

SIDMOUTH RURAL
(Sidmouth)

07/1382/COU

Target Date: 9 July 2007

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Davey
Location: Higher Sweetcombe, Sidbury
Proposal: Conversion of barn to form two holiday units

CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Authority

The proposal seeks the conversion of a barn to two holiday units. As a consequence the development would lead to additional traffic being generated.

The site is remotely located where the use of private vehicles is likely to prevail and the use of more sustainable modes of transport is unlikely to be an option. The roads leading to the site are narrow and poorly aligned. In addition, the access to the site is substandard in that visibility for and of vehicles emerging from the access is restricted by roadside boundaries, however, I would be confident that the trimming back of the hedgerows would provide the appropriate visibility splay (likely to be 2.4m x 70 m in this location.)

In transport and highway safety terms the development proposal is objectionable for the reasons given below. However, I am mindful that there may be other Development Plan policies that support this proposal, and therefore I believe it must be largely a planning matter as to whether or not this is an appropriate location for this type of development, in the light of balancing the policies and government guidance in respect of this development proposal. If there are overriding policies and support for the development then the highway objection would be withdrawn.

Recommends that permission be refused on two grounds provided that the Local Planning Authority decides that the reasons for refusal are not outweighed by other overriding development plan policies.

South West Water

No comment received.

Environment Agency

No comment received.

Environmental Health

No observations to make.

Natural England

No objection to the proposed development subject to inclusion of recommended conditions.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL

Approve provided the use is for holiday accommodation only and tied to the main dwelling.

WARD MEMBER(S)

No comment received.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

App.No:	Proposal	Decision	Date
04/P2435 & 04/P2434	Conversion & Extension of Barn to Form Holiday Cottage	Refused	09.11.04
01/P0795	Conversion of Barn A to Holiday Let	Approved	22.11.01
Split Decision	Conversion of Barn B to a Permanent Dwelling	Refused	22.11.01

PLANNING POLICIES

Government Guidance

PPS 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment
Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism

Devon Country Structure Plan (2001-2016)

Policy ST5 – Development Priority 2001 to 2016
Policy CO3 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy CO6 - Quality of New Development
Policy CO7 – Historic Settlements and Buildings
Policy TR2 - Co-ordination of Land Use/travel Planning
Policy TR5 - Hierarchy of Modes and Transport Assessment
Policy TR10 – Strategic Road Network and Roadside Service Areas
Policy T03 – Tourism Development in Rural Areas

East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

Policy S5 - Countryside Protection
Policy D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness
Policy D10 – Reuse of Rural Buildings Outside Settlements
Policy EN9 – Extension, Alteration or Change of use of Buildings of Special Architectural or
Historic Interest
Policy TA1 – Accessibility of New Development

Policy TA7 - Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Re- use and Adaptation of Disused or Redundant Rural Buildings

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is set in the open countryside to the north east of Sidbury and consists of the main Grade II listed farmhouse set in association with a range of modern and traditional farm buildings. The property is set down a long private access drive and while there are open views

out from the site it is not publicly visible. The property is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application proposes the conversion of an existing barn located opposite the main farmhouse to form two units of holiday accommodation.

CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

National and local policies on tourism development in rural areas support the small scale conversion of suitable rural buildings for holiday accommodation purposes subject to a number of criteria including that the building is capable of being converted without substantial rebuilding or reconstruction and it is closely related to an existing property from which it can be serviced.

A previous application submitted in 2004 sought the conversion of the same building but this proposed a scheme involving a substantial degree of rebuilding and alteration and was subject to objection from the Conservation Officer. This application was refused due to the amount of rebuilding proposed and the impact on the listed building and while the current application does propose a more sympathetic conversion scheme in comparison with the original proposal, we still need to consider whether the conversion work proposed accords with relevant policy and whether the building is suitable for conversion.

There is another more traditional building located to the north west of the main farmhouse which was given permission in 2001 for conversion to holiday accommodation. However it was noted from a site visit that no conversion works had been carried out on this barn, and the planning permission would appear to have therefore expired.

Suitability for Conversion & Impact on Listed Building

Although the barn is regarded as curtilage listed this is because it stands on the site of an original historic building rather than because of its historic merit and fabric. The barn as it currently exists has been rebuilt and while some historic fabric has been retained the barn is not traditional in its overall form and proportions. The main building is constructed from a mix of stone and block work with profiled asbestos roofing over steel angled trusses and the second building is predominately of timber construction with a profiled metal roof. The only piece of historic fabric identified by the Conservation Officer as being worthy of retention is a stone wall which forms the rear elevation of the main barn.

