
APPLICATION NO.	P11/W1351/EX
APPLICATION TYPE	EXTENSION OF TIME
REGISTERED	26.08.2011
PARISH	EWELME
WARD MEMBER(S)	Felix Bloomfield Rachel Wallis
APPLICANT	Ewelme Farms Limited
SITE	Down Farm Ewelme
PROPOSAL	Extension of time to implement planning permission P07/W1242 (Demolition of redundant agricultural storage buildings. Conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to provide 4 residential units, construction of new stables (as amended by drawing nos. BS/16/01A; 05A; 090A; 091A; 092B; 100A; 101B; 102B; 103B; 104A; 107e; 108B; 109B; 110B; 112;113;114 and revised design and access statement, also as clarified by survey drawings accompanying email from agent dated 26 June 2008)
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	465560190728
OFFICER	Mrs S Crawford

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application has been referred to the Committee because one of the local members Rachel Wallis has an interest in the company that has made the application and has therefore declared an interest in the application.
- 1.2 Ewelme Down Farm is in an isolated rural location. It lies at the end of a single track lane some 630 metres from the public road. The access track is also a bridleway. It comprises a large complex of farm buildings based around two yard areas; the buildings are of various ages, style and materials. There are 5 existing dwellings on the farm complex and another dwelling to the east served off the same access drive. The site lies in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The modern farm buildings on the east of the complex are in active agricultural use for housing pigs etc.
- 1.3 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application seeks an extension of time to an extant planning permission for the demolition of redundant modern agricultural storage buildings (barn 6 and 7, part of barn 2 and lean-to to the bothy). The application includes the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to provide 4 residential units and the construction of a new building to provide livery stables (8 loose boxes and open store for straw and machinery) as a means to diversify the farm enterprise. Car parking for 5 vehicles for use by the stables is proposed. 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 Ewelme Parish Council We see no reason to oppose this time extension, as there have been no material changes in the intervening period. We do, however, believe that there should be a condition attached to prevent construction traffic from accessing the site through the village.
- 3.2 Conservation Officer There are no material changes to circumstances since the previous application. There are therefore no further conservation comments, and no objections to the extension of time proposed.
- 3.3 Countryside Officer No observations to date
- 3.4 Waste Management Officer Space to store bins set within a min foot print of 1500mm x 600mm
* All bins to be presented at the nearest adopted highway, by 7am on the day of collection.
* Indemnity is required for private/un-adopted roads if they are to be used for access, adequate road surface for access (i.e. not gravel) and adequate vehicle turning area where access is permitted.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 P10/W0110/NM - alteration in position of store rooms and car port – MINOR AMENDMENT AGREED.
- 4.2 P07/W1242 - Demolition of redundant agricultural storage buildings. Conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to provide 4 residential units, construction of new stables - APPROVED

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 Adopted policies from the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011
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 – Development in 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, E3 – Supporting the local economy (rural areas) E8 – Re-use of rural buildings R10 – Development in connection with horses, A3 – Farm diversification
South Oxfordshire Design Guide

PPS1 – Delivering sustainable development

PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment
PPS7 – Sustainable Development In Rural Areas
PPG13 – Transport
PPS22 – Renewable Energy

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 In October 2009 the Government introduced new provisions to enable the time period for commencement of development on existing planning permissions to be extended. The provisions are a temporary measure for use during the economic downturn and are meant to ensure that planning permissions can be implemented more quickly when economic conditions improve. The main issue to consider with applications for an extension of time is whether there has been any change in site circumstances or planning policy since the original planning permission was granted. Whilst the development plan is in the process of being updated with the new Core Strategy, the adopted SOLP is still the relevant document to consider. There have been no changes in site circumstances or in local plan policy. In the last application the proposal was found to accord with the SOLP policies in relation to farm diversification and the conversion of rural buildings and the situation has not changed. The last application was determined under the influence of PPG7, which has now been superseded by PPS7; the general thrust of the policies is similar but more weight is given to support proposals that benefit the rural economy. The issues considered in the original planning permission are detailed below. The current planning permission will expire on 18 November 2011.

6.2 The main issues considered when planning permission was first granted were;

- Whether the principle of development was acceptable;
- The impact on the character and appearance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,
- Nature conservation; and
- Neighbour impact

6.3 There were two issues of principle to consider;

- Farm diversification; and
- Conversion of rural buildings for residential purposes.

