

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS TO FORM THREE PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS WITH ERECTION OF ANCILLARY GARAGING WITH STORES AT NORTHWAY FARM, HALSE (AS AMENDED)

Grid Reference: 313537.129027

Listed Building Consent: Works

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval for the following reason:

The proposed works will preserve and enhance the character and historic interests of the listed buildings and the setting of Northway Farm through the provision of an appropriate re-use for the traditional agricultural buildings. The proposal are therefore considered to be in line with guidance contained within PPS5 and Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. Further, the listed building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest will be preserved in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-1 Rev B Location plans
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-2 Rev C Site plan
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-3 Block and roof plan
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-4 Rev A Access Plan
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-5 Indicative site sections
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-6 Unit A Proposed floor plans
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-7 Units B and C Proposed ground floor plans
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-7 Units B and C Proposed ground floor plans
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-8 Units B and C Proposed first floor plans
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-9 Units A, B and C Indicative cross sections
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-10 Unit A Proposed elevations
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-11 Unit B Proposed elevations
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-12 Units B and C Proposed elevations
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-13 Units B and C - ancillary office/studio Unit A - garage and store
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-14 Unit C new build garage and store
 - (A3) DrNo 1811-15 Unit C New build garage and store

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

2. No works shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the works hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out and thereafter retained as such, in accordance with the approved details as above, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the listed building, its setting and any features of historic or architectural interest that it possesses, in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5.

3. Prior to commissioning, specific details of the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, with such approved details being strictly adhered to in the implementation of the approved works, unless any variation thereto is first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority: details of tanking to Units A and C; external joinery details; finished treatment to external joinery; internal doors; architraves; windows/cills; skirtings; staircases; means of venting and terminal details (where appropriate) for: kitchens/showers/bathrooms/recovered roofs; mean of compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations.

Reason: To ensure the use of materials and details appropriate to the character of the Listed Building, in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5.

4. All guttering, downpipes and rainwater goods shall be constructed of cast iron and painted black and thereafter maintained as such unless an application for listed building consent is first submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the listed building, its setting and any features of historic or architectural interest that it possesses, in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5.

5. No development, excluding site works, shall begin until a panel of the proposed stone/brickwork walls measuring at least 1m x 1m has been built on the site and both the materials and the colour and type of mortar for pointing used within the panel have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be completed in accordance with the agreed details and thereafter maintained as such.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the listed building, its setting and any features of historic or architectural interest that it possesses, in accordance

with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5.

6. The windows and doors hereby permitted shall be timber and thereafter maintained as such, in accordance with details to include sections, mouldings, profiles, working arrangements and finished treatment that shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to their installation.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building, in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review.

7. No works shall take place until a sample of the roofing materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the works hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out and thereafter retained as such, in accordance with the approved details as above..

Reason: In the interests of preserving the listed building, its setting and any features of historic or architectural interest that it possesses, in accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5.

8. Prior to the commencement of the works hereby approved, a schedule of all existing doors and shutters to be retained as part of the development hereby approved shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved works shall be carried out in complete accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the listed buildings, their settings and any features of special historic or architectural interest that they possess, in accordance policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, advice contained in PPS5 and section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

9. No external lighting shall be installed without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority. In the event that external lighting is installed the precise type, location and design shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall be installed in complete accordance with those agreed details and shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: In the interests of the protection of bat habitats, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9 and in the interests of preserving the listed buildings and their settings in accordance with policy 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, advice

contained in PPS5 and Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Notes for compliance

1. Your attention is drawn to the requirements and conditions attached to planning permission 18/11/0001 that also relates to this property.

PROPOSAL

The application, as amended, seeks listed building consent for the conversion of an agricultural buildings complex to form three independent dwelling houses together with ancillary office and studio accommodation at Northway Farm, Halse. The application includes proposals to form a new vehicular access along the southern site boundary off of the adjoining highway to serve both Northway Farmhouse and Unit B of the proposed development. This new access will require the removal of a 12 metre section of stone wall along the southern curtilage boundary of the main building, with the wall being realigned and rebuilt using the same materials. The existing vehicular access that currently serves the dwelling and farm yard will provide vehicular access to units A and C of the proposals.

