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| <b>APPLICATION NO.</b>  | <a href="#">P13/S2260/FUL</a>   |
| <b>APPLICATION TYPE</b> | FULL APPLICATION  |
| <b>REGISTERED</b>       | 24.7.2013   |
| <b>PARISH</b>           | HARPSDEN  |
| <b>WARD MEMBERS</b>     | Mr Malcolm Leonard & Mr Robert Simister   |
| <b>APPLICANT</b>        | Mrs Barbara Old   |
| <b>SITE</b>             | Former Dairy Building, 1 Upper House Farm Cottages Kings Farm Lane, Harpsden  |
| <b>PROPOSAL</b>         | Conversion of former dairy building to 2-bedroom dwelling incorporating parking and change of use of agricultural land to form domestic garden. |
| <b>AMENDMENTS</b>       | None  |
| <b>OFFICER</b>          | Paul Lucas  |

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee as a result of a conflict between the officers' recommendation and the views of Harpsden Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site is identified at [Appendix 1](#). It is 0.12 hectares, located off Kings Farm Lane between Sonning Common and Harpsden, north-west of a cluster of three dwellings, of which 1 Upper House Farm Cottages is owned by the applicant. The existing building on the application site is a single storey three-bay former dairy farm building, now only used for occasional parking and storage of farmyard equipment, about 4.5 metres in height and with a footprint of around 155 square metres. It is constructed from blockwork and corrugated sheet cladding supported by pre-cast concrete columns and steel angle roof trusses. There is an existing vehicular and pedestrian access from the unadopted lane, which is Harpsden Restricted Byway 22 passing along the eastern site boundary, screened by mature trees. The site is also bounded by an existing barn to the south that shares the access, a copse of mature trees to the west and open farmland to the north-west, all in the applicant's ownership. The site and the surroundings lie within the Chilterns AONB. The land rises to the north of the site.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of the existing building to provide a 2-bedroom dwelling incorporating parking and residential amenity space. A structural report has been submitted with the application to demonstrate that the building is of sound construction. The existing building structure and parts of the existing walls would be retained and strengthened with new blockwork infilling to openings, internal thickening where required and partitioning. External blockwork walls would be insulated behind stained timber weatherboard cladding above a fairfaced brick plinth surround. New oak roof trusses to each side of the existing steel trusses would strengthen the roof structure to support a natural slate clad roof. The existing building footprint area will not be increased except for construction of a surrounding brick plinth wall. A minor adjustment to the vehicular access point is proposed to improve visibility splays. The parking for two dwellings and turning space would be accommodated on the existing concrete hardstanding in front of the building. The private garden would be at the western end of the building and an open garden area to the north is proposed on what is presently agricultural land.

2.2 The plans of the proposed development can be found at **Appendix 2**. Other documents in support of the application can be viewed on the Council's [website](#).

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Countryside Access (OCC)** - No objection subject to standard informative to prevent obstruction or damage to the byway

**Waste Management Officer (District Council)** - No strong views

**Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council)** - No objection subject to conditions relating to vision splays, parking and turning areas and surface water drainage

**Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse)** - No objection

**Forestry Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council)** - No objection – landscaping condition suggested

**Harpsden Parish Council** – The application should be refused. We are keen to avoid more house building in this very rural part of the Chilterns AONB and anxious not to create any precedent that might be misused. Our point about the need to improve the water supply before any building is allowed (i.e. even on the possible extensions to 1 and 2 Upper House Farm Cottages) still stands. We would also draw attention to the poor state of the unadopted access road, which in our view argues against any new building in the area that depends upon it.

**Neighbours** – No representations received

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None directly relevant.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies  
 CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity  
 CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
 CSM1 - Transport  
 CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction  
 CSQ3 - Design  
 CSR1 - Housing in villages

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;  
 C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity  
 C9 - Loss of landscape features  
 CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity  
 CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
 CSM1 - Transport  
 CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction  
 CSQ3 - Design  
 CSR1 - Housing in villages  
 D1 - Principles of good design  
 D10 - Waste Management  
 D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles  
 D3 - Outdoor amenity area  
 D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers  
 E8 - Re-use of rural buildings

- EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
- EP3 - Adverse affect by external lighting
- EP4 - Impact on water resources
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- G4 - Protection of Countryside
- H12 - Replacement dwelling
- H18 - Extensions to gardens
- R8 - Protection of existing public right of way
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 – Sections 3, 4, 5  
 South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – Character Area 10

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

The policies within the Core Strategy and SOLP 2011 of relevance to this application are considered to be in general conformity with the provisions of the NPPF and therefore this application can be determined against these relevant policies.

