

8 DCSE2003/2231/F - DEMOLITION OF STORAGE SHED AND POULTRY UNITS. RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT LISTED FARM BUILDINGS TO FORM 5 HOLIDAY COTTAGES AND INDOOR SWIMMING POOL. WOODHOUSE FARM BARN, UPTON BISHOP, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 7UW

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**For: Mr & Mrs Skerrett per Warren Benbow Architects,
21 Mill Street, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3AL**

Date Received: 24th July 2003

Ward: Old Gore

Grid Ref: 6552 2907

Expiry Date: 18th September 2003

Local Member: Councillor J W Edwards

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Woodhouse Farm is situated at the north-eastern end of a long, narrow private track extending off an unclassified road which leads to the north from the Upton Bishop – Kempsey road and which is itself a 'cul de sac'. The farm complex includes a farmhouse (listed Grade II) and an 'L'-shaped group of stone barns (also listed), together with a smaller two-storey building (already converted into a dwelling) and adjoining cartshed which enclose the northern part of the farmyard. To the south of this complex is a modern steel-framed agricultural building and a number of intensive poultry units.
- 1.2 It is proposed to convert the main complex into 5 holiday units and to demolish the modern farm buildings. The main change to these buildings would be the addition of a roof to the east barn. The walls of this barn would need to be raised and it is proposed to achieve this by adding clerestorey glazing just below the eaves of the new roof. This would help reduce the number of new openings required. This range of barns would form 4 units of varying sizes (from one to three bedrooms) with the cartshed forming the fifth unit.
- 1.3 In addition a small stone workshop would be extended by the addition of a swimming pool and housing. The latter would have a steel frame with wooden windows and doors and a corrugated sheeting roof.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance

PPG7	The Countryside : Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development
PPG15	Planning and the Historic Environment

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy CTC2	Development in Areas of Great Landscape Value
Policy CTC13	Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest
Policy CTC14	Criteria for the Conversion of Buildings in Rural Areas
Policy TSM1	Criteria for Tourism Related Development
Policy TSM3	Encouraging the Development of Tourist Accommodation

2.2 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy C5	Development within AONB
Policy C36	Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings
Policy C37	Conversion of Rural Buildings to Residential Use
Policy SH24	Conversion of Rural Buildings
Policy GD1	General Development Criteria
Policy TM5	Proposals for Small Guesthouses, Bed and Breakfast and Self-Catering Accommodation

2.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Re-use and adaptation of Traditional Rural Buildings

2.4 Unitary Development Plan – Deposit Draft

Policy HBA12	Re-use of Traditional Rural Buildings
Policy HBA13	Re-use of Traditional Rural Buildings for Residential Purposes
Policy S8	Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development
Policy RST1	Criteria for Recreation, Sport and Tourism Development

3. Planning History

3.1 There have not been any recent planning applications relating to this site.

4. Consultation Summary

4.1 Environment Agency has no objection in principle but recommends conditions be imposed regarding drainage.

4.2 The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings does not generally favour the conversion of traditional agricultural buildings because the introduction of partitions and domestic style doors and windows often results in a loss of character and interest. However, in this case we appreciate that there is no existing agricultural use and that the buildings are in need of repair. Assuming that alternative and less intrusive uses have been considered, we feel re-roofing and conversion for holiday use may prove acceptable as a solution for the building's future. We are, however, somewhat

concerned about the intended number of units (requiring, for instance, an undesirable dividing wall across the main entry to the south barn) and about the large and reflective areas of glass to be used in openings. We also suggest that information on the treatment of the outside spaces is required.

Responses by internal consultees that raise material planning issues are summarised and considered in the Officers Appraisal.

5. Representations

5.1 The applicant's agent has submitted a detailed description and explanation of the proposals which are included as an appendix to this report.

