

APPLICATION NO. P06/W0438
APPLICATION TYPE FULL
REGISTERED 24.04.2006
PARISH LONG WITTENHAM
WARD MEMBER(S) Mrs Celia Collett
APPLICANT The University of Reading
SITE Willington Down Farm, Ladygrove Didcot
PROPOSAL Conversion of existing redundant barn to B1 office use.
AMENDMENTS As clarified by bat survey dated May 2006 and as amended by drawing nos.UR468:PL03A and PL04A accompanying letter from Agent dated 12 October 2006
GRID REFERENCE 454079/191932
OFFICER Mrs S Crawford

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application has been referred to Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Town Council.

1.2 Willington Down Farm comprises a group of buildings to the east of the B4016. There are; three houses, one of which is a thatched, listed building; a large timber clad and timber frame barn in two sections; and an assortment of more modern agricultural buildings. The current application relates to the timber clad and timber frame barn which lies within the centre of the complex. Although the site is within a mile of Didcot, this is a rural location. The site has no special designation.

1.3 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract **attached** at Appendix 1

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application, as amended, seeks planning permission for the conversion of an existing barn to provide 281 square feet of B1 office accommodation. Most of the accommodation would be provided on one level with two areas of mezzanine to the end bays in the main section of the barn. Parking spaces would be provided for 16 cars in an open yard area to the south of the barn. Access to the barn is provided via an existing single track lane of some 133m, this gives access onto the B4016 Didcot - Long Wittenham road.

2.2 Reduced copies of the amended plans and a copy of the Design Statement are

attached at Appendix 2.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 OCC (Highways) Objection. the site is in an unsustainable location for new commercial development as the proposal would result in an increase of vehicular trips to the site with no alternative choice of transport.

OCC (Archaeology) No objection subject to notification of finds.

Environmental Health Given the agricultural use, contamination may be present and conditions should be attached to any planning permission to explore and remediate.

Conservation Officer Support repair and restoration of the barn but suggest some design modifications.

Countryside Officer A bat survey is required – holding objection.

Long Wittenham Parish Council Approve, no objections.

Monson Details of foul and surface water drainage required.

Neighbour Representations (1) The details make good and sympathetic use of the existing building but clarification on parking for existing dwelling and access and egress onto B4016, increase in traffic generation could be dangerous. Barn is a habitat for bats and barn owls.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 None.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Adopted Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 Policies

G1 –sustainable framework for development, G2 – development should reduce the need to travel, and T1 – Measures to reduce dependence on private motorised transport.

Adopted SOLP 2011 Policies

G2 – Protection of District's resources, G3, proximity of new development to existing services and links to public transport, G4 – Development in the countryside, G6 – Quality of design and local distinctiveness, CON5 - setting of listed building, C1 – Landscape character, C8 – development affecting protected species, EP1 – adverse affects of development, EP3 – proposals for external lighting, EP4 – Protection of water resources, EP5 – Flood risk impact, EP6 - Surface water drainage requirements, EP7 – Ground water resources, EP8 – Contaminated land, D1 – Principles of good design, D2 – Parking for vehicles and cycles, D6 – design against crime, D8 – Conservation and efficient design, D9

– Renewable energy, D10 – Management of waste, E8 – Re-use of rural buildings.

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

PPS1 – Delivering sustainable development

PPS7 – Sustainable Development In Rural Areas

PPG13 – Transport

PPS22 – Renewable Energy

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues in this case are;

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable;
- Highway issues;
- Setting of listed building
- Nature conservation; and
- Any other issues

6.2 Policy E8 of the adopted SOLP allows for the re-use of rural buildings provided that;

- i. the buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- ii. Their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;
- iii. The fabric and essential character of the buildings are maintained;
- iv. There are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections;
- v. In the case of proposals for B1 or B2 uses the floor space in the complex of buildings does not exceed 500 square metres; and
- vi. In the case of residential conversions, other uses have been explored and found to be unacceptable in planning terms.

In this case, the barn is capable of conversion and the plans have been amended to overcome design concerns; the floor area to be provided would be some 281 square metres. The proposal would comply with all of the above criteria in your officer's view apart from the objection from OCC (Highways).

6.3 **Highway issues.** Even though the site is within 1 mile of the outskirts of Didcot, there is no pavement to provide access for pedestrians and although a bus passes along the main road, the nearest bus stop is in Didcot. This is a site where there is no other available form of transport other than the private car. In the circumstances

this is an unsustainable location for new development and uses with the potential to generate less traffic movements would be preferable.

- 6.4 Setting of listed building.** A grade II listed dwelling lies to the south east of the barn and the car parking would be provided to the frontage of this building. This area is already part laid to hardstanding to allow for the circulation of farm vehicles around the buildings. The design details of the conversion have been amended to provide a more sympathetic conversion and with the use of high quality materials and landscaping the proposal will not detract from the setting of the listed building.
- 6.5 Nature Conservation.** A bat survey report has been carried out, but it was not possible to access all areas of the barn, particularly the loft area in the eastern end. Whilst no evidence was found of bat activity it is not possible to conclude that bats will not use this area. If planning permission were to be granted a condition to alert the applicant of the requirement to stop works and notify Natural England would be required.
- 6.6 Other issues.** Neighbours have expressed some concern about the increase in traffic using the junction onto the main road because of the high speeds of vehicles along the road and the regularity of overtaking traffic on the wrong side of the road. Highways have no objection to this aspect of the proposal because the vision in either direction on this long and straight section of road is very good.

Neighbours have also expressed concern about displaced parking for their residential property. Some residents currently park in the vicinity of the site and are keen to agree alternative parking facilities. Given the availability of space in the area, this issue could be easily resolved.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1** Whilst, the proposal is acceptable in other respects, this is not a sustainable location for new commercial development and would encourage additional traffic generation where there is no public transport which is contrary to the Development Plan Policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That planning permission be refused for the following reason:**

1. That, the site is in an unsustainable location for new commercial development as the proposal would result in an increase of vehicular trips to the site with no alternative choice of transport. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies G1, G2 and T1 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, Policies G2, T1 and E8 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and the advice contained in PPG13 'Transport'.

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