

Application Number: DM/2018/02068

Proposal: Conversion of barn to holiday accommodation (2 dwellings)

Address: Barn 1, Penterry Farm, Chapel Hill Road, Penterry, St Arvans

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Parry

Plans: Block Plan - , Site Layout 1331 PL 04 - , All Existing Plans 1331 PL 01 - , All Proposed Plans 1331 PL 02 - , Block Plan 1331 PL 03 - ,

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

Case Officer: Ms Kate Young
Date Valid: 21.12.2018

This application is presented to Planning Committee at the request of the Local Member Cllr A Webb and also because the applicant is related to a Member of the Committee.

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 The application relates to a modern agricultural barn constructed of block work and corrugated sheeting, on a steel portal frame. It has been used for agricultural storage. The building measures 18 metres by 19.5 metres and is 6.7 metres high to the ridge. It is located between an agricultural bungalow and a converted barn in the grounds of Penterry Farm. The site is located within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a designated Minerals Safeguarding Area. There is a public footpath running along the track adjacent to the building.

1.2 The proposal is to convert the building into 2 no. four-bedroom holiday lets. Windows would be inserted into the front, rear and side elevations. The walls of the building would be clad in Yorkshire Timber Boarding and a roof clad in standing seam metal cladding, goosewing grey in colour. The holiday let would share the existing vehicular access with Foresters Cottage, the barn conversion and the main farmhouse. Two parking spaces would be provided for each new holiday unit and a hedgerow of native species would be planted along the western side of the site.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Reference Number	Description	Decision
DM/2018/02068	Conversion of barn to holiday accommodation (2 dwellings)	Pending Determination

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S1 LDP The Spatial Distribution of New Housing Provision
S11 LDP Visitor Economy

S13 LDP Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
S16 LDP Transport
S17 LDP Place Making and Design

Development Management Policies

H4 LDP Conversion/Rehabilitation of Buildings in the Open Countryside for Residential Use
T2 LDP Visitor Accommodation Outside Settlements
LC4 LDP Wye Valley AONB
NE1 LDP Nature Conservation and Development
EP1 LDP Amenity and Environmental Protection
DES1 LDP General Design Considerations
MV1 LDP Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations
RE3 LDP Agricultural Diversification
LC1 LDP New Built Development in the Open Countryside

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultation Replies

Tintern Community Council - Approve

MCC Biodiversity Officer - I am satisfied with the findings, considering the site location in a high quality habitat for bats with current dark conditions we would expect the lighting at the development to be sensitively designed so as not to illuminate the surrounding habitats. We note the current use of the building by bird species, in particular house sparrows the report does not identify any historic or current nests, however there is potential for nesting in the intermediate period, as such works will need to be conducted at an appropriate time of year to safeguard breeding birds please use condition.

Local Member - Requested that this application be presented to Members of the planning committee

4.2 Neighbour Notification

None received to date

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 Strategic and Spatial Choices

5.1.1 For the purposes of the adopted Monmouthshire Local Development Plan 2014 (LDP), the site is defined as being within the open countryside where changes of use of buildings to residential use are subject to strict control. The building is located in open countryside outside any defined development boundaries. The proposal, to provide self-catering visitor accommodation falls to be considered under Policy T2 of the LDP. This policy allows for such facilities provided that it consists of the re-use and adaption of existing buildings and that the conversion complies with the criteria set out in LDP Policy H4.

5.1.2 Policy H4 allows for the conversion or rehabilitation of buildings in the open countryside for residential use subject to various criteria all of which should be met if the proposal is to be allowed. Criterion (e) states that 'buildings of modern and/or utilitarian construction such as concrete block work, portal framed buildings clad in metal sheeting or buildings of substandard quality and/or incongruous appearance will not be considered favourably for residential conversion'. In this case the building which is the subject of the proposal, is constructed of blockwork and corrugated metal sheeting constructed around a metal frame. This is considered to be of modern construction and the building is not therefore considered to be suitable for conversion to residential use under Policy H4. The proposal is contrary to the objectives of the policy as it relates to a modern building of utilitarian construction. The Council has an adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance

'Conversion of Agricultural Buildings Design Guide' April 2015 (SPG). This SPG sets out the overarching aim of retaining and preserving traditional agricultural and rural buildings, thereby safeguarding the character and appearance of the countryside. The building which is the subject of this application has no such architectural merit and does not positively contribute to the character of the area. The building cannot be considered a traditional agricultural or rural building for which a re-use for residential purposes in order to protect its historic or architectural merit would be desirable. In this instance, the proposal would be contrary to criterion (e) of LDP Policy H4 and the thrust of the SPG.

5.1.3 Criteria c) of Policy H4 states that rebuilding works, necessitated by poor structural conditions and/ or the need for new openings in walls, should not involve substantial reconstruction, with structural surveys being required for marginal cases. A structural survey was submitted as part of the application. Which described the building as

"Single storey with a Floor Area of 358m². The building is steel portal frame structure with timber Yorkshire Boarding and concrete block panels. The timber boarding has been replaced to the East Elevation with concrete blockwork. The roof over is duo pitched with timber purlins spanning between steel frames. The roof is clad with concrete fibre profiled sheeting, incorporating profiled corrugated rooflights. The internal floors are a mixture of concrete and compacted hardcore and it is unlikely that the floors benefit from a damp proof membrane. The structure is in good condition with general maintenance required to guttering and boarding. The building is detached and has the benefit of a concrete apron to the perimeter."

5.1.4 In order to convert the building into holiday accommodation, all of the profiled sheeting on the roof of the building would be removed and the roof would be replaced in Kingspan standing seam insulated roof panels. The concrete block on the east elevation and a small length on the south and north elevation would have to be over-clad with Marine plywood and over-boarded with softwood boards. The existing Yorkshire boarding would be removed from the majority of the building and replaced with vertical sawn timber. The timber purlins would be strengthened and in some instances replaced. The internal floors are generally concrete and of differing levels. The floor would be taken up and replaced with new concrete floors laid incorporating a damp proof membrane and insulation. New window and door openings would be added. Only the steel framework would remain unaltered. The majority of the walls and all of the roof covering would constitute new build. The proposal will involve substantial reconstruction and this is contrary to criterion c) of Policy H4. The proposal is not a conversion of an existing building; it is tantamount to a new building in the open countryside contrary to Policy LC1 of the LDP and national planning policy.

5.1.5 The proposal is contrary to Policy T2 of the LDP as it is proposing the provision of visitor accommodation outside a development boundary but is contrary to the criteria c) and e) of policy H4. It would then fall to be considered as an exception. Policy T2 of the LDP outlines a number of exceptions where visitor accommodation may be permitted which include the following:

a) the substantial rebuild of a building within the curtilage of an existing and occupied farm property where it assists in an agricultural diversification scheme in accordance with Policy RE3.

b) the conversion of buildings of modern construction and materials provided the buildings are appropriate for residential use (e.g. not modern agricultural or factory buildings); not of substandard quality and /or incongruous appearance; and have been used for their intended purpose for a significant period of time. Particularly close scrutiny will be given to proposals relating to those buildings less than 10 years old, especially where there has been no change in activity on the unit.

c) the conversion of buildings that are too small or are inappropriately located to provide appropriate standards of space and amenity for conversions to permanent residential accommodation but are suitable for tourist accommodation.

Where conversions to tourism accommodation are allowed in the exceptional circumstances set out in criteria a) to c) above then the occupancy of the building will be restricted in perpetuity to

short stay tourist accommodation. All proposals will be considered against other plan policies and should integrate with their surroundings, in terms of design and layout and how the proposal will function.

5.1.6 Criteria b) and c) of the exception element of Policy T2 are not met given that the proposals do not represent a conversion. The resultant development would result in the substantial reconstruction of the building. The proposal is not a conversion of an existing building and is tantamount to a new building in the open countryside. Criterion b) also explicitly states that the conversion of modern buildings would only be acceptable if the building is suitable for residential use. The existing modern agricultural building is not suitable for residential use and the proposal is therefore contrary to criterion b) of Policy T2 of the LDP.

5.1.7 Criterion a) of the exceptions to Policy T2 states that as an exception to provide visitor accommodation on an occupied farm property substantial rebuild may be permitted where it assists in agricultural diversification in accordance with LDP Policy RE3.

5.1.8 A Design and Access Statement was submitted as part of the application. It says that Penterry Farm, 133ha, was brought by the applicant in 2000 and that it underwent substantial renovation and that it now produces organic beef and lamb. In order to diversify five of the barns on the farm have already been converted into residential properties that are rented out on long-term tenancies. The applicants maintain that as the modern agricultural building, the subject of this application, is situated between two residential properties (a bungalow which is the subject of an agricultural workers occupancy condition and a recently converted barn) that the building is of no use for agricultural purposes. Due to uncertainties over Brexit, the applicants want to diversify further and to provide two high-end holiday lets and to boost tourism within the Wye Valley. The applicants would work with the local Tourist Information Centre and hope to rent out the two four-bed properties for 100% of the time. It is proposed that the two holiday lets would be run as a "Farm Stay" business.

5.1.9 Policy RE3 of the LDP states the following: -

Development proposals which make a positive contribution to agriculture or its diversification will be permitted where the new use or building meets the following criteria:

- a) the proposed non-agricultural development is run in conjunction with, and is complementary to, the agricultural activities of the enterprise;
- b) the proposal is supported by an appropriate business case which demonstrates the link to existing business activity and the benefits of the scheme in terms of sustaining employment / the rural economy;
- c) in relation to new build, the applicant must demonstrate that there are no existing buildings suitable for conversion / re-use in preference to new build;
- d) with regard to diversification proposals for visitor accommodation, new build will only be permitted where it consists of the substantial rebuild of a building within the curtilage of an existing and occupied farm property, as specified in Policy T2;
- e) where rebuild is permitted under criteria c) and d) any rebuilding work should respect or be in sympathy with the local and traditional characteristics of the building;
- f) proposals for new built development meet the detailed criteria set out in Policy LC1;
- g) proposals for renewable energy schemes meet the criteria set out in Policy SD1.

5.1.10 The applicants have put forward their business case in the form of a Design and Access Statement, a summary of which is outlined below.:

"The site is close to Tintern Abbey and is popular with people walking along the Wye Valley; the applicants are aware that visitors would like to stay in the area but there is a lack of tourist accommodation in the locality. Many people use the footpaths that cross the farm but that their accommodation needs are not being met. The Farm enjoys panoramic views across the Wye Valley so is perfectly suited for holiday accommodation. The building is not suitable for agricultural needs as it is located between two residential properties. Uncertainty over the lamb export market as a result of Brexit means that they have to diversify in order to sustain the agricultural enterprise. Monmouthshire is known as a gastronomical hub within the Gourmet Triangle with many excellent

restaurants locally. There are many other tourist attractions in Monmouthshire and the surrounding counties. They are expecting a 100% occupancy rate. The location is good being so close to population centres. The holiday lets will be equipped to a high modern standard and will meet the 5 Star accreditation with Visit Wales. The proposal conforms with the objectives of PPW edition 10 with regards to supporting tourism and boosting the rural economy. The LPA should adopt a positive approach to diversification projects in rural areas as additional small business activities can often be sustainably located on farms and provide additional income streams additional employment opportunities and prosperity to rural communities. The site is reasonable walking distance to the bus route on the A466 from where you can gain access to Monmouth and Chepstow. There is also potential for walking and cycling in the area.”

5.1.11 The proposal needs to be evaluated against Policy RE3 of the LDP in order to be in accordance with the exception element of Policy T2 criterion a). Policy RE3 outlines that the proposal must make a positive contribution to the farm and its diversification and it must be run in conjunction with and complement the existing farm. In this case the holiday lets, although being located within the working farm, are not considered to be run in conjunction with the working of the farm and not enough evidence has been submitted to suggest how this proposal complements the existing farm. The applicant has submitted a business case but this does not adequately link the proposed holiday accommodation to the existing farm activity. The applicant has failed to demonstrate the benefits of the scheme in terms of sustaining employment on the farm its self. It is accepted that tourist accommodation does benefit the local economy but it has not been demonstrated why the tourist accommodation has to be in this specific location. The conversion of this modern agricultural building for residential use is not acceptable. There are other forms of sustainable visitor accommodation that could be accommodated at the farm that could complement the existing enterprise and provide supplementary income. Sustainable forms of visitor accommodation are supported by planning policy and could be utilised at this farm. Support for this type of visitor accommodation is outlined in the Sustainable Tourism Accommodation Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted November 2017.

5.1.12 The proposal is considered to be new build development rather than conversion as the roof and a large parts of the walls will be new while only the portal frame and some of the blockwork will be re-used and the blockwork will be total re-clad. Any buildings that were suitable for conversion to holiday let have recently been converted into residential accommodation. The site is located within the farm holding but it is not within the curtilage of an existing and occupied farm property, contrary to criterion d) of Policy RE3. The building is not considered suitable for visitor accommodation due to its modern agricultural style. The application fails to demonstrate that this specific form of development is required for agricultural diversification. The scheme is contrary to the criteria a), b) and d) of Policy RE3 of the LDP and therefore the proposal does not meet criterion a) of the exceptions element of Policy T2 of the LDP.

5.1.13 The principle of converting the existing modern agricultural building into residential use in the form of holiday lets is unacceptable and the development would be contrary to Policies RE3, T2 and LC1 of the LDP.

5.2 Design

5.2.1 The conversion proposed would be contained wholly within the existing building with no extensions or outbuildings being proposed. The site is elevated with substantial views over the Wye Valley. There is a public footpath running along the track at the front of the building and another footpath to the rear of the building. As such, the building is prominently located within the landscape which has been designated as an AONB. The proposal would inevitably alter the appearance of the building and the introduction of so many new window openings on all elevations would give the building a domestic appearance which would be damaging to the rural character of the landscape. The resultant building would give the appearance of a modern agricultural building barn with domestic style windows, out of keeping with other buildings in the area, and would introduce an alien style that did not integrate into its surroundings. As such, the proposal is contrary to the objectives of Policy DES1 of the LDP which requires development to respect the local character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire. The proposal is also contrary to the objectives of Policy EP1 of the LDP which seeks to protect the character and quality of the countryside. Development within the open countryside will only be permitted where it would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the special character or quality of the Monmouthshire Landscape. The resultant building would be in the form of an agricultural building, but would have a domestic appearance. This combination would be alien to the area and the resultant building

would not assimilate with the surrounding landscape. The resultant building would cause visual intrusion harming the appearance of the rural landscape contrary to the objectives of Policies DES1 and EP1 of the LDP.

5.3 Impact on the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

5.3.1 Policy LC4 of the LDP requires that within the Wye Valley AONB any development must be subservient to the primary purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. In the Wye Valley the predominant character is one of rural farmland on the outer areas and intensive woodlands on the valley sides. The introduction of two large holiday lets so prominently located within the open farmland is not compatible with the character, purpose and long-term management of the AONB. A building finished with modern materials, especially the Kingspan standing seam roof and the domestic style windows and doors, is not appropriate in this rural location and the building will not harmonise with the surrounding landscape and built heritage. The introduction of hedgerow planting along the boundary of the curtilage and the formal laying out of four car parking spaces will add to the domestic appearance of the proposal. The site is adjacent to a public footpath and therefore it would be highly viewable to people walking in the area. The proposal to convert this building into two large holiday units with their proposed domestic features will damage the rural character of the area, it would not conserve the natural beauty of the area and as such the development is contrary to the objectives of Policy LC4 of the LDP.

5.4 Economic Development Implications

5.4.1 It is one of the fundamental aims of MCC to encourage tourism throughout the county. This self-catering holiday let would allow tourists to visit the area and spend in the local economy. Tourism development, however, also needs to comply with other planning considerations. Policy S11 of the LDP supports the visitor economy and states that development proposals that provide sustainable forms of tourism will be permitted subject to detailed planning considerations. The conversion of a modern agricultural building into a residential use is not supported within the LDP and the resultant built development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the rural landscape. The conversion of this modern agricultural building is not in accordance with policies T2, H4, RE3, LC1, LC4, DES1 and EP1 of the LDP and therefore this form of tourism development cannot be supported.

5.5 Highway Safety

5.5.1 The existing vehicular access would be utilised and this is of sufficient standard to accommodate traffic likely to be generated by these two proposed holiday lets as well as the existing dwelling and the farm. There is adequate land available on the site to provide parking provision for both holiday lets but this would have an adverse impact on the visual appearance and rural character of the area. The proposal does accord with the objectives of Policy MV1 of the LDP.

5.6 Residential amenity

5.6.1 There are only two properties close enough to be affected by the proposal. One is a bungalow that is the subject of an agricultural occupancy tie, approximately 16 metres from the proposed holiday let, and a barn that has been converted into a residential property which is approximately 18 metres from the proposal site. Both of these properties are in the applicants' ownership and are rented out to tenants. The ground and first floor windows on the side elevation of the proposal would look directly towards the existing properties but they are both a sufficient distance away so as not to cause a significant loss of privacy. Therefore the proposed development would not have a harmful impact on any other party's residential amenity.

5.7 Ecology

5.7.1 MCC Ecologists reviewed the ecology report submitted with the application and were satisfied with the findings. The site is located in a high quality habitat for bats with current dark conditions. Therefore, it is important that any lighting scheme be sensitively designed so as not to illuminate the surrounding habitats. If necessary this could be conditioned. The report did not identify any historic or current nests, however there is potential for nesting in the intermediate period, as such works will need to be conducted at an appropriate time of year to safeguard breeding birds again this could be controlled by condition. The development would have an

acceptable impact on wildlife interests and would be in accordance with Policy NE1 of the LDP.

5.8 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

5.8.1 The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales has been considered, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WBFG Act). In reaching this recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been taken into account and it is considered that this recommendation is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

5.9 Conclusion

5.9.1 The modern agricultural building is not appropriate for residential use and it requires substantial construction to accommodate the proposed tourism use contrary to Policies T2, H4 and RE3 of the LDP. The application has not justified that the agricultural diversification is acceptable in accordance with Policy RE3 of the LDP. The principle of converting this modern utilitarian structure for residential use is unacceptable. The proposed development would also have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and the Wye Valley AONB. The proposals are contrary to policies T2, H4, RE3, LC1, LC4, EP1 and DES1 of the LDP.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

Reasons for Refusal:

1 The modern agricultural building is not appropriate for residential use and it requires substantial construction to accommodate the proposed tourism use. The principle of converting this modern utilitarian structure for residential use is unacceptable and the development would result in unjustified new build development within the open countryside contrary to Policies T2, H4 e), RE3 and LC1 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.

2 The proposal would substantially alter the appearance of the building and the resultant building would not be in keeping with other buildings in the area. The development would introduce an incongruous, hybrid building of agricultural form and domestic appearance that would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the rural landscape, which is sensitively located within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The development is contrary to the objectives of Policies DES1 c), EP1 and LC4 of the LDP which seeks to protect the special character and quality of this rural landscape.