5.2 Upton Bishop Parish Council comment as follows:

On balance the Parish Council do not oppose the application, if only because it will ensure the removal of the dreadful poultry houses and other agricultural units on site. It is a salutary reminder of how the unrestricted construction of agricultural buildings in open country can present long-term problems and here where their removal is occasioned only by a permission for further development. The applicant stated that he intended to keep one poultry house which is to the left of the site as you enter the property, in a hollow. The Parish Council are of the view that all poultry houses should be demolished and removed from site as a condition of any planning consent together with the building adjacent to the bull pen and the hoppers, feeders, tanks and ancillary apparatus. The applicant stated that the concreted areas would also be ripped up and removed. The Parish Council believe this should be a condition of any consent which is granted. The building which currently appears to be an office and which it is proposed will double in size and house a swimming pool would by reason of the increase in size appear to constitute a new building in open space. It is for the Planners to decide whether this is so. The applicant states that he intends to roof this building (if permission is granted) with corrugated sheeting. This seems to the Parish Council to be incongruous and if the building is permitted then the roof must be of the same materials as the rest of the development, i.e. slate or pan tiles.

It is for the Planning Authority to decide if the cart house is a building and which is redundant, as it appears to be used for storage purposes as ancillary to the cottage to which it is adjacent. Likewise, the Planning Authority will decide whether the building to the right of the cart house which currently comprises stone walls, and a concrete block section constitutes a building, and which can be classified as redundant. The remaining agricultural buildings which the applicant intends to retain should be made the subject of a condition of storage only so as to prevent their use as housing for migrant workers as happens elsewhere. The Parish Council consider that the removal of the agricultural buildings, feeding apparatus and concreted areas should be completed and the land restored to its original condition before any of the units are occupied. The Parish Council have an overriding concern that if the proposed holiday letting venture is not successful, the Planning Authority will be faced with an application at some point in the future for permission to use the units for permanent residence. In the view of the Parish Council this would be unacceptable given that it would create a settlement of some seven dwellings at a point far removed from any existing settlement of some seven dwellings at a point far removed from any existing settlement which constitutes the Parish of Upton Bishop.

Highways

It seems to the Parish Council that the traffic implications of the proposed development would be to substitute one traffic problem for another in that the current heavy goods use of the lane would cease but would be replaced by a much more frequent use by motor cars of the lane and access to the site by holiday makers who would be unfamiliar with the lane. Given the continued use of the lane by Castle Farm and by the dwellings immediately adjacent to the lane, the Parish Council will consider that there are significant highway implications and consider that the Highways Authority should be asked to assess the impact of a development upon the public roads leading to the site.

5.3 Much Marcle Parish Council has no objection to this planning application.

5.4 Two letters expressing objections/concerns have been received. In summary the following points are made:

- Lane to Woodhouse Farm is heavily used by farm traffic and herb business employing 20 staff - proposal could generate up to 20 vehicles at any one time, all of the drivers unfamiliar with the hazards on the narrow lanes;
- proposal is in effect for a holiday park which would be detrimental to rural environment of the area, add to noise pollution, increased risk of crime and reduce personal security and property. This is a peaceful area of natural beauty and this proposal could eventually change this environment as a floodgate to further leisure development. Not in keeping with the area;
- risk that may become permanent dwellings forming a small hamlet of 7 dwellings way outside the village envelope;
- poultry houses must be demolished concurrently with conversion scheme;
- a proposal for holiday homes nearby was refused planning permission for similar reasons to those stated above.

Both letters however also support demolition of the poultry houses, which do not comply with current standards and result in traffic at unsociable hours causing disturbance to local residents. One letter also supports restoration of the stone buildings which have been neglected too long.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 National and local policies encourage conversion of rural buildings to uses that benefit the local economy. In view of the isolated rural location it is considered that holiday accommodation is the only appropriate use. In principle therefore the proposal accords with the Council's policies. The submitted Structural Inspection report and a site inspection confirm that conversion can be undertaken without major reconstruction of the barns.

