

4.5.2016

Application No: 16/02385/FUL

Proposal: Proposed Conversion of Agricultural Buildings, Including Re-Cladding Walls & Roof, Installation of New Floor, to Provide Four Bedroom Dwelling with Associated Parking, Walled Garden/Rear Garden, Wildlife Pond & Landscaping (Resubmission of 15/10902/FUL).

Site Address: Ranch House Farm, Bath Road, Colerne, Wiltshire, SN14 8AT.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board have been asked to comment on this application following Mark Goodwin's consultation response of 26th April 2016. The Board has considered the application and wishes to raise an **objection**.

Relevant paragraphs of the NPPF to be considered include Paragraph 14 (footnote 9), and Paragraphs 55 and 115. The Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy CP48 also refers to the conversion and re-use of rural buildings. The Board also notes that the 2015 application generated an objection from the Highways Engineer in terms of remoteness from local services and facilities. Mark Goodwin's own response has raised an objection in terms of landscape impact, the appropriateness of the building for conversion and accordingly a failure to "conserve and enhance" the character and special qualities of the AONB (under Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000). I also attach an appeal decision from within the Cotswolds AONB (Cotswold District Council) where an Inspector dismissed an appeal for two holiday units.

Impact on the AONB

The Board agrees with Mark Goodwin's conclusions in respect of landscape impact. The Landscape and Strategy guidelines for the Cotswolds AONB highlights the risks in this area from *"Isolated development such as new single dwellings on the valley slopes that might compromise rural landscape character, particularly between areas of development."* Accordingly a development of this nature would result in new isolated residential development, new lighting (including from large areas of glazing to elevations) and the erosion of the recognised quality of "dark night" skies, and visual intrusion both in the immediate locality from the public right of way but also in more distant viewpoints (see submitted viewpoint analysis). Therefore, unlike the attached appeal, this proposal would negatively impact on the recognised character and special qualities of this part of the AONB. The use of zinc roofs, large areas of glazing, the form and location of openings, balcony, chimney and external render, unlike the attached appeal, is considered not to be sympathetic to the character of the barns.

Suitability for Conversion

The attached appeal is of relevance in relation to the condition of the existing buildings. In the case of the attached Middle Duntisbourne example the Inspector notes *"6. I am not convinced by what I saw that the existing structural framework is substantial enough to be capable of conversion without needing a high degree of demolition and reconstruction, which would amount to a new building with very little of the original left. I have had regard to the structural survey which has been carried out. However, the extent of the proposed works goes well beyond the 'conversion', or the re-use of the existing barn to a holiday let use. Indeed, the effective reconstruction of the building to form the accommodation would, in my opinion, amount to the formation of a new building in the countryside."* Policy CP48 from the Wiltshire Core Strategy includes consideration is given to *"i. The building(s) is / are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding, and with only necessary extension or modification which preserves the character of the original building."* The Board therefore also considers in this case that the works required to create a new dwelling go well beyond a "conversion."

Sustainable Development

The effect of this proposal would be to create a new dwelling in an isolated location, outside the nearest settlement and within a nationally protected landscape. The Highways Engineer's previous objection on this point is noted above. Policy CP48 does make provision for conversion to residential but such proposals should still meet the criteria of that policy and be in line with national policy. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF generally advises *"Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances."* Re-use of buildings is referred to as an example of special circumstances, which is also followed by the text *"and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting."*

Conclusions

The Board considers the level of development required to create a dwelling goes beyond a "conversion" and the location of this site in the countryside means that the scheme does not constitute sustainable

development and would result in a new dwelling within the countryside of the AONB. The scheme therefore does not fulfil the requirements of Paragraph 55 of the NPPF and Policy CP48 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The proposal would not lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting but would result in harm, as referred to above in relation to the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF confirms “great weight” should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Therefore, the Board raises an objection in relation to this proposal