

30/2005/009

MRS E GOODING

CONVERSION OF BARN TO RESIDENTIAL DWELLING, PITMINSTER FARM BARN, PITMINSTER.

22002/19443

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The proposal comprises the conversion of an historic stone barn to form a 3 bedroom dwelling.

Two walls are stone, and the remaining two walls and roof are galvanised steel cladding. The building is timber framed.

Although the building is within open countryside, it immediately abuts the settlement limit of Pitminster.

An existing agricultural access and track serve the barn, and the applicant has specified that a new agricultural access would not be required.

A structural engineers report advises that the stone walls are sound and that the building can be converted to a dwelling.

A wildlife survey has also been submitted and this concludes that bats do not appear to use the building but that its conversion has the potential to create bat roosting sites, owls do not use the buildings and other bird species use the building including swallow that nest here.

The applicant advises that the original hand-made rosemary tiles have been saved and these would be re-used. She also advises that alternative uses have been considered but believes that residential use would ensure the safeguarding of its character, and that security for businesses is a problem.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY in detail in the applicants supporting letter it is stated that this barn is away from the main farm complex and is a disused structure that is possibly a very old building which has been allowed to run into disrepair due to non-use. Therefore if the barn has fallen in to non-use the traffic patterns for the proposed residential use may be considerably higher with nature of the trip patterns being quite different with a higher level of longer distance trips. The village of Pitminster does not accommodate adequate services and facilities, such as, education, employment, health, retail and leisure, and the public transport services within the village are infrequent. 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 given in PPG13 and RPG10, and to the provision of policy STR1 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (Adopted: 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 the private car. In the event of permission being granted I would recommend that conditions are imposed.

ENGLISH NATURE views awaited. SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST views awaited.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER my main concerns are:- (1) the proposals would be contrary to policy EN13 in that the domestic curtilage would impact on the local landscape character of the area; (2) the proposals are close to the Poundisford Park which is a medieval deer park and would have detrimental impact on its character. However, if the proposals are acceptable in planning terms I would recommend the following:- (1) provide a hedge bank (up to 1 m high) with native planting above around the whole site (post and rail is not acceptable); (3) maintain most of the site as agricultural land use and plant with a traditional style orchard; (4) the access drive should be 'dog-legged' so that it does not form such a strong axis feature. WILDLIFE SPECIES CO-ORDINATOR if planning permission is granted on that barn I advise that conditions are made to maintain access for bats and swallows. Landscape proposals would play an important part in maintaining the very rural nature of the site which would be of key importance to bats and swallows. RIGHTS OF WAY OFFICER I assume that the entrance will be within the development area and will not affect the footpath. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER recommends condition and notes.

PARISH COUNCIL broadly in support of this application. Landscaping will be essential with native hedges being a condition. It will be very important to blend the very long access drive into the design. The barn is of great architectural significance. Having had discussions with the owner it appears he is dedicated to the refurbishment of it in a very sympathetic manner. Materials used should be of high quality and reflect the age of the barn. The drawings showing the design were favourably received.

4 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:- loss of privacy would result; some nuisance with noise and dust would occur; if permission is granted conditions should be imposed to include restoring of topsoil along the drive; rear boundaries of The Green to be realigned, the verge to be mown regularly, fences to be erected, the drive to be surfaced to keep noise and dust to a minimum, and no farm business to be conducted from the property; a precedent may be set whereby other houses would be built; the bus service is very sparse; the mains sewerage should not be interfered with; the barn should not be extended; and the vehicular access poses a road safety problem.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy H7 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan seeks to resist conversions of buildings to residential use unless, inter alia, the building is of permanent and substantial

construction, is in keeping with its surroundings, and is unlikely to attract a suitable business re-use. Policy EN12 seeks to ensure that proposals are sensitively designed to respect the distinct character and appearance of Landscape Character Areas. Policy EN5 seeks to safeguard protected species. Policies S1 and S2 seek to safeguard, inter alia, the character of buildings, visual and residential amenity, and road safety.

ASSESSMENT

The structural engineers report confirms that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion. The building is also historic, vernacular, very attractive, and worthy of conversion to residential use. The Highway Authority's concern over the issues of sustainability is considered unreasonable in this instance, particularly given the location of the building adjacent to the Pitminster village boundaries. The public footpath will clearly be unaffected by the proposal and it is not considered that the immediate landscape would be affected. The principle of conversion of this building to residential use is consequently considered acceptable, and wildlife issues and reasonable concerns of local residents could be addressed by the imposition of suitable conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Permisison be GRANTED subject to conditions of time, materials, drainage, landscaping, windows and doors to be timber and recessed with full details to be submitted, GPDO extensions, no additional buildings, garages, fences, wildlife protection, contamination, highway conditions and curtilage specification.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION: The proposed building is of permanent and substantial construction, is in keeping with its surroundings, and its conversion would not adversely affect the character of the building, visual or residential amenity, road safety, and the surrounding landscape character. Accordingly, the proposed development does not conflict with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies H7, S1, S2, EN12 and EN5.

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

CONTACT OFFICER: 356465 MR J GRANT

NOTES:

