
APPLICATION NO.	P11/W1193
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	15.08.2011
PARISH	SOUTH STOKE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Ann Ducker MBE Pearl Slater
APPLICANT	Mrs Catherine Tustian
SITE	Barracks Farm, North Stoke, Wallingford
PROPOSAL	Change of use of two agricultural barns. Refurbishment and upgrading of the single storey barns to provide accommodation for craft workshop. Installation of solar panels.
AMENDMENTS	As clarified by additional information and revisions to site area to include access and passing places received on 8 September 2011.
GRID REFERENCE	461246/185338
OFFICER	Mrs S Crawford

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application has been referred to Committee because the applicant is related to the Leader of the Council. Mrs Ann Ducker MBE has declared an interest in the application.

1.2 The two barns, subject of this application, form part of a larger farmyard complex to the east of the B4009 (Goring to Crowmarsh Road). The two barns create an L shape plan form, the projecting wing is a curved roof, partly open Dutch barn; it has a flint plinth wall on the west elevation with brick coping and corrugated sheet walls and roof; some parts of the wall have collapsed and the corner section has been rebuilt in concrete block work. The front plinth wall of the Dutch barn is concrete blockwork with some walls of vertical timber boards. The return wing has three walls constructed in flint and brick, with some timber boarding; the back wall is constructed in a clunch stone, part of which has collapsed. The roof of the return wing is covered with corrugated cement sheeting. There is a concrete covered yard area to the east of the projecting wing. Access to the farm complex and two cottages is gained off a short section of single track road off the B4009. The site lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is also within an area of archaeological restraint.

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

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application, seeks planning permission for the refurbishment and conversion of the barns to provide 415 square metres of craft workshop Class B1 (C) accommodation). The workshops would be provided on one level. Parking spaces would be provided for 6 cars in the open yard area adjacent to the barns. Access to the barn is provided via an existing single track lane of some 230 m, this gives access onto the B4009 Goring - Crowmarsh Road. No increase in footprint or volume of the buildings is proposed. Additional information to clarify details of the envisaged use have been received and to amend the site area to include the access to the main road and allow for the provision of a passing place.

- 2.2 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2. Copies of the Design and Access Statement and all the consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 South Stoke Parish Council No observations to date
- 3.2 OCC (Highways) Holding objection. The location is a relatively isolated one and inappropriate diversification of the use of the site in highways terms would potentially be detrimental to highway safety. A reduction of the potential impact would be beneficial. The details and mitigation are important as the principle of diversification may be acceptable; at present it could be something as small as a hobby or as large as a factory. The number of employees may be one route to limiting the scale to an appropriate one and possible to condition.
- 3.3 Health and Housing (Environmental Protection Team) Considering the remote location of the site and the fact there are two existing cottages adjacent to the proposal, it is my opinion that it is unlikely that there are any significant sources of disturbances in the area and therefore there are no objections in terms of nuisance.
- 3.4 OCC (Archaeology) No objection.
- 3.5 Countryside Officer The Dutch barn is unsuitable for use by bats or barn owls. The other barn is very light inside as a result of a number of roof lights inserted into the structure, the building is also very draughty as a result of gaps in the roof structure. No evidence of use by bats or barn owls was present. No objections to this proposal.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 5.1 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, C1 – Landscape character, C2 – Impact on AONB, 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, A3 – Agricultural diversification.
South Oxfordshire Design Guide

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Growth
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,
- Impact on Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Nature conservation; and
- Any other issues

6.2 **Principle.** PPS7- Sustainable Development in Rural Areas promotes sustainable economic growth and diversification as one of its objectives. In particular PPS7 seeks to promote more sustainable patterns of development by focusing most development in or adjacent to towns and villages and discouraging the development of greenfield land. Furthermore PPS7 seeks to improve the economic performance of rural areas by developing rural enterprises that provide a range of jobs.

PPS7 in paragraph 17 sets out the government's policy on the re-use of buildings in the countryside. The re-use of buildings for economic development purposes is considered to be preferable to other uses provided that proposals should take account of the following:

- a) the potential impact on the countryside and landscape and wildlife
- b) specific local economic and social needs and opportunities
- c) settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, markets and housing
- d) the suitability of different types of buildings and of different scales for re-use
- e) the need to preserve or the desirability of preserving buildings of historic or architectural importance or interest which otherwise contribute to local character.

Paragraph 18 of PPS7 requires local authorities to be supportive of the re-use of buildings that are located adjacent or near country towns or villages.