Units A and B will provide for four bedroom dwellings set over two floors with associated living accommodation whilst Unit C will be a 5 bedroom property. An existing open fronted barn to the east of the complex is to be converted to two ancillary studios/ office spaces to serve units B and C. The studio serving Unit C will be fitted out with a new kitchenette, cupboard and WC.

The proposed development will require significant works to the internal fabric of the buildings and some re-arrangement to the existing layout of the barns. It is proposed to utilise new stud walls, plasterboard ceilings, timber doors and a combination of timber first floors and concrete ground floors with flagstone and bricks to be retained to the southern section. Externally, the buildings will remain relatively unaltered with the exception of new timber fenestration with timber boarding below being installed into existing openings within the buildings. 4 new small windows are proposed with 4 existing openings being enlarged to form doorways from windows. All replacement rainwater goods will be of cast iron. New stone walls, some connected to the buildings are proposed as are new hard surfaced areas within each curtilage.

The application is supported by a heritage statement as required by Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5. Additional reports regarding wildlife, the structural stability of the building and design and access issues also accompany the application. However, the heritage statement provides for a detailed historical analysis of Northway Farm; the 1888 Ordnance Survey map clearly shows Northway Farm and the existing traditional barns to the north. Later maps show the buildings being unaltered in plan form until 1962 when the first of the detached modern buildings to the west with no change thereafter until 1988, after which it is thought that the remaining modern buildings to the north and west were erected.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

Northway Farm house is a two storey grade II listed building, with a rendered walls,

slate roof, timber sash windows, timber 6 panel door and a flat roof portico. Attached to the northern elevation of the farmhouse is a linear set of agricultural barns, which are set over two storeys with stone walls with brick detailing around the original openings, natural slate roofs and timber doors. These are thought to have been extended during the 19th century with little to no alterations having occurred between 1888 and 1962.

The barns form a complex of buildings sited around a concrete yard area, enclosed along the eastern boundary by an open fronted single storey building. This building has a stone tablet to the southern gable that reads "W.N Row ESQR 1872". The supporting heritage statement believes this to tie in with the conveyance of the farm at the time that it was transferred to Somerset County Council.

The site is set over split levels with the farmhouse, parking/turning areas and part of the barns to be converted (including part of Unit A) being approximately 2.4 metres below the main portion of the barns and formal yard area further to the north. To the north and west of the barns are more modern steel portal frame buildings clad in an array of profile metal sheets; many of these buildings are open at the front and sides and screen the traditional buildings from views to the north and west of the site. Internally, the barns have various rooms that are subdivided by brick, block and timber walls. The main slate roof is supported by a timber structure throughout which has been formed via various styles and construction methods. The buildings appear to have developed incrementally up until around 1888 and then dramatically with the modern buildings erected after 1962.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - No comment

HALSE PARISH COUNCIL - Object to proposals. Numerous comments made, of which the only point pertinent to the determination of listed building consent is that the farm holding should be retained as a single unit without it being separated off into single plots.

CONSERVATION OFFICERS - No objection subject to conditions - The farm buildings are listed by virtue of being physically attached to, and within the curtilage of, the grade II listed Northway Farmhouse. They appear to be contemporary with the farmhouse and date to the early and mid C19 – which is confirmed by the submitted historic building survey.

Although the farm is still operating, this group of historic buildings is under utilised and in poor condition. The best use for these buildings would be the one for which they were designed but it would appear that due to changes in agricultural practice they can no longer economically fulfil this function. An alternative 'low impact' use would be the next best thing. Conversion to domestic accommodation would have a 'high impact' on the fabric of the buildings and their setting and is therefore usually the least desirable option. In this instance, provided there is no other viable use for the buildings, domestic reuse would (in conservation terms) be acceptable to ensure the long-term future of this historically important group of farm buildings.

This application has been the subject of pre-application discussions and the material submitted has addressed my earlier concerns with the scheme.

Representations

9 letters of objection received from members of the public, of which the following points are pertinent in determination of the application for listed building consent:

- new openings within listed buildings have been denied elsewhere locally,
- scale of development is inappropriate to its setting;
- property should be developed in line with its grade II listing;
- Northway should remain as one 'lot' and not sub-divided;
- scope of the development is inappropriate to the location and is ill-considered.

