

## **THE CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS**

### **Executive Summary**

This draft guidance supplements Structure Plan and emerging Local Plan policy and provides a framework for the consideration of planning applications for the conversion or re-use of buildings in the countryside. The guidance seeks to set out clearly:

- ❑ The type of farm building that is suitable for conversion and that which is not.
- ❑ The uses that the Council wishes to encourage in rural buildings, subject to environmental and other criteria.
- ❑ The uses that the Council considers inappropriate in rural buildings.
- ❑ The criteria that applicants need to be aware of before submitting an application.

### **Rural buildings fall into 2 broad categories:**

- 1) Traditional buildings- those of architectural or historic merit, for instance those of stone, cob, or brick construction under a slate roof are suitable for conversion subject to the use and criteria outlined below.
- 2) Modern buildings- suitably located modern buildings of permanent design or construction, capable of re-use or resiting, will be considered for community uses or an appropriate commercial use that will contribute positively to the local economy. Any such use must be acceptable in locational, highway, amenity and landscape terms. Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings or structures deemed to be dilapidated or incapable of conversion will not be considered acceptable.

The Council is aware that farmers increasingly need to diversify, due to changing economic circumstances. It wishes to help farmers, and other owners, by providing clear advice on acceptable re-uses for redundant rural buildings. Provided their conversion does not undermine the viability of an existing agricultural holding, the Council is particularly keen to see the creation of appropriate year round employment in structurally sound vernacular buildings which are well related to existing settlements. Businesses in the knowledge-based and cultural sectors may be appropriate, because they make extensive use of the web, can be operated at a small scale, and do not generate large traffic movements or noise and pollution.

### **The re-use of rural buildings for the following uses will be encouraged:**

- i) Ancillary agricultural uses (including farm shops).
- ii) Crafts, light industrial, business uses, small manufacturing units, storage.
- iii) Community, recreation and tourist facilities.
- iv) Holiday accommodation (where the rural building is close to the main farm/country house and subject to a section 106 Agreement or planning condition to ensure permanent retention as holiday accommodation)

The criteria against which proposals in (i) and (iii) will be judged are:

- ❑ Is the access appropriate to the scale of the enterprise proposed?

- ❑ Is the scale of the enterprise appropriate to the position, building, and expected traffic generation?
- ❑ Is the form, bulk and general design of the building in keeping with surroundings and local building styles and materials?
- ❑ Are there any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring properties, public amenity, landscape or wildlife?
- ❑ Does the proposal add substantially to the need to travel by car?

Conversion of rural buildings to residential will be permitted where residential use is the only way to secure the long term future of a listed building and/or a building of architectural or historic merit, the conversion will meet an established need for an agricultural worker, the residential use is an integral, essential, but subordinate part of a larger tourism, employment, recreation or community scheme or, in exceptional cases, where it will meet an identified need for affordable housing in a sustainable location in accordance with the criteria relating to exceptions housing.

# Conversion of Rural Buildings

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide guidance to people who are considering converting rural buildings to alternative uses. Rural buildings are those outside of any town or village with a built-up area boundary (as defined in the Local Plan.) This report forms Interim Supplementary Planning Guidance to the emerging East Devon Local Plan. It supplements Local and Structure Plan Policy and provides a framework for consideration of planning applications for conversion or re-use of rural buildings. It provides guidance to owners, businesses and developers on uses and forms of development that the Council will encourage, or accept, in rural buildings.
- 1.2 If, after reading this guidance, an owner is intending to submit a planning application, they are *strongly advised to contact the Development Control Section of the Environment Directorate at an early stage in order to discuss their proposals with Officers. General queries relating to the Policy should be addressed to the Policy and Conservation Section.*
- 1.3 This report complies with and reflects national and local government planning policy and will form Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), providing further detail to Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) and Devon Structure and East Devon Local Plan Policies. The Local Plan Policy of particular relevance is D9B (Re-use of Rural Buildings Outside Settlements) which is reproduced in full at the end of this guidance. In the event that a planning application is submitted, other policies of the Local Plan may also be considered relevant.
- 1.4 The Policy and Conservation Section of East Devon District Council, in consultation with Members, Parish Councils and the Council's Economic Development Unit has produced the report which has been adopted by the District Council as interim Supplementary Planning Guidance to be used in the determination of planning applications, following public consultation.

