suggest provision for bat boxes and access points into the wall cavities to provide alternative roost locations for hibernating bats. The Authority's Ecologist has since confirmed that these mitigation measures for bats can be achieved through the attaching of appropriate conditions to any permission for the current application

It is therefore considered that the proposals would comply with Core Strategy policy L2 and Local Plan LC17 subject to conditions securing appropriate mitigations measures for bats and birds.

Conclusions

Officers acknowledge that this is a genuine local needs case, which has generated a significant level of local support, and the applicant has demonstrated that there are no suitable alternative options available for her. It is also acknowledged that the position of the barn and the fact that as it is owned and is situated within the applicant's family's owned parcel of land this would be the preferred option.

It is considered, however, that even though there is a sufficient justification for the proposed dwelling, the current proposals cannot be accepted because the proposals conflict with landscape conservation objectives and the proposed barn conversion would significantly detract from the scenic beauty of the National Park.

Therefore any approval for the current application would be contrary to Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, L1 and L3, saved Local Plan policies LC4 and LC8 and national planning policies in the Framework, which individually and collectively say great weight should be afforded to the conservation and enhancement of the valued characteristics of the National Park.

Accordingly, the current application is recommended for refusal because the proposals do not comply with the relevant policies in the Development Plan or national planning policies in the Framework.

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