Paragraph 55 - To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The planning issues that are relevant to this application are whether the development would:

- Be acceptable in principle;
- Have an acceptable impact on the rural character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, bearing in mind its location within the Chilterns AONB;
- Result in any conditions prejudicial to highway safety;
- Cause any residential amenity issues; and
- Give rise to any other material planning considerations

Principle of Development

6.2 The site lies in the countryside where there is a presumption against new independent residential development. However, in this case, the additional residential accommodation would be created through the conversion of an agricultural building. Such applications for the re-use of rural buildings are supported by the SOLP 2011 Policy E8, provided certain impact-based criteria are met. Officers are also mindful of guidance contained within the NPPF (Para. 55), which is more recent than Policy E8 and takes a more permissive stance in relation to the reuse of existing buildings for residential use. In such an isolated location, the alternative re-use for business purposes would be likely to give rise to greater traffic generation on unsuitable roads and consequential noise nuisance in a tranquil part of the countryside. Therefore, the principle of residential conversion is acceptable.

Visual Impact

- 6.3 SOCS Policy CSEN1 seeks to protect the landscape character of the countryside, particularly the natural beauty of AONBs. Officers are satisfied that the building is of permanent construction and is structurally sound, in accordance with criterion (i) of Policy E8 of the SOLP 2011. The conversion of the building into a dwelling would require some internal and external alterations, involving traditional materials and the introduction of glazing but these would not significantly change the character of the building and the shape of the building would remain the same. The photovoltaic cells would be installed on the roof slope facing into the yard area, rather than onto open countryside. Consequently, the overall form and scale of the barn would remain unaltered, particularly in public views from the byway in accordance with criteria (ii) and (iii) of Policy E8 of the SOLP 2011. The formation of the garden would incorporate land that has the appearance of a paddock and is closely related to the building. The boundary with the adjoining farmland could be denoted through indigenous planting. As such, the proposed garden would not have a detrimental effect upon the landscape in accordance with criterion (i) of Policy H18 of the SOLP 2011. The Council's Forestry Officer is satisfied that the important trees close to the site would not be harmed. The existing functional, but run-down appearance of this rural building and its immediate surroundings would be enhanced through its re-use for residential purposes, in compliance with the guidance in the NPPF. In the light of the above assessment, officers consider that there would not be any significant landscape impact to this part of the Chilterns AONB, in accordance with the above policies.

Highway Safety

- 6.4 Policy CSM1 of the SOCS explains that proposals should not give rise to highway safety issues and SOLP 2011 Policy E8 criterion (v) requires there to be no overriding highway objections. The Highway Liaison Officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to a few standard highway conditions, in compliance with the above policies.

Neighbour Impact

- 6.5 Criterion (v) of Policy E8 and criterion (ii) of Policy H18 of the SOLP 2011 require there to be no adverse affect upon the amenity of adjoining residents or other users of the countryside. The closest neighbouring dwelling lies about 50 metres to the south and there is a barn that lies between them. As such, there would be no discernible impact upon the living conditions of the closest residential occupiers. The OCC Countryside Service is satisfied that the development would not adversely impact upon the restricted byway in accordance with the above criterion.

Other Material Planning Considerations

- 6.6 As the proposed accommodation would involve the conversion of an existing building, officers are not seeking full compliance with Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, but instead require the implementation of the list of measures on the sustainability template submitted with the application and any details of either air or heat source pumps to be provided. The development would incorporate water efficient plumbing and sanitary installations would utilize dual flush W.C. cisterns, rate-restricted flow taps/showers and rainwater harvesting, which would all contribute towards efficient use of water. Any existing water supply issues in the locality should be taken up directly with Thames Water.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed development would not harm the landscape character of the surrounding area, the living conditions of adjoining residents or be prejudicial to highway safety and would be in accordance with Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Government Guidance.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION****8.1 Planning Permission**

- 1. Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
- 2. Approved plans \***
- 3. Schedule materials required (all)**
- 4. Withdrawal of P.D. (extensions, outbuildings, hardstandings) \***
- 5. Sustainable Design Features \***
- 6. Vision splay protection \***
- 7. Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained \***
- 8. No Surface Water Drainage to Highway**
- 9. Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only)**
- 10. Contamination - (investigation)**

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