

SE03/223

Introduction

Woodhouse Farm is a mixed use farm located north east of the village of Upton Bishop in South Herefordshire. Currently the farm is predominately soft fruit production and poultry rearing and this application seeks permission to diversify the business base of the farm to provide holiday accommodation on the site.

The Buildings

Woodhouse Farmhouse itself is an attractive Grade II property thought to originate in part from the 15th century and though remodelled repeatedly over the intervening centuries still includes two cruck frames within the former hall range.

To the east of the farmhouse lie two ranges of predominately stone farm buildings which collectively form an enclosed courtyard or foldyard as it is referred to in the Listing description. Rather confusingly the listing description places this group of buildings to the west of the farmhouse but we believe the author has inadvertently misplaced north whilst note taking. Turning in a clockwise direction with the farmhouse on your left the buildings which comprise the courtyard are as follows:-

Range 1

The Cottage - a small stone barn or grain store which has been converted by the previous owners of the farm into a self contained cottage. This building does not form part of the application and is included for information only.

The Cartshed - a partially open sided single storey timber framed structure with stone gable end and rear elevation.

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Range 2

East Barn- currently roofless this building forms the eastern edge of the courtyard and is included within the listing description for it's group value in defining the courtyard setting of the farmhouse.

South Barn - the most imposing of the outbuildings on site , it is currently completely obscured on it's south flank by the large modern storage shed which abuts it.

Bullpen - referred to in the listing description as a stable, this tall partially stone roofed building provides a strong endstop to the collection of buildings. As with the South Barn it's southern flank is currently completely obscured by the large modern storage shed which abuts it.

To the south of this group of buildings and separated from it by the storage shed referred to above is what is affectionately referred to as **The Shed** . This is a stone walled structure with high pitched timber weatherboarded gables and is currently used as the farm office.

Beyond this to the south east and south west lie a collection of modern poultry units and other ancillary modern farm buildings and beyond those the areas of soft fruit production.

The Proposal

The farm buildings in close proximity to the farmhouse have long since ceased to be used for agricultural purposes and being unsuitable for modern farming practices and machinery have lain empty for several years. This application seeks permission to restore these historically valuable buildings and convert them to provide a collection of holiday "lets" together with an indoor swimming pool. In doing so this will create an additional income stream to ensure the future viability of the farm whilst safeguarding these attractive agricultural buildings.

Taking each building in turn the proposals are as follows:-

The Cartshed . This is to be restored and converted into a two bedroom single storey holiday let. Currently the building is roofed in a variety of materials from large pantiles to corrugated sheeting. There is also a small single storey link section which currently forms part of the cottage which is partially tiled and partially flat roofed. The intention is to absorb this small link section back into the cartshed and form a continuous pitched roof over both sections. By salvaging pantiles from elsewhere on the site the entire building will be reroofed in reclaimed pantiles. Modifications to the existing structure are minimal as the building is blessed with a variety of window openings. The open bays are to be glazed in with large uninterrupted panels of glazing in order to

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preserve the agricultural feel of the building and a series of sliding external louvered timber screens will provide privacy at night for the occupants without the need for "domestic" elements such as curtains. When not in use the screens can be stacked to one side. Internally the unit will consist of a bedroom with an attached bathroom at either end of the building and a large open plan living dining kitchen area in the middle. Existing trusses and framework will be left exposed internally and original window openings on the rear of the building will be reinstated.

East Barn. The major task here is the restoration of the lost roof. Though the existing stone walling is in good condition (see attached structural report) the intention is to build a new independent timber frame inside the existing structure to support both a new first floor and the new trussed roof. This will allow the existing wall to be retained with the absolute minimum of alteration and also provides a clear distinction between the historic elements of the building and the honest repair work we are undertaking. As with most barns this building is not blessed with many apertures which could provide windows. Apart from the two storey cartway through the middle (currently infilled with blockwork) there are eight ventilation slots on either side and a further six on the gable end. In order to preserve the agricultural appearance of the building we would rather not widen these apertures as is common practice when converting this type of structure to domestic use. Instead we are proposing to supplement the light provided by these arrow slots with a discrete band of clerestorey glazing tucked in between the top of the existing stone walls and the eaves of the new roof. The existing walls are between 450-500mm thick and the clerestorey glazing is proposed to lie in the same plane as the new timber frame i.e. within the line of the walling. Consequently the glazing will be recessed approximately half a metre back from the outside face of the building and coupled with the fact that the glazing will be in the shadow of the overhang on the roof we feel this is a very subtle and unobtrusive way of providing adequate levels of daylight in the building interior without altering the essential characteristic of the barn. Please see dwg. 9918.28 for details.