## 2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

- 2.1 The East Devon Local Plan, placed on revised deposit in September 2003, sets out the Council's policies and proposals for the use of land and buildings in the District during the period up to 2011. The Local Plan, which complies with the policies of the Devon Structure Plan and Central Government Guidance, is currently being considered at Inquiry and it is hoped that it will be adopted in Winter 2005. This report will form Supplementary Planning Guidance that will complement and add detail to the many policies contained within the documents that provide an overall guide and context for development.
- 2.2 Local Plan policies have the underlying theme of protecting the countryside and do not permit new residential development outside towns and villages, unless there is overriding justification to do so in exceptional circumstances. Other types of development in such locations are strictly controlled, balancing the need to encourage

rural enterprise and provide facilities for existing local communities, whilst minimising the environmental impact and ensuring that new development is sustainable.

- 2.3 The Government, in PPS7, states that the range of industries that can successfully be located in rural areas is expanding. Many commercial and light industrial activities can be carried on in rural areas without causing unacceptable disturbance. There are attractions to the firms and their staff in a countryside environment, and there are benefits to employment and the local economy. Such firms also help to bring new life and activity to rural communities and so are generally welcomed and quickly assimilated. Local planning authorities are advised to bear in mind the vital role of enterprises, especially at a small scale, in promoting healthy economic activity in rural areas which can contribute to both local and national competitiveness.
- 2.4 The Rural White Paper reinforces the importance of economic diversification and the need to accommodate change while continuing to conserve the countryside.

### **3.0 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The broad thrust of national planning and Local Plan policy is as follows:
- conversion of rural buildings to a business re-use will be encouraged, provided that they are suitable for the specific re-use;
  - residential re-use will, in general, not be allowed unless the building is of historic or architectural merit and the applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure a suitable business re-use (or where the residential use is a subordinate part of a scheme for business use);
  - if the building is in open countryside, it must be capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction or alteration. Any extension must be modest;
  - the form, bulk and general design of the conversion scheme is in keeping with the structure, form, character or setting of the building and its surroundings and local building styles and materials;
  - conversion should not result in unacceptable impacts upon the local environment or amenity;
  - the proposal does not substantively add to the need to travel by car, create traffic or access problems.
  - the proposals will not undermine the viability of an existing agricultural enterprise.
- 3.2 All applications for the re-use of rural buildings should be accompanied by the results of a combined bat and barn owl survey. In addition, provision for barn owls should be incorporated into all re-use schemes, irrespective of their presence or absence.
- 3.3 General guidance on design issues, and considerations which should be taken into account when making a planning application, are included later in the report.
- 3.4 Where a proposal involves the re-use or conversion of agricultural buildings and any replacement or new buildings would have a serious detrimental effect on the landscape, permitted development rights will be withdrawn for new farm buildings on the relevant part of that particular agricultural unit or holding. In determining proposals to convert a building constructed using agricultural permitted development rights, account will be taken of the extent to which the building has been used for its original purpose.

- 3.5 Sometimes an attempt is made to abuse the system by constructing a building with the intention of early conversion to another use. In such cases the history of the building will be investigated to establish whether it has been used for the agricultural purpose for which it was originally claimed to have been built. Also, where the proliferation of farm buildings could have a seriously detrimental effect on the landscape, it may be appropriate to consider attaching to the grant of planning permission for the use of an agricultural building for non-agricultural uses, a condition withdrawing permitted development rights for new farm buildings in respect of the particular unit or holding.

## 4.0 CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS TO OTHER USES

### 4.1 ***Building Type***

With changes in farming practice, many rural buildings, such as barns, cowsheds, cart-sheds, poultry houses and granaries, are no longer needed for their original purpose. Some rural buildings add greatly to the character of the countryside and to local distinctiveness, and the Council therefore wishes to help conserve them. Others are of no architectural or historic value and should either be demolished or, where they can still contribute usefully to agriculture, be re-sited.

### 4.2 Rural buildings fall into two main categories:

- i) Traditional buildings of some architectural or historic merit, for instance those of stone, cob or brick construction under a slate roof.

These buildings can make a striking and valuable contribution to the character and quality of the landscape as well as having historic value in their own right. The Council is keen to see the built fabric of these buildings retained and will encourage their sensitive re-use for the rural economy. Indeed, if a listed building is allowed to fall into disrepair the Council has the option of serving an Urgent Works Notice requiring action to protect it.

**These buildings are suitable for conversion to the uses outlined below in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.7.**

- ii) Modern buildings.

Where suitably located modern buildings of permanent design or construction are capable of re-use and/or resiting the Council will consider community uses or an appropriate commercial use, including equine, that will contribute positively to the local economy. Any such use must be acceptable in locational, highway, amenity and landscape terms. Owners of such buildings should contact the Council to discuss their proposals.