PPS7 reaffirms the government's support for farm diversification. Paragraph 30 recognises that diversification is vital to the viability of farm enterprises. PPS7 supports well conceived farm diversification schemes that contribute to sustainable development and which help to sustain the agricultural enterprise and are consistent with their rural location.

Policies A3 and E8 of the adopted SOLP supports the approach set out in PPS7 by allowing for farm diversification and 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 addition to the E8 criteria above, Policy A3 supports proposals for farm diversification where the landscape is not damaged, where the use is compatible with the countryside location and where there is no loss of amenity. New buildings will not normally be allowed unless it is ancillary to the proposed use and the existing buildings are not suitable.

In this case, the barns are located mid way between Goring and Crowmarsh (approximately 4 km to both) near to the main road and this represents a relatively sustainable location. The barns require some repair but are capable of conversion with little change to the fabric or character of the buildings or surroundings; the floor area to be provided would be some 415 square metres. The use could also provide important local jobs and a use that contributes to the local economy is preferable to a residential use. The proposal would comply with all of the above criteria in your officer's view.

- 6.3 **Highway issues.** The existing access to the farm complex is a single track lane that is rutted for some of its length. The Highway Engineer expressed concerns in relation to traffic generation, the lack of passing places, the rutted state of the track and the unsuitability of the site for high traffic generating uses such as a general office use. The applicant has clarified the position in relation to the B1 (C) use and the application has been amended to provide for a passing place along the length of the track and the re-surfacing of the whole length of the track. The provision of the passing place and the re-surfacing of the track can be secured by condition. A condition is also recommended to restrict the use to a B1 (C) category to limit the number of vehicles using the site. Whilst the concerns of the Highway Officer are acknowledged, there are significant benefits to the rural economy. Having regard to the highway improvements that have been put forward and the user restriction on the occupation of the building the change of use is acceptable in your officers opinion.
- 6.4 **AONB impact.** The buildings are capable of conversion with little alteration; The steel and wood roof structures of both barns will be retained where possible with both barns being re-covered with insulated "standing seam" aluminium panels; rooflights would be included to provide internal natural daylight. Existing flint and rubble walls would be repaired and new insulated timber walls would be built inside; existing timber boarding are to be replaced with new larch boards. The existing concrete floors would be repaired and given a thermoplastic screed. The relatively low key use as a craft workshop would be compatible with the countryside location and will have little impact on the landscape. A condition is recommended to prevent the storage of materials outside the building.
- 6.5 **Nature conservation issues.** Policy C8 also aims to ensure that protected species and their habitats are not adversely affected by new development. The Dutch barn is unsuitable for use by bats or barn owls. The other barn is very light inside as a result of a number of roof lights inserted into the structure, the building is also very draughty as a result of gaps in the roof structure. No evidence of use by bats or barn owls was present. No objections to this proposal.
- 6.6 **Sustainable design.** Policy D8 of the SOLP seeks to ensure that all new development demonstrates high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials. As the proposal relates to existing agricultural buildings the opportunities to retro fit the building with sustainable features are limited particularly given the proposed use. However, the scheme includes the provision of solar collectors on the roof that will provide 95% of required hot water from May to October and 50 – 60 % for spring and autumn and 25- 35% in winter. The buildings would also be heated with woodburning stoves and rainwater would be harvested from the roofs and down pipes.
- 6.7 **Neighbour impact.** There are two residential properties adjacent to the barns. The proposed use falls within the use category B1 (C) which includes all light industrial uses. An important provision of the B1 use category is that the use can be carried out in a residential area without causing problems of noise or other disturbance. Given the slight separation between the residential buildings and the barn (approx 20 metres) and

the fact that there will be no window or door openings onto the side elevation to the dwellings the use is unlikely to cause disruption to neighbours.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 In your officer's view the proposed change of use of the barns to a craft workshop use is acceptable because the buildings are capable of conversion with little alteration, the use is compatible with the countryside location, will have little impact on the landscape, or neighbours and improvements to the access can be secured to improve the current access arrangements. The use will support the diversification of the farm, provide jobs and support the rural economy and accords with the Development Plan Policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 **Your officers recommend that Planning Permission is granted for the change of use subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement 3 years**
2. **Compliance with approved plans**
3. **Making good to match existing on stone barn walls**
4. **No external storage**
5. **Provide parking in accordance with approved plan**
6. **Provide passing places along the access prior to occupation**
7. **Improvements to access surface to be carried out within time period**
8. **B1 (C) users only**

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