

36/2007/016

MR & MRS KEMP

**RETENTION OF BARN FOR HOLIDAY USE INCLUDING BLOCKING UP OF WINDOWS, RETENTION OF WIND TURBINE AND OTHER RENEWABLE ENERGY PROVISION ON ROOF AT HIGHER HOUSE FARM, HELLAND LANE, STOKE ST GREGORY**

333896/125635

RETENTION OF BUILDINGS/WORKS ETC.

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**PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for the retention of works carried out to this barn that was originally approved for conversion to a holiday let in 2003. A subsequent application made in 2006 for the unauthorised conversion works was refused and an enforcement appeal dismissed. The current scheme blocks up the windows that were unauthorised, adds a doorway and retains the wind turbine, rooflights and the solar panels on the slate roof.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the proposal is to regularise the building to conform with planning permission 36/2003/026 but also include renewable energy resource electricity as the site is not connected to the National Grid and cannot be connected with an underground supply. I raise no objection on highway grounds, however I would like to state the proposal is contrary to Structure Plan policy STR6 as the proposal will foster the need to travel as the development is not located in close proximity to services. However due to the nature of the proposal being a holiday home it is considered that the impact of traffic generated from the proposal will be minimal. NATURAL ENGLAND based in the information provided there is no comment to make on the proposal.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER I am concerned that the wind turbine and solar roof panels are incongruous elements in the local landscape. They are clearly visible from public footpaths. NATURE CONSERVATION & RESERVES OFFICER there is currently access for bats into the converted building and the site is located adjoining a SSSI and there are records of bats in the area. I advise that a wildlife survey and report is submitted, by a suitably qualified person, to the LPA for consideration in determining the application. The optimal time for bat surveys is between May – end of September/beginning of October. I recommend that the survey should identify protected species present and bearing in mind the Inspector's report and PPS9, a scheme provide roosting opportunities for bats even if there is no existing roost.

PARISH COUNCIL no objections to the application but comment that as the application is for holiday accommodation all future development rights should be removed from the property. The standard of finish to blocking up the windows on both floors does not appear to be permanent.

1 LETTER OF OBJECTION has been received raising the following issues:- the turbine should be repositioned to the south-east of the dwelling at a lower level so that it no longer spoils the scenic views from Higher Huntham Farm; the property should also be renamed.

1 LETTER OF SUPPORT has been received.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

RPG10 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West.

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 – Sustainable Development, STR6 – Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages, POLICY 1 – Nature Conservation, POLICY 5 – Landscape Character, POLICY23 – Tourism Development in the Countryside.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 – General Requirements, S2 – Design, S7 - Development Outside Settlements, EC6 – Conversion of Rural Buildings, C12 – Renewable Energy, C13 – Wind Turbines, EN4 – Wildlife in Buildings, EN12 – Landscape Character Areas.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The main consideration with this revised scheme is whether the changes to the design of the original scheme and provision of the renewable energy items such as the 6.5 m wind turbine and the solar roof panels are acceptable. The scheme originally approved in 2003 had openings in the north and south elevations and none in the gable ends. The current scheme blocks up 6 openings in the gable ends and retains one doorway in the west elevation. The retention of this one opening is considered to be acceptable and not in itself to detract from the original character of the building to a significant degree. A condition to ensure adequate blocking up of the windows and preventing new openings would be considered appropriate if permission were to be granted.

In light of the previous consideration by the Planning Inspector on the Enforcement appeal provision for protected wildlife species has to be accommodated for within the scheme and the applicant has commissioned a wildlife survey to be carried out. The Nature Conservation Officer considers that habitat needs to be maintained in light of PPS9 and therefore a condition to ensure bat roosts and other issues identified by the survey needs to be included in any permission to ensure provision before the use commences.

The Highway Authority raise concern over the location of the site and its isolation from local services. The use here for a permanent dwelling was refused and the original proposal for a holiday let was also recommended for refusal. Members considered the site suitable for holiday use and provided this was to be the case the use by holiday makers should not significantly affect traffic movements. Clearly this would not be the case if this was a permanent dwelling and the holiday use here needs to be conditioned.

The proposal provides for a number of measures to in seeking to provide for an eco-friendly development and in light of no mains electricity on the site. The roof is provided in slate rather than tile as originally approved. However there are examples of slate roofs in the area and the use of slate rather than tile is considered acceptable and was also considered so by the Planning Inspector. The photo-voltaic panel and solar panels blend better on a slate roof than a tile one. The Planning Inspector considered it an environmental advantage if the necessary panels were not located on the roof. The Landscape Officer raises concern over the visual impact of these. However the applicant has sought advice and indicated that there are technical reasons as to why the panels are sited close to the building and that this is best achieved by them remaining on the roof.

The proposal also includes a wind turbine to help provide electricity to the site. The site is some distance from any mains connection and the cost of an underground supply would be prohibitive while an overhead supply would also be costly and require a number of telegraph poles across fields to reach the site. The provision of a single relatively small wind turbine set into the orchard is considered acceptable in principle. A turbine on a 6.5 m column would largely blend into the background and not be obtrusive over long distances. It would be visible locally from footpaths and other private vantage points, however the scale of the structure is not considered to be such to warrant a refusal on visual impact and landscape grounds.

In summary there have been a number of changes on site since the previous refusal and the dismissed appeal and given the removal of windows and the ability to impose various conditions controlling future development and wildlife mitigation it considered that the use of the site for holiday purposes be approved.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials for blocked openings, holiday let, no extensions, no ancillary buildings, no fencing, no further windows/doors, wildlife survey and mitigation including bat roost.

**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:-** The proposal is considered not to harm the visual amenity in this rural location and is considered to comply with Taunton Deane Local Plan policies S1, S2, EC6, C12, C13 and EN4 and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

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

**CONTACT OFFICER: 356398 MR G CLIFFORD**

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