

27/10/0011

WRENCON DEVELOPMENTS LTD

CHANGE OF USE FROM REDUNDANT BARN TO B1 USE (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL UNIT) FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF HORSE BOXES AT 1 ALLERFORD FARM BARN, NORTON FITZWARREN

Grid Reference: 317933.125088

Full Planning Permission

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval subject to the views of the Environmental Health Officer

The proposed development would make a good use of an existing rural building, and given the surrounding buildings and land-uses is considered to comply with specific policy requirements for the conversion of rural buildings.

The proposed development would not give rise to unacceptable landscape impacts or cause significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents or the highway network. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policies S1 (General Requirements), S2(Design), EC6 (Conversion of Rural Buildings) and EN12 (Landscape Character Areas) of the Taunton Deane Local Plan and policies STR1 (Sustainable Development), STR6 (Development outside Towns and Villages) and 49 (Transport Requirements of New Development) of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

989/01 Survey floor plan & section A-A
989/02 Survey elevations
989/03A Floor plan and roof plan
989/04A Proposed elevations and site plan
842/05 Revised location plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The site shall be used for the manufacture of horse boxes only and for no other purpose.

Reason: Other uses have the potential to cause detrimental impacts to the amenities of neighbouring properties and may lead to increased traffic that would be detrimental to highway safety, in accordance with Policy S1 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan and Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

Members will be updated as to other conditions recommended by your Environmental Health Officer.

Notes for compliance

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use and conversion of a redundant agricultural building to B1 use at 1 Allerford Farm Barns, Norton Fitzwarren. The proposed use, which will allow for the manufacturing of towable and motorised horse boxes.

The proposal involves the re-cladding of the external frame with plastic coated, insulated metal sheets and new concrete block work where required, all to match the existing. The unit will be served by two roller shutter doors, one to the south east and one to the north east elevations. Internally the building will provide for an open plan workshop, two offices, a staff room, two toilets and bike store. A waste skip area will be provided to the north east of the unit.

The unit will be accessed via the existing site access that serves the existing contractor's office and store at Wrencon; it is proposed to provide 6 parking spaces to the east of the unit, accessed off the informal drive way and concrete turning area. The application is supported by a wildlife survey that concludes neither further emergence surveys nor a Natural England development license are required.

The application is before the Taunton Deane BC Planning Committee for determination as the applicant is an elected member and leader of the council.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

Allerford Farm barns are located in a remote area of open countryside, approximately 1.5 km to the south west of Norton Fitzwarren. The site is accessed along narrow rural lanes off of the main county route highway at Norton Fitzwarren. The development site comprises a redundant steel portal frame building clad externally in metal profile sheets and concrete walls to the lower section of the building. A large concrete yard area is located to the east of the building, which is surrounded by similar former agricultural buildings, some converted to alternative business use and storage.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP – comment:

"The proposed development site is outside the development limit of Norton Fitzwarren and is, therefore, remote from any urban area and therefore distant from adequate services and facilities. In addition, public transport services are infrequent or located some distance away from the site. As a consequence, occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependant on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned comments, it must be a matter for the Local Planning Authority to decide whether the re-use and/or any other overriding planning need outweighs the transport policies that seek to reduce reliance on the private car.

In detail the approach roads leading to the site are substandard in terms of width and alignment and the junction with the B3227 (County Route) , to the west of the railway bridge, suffers from restricted visibility. There have been three personal injury accidents in close proximity of this junction in addition to one on the approach road between the site and the junction. Consequently, this is not a location where I would wish to see an increase in traffic generation.

It is considered by the Highway authority, that a commercial use, and the type of traffic associated with a B1 use, in this location will be unacceptable due to the substandard nature of the approach roads and junctions in terms of width, alignment and visibility.

I have looked at the previous consent referred to, for a storage facility (27/03/0005), which had a number of conditions, which would appear to have been imposed to keep traffic movements to a minimum. My concern is if a general "B1" consent is granted, if the business grows it would be difficult to control future expansion as a precedent will have been set. A transport assessment/statement and/or travel plan will be required, because the development is located where the transport infrastructure is inadequate, in particular substandard approach roads.