The conversion works proposed would involve the use of the majority of the existing openings and would improve the overall appearance of the building through the refurbishment/replacement of the facing materials and the replacement of the existing roofing materials with natural slate. However to facilitate the conversion it is proposed to add a number of new openings and raise the roof of the main barn from 3 metres to 4.1 metres and while the visual structural report submitted in support of the application concludes that conversion could be carried out with substantial rebuilding, it is still considered that the amount of alteration and replacement proposed, particularly to the roof of the main barn, is too great to bring the proposal within the Criterion of Policy D10.

The Conservation Officer is also of the view that, apart from the stone wall, the existing building is of little architectural or historic merit such that it is not worthy of retention and the stone wall could be retained on its own (this wall is in good condition and this is confirmed by the structural report). While it is recognised that the existing building is in poor condition and therefore detracts from the listed building, on balance it is considered that it would be better for the character and appearance of the listed building for the modern fabric of the barns to be removed than for the

modern form and proportions of the barns to be retained and reinforced. The stone wall could then be retained on its own as an attractive boundary feature of the farm yard.

Highway Issues

The site is remotely located being accessed off narrow rural lanes and the Highway Authority has raised an objection to the scheme on the grounds of the inadequate road network and the failure to promote sustainable transport objectives. A key component of national and local policy for the conversion of rural buildings is that the buildings must be suitably located in terms of accessibility to non-car based transport modes and that the existing highway network can safely accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the development. The site is in such a remote location that all users of the holiday accommodation will be dependant on private car based travel and there is no real likelihood of guests accessing the site by public transport, walking or cycling. Added to the poor quality of the approaching road network identified by the Highway Officer the development would undoubtedly be harmful in transport terms and could only be justified if there were overriding policy considerations or benefits such as the retention of a building of special architectural or historic interest. However, as we have already identified, there is no such benefit in this case and the works proposed to do not fully accord with relevant policy such that these highway concerns should not be overridden in this case.

Other Issues

There are not considered to be any issues in relation to protected species, residential amenity or landscape/AONB impact because the site characteristics are such that the proposal will either not have any impact or any potential impacts could be adequately dealt with through appropriate conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

There is an identified highway objection on the grounds of sustainability and the adequacy of the road network and in this case there is no overriding justification or policy support for the proposal. The building is not of any architectural or historic merit that would justify its retention and the only piece of historic fabric worthy of retention is the stone wall and the Conservation Officer is of the view that this could be retained on its own. The conversion works also propose too great a degree of alteration and rebuilding such that the works do not accord with a key criterion of the Council's barn conversion policy.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reason(s):

1. The conversion works, by virtue of the replacement and raising up of the roof of the main barn and the amount of replacement of external surfaces, propose too great a degree of alteration, extension and rebuilding such that the works do not accord with a key criterion of the Council's barn conversion policy. The building as a whole, by virtue of its non traditional form and proportions and lack of historic fabric, is also not of sufficient architectural or historic merit as to justify its retention and the conversion of the whole building is not required to preserve the existing stone wall which is the only historic fabric worthy of retention. The retention and re-use of a building of non traditional form and proportions and lack of historic fabric would also fail to preserve the character and setting of the adjacent listed building. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies ST5 (Development Priority 2001 to 2016), C06 (Quality of New Development) and C07 (Historic Settlements and Buildings) of the Devon County Structure Plan (2001 – 2016) and Policies S5 (Countryside Protection), Policy D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness), D10 (Reuse of Rural Buildings Outside Settlements) and EN9 (Extension, Alteration or Change of use of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest) of the East Devon

Local Plan (1995-2011) and the general guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment.

2. The location of the proposed development is likely to create the need for additional travel by private vehicles due to its remote rural location and the lack of suitable access to alternative means of travel. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies ST5 (Development Priority 2001 to 2016), TR2 (Co-ordination of Land Use/travel Planning) and TR5 (Hierarchy of Modes and Transport Assessment) of the Devon County Structure Plan (2001 – 2016) and Policies D10 (Reuse of Rural Buildings Outside Settlements) and TA1 (Accessibility of New Development) of the East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011) and the general guidance in Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.
3. The road giving access to the site is, by reason of its inadequate width, poor vertical alignment, poor horizontal alignment, gradient, and junctions, unsuitable to accommodate the increase in traffic likely to be generated by the development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy TR10 (Strategic Road Network and Roadside Service Areas) of the Devon County Structure Plan (2001 – 2016) and Policies D10 (Reuse of Rural Buildings Outside Settlements), and TA7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access) of the East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011).

Refused plans

Drawing Number PD.1.00 Site Plan received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.2.00 Existing Ground Floor Plan received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.2.01 Proposed Ground Floor Plan received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.2.02 Proposed First Floor Plan received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.00 Existing Front Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.01 Proposed Front Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.02 Existing Side Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.03 Proposed Side Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.04 Existing Side Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.05 Proposed Side Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.06 Existing Rear Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.3.07 Proposed Rear Elevation received 14 May 2007
Drawing Number PD.4.01 Proposed Section received 14 May 2007

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.