### ***Uses permitted in conversions of suitable redundant rural buildings***

### 4.3 **Commercial Use**

The Council is aware that farmers increasingly need to diversify, due to changing economic circumstances. It is therefore particularly keen to see the creation of appropriate year-round employment in structurally sound vernacular buildings. The conversion of rural buildings to business or commercial uses will make a positive contribution to the local economy and to rural diversification. This type of development will both retain and/or create local employment opportunities in rural areas – where it is

normally difficult to secure planning permission for 'new build' development This approach is supported by PPS 7, which goes so far as to stress that there should be no reason for preventing conversion of rural buildings for business use subject to certain criteria, relating to highway safety, landscape, amenity and sustainability.

- 4.4 Businesses in the knowledge-based and cultural sectors may be particularly appropriate, because they make extensive use of the web, can be operated at a small scale, and do not generate large traffic movements or noise and pollution. These are also identified by the South West Regional Development Agency as key growth sectors.

**The re-use of redundant rural buildings for the following commercial uses will be encouraged:**

- i) **ancillary agricultural uses (including farm shops)**
- ii) **crafts, light industrial, business uses, small manufacturing units, storage**

#### **4.5 Tourism Use**

Tourism is a cornerstone of the East Devon economy. Much tourism-related employment continues to be low paid, seasonal and fragmented. On the other hand the Council is working to extend the tourist season and improve the quality of the tourism offer. Small-scale attractions and good quality self-catering and 'B and B' in attractive unspoilt rural areas comprise an important aspect of East Devon's tourist experience. The planning authority has to find the right balance between protecting the countryside and enabling small-scale tourism businesses to flourish.

- 4.6 The planning authority is required to exercise care to ensure that allowing holiday accommodation in the countryside does not become a backdoor means of obtaining permission for residential use where it would not normally be allowed. Central Government, in PPS 7 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 21- Tourism (PPG21) draws a distinction between permanent residential dwellings and holiday accommodation in the in the countryside. Residential dwellings are likely to place greater pressure on local services, contribute less to the local economy (as tourists spend significantly in local shops etc) and generate larger numbers of journeys by car than tourists. Annexe C to PPG 21 acknowledges that holiday accommodation may exceptionally be allowed where permanent residential accommodation would not normally be acceptable in the context of local or national policy. It advises that local authorities exercise care over such applications, and that "it may be appropriate to apply similar strict criteria to that over new housing in the countryside".

- 4.7 In deciding whether conversion to holiday accommodation is acceptable, the planning authority will consider the location of the property, the availability of access roads, the need for new services to the property, the scale of the scheme and the willingness of the owner to submit a business plan demonstrating viability of the scheme. The Council's Economic Development Unit will also strongly encourage holiday accommodation providers to become part of an approved tourism quality grading scheme. It is very important that only buildings in close proximity to the main farm or country house from which they will be serviced are converted as this considerably reduces the number of car journeys needed to greet visitors, change linen etc. and, linking the use of the conversions to a specific house, prevents them from being sold separately as 'second homes' which benefit the local economy to a lesser extent than holiday lets. The relationship between the properties, maintained by planning condition or section 106

agreement, will ensure that the potential for a long-term regular income is available to the owner, thus supporting rural diversification.

- 4.8 A business plan will usually be required to demonstrate that the proposed conversion will meet an identified need and that the conversion will make a genuine positive contribution to the rural economy rather than being an attempt to obtain a 'residential' unit in the countryside.

**The re-use of redundant rural buildings for the following tourism/community uses will be encouraged:**

- i) community, recreation and tourist facilities**
- ii) holiday accommodation (where the rural building is close to the main farm/country house and subject to a section 106 agreement or planning condition to ensure permanent retention as holiday accommodation).**

**4.9 Residential Use**

**There is, and will continue to be, a presumption against residential use in these buildings. An exception may be made where:**

- i) there is a proven agricultural need for a worker to live on site.**
- ii) or where there is a proven business need for a worker to live on site, as a subordinate part of a larger scheme.**
- iii) there is a proven need for affordable housing and it's provision accords with Local Plan Policy H5- Affordable Housing on Exceptions Sites.**

**In all cases these will be subject to a section 106 agreement to ensure the residential unit is used in this way in perpetuity.**

- iv) the residential use is the only way to ensure the long-term retention of a listed building and the Council is satisfied that tourism or business uses are not viable.**

