

MR S GOTHARD

**CHANGE OF USE AND CONVERSION OF BARN TO HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION,  
BARN OFF HELLAND LANE, HUNTHAM, NORTH CURRY.**

33900/25610

FULL PERMISSION

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**PROPOSAL**

Planning permission was refused under delegated powers in October, 2002 for the conversion of this barn to a dwelling. The current application is for the change of use and conversion of the barn to holiday accommodation. The site area is approximately 0.22 hectares and is located within the Levels Landscape Character Area and a Special Landscape Area. In addition the site is situated close to the boundary of West Sedgemoor Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) which forms part of the Somerset Levels Moors and Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site. The external walls of the barn are a mixture of blue lias stone, brick and concrete block and the roof is corrugated iron. As part of the conversion it is proposed to demolish the concrete block section of the barn and to erect an extension (2.9 m x 6.4 m). It is also proposed to erect a new tiled pitched roof over the barn, which will be a different pitch to the existing and involve raising the ridge height. It is proposed to gain access to the site via a track which is approximately 180 metres in length. The access would involve hard surfacing an existing track and providing a 1 m high bund on its south side over the entire length.

**CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY the proposed development site is located outside the confines of any recognised development boundary limits, remote from retail and leisure facilities. The site is accessed via a public footpath, and the roads leading to the site are substandard in terms of width, alignment and visibility. There are no footways or coherent street lighting systems on the routes to the site, and the site performs very poorly in terms of transport mode choice. Any visitors to the development will be highly dependant on the private car and while they may find some basic services within the neighbouring villages of North Curry and Stoke St Gregory, they are more likely to travel to Taunton for essential provisions. This proposal would foster an increase in the need to travel and increase dependency on the private car, contrary to the advice given in PPG13 and Policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. I would therefore recommend refusal of the application on highways and transportation grounds for the following reasons: 1) The proposal would result in the creation of a holiday cottage in a remote rural location, some distance from facilities and services. In the absence of any satisfactory cycling or walking facilities, the development would result in growth in the need to travel and the occupants would be dependent on the private motor car. This would be contrary to the provisions of PPG13 and Policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review. 2) The proposed development would result in an increase in vehicular traffic along a designated public footpath with consequent loss of amenity and risk of additional hazard and inconvenience to all users of the designated right of way.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY No objection in principle subject to conditions and notes covering the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals, package treatment plants and pumps to be used for pumping out water from excavations. ENGLISH NATURE the application area lies close to an SSSI, which is part of the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, which are of international importance. We welcome the intention to direct water to soakaways. We would recommend that all foul sewage is directed to a mini sewage treatment plant. This is acceptable in principle to English Nature providing the system is adequately maintained. English Nature is of the opinion that the proposal would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SPA or Ramsar and is not directly connected with the management of the site for nature conservation. We do not believe the proposal will have an adverse impact on West Sedgemoor SSSI. We recommend a check is made of the buildings to ensure that no protected species are present before works commence.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER the barn is in an exposed location in open countryside. The track is unsuitable for general vehicle use, its upgrading would not be in keeping with the SLA. RIGHTS OF WAY OFFICER the footpath will not be affected. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER recommends conditions and notes re possibility of contaminated land arising from the previous agricultural use. DRAINAGE OFFICER I note that drainage is to be dealt with by soakaways and septic tank or self contained treatment works. I suggest standard conditions for these disposal methods. With regard to foul drainage the consent of the Environment Agency will be required. It should be ascertained from the applicant what form of disposal system will be employed.

STOKE ST GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL part of the barn was originally a dwelling, which this proposal seeks to restore. The concrete blocks are to be replaced by blue lias stone and the tin roof tiled. Water is already available on site and services will be provided underground. There is an existing curtilage. Grass will be removed from the old track way and made good with stone and a bund formed to lessen visual impact; the hedge, stile and footpath will be reinstated. The Council feels that the proposed conversion will be of benefit to the area and supports it. NORTH CURRY PARISH COUNCIL no objections in principle, but anxious it does not set a precedent for future extensions of small barns. We request that a condition be placed for underground services.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

Policy 5 (Landscape Character) of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review states that the distinctive character of the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake. Policy ED/EC/7 (Special Landscape Areas) of the East Deane Local Plan states that there should be a strict control of development in SLAs. Policy S1 (General Requirements) of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit identifies a list of criteria which developments are required to meet. Considerations include accessibility and the impact of developments on the appearance and character of any affected landscape. Policy EC3 (Conversion of Rural Buildings) of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit requires conversions to holiday accommodation to meet a range of criteria, including that proposals should be sited near a public road and should not involve major rebuilding or significant extension and alteration. Policy EN13 (Landscape Character Areas) of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit requires proposals to respect the distinct character and appearance of such areas.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The barn in question is located outside of the defined limits of any recognised settlements in open countryside and as such the proposed conversion to holiday accommodation needs to be assessed against the criteria of Policy EC3 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit. The proposed conversion requires significant rebuilding, extension and alteration and the barn is sited in an isolated position, some distance from a public road. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy EC3. As the accessibility of the barn is poor the necessary improvements to the infrastructure to provide access would be likely to have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. For these reasons the proposal is considered to be unacceptable.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be REFUSED for the following reasons: the conversion requires significant rebuilding, extension and alteration and is not sited near a public road and is therefore contrary to policy; the accessibility of the barn is poor and necessary improvements to infrastructure to provide access are likely to have a detrimental impact on the appearance and character of the area.

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

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