In order to take full advantage of the sense of space created by the new open trussed roof an upside down plan is proposed with three bedrooms and two bathrooms at ground floor and a completely open plan kitchen dining and living area at first floor. A spiral staircase housed within a timber clad drum links the two floors and makes legible the clear distinction between new and old elements. Glazed areas within the cartways are kept as large and uninterrupted as possible in order to reinforce the non-domestic nature of the building historically. Once constructed the new roof is to be clad in slate tiles to match it's southern counterpart.

South Barn. Unlike the East Barn the South Barn has a wider range of existing openings and has retained it's original roof. It's appearance however is severely compromised at present by the modern storage shed which engulfs it's southern flank. The major alteration to the South Barn is therefore not to the barn itself but the demolition of this adjacent structure and the restoration of the building's setting.

At some stage the east end of this barn has been consumed into the East Barn so that the internal plan bears no relation to the roof plan over it. We are proposing returning this part of the building to its rightful ownership which will allow internal floor levels within the part of the buildings to be returned to their historic levels. On its northern flank a poorly built corrugated lean-to is to be demolished and the modern lean-to roof over the cartway removed to improve the quality of daylighting to the interior. The size of the barn renders it too large to be converted into a single holiday let and therefore it is proposed to subdivide the space into two separate units. The western half will comprise of a 2 bedroom 2 bathroom unit and the eastern half a 3 bedroom 2 bathroom unit. As collectively all the units will form a holiday "village" with shared use of common facilities such as the pool, the intention is to use a common design philosophy for all the units. Consequently the units in the South Barn are designed on the same upside down principle as the East Barn with ground floor bedrooms open plan first floor, and timber clad stair drums.

The Bullpen. As with the South Barn the major alteration here is the removal of the adjacent storage shed. This building is a completely self-contained two storey stone structure and blessed with a bewildering array of different sized openings. It is proposed to convert it into an open plan one bedroom one bathroom holiday let studio in order to give full expression to the dramatic nature of the interior space. The remnants of an original first floor remain and this will be retained and restored to form a sleeping gallery whilst the rest of the space will be retained as a double height space. A large vertical slot to the south facade is completely blocked in at present and will be reinstated as part of the restoration works. Other smaller openings currently blocked in will be reinstated and the current roofing materials consisting of one slope clad in clay tiles and one slope clad in stone will be retained.

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The removal of the storage shed creates a large outdoor space between the barns and The Shed to the south. This is intended to be the main focus for outdoor activity for the holiday lets away from the farmhouse itself. To give focus to this area and provide an added attraction for the holiday lets it is proposed to convert and extend the Shed to form a Poolhouse. The existing stone structure is to be converted to provide changing facilities whilst a new steel framed extension will house the pool itself. Large uninterrupted panels of glazing between the framing elements will reinforce the agricultural feel of the building and give the impression of an open structure. As with the cartshed panels of sliding louvred timber screens will provide privacy if required and the ability to close up the pool when not in use. A simple weather boarded facade punctuated by only a glazed screen on the south is echoed in reverse on the north facade with a glazed gable end punctuated by a weatherboarded panel.

Beyond the Poolhouse lie three intensive poultry units. It is not intended that these buildings remain in this location once the holiday accommodation is ready for occupation. It is however essential that the income stream they provide is maintained up until the point of occupation. Dismantling of the buildings will therefore need to occur after the completion of the holiday lets not before in order to maintain income. Once they have been removed it is intended to return this area to grassland so that the barns once more sit in an attractive rural setting as they must originally have done.

Taking collectively these proposals seek to create a sustainable future for Woodhouse Farm as a going concern based on the twin income streams of agricultural production and holiday accommodation. I trust the enclosed meets with your approval and we look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely



Dean Benbow
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enc.

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