- 4.10 The majority of applications for conversion of rural buildings seek residential use because this is the most profitable use. However, it is contrary to long-established planning policies, and the principles of sustainability, which seek to direct new housing to existing settlements where facilities exist without residents needing to rely on the private car, whilst protecting the open countryside. Conversion of rural buildings, particularly farm buildings, to residential is often detrimental to their appearance requiring major changes, tantamount to erecting a new building, and the paraphernalia that is associated with dwellings such as aerials, garden furniture, washing lines and sheds. This damages the character of the building, its setting and the wider countryside. In addition, residential dwellings in rural areas increase reliance on the private car, place demands on local services and do not contribute to the local economy to the extent that tourists do.

- 4.11 By their nature rural buildings are located in open countryside, outside any Built-up Area Boundary as defined in the East Devon Local Plan. Residential conversion will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This could be where there is a proven agricultural need, or as a subordinate part of a business case where there is a proven need for a worker to live on site. Permission will then be granted subject to a section 106 agreement to ensure permanent use in relation to this need.

- 4.12 Very occasionally buildings may become available for conversion which are located on the edge of settlements where an identified need for affordable housing is recognised by the District Council. In these instances it may be appropriate to convert the buildings to meet the need for affordable housing, under the exceptions housing Policy of the Local Plan (H5), rather than developing a greenfield site. Such developments are usually undertaken with a Registered Social Landlord and will be subject to restrictions limiting the occupancy in perpetuity. The District Council will require the buildings to meet the criteria set out in Policy H5. These circumstances arise rarely and applicants are advised to discuss proposals with an Officer of the Council at an early stage.
- 4.13 Before conversion of a listed building to residential use will be considered, the District Council must be satisfied that the use of the building for commercial use or holiday accommodation is not viable. Evidence will be sought that the building has been marketed extensively, at a realistic price, for a substantial period of time. It is difficult to be prescriptive about the definition of the marketing exercise as each case will be different. However the planning authority will expect a marketing exercise to comprise:
- bi-monthly advertisement in a regional newspaper
  - advertising with a commercial property agent;
  - notifying other organisations who may have an interest in promoting the site.
- 4.14 It is recognised that marketing a building without permission for a specific use is difficult, however estate agents regularly market buildings as suitable for employment or tourism purposes “subject to the necessary planning permission”. If planning permission has been obtained for an employment or tourism use or repair works are carried out to improve the building’s condition, and the building is then marketed without success, applications for the conversion of that building to other uses will be considered more favourably than if such measures are not taken. The Council is able to provide advice on marketing and provide a model marketing plan upon request.
- 4.15 In some instances it will not be possible/appropriate to market the building for a substantial length of time. In these cases (and in other cases if it is considered necessary) the applicant will be asked to submit an independent report giving detailed conversion costs and the estimated yield of the commercial uses outlined in sections 4.3-4.8 of this guidance and the projected eventual income from the tourism industry. In order to establish that tourism use is unviable evidence that other accommodation of a similar type in the local area (ie within 5 miles) is under occupied/operating at a loss may be sought and should cover a whole season as numbers will fluctuate depending on weather, local events etc. If this information is not available, it may be assumed that a tourism use would be viable and conversion to residential may be discounted. When a building has been extensively marketed for commercial and tourism purposes without success, or these uses are discounted as a result of a detailed independent report, and conversion is the only way to ensure the conservation of a listed building, consideration will be given to residential use.
- 4.16 The District Council currently receives significant numbers of planning applications for the conversion of rural buildings to holiday and commercial uses, this in itself suggests that the demand for such accommodation in the District remains high.

### ***Varying the planning condition restricting use of a building to tourist accommodation***

- 4.17 Applicants, having succeeded in obtaining planning permission for conversion of a rural building to provide holiday accommodation, might want to apply to have the restrictive planning condition removed. This effectively means that the building would become residential. If the building is listed and hasn't been converted the process will be the same as is outlined in the section above.
- 4.18 Any relaxation of the occupancy restriction to allow residential occupation would constitute the creation of new residential dwellings in the countryside, contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan. Such proposals will be strongly resisted unless a dwelling to meet a proven agricultural or affordable need or as a subordinate part of a business scheme is proposed. **Conversion of tourist accommodation to residential on the basis that the tourism use is not proving viable due to lack of demand or cost of conversion will not be permitted.**
- 4.19 If the building is listed and has been converted, evidence that the use is not proving viable will be required if a condition restricting the use of the building to tourist accommodation is to be removed. The District Council will consider applications accompanied by evidence that a number of firms with a wide experience of letting have been approached and the tourist accommodation has been widely marketed far more favourably than those submitted without supporting information. Evidence of extensive publicity ie. Local or national newspapers, internet webpage, Tourist Information Centres will also be extremely useful.

