

35/2007/011

MR & MRS MILTON

**CHANGE OF USE AND CONVERSION OF BARN TO FORM DWELLING AT
POTTERS COTTAGE, APPLEY**

307160/121607

FULL

PROPOSAL

The proposal comprises the change of use and conversion of a barn to form a dwelling, with parking and turning adjacent to the barn using an existing access. A new access is proposed to serve the existing dwellings to the north of the barn. The barn is 5.2 m x 6.7 m x 5.9 m high. It is constructed with natural stone and a corrugated iron pitched roof. It is currently used as a garage/workshop. It has existing openings on all sides. The proposed alterations to the barn include replacement roof with natural slate and the addition of one window, and an existing window to be changed into a door.

A design and access statement, structural survey, wildlife report and alternative commercial use report have been submitted with the application.

This proposal was previously refused, based on the same information that has been provided with this application.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY In terms of traffic generation the proposed development may generate a similar level of traffic to that of the agricultural use of the barn, but the nature of the trip patterns connected with a residential use are likely to be very different with a higher level of longer distance trips. The proposed development site is remote from any urban area and therefore distant from adequate services and facilities, such as, education, employment, health, retail and leisure, in addition, there are very limited public transport services. As a consequence, occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependent on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice given in PPG13 and RPG10, and to the provisions of policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Review (adopted policies: April 2000). Notwithstanding the aforementioned comments, it must be a matter for the Local Planning Authority to decide whether the retention of the building for re-use and/or any other overriding planning need, outweighs the transport policies that seek to reduce reliance on private car. The proposal will utilise an existing vehicular access that derives access from/onto a classified unnumbered highway that will become the parking area (for 2 vehicles) for the converted barn, with a new access being created to the north for the existing dwellings. Visibility from the existing access is substandard, however if the proposed new access incorporated splays extending to the extremities of the site, this would provide and improve visibility for the proposed development and existing dwellings

deriving access from the new access. If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant consent, list of conditions recommended.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND RESERVES OFFICER evidence of sparrows nesting was found and evidence of a badger pathway 15 m to the north, but no setts. Recommend a condition to protect nesting birds, provision of access for bats, and informative note.

PARISH COUNCIL supports the proposal, bearing in mind the valid comments on refusal of the first application, if a condition to limit any subsequent extension can be imposed, this small unit could be a potential first home for a young couple or family, which would be welcome in this area, therefore the Council would wish to support this application.

SIX LETTERS OF SUPPORT have been received raising the following issues:- the home would be suitable for local young people and first time buyers; suggestions that any car parking is screened by natural hedging or trees; and that there is a restriction on outside lighting.

POLICY CONTEXT

PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, PPG13 - Transport, RPG10.

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies 49, STR1 and STR6.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies H7 & EC6 (Conversion of Rural Buildings).

ASSESSMENT

This is a small stone building close to the road in an unlisted settlement. Policy EC6 permits the conversion of rural buildings to commercial uses, subject to certain criteria and it is considered that this building would lend itself to a commercial use. However, this application is not for conversion to a commercial use and the agent has submitted a letter which indicates that he considers that a commercial use would be unlikely as the renovation and set up costs would be prohibitive. He also states that a business use close to existing dwellings would have a detrimental effect, and there are vacant business premises available in Greenham and Wellington. No evidence has been submitted to support this view, and until the identity of a commercial use is known, it is not possible to say that a commercial use would be unacceptable.

Policy H7 does not permit conversion to a residential use unless certain criteria are fulfilled. With regard to these criteria, the building is very small and would only be a 2-bedroom dwelling. It is likely that there would be pressure in the future to extend it, especially in such a rural location, and it could not be extended without changing the character. No marketing exercise has been undertaken and there is no evidence that it is unlikely to attract a suitable business re-use. The new access and drive to serve the cottage behind, the parking and turning area and the use of part of the field

as residential curtilage for the barn detract from the visual amenities of this rural location.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be REFUSED for the reason that the site is located in the countryside where the conversion of rural buildings to residential use will not be permitted unless certain criteria are fulfilled. In this case the proposal does not fulfil some of the criteria. No marketing exercise has been undertaken to establish whether a suitable commercial use would be attracted. The building is small and in this location it is likely that there would be pressure for it to be extended in the future. It is considered that the building could not be extended without changing the character. The access, parking and residential curtilage would detract from the visual qualities of an attractive rural area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies H7 and EC6.

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

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NOTES: