

DC/2014/01519

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS 2, 3 AND 4 INTO RESIDENTIAL USE – TWO DWELLINGS

FIVE LANES FARM, CAERWENT

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Prospero

Registered: 5th March 2015

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

- 1.1 This application site is located to the west of the road leading from Carrow Hill north to the A48. The site is concerned with two redundant single storey stone barns located to the south of Five Lanes Farmhouse and the converted attached barn that was granted planning permission (DC/2013/00670). The barns are separated from the farmhouse by an existing access/yard area. The site is located within the open countryside, a Special Landscape Area (SLA) and also within a Source Protection Zone 1 (SPZ1).
- 1.2 The eastern wall of Barn 2 forms the boundary wall of the site with the adjacent highway.
- 1.3 It is proposed to convert Barn 2 into a two bedroom dwelling and Barn 3 into a three bedroom dwelling. This includes:
- Removal of existing timber and sheeting lean-to from inside the L shape on Barn 2;
 - replace existing walls (currently timber posts with timber or metal sheet cladding) with oak structural posts and insulated timber clad walling in-between;
 - re-use of the existing openings with the exception of a new window and door to the south west elevation.
 - Remodel the existing roof above the pigsty to form a low double pitch, finished in slate
 - All stone walls to be re-pointed with a lime base mortar.
 - Timber joinery and cast iron rainwater goods
 - Parking bays to be finished in local stone chippings
- 1.4 The application was initially for the conversion of three barns however due to financial implications the proposal has been reduced to two barn conversions. The application is supported by:
- Design and Access Statement
 - Structural Inspection Report
 - Bat Roost Inspection (visual) and Activity Survey
 - Business Re-use Statement
- 1.5 The proposal is presented to Committee because the applicant is a close relative of a County Councillor.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

DC/2013/00670 – Barn Conversion. Approved November 2013

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S13 Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment

S17 Place Making and Design

Development Management Policies

EP1 Amenity and Environmental Protection

EP5 – Foul sewage disposal

DES1 General Design Considerations

H4 – Conversion / Rehabilitation of Buildings in the Open Countryside

NE1 – Nature conservation and design

LC5 – Protection and enhancement of Landscape Character

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Monmouthshire Local Development Plan Conversion of Agricultural Buildings Design Guide – April 2015

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultations responses

Caerwent Community Council – recommend approval. Believe Building 2 has been recently extended, rooflines should remain the same, natural stone should be used. Query if NRW are happy with the proposal in view of the number of aquifers in the area.

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust - requests a condition that no development shall take place until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

Natural Resources Wales – Initially objected to proposal as it involves non-mains drainage that poses an unacceptable risk of pollution to groundwater and no detail was supplied to demonstrate that the risks posed to groundwater could be safely managed. Since this original response, an Environmental Permit has been issued by NRW for the foul drainage and this has demonstrated that the use of non-mains drainage at this location would not cause pollution of groundwater within the Source Protection Zone.

With regards to protected species, consider there should not be a detriment to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of the bat species present provided an appropriately worded condition requiring the implementation for the recommendations for bat mitigation as set out in Section 5.15 to 5.34 of the bat survey report.

Biodiversity - conditions recommended.

Highway Officers – recommend approval subject to conditions.

4.2 Neighbour Notification:

No representations have been received.

5.0 ISSUES AND EVALUATION

Principle of Development

Visual amenity

Neighbour amenity

Biodiversity

Access

Foul drainage

Archaeology

5.1 Principle of Development

The application site is located within a countryside setting and as such policy H4 (the conversion/rehabilitation of buildings in the open countryside to residential use) is of note. Policy H4 permits such development subject to various criteria.

The proposed barns are constructed from natural stone walls that are structurally sound. It is considered that the form and appearance of the buildings are suitable for a residential conversion and the replacement of roof timbers or posts is not considered to constitute substantial reconstruction in accordance with criteria (e) and (c) of policy H4. The roof extension proposed on Barn 2 to change the subservient pig sty area from a mono-pitch with walled enclosure to a gable end extension is considered modest and does not detract from the character and traditional appearance of the main barn element in accordance with criteria (a), (b), (d) and (f). The Community Council have commented regarding work to Barn 2, however no new addition was obviously apparent at the site visit.

The proposal utilises the existing form, bulk and design of the building, and respects the rural character and design of the buildings.

The proposed curtilage and access are within the existing access/yard area, are in scale and sympathy with the surrounding landscape and do not require the provision of unsightly infrastructure and ancillary buildings.

A ‘business re-use’ statement has been provided and it is agreed that there would be a limited demand for a business use in this area. As the barns are suitable buildings in form for a residential conversion the proposal meets the requirements of criterion (g) of policy H4.

Given the above the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy H4 of the LDP.

5.2 Visual amenity impact

Policy DES1 of the Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) refers to General Design Considerations whilst Policy LC5 is concerned with the Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character.

The design of the barns shows a sensitive conversion that retains the original character and openings of the existing barn. Proposed materials are high quality and in-keeping with the traditional nature of the building and surrounding setting. It is proposed to enclose a modest area of the field to the rear of the barns as garden space for each dwelling. This would be enclosed in post and rail fencing supplemented by hedging, an appropriate form of enclosure for the development.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposed conversions represent an acceptable form of development and would have a limited impact upon the surrounding attractive countryside.

5.3 Neighbour Amenity

It is not considered that the application proposals would cause unacceptable harm to the amenities and privacy of surrounding residential properties. The nearest properties that could be affected by the proposal are the existing farmhouse and attached converted barn to the north.

The barns proposed to be converted are single storey with Barn 2's windows facing towards the farmhouse set over 24m away whilst the end elevation of Barn 3 facing these dwellings is blank. Barn 2 and 3 elevations facing one another are separated by a parking area with proposed intervening planting. As the windows are at ground floor level it is considered that this arrangement is acceptable.

5.4 Biodiversity

Where an application site has been assessed as being a breeding site or resting place for European Protected Species, it will usually be necessary for the developer to apply for 'derogation' (a development licence) from Natural Resources Wales. Monmouthshire County Council as Local Planning Authority is required to have regard to the Conservation of Species & Habitat Regulations 2010 (the Habitat Regulations) and to the fact that derogations are only allowed where the three tests set out in Article 16 of the Habitats Directive are met. In the present case bats are known to use the application site. The three tests are set out below together with a commentary on each.

(i) The derogation is in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

Comment: The barns had bat roosts of low conservation significance for multiple species (Common Pipistrelle, Brown long-eared, Myotis sp, Soprano Pipistrelle).

Nesting birds were also noted in barn 3 and mitigation proposals have been outlined in Section 5 of the bat survey report including the installation of Schwegler bat boxes and tubes, raised ridge tiles and roosting opportunities in nearby trees. Lighting is an important consideration and a lighting plan is recommended.

(ii) There is no satisfactory alternative

Comment: The outbuilding is in this location therefore the proposed conversion has no alternative.

(iii) The derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned as a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Comment: The application has been informed by an ecological assessment (Barns 2, 3 and 4 at Five Lanes Farm, Caerwent, Monmouthshire Bat Roost Inspection (Visual) and activity survey prepared by Avalon Ecology, July 2013). Bat roosts of low conservation significance for multiple species (Common Pipistrelle, Brown long-eared, Myotis sp, Soprano Pipistrelle). Nesting birds were also noted in barn 3 and mitigation proposals have been outlined in Section 5 of the bat survey report including the installation of Schwegler bat boxes and tubes, raised ridge tiles and roosting opportunities in nearby trees. Lighting is an important consideration and a lighting plan is recommended.

Natural Resources Wales have confirmed in their letter dated 26/02/2015 that a licence will be needed and that subject to the methods and mitigation outlined in Section 5 of the report, there will not be a detriment to favourable conservation status of the species.

In the light of the circumstances outlined above which demonstrate that the three tests would be met, and having regard for the advice of NRW and the Council's own Biodiversity Officers, it is recommended that the following actions be put in place:

- compliance with the submitted mitigation/compensation
- condition requiring any external lighting to be agreed
- No work within bird nesting season unless otherwise agreed
- condition to see evidence of licence

5.5 Access

The properties are reached via an existing access that has been slightly repositioned for improvement as part of a previous application for the site. The Monmouthshire Parking Standards 2012 require one car parking space to be provided per bedroom per property. The proposal exceeds these requirements and therefore Highways comment that there are no highway grounds to sustain an objection to the application subject to conditions in respect of surface water drainage and retention of the parking in perpetuity.

5.6 Foul Drainage

The site is location within Zone 1 of the Great Spring Source Protection Zone (SPZ1) and therefore the proposed development could threaten potable water supplies. NRW initially objected to the proposal as it involves non-mains drainage that could pose an unacceptable risk of pollution to groundwater with no detail supplied to demonstrate that the risks posed to groundwater can be safely managed. A risk assessment was requested with the addition that an Environmental Permit would be required.

Since the original submission, the applicant has applied for and had approved an environmental permit for the package treatment plant and infiltration system (Permit number EPR/GB3790HZ).

The risk assessment requested by NRW in their initial objection is information that is required for the Environmental Permit application process. As the Environmental Permit has now been issued, it is considered that the proposal must have provided satisfactory details in respect of the risk to potable water and its management. NRW have been re-consulted and have confirmed that their objection to the proposal is removed as it has been demonstrated that the use of non-mains drainage at this location would not cause pollution of groundwater within the Source Protection Zone. This addresses any Community Council concerns raised.

5.6 Archaeology

The application site is situated west of the Roman town of Caerwent and south of the Roman Road – an area rich in archaeological deposits.

Although the archaeological work carried out for the conversion of Barn 1 found scant evidence (and what was evident was post medieval), Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) consider that the potential for Bronze Age to Roman date archaeology to be encountered remains. Whilst GGAT do not object to the proposal they recommend the imposition of a condition to ensure that any archaeological features and finds disturbed by the works are fully investigated and recorded.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approval

Conditions

1. Standard 5 year in which to commence development.
2. Barn 1 – permitted development restrictions on extensions, outbuildings, etc.
3. Barn 3 – Retention of existing walls
4. Barn 5 – No fences to be added other than those approved – permitted development restriction.
5. No works to or demolition of buildings or structures that may be used by breeding birds shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority. Reason: to safeguard species of conservation concern protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and in accordance with LDP policy NE1.

6. Notwithstanding the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no lighting or lighting fixtures shall be installed on the building or in the curtilage until an appropriate lighting plan which includes lighting type and specification, protecting roosting and foraging/commuting habitat for bats has been agreed in writing with the LPA. Reason: To safeguard roosting and foraging/commuting habitat of Species of Conservation Concern in accordance with LDP policies NE1 and EP3.
7. The hereby permitted works shall not in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either: a copy of the licence issued by Natural Resources Wales pursuant to Regulation 53 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 authorizing the specified activity / development to go ahead; or a statement in writing from the scheme ecologist to the effect that it does not consider that the specified activity/development will require a licence. Reason: to safeguard species of conservation concern protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
8. No development shall take place including any demolition, ground works, site clearance until a protected species (bats) method statement for works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the method statement shall include, as a minimum the:
 - a) purpose and objectives for the proposed works;
 - b) timetable for implementation, demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing of construction;
 - c) measures to avoid killing and injuring bats during works
 - d) use of materials (such as timber, roofing membranes),
 - e) persons responsible for implementing the works;
 - f) positioning, size, type & location of bat roosting provision
 - g) positioning and size of entrances of bat mitigation;
 - h) initial aftercare and long-term maintenance;The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter. Reason: to safeguard species of conservation concern protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and in accordance with LDP policy NE1.
9. Secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work ARC02
10. No surface water from the site shall drain onto the County Highway or into the County Highway drainage system.
11. All surface water shall be collected and disposed of within the site of the proposal.
12. The parking provision in accordance with the approved plan shall be retained for the use of parking a motor vehicle in perpetuity.
13. The proposed landscaping and enclosures shall be carried out in strict accordance with the Site Layout Plan 1197-21A.

14. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Informative

Refer to NRW Planning Advice Note