6.2 The main concern expressed in the representations is the traffic generated by these units. The Head of Engineering and Transportation, Transportation Manager does not raise any objections however provided the access track can be upgraded and passing places provided, which can be required by condition. There are only a few houses along the unclassified road and it is not considered that traffic flows would be unduly heavy as a result of this development nor that noise and disturbance from that traffic

would significantly harm residential amenities. The track, although long and winding in places and in need of re-stoning is for much of its length as wide or wider than the highway that leads to it. The applicant has confirmed that the track could be upgraded.

- 6.3 It is accepted that conversion into residential dwellings may be more difficult to resist once this scheme has been implemented, but it would first have to be demonstrated that commercial use was not viable. Furthermore under current policies conversion to houses would have to be considered after market testing and an isolated location is not specifically mentioned in the statutory policies as grounds for refusal. These listed buildings are important as a group. PPG15 strongly encourages finding new uses which ensure the long-term future of such buildings. County Structure Plan Policy TSM3 specifically encourages farm tourism that help conserve historic buildings. It is not considered therefore that this concern regarding future use is grounds to refuse this proposal, which as noted in paragraph 6.1 accords with current policies.
- 6.4 The extension of buildings to facilitate conversion is discouraged by statutory policies. Nevertheless the swimming pool extension is appropriate to the use, and is appropriately sited without being intrusive in the landscape. The scheme benefits the landscape by demolition of 3 unattractive poultry units. Furthermore the cost of conversion is considerable bearing in mind the level of decay and this addition may help to make the proposal viable. Any further leisure facilities to make a holiday park would require a further grant of planning permission which would be considered on its merits and against the policies then prevailing. It would not be reasonable to require demolition of the fourth poultry unit. This is further from the barn complex and not intrusive.
- 6.5 Conversion of farm buildings to residential (holiday) accommodation almost always involves some alteration to the buildings character. In this case the changes are not considered to be so harmful as to warrant refusing planning permission and are generally in accord with the Council's planning guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

In respect of DCSE2003/2231/F:

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions

1 A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission))

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 C02 (Approval of details)

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of these buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

3 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

4 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

- 5** Notwithstanding the submitted drawings no demolition and/or re-building of the walls of the barns and cartshed shall be carried out unless details of the extent and nature of the works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the character of these buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

- 6** No development shall take place until details of the layout of the site including access drive, parking and turning areas and the treatment of the site of the buildings to be demolished have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the area and the setting of the listed building.

- 7** No development shall take place until details of improvements to the surface of the private access track and formation of parking spaces have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

- 8** The details of access track, passing places, drive, parking and turning areas approved pursuant to condition nos 5 & 6 shall be implemented before the occupation of the holiday cottages.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

- 9** E31 (Use as holiday accommodation)

Reason: The local planning authority are not prepared to allow the introduction of a separate unit of residential accommodation in this rural location.

- 10** F18 (Scheme of foul drainage disposal)

Reason: In order to ensure that satisfactory drainage arrangements are provided.

- 11** The poultry units specified in the application to be demolished shall be demolished and the materials including all hard surfaces shall be removed from the site before the occupation of any of the holiday cottages hereby approved.

Reason: To define the terms of the permission and in the interests of visual amenity.

In respect of DCSE2003/2233/L:

That listed building consent be granted subject to the following conditions

- 1** C01 (Time limit for commencement (listed building consent))

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 C02 (Approval of details)

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of [special] architectural or historical interest.

3 Notwithstanding the submitted drawings no demolition and/or re-building of the walls of the barns and cartshed shall be carried out unless details of the extent and nature of the works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the character of these buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

4 G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

5 G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

6 No development shall take place until details of the layout of the site including access drive, parking and turning areas and the treatment of the site of the buildings to be demolished have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the area and the setting of the listed building.

7 The details of access track, passing places, drive, parking and turning areas approved pursuant to condition nos 5 & 6 shall be implemented before the occupation of the holiday cottages.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

8 The poultry units specified in the application to be demolished shall be demolished and the materials including all hard surfaces shall be removed from the site before the occupation of any of the holiday cottages hereby approved.

Reason: To define the terms of the permission and in the interests of visual amenity.

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.