

WHERSTEAD – BARNs AT REDGATE FARM, REDGATE LANE

Conversion of and alterations to agricultural buildings to form detached dwelling and cartlodge.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Fawcett

Case Officer: Gemma Pannell

SITE

1. The application site lies in open countryside of a rural character and contains a timber framed barn with a thatched roof which is Grade II Listed, positioned immediately to the south of the barn is a four bay cartlodge. The buildings are redundant from their original agricultural use. The site is outside the defined built up area boundary for Wherstead and is therefore within the “countryside” for planning policy purposes. The site is also within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

PROPOSAL

2. The application seeks permission to convert the barn to a 4 bedroom dwelling with cartlodge and store. The scheme has been subject to negotiation with officers to ensure that the detail of the conversion is acceptable.
3. The site already benefits from planning permission for use for retail sales in connection with agriculture; however this has not been implemented.

HISTORY

4. 2001 – Planning permission granted for change of use from existing agricultural barn to retail (related to rural activities) (B/01/00421/FUL refers)
5. 2005 – Applications withdrawn (on advice from officers) for alterations and conversion of buildings to form detached dwelling and cartlodge. (B/05/01581/FUL and B/05/01641/FUL refers)

POLICY

6. PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
 - Paragraph 17 states that “The Governments policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Residential conversion may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building.

Suffolk County Structure Plan 2001

7. ENV2 – The conversion of sound traditional rural buildings will be supported where consistent with other Structure Plan Policies particularly where, amongst other things there would be a significant environmental benefit.

Babergh Local Plan Alteration No 2 (Second Deposit Draft version)

8. CR02 (AONB Landscape)
9. CR19 (Conversion of redundant buildings – residential)

OBSERVATIONS (Original application)

10. PC – None received
11. County Highway Authority – The northern access shown on the site plan is not acceptable. The visibility at this location is severely substandard. Hazards and dangers would be created by vehicles turning into and out of an access at this location, which is detrimental to road safety.
12. Suffolk Wildlife Trust: BATS – The building should be surveyed for bats prior to this application being determined.
13. Natural England – No objection to the proposed development in respect of legally protected species as we are not aware that they are likely to be adversely affected by the proposal.
14. SCC (Arch) – Standard condition
15. EA – Standard advice regarding private treatment plant.
16. SCC (Fire and Rescue) – Adequate provision is required for fire hydrants. Fire hydrant provision will generally be agreed upon when the Water Undertaker submits water plans to the Water Officer for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. In this instance, the provision of an Emergency Water Supply (EWS) may be considered to be more cost effective and used as a suitable alternative.

ASSESSMENT

17. The following matters are the key considerations in this application:
 - Policy Considerations
 - Highways
 - Wildlife

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

18. The application is for the re-use of a range of traditional buildings that are no longer suitable for agricultural. The buildings have been previously considered suitable for commercial/business use and planning permission was granted on this basis in 2002. The current application has not been accompanied by a marketing campaign to show that alternative uses have been explored and discounted and is therefore considered contrary to the provisions of policy CR19.
19. Policy CR19 states that planning permission for the conversion of historic, traditional or vernacular barns in the countryside to permanent residential use

provided that (inter alia) that the barn by virtue of its style, design, architectural or historic interest. It is considered that barns are of significant architectural and historic merit as deemed by their Grade II Listed status and therefore are worthy of retention and an alternative use should be considered.

20. The policy states that the buildings should be capable of conversion without significant rebuilding or extension and retains the character and open volume of the barns with minimal change. The plans submitted show how the building can be converted, whilst retaining the open volume and without the need for extension. The openings proposed take advantage of existing openings within the building and are considered entirely acceptable. The applicant has not submitted a structural survey and therefore it is not evident from the application whether the conversion can take place without significant rebuild.
21. Despite the acceptance of the form of the conversion the application in its current format is fundamentally unacceptable under the provisions of policy CR19 whereby the barn has not undergone a marketing campaign and therefore the alternative uses have not been fully considered and can not therefore be discounted.

HIGHWAYS

22. The plans have been revised following the concerns raised by Suffolk County Council Highway Authority and are subject to a re-consultation. The views of the County Highway Authority will be reported verbally if available.

WILDLIFE

23. The application has not been accompanied by a wildlife survey and therefore the presence or otherwise of bats has not been considered by the applicant. If bats are present on the site mitigation measures would need to be designed and implemented in order to ensure that a suitable habitat is secured.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission – contrary to policy CR19 which requires the submission of a marketing campaign, structural survey and absence of a wildlife survey.

DECISION