### **5.0 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING A PLANNING APPLICATION**

- 5.1 In addition to the guidance set out above, there will be further criteria which must be taken into consideration when determining a planning application for conversion.
- 5.2 In all instances the objective is to ensure that buildings to be converted are adapted sympathetically having regard to their surroundings. In the case of traditional buildings, the scheme of conversion should ensure that the original character of the building is retained.
- 5.3. **Redundancy-** Where an agricultural building is proposed to be replaced through conversion, the proposal should not lead to the need for further agricultural buildings elsewhere, **unless there are some technical and commercial reasons to do so.**
- 5.4 **Quality/Condition of Building-** In the open countryside, buildings should be of permanent and substantial construction and should not be so derelict that they could only be brought back into use by substantial rebuilding, tantamount to the erection of a new building.
- 5.5 In order to establish the condition and physical suitability of a building, an independent structural engineer's report will be required. This should clearly demonstrate the structural capability of the building to accommodate the scheme proposed and be submitted with the planning application. This will benefit both the Council and applicant since if a building collapses during alteration the planning permission may be rendered unimplementable.

5.6 **Quality of Conversion-** Once the suitability of a building for conversion is established, then the actual details of the scheme need to be assessed. The following considerations are put forward as generally reflecting good practice. There may be individual buildings wherein the guidance may not be appropriate depending on its unique character, design, materials and construction. In such cases advice should be sought from appropriate Council officers.

**(a) Extension/alteration**

Generally, the building should be capable of conversion without the need for extensions and alterations. The roof line should not be altered or raised and dormers will almost always be inappropriate, unless they are traditional to other buildings in the locality.

**(b) Internal sub-division**

By the nature of their intended purposes, many buildings are open plan internally. It is inevitable, particularly for tourism/residential uses, that internal sub-division is necessary e.g. to separate kitchen, bathroom and living space or to separate office space/storage. Internal sub-division should be kept to a minimum so as to respect the internal features, space or roof structures.

**(c) Elevational changes**

(i) Windows and Doors:

A difficulty experienced in conversion schemes is to enable sufficient natural light into a building, without the creation of a considerable amount of new openings for windows which would seriously damage its existing character. Wherever possible, existing openings should be retained and new openings should be kept to a minimum. Where new windows and doors are unavoidable, they should be sympathetic in design, proportions and materials. The use of PVCu will invariably be unacceptable and all external timber should be painted rather than stained. Additional light may be achieved by the glazing of ventilation slits and sparing use on less visible roof lines of flush fitting conservation rooflights.

(ii) Details:

Existing features such as fixed machinery, arches, lintels ventilation slits etc., should be retained and incorporated into the scheme. Where openings need to be blocked up a sympathetic material should be used and recessed to emphasise the original opening. The use of timber boarding or glass may be appropriate for large openings with glazing helping to ensure sufficient natural light is available. The introduction of chimney stacks and modern or over-ornate details should be avoided. External rainwater goods should be kept to a minimum and be black finished cast-iron or aluminium.

(iii) External materials:

Existing stone/brickwork should be repointed using traditional lime based mortars and methods, and roof slates/tiles should be repaired and re-used wherever possible. In instances where new materials are necessary, these should match the existing in terms of size, colour, texture etc. Only when the existing building features rendering and/or paint/whitewash will this form of treatment be appropriate.

5.7. **External Areas-** Notwithstanding the quality of the actual conversion scheme, considerable care must be taken with the external surroundings. The creation of a 'residential' curtilage, boundary treatment and the introduction of residential and domestic features and materials can have a damaging effect on the character of the building and its surroundings.

### **(a) Curtilages**

The curtilage of a rural building should generally remain open and uncluttered. Where there is scope for private areas in tourism/residential conversions these should be screened with hedging, Devon banks or walls of old brick or stone and should follow existing natural or manmade boundaries such as hedge lines or farmyard boundary walls. The treatment of boundaries should reflect the building's rural character with simple post and rail fences stone / brick walls and timber gates being acceptable. The planning application should include plans clearly defining the extent of the curtilage areas and showing detailed boundary treatments.

In tourism/residential conversions, conservatories, pools, sheds, interwoven fences and ornate entrances etc., may detract from the character of the building and its setting. The incorporation of agricultural land into a building's curtilage constitutes a change of use and will require planning permission but will normally be discouraged.