The Somerset Parking Strategy sets out that 15 spaces is appropriate for the proposed B1 Use Class, however only 7 (car parking) spaces are proposed which is significantly below the required standard in this unsustainable location. I would therefore seek that the maximum level is provided."

OAKE PARISH COUNCIL – Awaited.

NATURE CONSERVATION & RESERVES OFFICERS - No objection. Recommended condition for timing of works to avoid bird nesting season as birds found to be using the building.

Representations

None.

PLANNING POLICIES

S1 - TDBCLP - General Requirements,
S2 - TDBCLP - Design,
EC6 - TDBCLP - Conversion of Rural Buildings,
M1 - TDBCLP - Non-residential Developments,
PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development,
PPS4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth,
PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas,
PPG13 - Transport,

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues in the consideration of this application will be the principle of the development, the impact on the visual amenities of the area, the impact on neighbouring property and highways.

Principle

The site is in the open countryside, where there is a general presumption against development. However, Planning Policy Statement 7, supported by policy EC6 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan, encourages the re-use of rural buildings for employment uses. It is considered that this proposal complies with the specific requirements of policy EC6 in that it is sited near a public road, is generally in keeping with the surroundings and has a size and structure suitable for conversion without major rebuilding, extension or alteration.

The building itself, is a modern steel portal framed building and, therefore, lends itself to the use proposed. The building would require the sides to be blocked up, but the general form of the building would remain the same and in the context of the other existing portal framed buildings on the site, the required works are not considered to amount to significant alteration.

Visual amenity

As noted above, there will be changes to the external appearance of the building, but the general form of the buildings will remain. The building adjoins two similar buildings that have been adapted to office/storage space for the applicants business. In this context, it is not considered that any harm would arise to the visual amenities of the area, as a result of the proposed development. The existing access would be utilised without modification and, therefore, there would be no alterations to boundary hedgerows etc. which front the public highways.

Neighbouring property

There is residential property immediately to the southeast of the site. It is not considered that the physical alterations to the building would cause any adverse impact on the neighbouring property. The proposed use has the potential to increase disturbance, by introducing manufacturing floorspace to the site.

Formal comments from Environmental Health are awaited, however, verbal discussions have not resulted in any concerns that should warrant the refusal of permission. It is likely that the Environmental Health Officer will recommend that conditions are imposed to control the hours of operation and the acceptable noise

levels at the façade of adjacent residential properties. Members will be updated at committee.

Notwithstanding this, the manufacture of horse boxes on this scale is likely to fall within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended, and as such the grant of permission could lead the way to various other uses, which could have a significant impact upon neighbouring property. Given the proximity of the neighbouring dwellings, a condition limiting the use to the specific activities sought is considered to be necessary.

Highways

The Highway Authority have raised objection to the proposed development due to the isolated location of the site. However, given that the principle of the development is supported by national and local planning policy, it is not considered to be reasonable to object on this basis.

Concern has also be raised over the standard of the access roads, however, the site is already home to the building contractor's yard and as such accommodates some degree of heavy traffic. There are also nearby equestrian developments, so a number of horse boxes and similar traffic already use this part of the rural highway network. In this context, given the limited size of floorspace concerned, and the fact that this proposal is to convert an existing building, it is not considered that the increase in traffic would be detrimental to highway safety.

The Highway Authority have also requested that a travel plan is submitted and agreed. However, the application forms state that the proposal would employ an additional 4 people, and it is not considered that a travel plan is justified for this small scale of development. Similarly, in light of the proposed staffing levels, it is not considered necessary to request the increase of parking spaces suggested by the Highway Authority. In any case, the site is some distance from the access point onto the public highway and it is highly unlikely that an under provision of parking would give rise to any detriment to highway safety.

As with the impact on neighbouring property, the conclusions reached on this issue are dependent on the specific use applied for and it is considered reasonable to impose a condition to retain control over other uses in the future.

Conclusion

The proposed development would make a good use of an existing rural building, and given the surrounding buildings and land-uses is considered to comply with Policy EC6 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan. The proposed development would not give rise to unacceptable landscape impacts or cause significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents or the highway network. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and it is, therefore, recommended that planning permission is granted.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1988.

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