

10/2002/015

MR S YOUNG

CHANGE OF USE AND CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO DWELLING AT PAYE FARM, CHURCHSTANTON.

18850/13170

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The site lies amongst a group of buildings at the end of an unsurfaced track, one of the buildings having already been converted to a dwelling. The building has a stone rear wall, but the front elevation is constructed of concrete block. The roof with the exception of a small section of slate is clad in corrugated iron. Two previous applications have been refused on the grounds that the building is of insufficient quality in its own right or of such importance in the landscape to warrant its retention; substantial alterations will be required to convert it into a dwelling; and the proposal would adversely affect the appearance and landscape of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Policy ED/EC8 of the Adopted East Deane Local Plan and Policies H9 and EN10 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit. One of the applications was also dismissed at appeal.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the proposed development site is located outside the confines of any recognised development boundary limits, in a remote area some considerable distance from the newest facilities. Whilst it must be mainly a planning matter as to whether the barn is suitable for conversion, it should be noted that residents of the proposed development will be wholly reliant on the private car. This is contrary to advice given in PPG 13, RPGIO and policy STR1 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. A private dwelling is likely to have a similar level of traffic generation to that of this agricultural building, but the trip patterns of a private dwelling are likely to produce a much higher proportion of long distance journeys, as the site is remote from employment and retail centres. This is clearly fostering a growth in the need to travel and is unsustainable in terms of transport policy. In light of previous barn conversions at this site where no highway objections were raised, it would be unreasonable to recommend the refusal of this application on grounds of transport policy. However, it must be a matter for the Planning Committee to consider whether the benefit of retaining the building as a single dwelling outweighs the policy guidance that seeks to reduce the reliance on the private motor car.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER suggests conditions due to the possibility of contaminated land arising from previous agricultural use.

PARISH COUNCIL it is felt that this current application differs very little from previous Applications, eg 10/2001/005, and my Council concurs with the views expressed in your

letter of 3rd May, 2001 and confirmed by Mr Grainger (Inspector) in his Decision dated 19th February, 2002. It would appear that a number of changes have been made to the building over the years without substantially improving it. It is also understood that Mr Young has an interest in/owns other property very close to the building in question although this interest does not appear to have been declared. Additionally, the current proposals will seriously interfere with the working of Paye Farm, now under new ownership, and will have an excessively detrimental effect on the privacy of the property known as Paye Barton. In view of the foregoing, my Council is strongly opposed to this application.

5 LETTERS OF OBJECTION from three independent households have been received on the grounds of increased traffic using substandard access; barn would be better used for livestock; applicant has split barn from retained land; traffic would pass through working farmyard; outside settlement limits; does not meet barn conversion policy; contrary to appeal decision; merely a profiteering exercise by applicant who is emigrating; Local Planning Authority should not accept duplicate application.

POLICY CONTEXT

East Deane Local Plan Policy ED/EC8 protects sites within the AONB. Policy EN10 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit restates this. Policy H9 sets out the circumstances where the conversion of a rural building may be considered as an exception to the normal strict control.

ASSESSMENT

Whilst I still consider that the earlier decisions to refuse the principle of conversion of this barn were correct, this was not a view shared by the appeal Inspector. He concluded that "its appearance is not untypical of many adapted farm buildings and, unlike many of the other buildings in the vicinity, it can, in my judgement, properly be regarded as in keeping with its surroundings. In this respect I consider that it complies with the requirements of PPG7 and emerging Policy H9." In light of these comments a refusal reason based upon the quality of the building could no longer be sustained.

Where the Inspector considered the proposal unacceptable was in the level of alterations proposed. "In short, above the current eaves level, it appears that the converted structure would be very largely new. Although its maximum height would be no greater than the existing building it would, in my judgement, be significantly different in its form and appearance. Moreover, I consider that works of this magnitude constitute major rebuilding which takes the proposal outside the scope of what is allowed for in Policy H9 and PPG 7. Given this and the more domestic appearance of the converted buildings and its surroundings, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of this rural area."

The current application does not seek to raise the eaves level to provide first floor accommodation and therefore retains the existing shape of the building. However an entirely new roof structure is still proposed and the entire front elevation is to be rebuilt in weatherboarding with brick piers. It is therefore concluded that the Inspector's concerns have not been overcome, in respect of the amount of rebuilding and alteration proposed.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for reasons of major alterations to roof and front elevation, contrary to barn conversion policy and resultant impact on AONB.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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