PLANNING POLICIES

S1 - TDBCLP - General Requirements,

S2 - TDBCLP - Design,

S&ENPP9 - S&ENP - The Built Historic Environment,

PPS 5 - PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment,

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The pertinent issues that require consideration are the impacts of the proposed conversion works upon the listed building(s), which is a heritage asset as set out within guidance contained within Planning Policy Statement 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment). In determining proposals for listed building consent, Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in considering whether to grant listed building consent, the Local Planning Authority “shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.

The buildings are listed virtue of their physical and functional relationship to the main listed farm house at Northway Farm. The buildings are predominantly located around a raised central yard area and together with adjacent buildings form a close knit group that make a positive contribution to the setting of the farmstead. When approaching Northway Farm, the barns form a dominant feature within the narrow street scene, being set at a raised level above the adjoining highway. Their appearance is one of a traditional group of linear buildings constructed of natural stone walls and slate roof. Since being extended towards the end of the 19th century, the buildings appear to have been relatively unaltered, with only a small number of original openings having been blocked off. The supporting heritage statement provides a clear and detailed analysis of the buildings and clearly defines their importance with regard to their relationship with the listed farmhouse which dates back to the early 19th century. Having regard to these matters, the barns, whilst of interest in their own right, are a key facet to the main listed building, its historical importance and setting within the local area. Given the historical significance of the buildings it is deemed appropriate to find an alternative use for the buildings so as to ensure their long term future.

As noted by the Council's conservation specialist, residential conversion schemes generally have a high impact upon the historic fabric and interest of listed buildings, particularly where traditional agricultural barns are concerned. In this instance however, the proposed development will make very few alterations to the external fabric of the building, with only a small number of new and altered openings being

proposed. Externally, with the removal of the modern buildings to the north and west, the conversion scheme is considered to provide an opportunity to return the overall appearance of Northway Farm to a traditional one that may have been found in the early 19th century. The application will make use of materials that are sympathetic towards the original buildings and will in fact compliment the character of the barns. Such a low impact approach externally will ensure that the historic integrity of the building is maintained.

Internally, the barns are of limited merit and have clearly had various alterations made over the past 200 years or so. There are few original features of architectural merit that are being altered; those that do remain, such as the flagstone and brick work flooring to the lower section of Unit A will be retained. Many of the existing, modern partitions will be replaced with modern features, such is not considered to undermine the integrity of the building nor its importance as a heritage asset. Importantly the councils conservation officer is satisfied that the proposed scheme will not harm the listed building subject to the further agreement of materials and various other works and methods by way of condition.

The layout of the scheme is considered to be acceptable, providing for modest open garden areas with outbuildings orientated and positioned so not to detract from the setting of the buildings. The open plan garden areas are to be kept within a moderate distance from the buildings so not to intrude overly upon the surrounding landscape. It is accepted that on plan form the proposals appear slightly more domestic than agricultural, however the contribution that the barns make to the setting of the listed building will be retained for future generations to appreciate with the exclusion of any modern, urban features to the boundary. The new stone walls, both high and low level are reflective of existing boundary features within the site and will compliment the appearance of the site as proposed and aid the assimilation of the new curtilage areas within the context of the site. The proposed window design and treatment is sympathetic towards existing features within the lower level barn at Unit A and the western elevation of farm house. Works to the lower level storage buildings will also bring about a visual improvement. As such, when viewed from the highway to the east of the site, it is considered that the buildings will continue to exhibit a traditional agricultural appearance.

The proposals are considered to provide for a sympathetic conversion scheme of the buildings. The ancillary studios/office that will serve Units A and B, whilst not wholly necessary, will provide a suitable use for the building that is important both for its contribution within the street scene and in enclosing the formal courtyard area. The new access requires a 12 metre (approximate) length of stone boundary wall to be rebuilt slightly north within land being incorporated within the residential curtilage of the farm house. This wall is likely to form a curtilage feature covered by the listing of the property. Notwithstanding this, it is felt that the wall, if rebuilt with the original or matching materials will not materially harm the setting of the listed building or its features of historic interest.

To conclude, the subdivision of Northway Farm is not considered to harm the integrity of the listed buildings or their setting. It is considered that by allowing their conversion and re-use, the buildings, their setting and the historic interest of Northway Farm will be preserved. As such it is recommended that listed building consent be approved, subject to conditions.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the

implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1988.

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