

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SITE INSPECTION GROUP HELD ON
MONDAY, 5 JANUARY 2009****(11/1539/08/F & 11/1540/08/LB) (i) conversion of redundant barn to two dwellings and annexe with garaging, and (ii) Listed Building Consent for two dwellings and annexe with garaging**

Present: Cllr Cane
Cllr Fielden (Chairman)
Cllr Hicks
Cllr Pennington
Cllr Westacott

Also in attendance:

Mr M Elliott – Area Planning Officer
Cllr Rankin – Local Ward Member

In introducing the application, the Area Planning Officer (APO) made particular reference to:-

- (A) the site description. The APO advised that the buildings at Lower Warcombe consisted of an historic farmyard grouping located alongside a very narrow country lane. The main farmhouse was a grade II Listed Building. The barns, which were situated to the north of the farmhouse, were located on either side of a narrow yard and comprised a granary, shippon, stables, cartshed and workshop. Both the shippon and stables were bank side, set adjacent to the lane, and were two storeys in height. The cartshed was attached to the south elevation of the stables and was single storey in height. The buildings presently were mainly unused, as the farm was no longer in operation;
- (B) the details of the proposal. The APO advised that the proposal sought conversion of the range of barns to two residential dwellings, with an associated annexe and for the erection of a new garaging building on the site of the modern agricultural buildings. One dwelling would be created through the conversion of the shippon – the most northerly bank barn, and one dwelling and its annexe would be created through the conversion of the stables, cartshed and part of the granary. The remaining part of the granary and the workshop would be used in connection with the farmhouse.

The conversion would involve internal and external alterations to the barns, along with the creation of new garages/workshops to the north of the barns with vehicular access and parking, a courtyard garden to the west of the shippon, a private garden to the north west of the barns and the subdivision of the historic courtyard set between the barns. The area to the south of the barns would be used as a car parking/turning area for the farmhouse.

Following the Development Control Committee meeting of 10 December 2008, the APO advised that revisions to the proposal had been received to accommodate comments expressed during the debate at that meeting. These involved the removal of all patent glazing and rooflights from the roadside roofs of the Shippon and Stables; removal of the roadside roof flue on the Stables, removal of the two rooflights on the workshop lean to next to the Granary; removal of the patent glazing from the Granary; repositioning of two rooflights on the Granary to the roof plane facing the field where there were already two rooflights which would be replaced by these new ones; and removal of the flue from the Granary.

Furthermore, it was noted that the applicants had agreed to submit a draft Section 106 Agreement to provide the full open space/recreation amount and provision for a commuted sum towards off site affordable housing in accordance with the council's policy;

(C) concern over the proposed scheme. The APO advised that the requirements of the creation of two independent residential dwellings and annexe accommodation generated a restricted layout which would result in harming the setting of the listed building and would be out of keeping with the rural context of the site. The APO further commented that whilst the revisions to the scheme were welcome there remained concerns on the proposal. In particular the first floor under eaves glazing to the 'Stable' conversion and the use/manner of conversion of the cart shed as a living room to that unit. The use of the cart shed for this purpose was inappropriate and resulted in a very poor relationship with the existing farmhouse. There would be poor standard of amenity and the use would result in pressure for further inappropriate means of enclosure that would be visual detrimental to the group. It was felt that the subdivision of the courtyard in order to create private outside areas for any residents would be particularly damaging to the setting of the barns and farmhouse.

(D) the potential for the creation of holiday accommodation. The Group was informed that when accommodation created through conversion was not by nature of its design capable of use as a dwelling (e.g. lack of external curtilage, lack of privacy, overlooking, distant/communal car parking), then the Council may be prepared to grant a residential permission, which was restricted to holiday accommodation only. The APO felt that this would be a good example of such a scheme and if the proposal was for use solely as holiday accommodation then officers may be minded to support a proposal for holiday accommodation subject to changes to the manner of conversion and removal of physical means of subdivision of the courtyard to the barns.

The Group then proceeded to view the application site from a number of vantage points, including the perimeter of the site and the highway, in an attempt to gauge the relationship between the application site and farmhouse.

The local ward Member in attendance expressed support for the proposals highlighting that it would be better to enhance these historic barns as opposed to letting them fall into further disrepair. The Member felt that it would bring the

courtyard back to life and encourage families into the area. Furthermore, it was noted that English Heritage had not objected to the application and therefore the local Member encouraged the Group to also support the proposals.

However, the ward Member did express concern with the suggestion of using the barns solely for holiday accommodation due to the number of such properties already in existence within the ward. Although, in response, it was noted that even if the properties were sold on the open market for private dwellings, there was nothing to prohibit any purchaser from using them as holiday accommodation.

During discussion, Members expressed their support in principle to the proposals although they did have a number of concerns. These related specifically to the subdivision of the courtyard, which Members felt would constrict the outside layout and be damaging to the setting of the barns, and the close proximity between the farmhouse and the end courtyard of the Stables proposal. The Group felt this would be detrimental to the farmhouse giving loss of privacy to its residents. Due to these reasons (the development in part and the subdivision of the courtyard), plus the absence of a formal Section 106 Agreement being received (although the Group did accept that the applicants had now agreed to submit one), Members felt that they could not support the application as currently presented. The local ward Member therefore advised that the applicants had indicated that they would address these concerns and amend the proposals accordingly. In response, Members felt that they could only vote on the application as presented before them at present, and therefore could not support the proposal as it currently stood. However, the Group did indicate that if the applicants did submit revised plans to address the concerns raised then they could be more inclined to support the proposal.

It was then unanimously:-

RECOMMENDED

That in respect of application 11/1539/08/F the application be refused for the following reasons:-

1. Inappropriate manner on conversion to barns insofar as it relates to the conversion of the cartshed comprising part of 'The Stable' by reason of its appearance and poor relationship would result and the physical subdivision of the courtyard area serving the barn group which have detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the barn group and setting of the listed building.
2. As reason 5 in the Officer recommendation.

RECOMMENDED

That in respect of application 11/1540/08/LB the application be refused as per reason 1 as outlined above.