6.4 **Farm Diversification.** The existing planning permission includes a new building with 8 loose boxes, tack room and storage for the stabling of horses to provide livery. The new stable block would stand in place of one the large barns to be demolished. Planning permission was granted because the scheme was in line with Policy A3 of SOLP which allows for proposals to diversify the agricultural industry and Policy R10 which allows for development in connection with the keeping of horses. Farm diversification is allowed where there no amenity or highway objections, 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 are not normally allowed unless it is ancillary to the proposed use, where the existing buildings are not suitable and there are no environmental, amenity or highway objections. In this case, planning permission was granted because neither the large modern farm buildings (to be demolished) nor the traditional barns proposed for residential conversion were suitable for use as stable accommodation. The new stables would be on the footprint of a large unattractive modern barn that would be demolished as part of the proposal and the new building is of a more traditional form, materials and better quality and design. The stables would be within the existing farm complex and would generate less traffic movements than the existing agricultural activity. It is also a use

that requires a countryside location and has good access to the local bridleway network. In the circumstances, despite the concerns about the adequacy of the local highway network, the stable use was considered acceptable and planning permission was granted subject to a condition to ensure that the stabling remains as part of the farming enterprise and is not sold off separately. These circumstances remain unchanged for the consideration of the current application for the extension of time.

6.5 Conversion of rural buildings. In respect of the residential conversion, 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.

Two large modern barns with a total floor area of 836 square metres would be demolished to make way for this development. The structural survey submitted showed that the remaining barns were suitable for conversion without major reconstruction and the plans secured an acceptable scheme in terms of design.

With regard to criterion vi. of Policy E8 other uses were not pursued with the existing planning permission because the site was not a sustainable location for any new use given the lack of alternative means of transport other than the private car and no access to facilities. The buildings were structurally sound but not suitable for continued use for agricultural purposes in today's market and PPG7 (now superseded by PPS7) encouraged continued use of buildings to help the rural economy. The highway authority advised, at the time, that they would object to any commercial use of the buildings and their preferred use was for residential because of the location of the site and the character of the highway network. The highway network is not of a standard that can accommodate large farm vehicles satisfactorily and there would be an overall benefit in a residential conversion which would reduce traffic generation and the size of vehicles on the network. These circumstances are similar for the consideration of the current application for the extension of time with the only change being introduced with the new PPS7.

6.6 AONB impact. The existing farm yards have large areas of concrete hardstandings and large buildings of utilitarian form and materials. The scheme retains the farming activity outside the application area and would tidy the site up quite considerably, reducing the bulk of buildings on the site and improving their quality. The use for stabling is also appropriate as a bridleway runs through the site. Planning permission was granted because the proposal would enhance the natural beauty of the area and this remains unchanged for the consideration of the current application for the extension of time.

6.7 Nature Conservation. A bat survey report was carried out in connection with the existing permission. The Countryside Officer was satisfied that the nature conservation issues could be addressed by condition and these were attached at condition 11 (owls) and condition 12 (bats). The agent is providing copies of the previous ecology reports and the Countryside Officer's comments will be reported verbally at the committee meeting.

6.8 **Neighbour impact.** The barn conversion will not result in unneighbourly development given the orientation of the buildings and the relationship with the existing houses on the complex. Some concern was expressed on the existing permission about the proximity of the converted barns to the retained farm complex; the view was taken that the converted barns would not be materially nearer to the farm buildings than other houses within this complex. In addition the proposal creates one yard surrounded by residential development and the second becomes much more obvious as the working farm yard. It would also be clear to any occupants that they were buying a property on a working farm. This situation remains unchanged for the consideration of the current application for the extension of time.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 Your officers recommend that planning permission is granted for an extension of time because there have been no changes in site circumstances or local plan policy since the original planning permission was granted.

7.2 Planning permission was granted for the scheme in 2008 because, whilst other uses have not been explored, the location of the site and standard of the highway network are not suitable for other uses. The proposal for residential conversion provided an acceptable re-use and respected the character of the barns, it was not unneighbourly and would not have generated significant amounts of traffic. As such the proposal accords with the Development Plan Policies.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **It is recommended that Planning Permission for the extension of time be granted subject to the same conditions as the original planning permission**

1. **Commencement 3 years**
2. **compliance with approved drawings**
3. **Samples of materials - all**
4. **External ducts and flues (details required)**
5. **Windows and doors to specification**
6. **Landscaping**
7. **Demolish specified buildings**
8. **Provide parking and manoeuvring areas**
9. **Foul and surface water drainage details**
10. **Wildlife protection - owls**
11. **Wildlife protection - bats**
12. **Withdrawal of PD rights, Part 1 Classes A, B, C, D and E**
13. **Withdrawal of PD rights, Part 2 Class A**
14. **Equestrian use to remain as part of agricultural holding**

Author: Sharon Crawford
Contact No: 01491 823739
Email: planning.west@southandvale.gov.uk