### **(b) Surfaces**

Modern ground surface materials such as tarmac and concrete are sometimes out of keeping with the character of traditional rural buildings, **although there are instances when tarmac may be suitable**. Wherever possible, existing stone sets, cobbles or other suitable/sympathetic materials should be retained or re-used and supplemented where necessary.

### **(c) Landscaping**

Generally, hard landscaping will be appropriate to courtyards and soft landscaping appropriate elsewhere. Existing landscape features should be retained where possible. Planning applications should be accompanied by a fully detailed landscaping scheme.

### **(d) Parking**

Parking should be in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's guidelines. Careful consideration should be given to the sensitive siting and design of car parking, in both employment and residential schemes. Wherever possible in a residential conversion scheme, garaged cars should be incorporated within the conversion scheme, especially in buildings with former loading bays and barn doors.

### **(e) Services**

Particular care needs to be given to services which can have a damaging visual effect. LP gas tanks, septic tanks etc. should be sensitively sited and well screened so as to be unobtrusive whilst electricity control boxes, alarm boxes, satellite dishes and flues etc., should be positioned on less prominent elevations.

### **(f) Storage**

Some employment conversion schemes may need space for the storage of goods and materials. As with car parking, careful consideration should be given to the siting and screening of any storage areas, ensuring that there is a minimal impact upon the building and its surroundings by utilising screening through existing or new walls or through landscaping measures.

### **(g) Access for Disabled People**

An inclusive design approach is recommended to incorporate facilities for disabled people in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, in particular Part III – adjustments in relations to physical features. Access should be in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations in conjunction with BSI 8300:2001.

## 5.8 **Amenity/Setting of Other Buildings**

The relationship of the conversion scheme to other buildings needs to be assessed. Often there will be dwellings nearby and both these and the conversion scheme must take account of privacy and overlooking issues. Agricultural or other operations, either on the site or nearby must not result in inadequate amenity standards.

## 5.9 **Wildlife**

Some buildings may contain roosts for bats and owls which are protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. To determine whether this is the case the applicant will need to undertake a pre-determination survey and English Nature will be consulted on the results of the survey and mitigation required. It is an offence to damage or destroy a bat breeding site or resting place and an offence can be committed even if the actions were unintentional. Steps can be taken in the detailed designs of roofs to provide suitable habitats and access for bats, swallows and owls and, whether they are present or not, provision for owls and swallows should be made as they will quickly colonise premises where suitable accommodation is provided.

## 5.10 **Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas**

Some buildings may be listed as being of special architectural or historic interest or may fall within the curtilage of a listed building. Others may fall within conservation areas. In both cases conversions will require very careful consideration to ensure that the character, appearance and features of the buildings are retained. A separate application for listed building consent will be required where works are proposed to a listed building or building within the curtilage of a listed building.

## 5.11 **Removal of Permitted Development Rights**

In granting planning permission for residential conversions permitted development rights will be removed by the imposition of a planning condition. All subsequent alterations i.e. garages, extensions, outbuildings, sheds, alterations to the roof etc., which would normally be permitted development, will require specific planning permission. This is to avoid the loss of the building's character through a series of small changes which cumulatively have an adverse effect.

## **6. MAKING AN APPLICATION**

6.1 Applicants are advised to consult with Development Control Planning Officers before submitting planning applications. For this particular SPG applicants should provide the following (specific) information:

In all cases a Building Regulation application will be required and applicants are advised to contact the Building Control Section or an approved Inspector to obtain further information and the necessary application forms and fee guidance.

Plans:

- elevational and plan drawings (existing and proposed);
- cross sectional drawings where necessary (plans should clearly show what elements of the original building will remain and what elements of the scheme are new)
- landscaping details showing existing and proposed hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;

Structural Survey:

- Submission of a report prepared by a structural engineer/surveyor

Marketing Criteria: (for residential schemes and the removal of tourism planning conditions only)

- elevational and plan drawings (existing and proposed);  
cross sectional drawings where necessary (plans should clearly show what elements of the building will remain and what elements are new)
- Submission of evidence that sufficient and reasonable attempts have been made to secure a business/commercial re-use for the building.

Further information can be obtained from:

The Policy and Conservation Section, Environment Dept. East Devon District Council, Knowle, Station Road, Sidmouth, Devon. EX10 8HL Telephone: 01395 516551 or e.mail [crodway@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:crodway@eastdevon.gov.uk)