

Application No: 08/02592/F	Ward: Caversfield	Date Valid: 06.01.09
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Applicant:	Tusmore Park Holdings
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Site Address:	Tusmore Park Farm, Tusmore, Bicester, OX27 7SH
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Proposal:	Re-submission of Planning Application 07/02228/F – Conversion of existing barns to office space with appropriate welfare facilities and provision of new car parking. Replacement of existing windows/doors with new timber framed windows/doors and screens with double glazed units. New roof lights and roof entrance canopy.
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1. Site Description and Proposal

Tusmore Park Farm is located to the east of the A43, between junction 10 of the M40 and the town of Brackley, approximately 1.5km north of the roundabout junction at Baynards Green, sited within the open countryside. The site is currently accessed via a slip road from the A43 which enters the farm yard to the west.

The existing farm yard comprises a mixture of traditional agricultural buildings and modern agricultural buildings. To the south and east of the application site are a number of modern agricultural buildings which are unaffected by the proposals. The buildings which are the subject of this application are of a traditional form and comprise single storey and two storey buildings located to the west of the farm yard and the western edge of the Tusmore estate. The buildings are constructed of local stone with a slate roof.

There are 3 barns in total, described in the application as Barn A, Barn B and Barn C.

Barn A – This building is a long elongated building of a two storey scale with various openings in the east and south elevations and first floor openings in the west elevation.

Barn B – This building is attached to the east elevation of Barn A and is one and a half storey with openings in the north and south elevations

Barn C – This building is L-shaped and one and a half storey with openings facing into the courtyard and openings facing the farm yard to the south.

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing stone buildings to provide 630m² of office space, including welfare facilities, and the provision for new car parking, improvements to the access drive and landscaping to the courtyard. The proposed development includes internal and external alterations to the existing buildings. In general the existing openings are to be utilised apart from the blocking up of two openings and creating one new opening in barn A and the blocking up of one existing opening in barn C.

2. Application Publicity

The application has been advertised by means of a site notice posted near the site and an advert in the local paper. The statutory consultation finished on the 12th February 2009.

Parish Council – no comments received

3. Consultations

Highways Agency – no objection

Local Highway Authority – Following the Highway Authorities comments on the application supplied by letter of 21 December 2007, a transport statement has been submitted with the current application.

The statement makes the case that various policy documents would suggest that local authorities should consider favourably, under certain conditions, the re-use of rural buildings for offices. It also refers to the report looking at local demand for offices in rural locations.

The statement highlights the lack of employment in Fringford Ward and considers the previous use as farm buildings would have generated more vehicle trips. However, the provision of 25 car parking spaces light suggest that in reality this would not be the case.

The Highway Authority remain of the view that by virtue of its location and limited access by public transport the offices would be reliant on employees and visitors traveling by car and therefore the proposal is contrary to PPG13 and Oxfordshire County Council Structure Plan policies G1, T1, E1, E3. The Highway Authority therefore object to the proposal.

4. Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Guidance		PPS7: Sustainable development in rural areas PPG13: Transport
Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016	- Policies	Policy G1 Policy T1 Policy E1 Policy E3 Policy E4
Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996	- Saved Policies	Policy EMP4
Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011	- Policies	Policy EMP6

5. Appraisal

The following issues are considered to be relevant to this application:

- The principle of new office development in this location;
- Sustainable development principles and highway issues;
- The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Policy background

National planning guidance in the form of PPS7 considers development within the open countryside and supports the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. PPG13 seeks to promote sustainable transport choices for people and for moving freight, promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by

public transport, walking and cycling and reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

The County Structure Plan seeks to concentrate development in locations where a reasonable range of services and community facilities exist or can be provided and the need to travel, particularly by private car, can be reduced and walking, cycling and the use of public transport can be encouraged. Policy E4 considers small scale local employment diversity and seeks small scale premises including proposals that encourage farm and rural diversification in appropriate locations. The sub text to this policy states that the reuse or adaptation of traditional rural buildings for business use or tourism will generally be encouraged where they offer high quality and well designed conversions and do not cause significant highway or traffic problems.

Policy EMP4 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan considers employment development in rural areas. The conversion of existing buildings or groups of buildings (provided that the form, bulk and general design of the building concerned is in keeping with the surrounding area and, in the case of a building beyond the limit of a settlement, can be converted without major rebuilding or extension) is supported by this policy in the Local Plan.

The principle of conversion to provide office development

The site is located within the open countryside adjacent to the A43 approximately 2km north of junction 10 of the M40 and south of the town of Brackley. The site currently comprises a group of high quality traditional agricultural buildings which are now largely redundant and used only occasionally for storage. The proposal involves the conversion of the existing traditional barn buildings into modern open plan offices.

PPS7 supports the reuse of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings within the open countryside. The existing buildings in this case are considered to be of a high quality and their conversion would be in accordance with the requirements of PPS7. The buildings proposed use, as offices would achieve appropriate diversification of existing agricultural buildings which no longer meet the requirements of modern farming practices and would provide office accommodation which would support the local economy. The high quality of the existing buildings means that their conversion to offices will be achievable without major alterations or extensions to the buildings. The proposals are therefore considered to meet the requirements of E4 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and EMP4 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan which both support the conversion of high quality buildings for employment diversification providing that the building can be converted without major rebuilding or extensions.

Sustainable Development and highway issues

The location of the buildings within the open countryside without a regular bus service or opportunity to walk or cycle from residential areas means that the proposed development would be reliant on private motor car trips. The proposal has therefore received an objection from the Local Highway Authority concerned that the proposed development would not meet the sustainable development requirements of PPG13 and policies contained within the Oxfordshire Structure Plan.

The existing farm complex at full production would create 38 (two-way) trips a day, however at current production, without the traditional farm buildings in use, the daily trips are approximately 18 (two-way). The proposed development would generate traffic to the site which from the figures provided in the transport statement are approximately 20 trips a day (two-way) which replaces the trips created by the agricultural use at full production.

Therefore, the trip generation to the site would not be significantly different to previous uses and the traffic caused by the proposed development, therefore the proposed development would not be considered to have an adverse impact in sustainability terms.

In addition, the buildings are of high quality and would offer small scale office accommodation which will benefit the local economy in accordance with Structure Plan policy E4. The proposed development will create 630m² of floor space (480m² of office space) which is relatively small scale.

The proposed vehicle access to the site is already in place and is considered adequate for the access to the proposed offices without adversely affecting highway safety. The parking and manoeuvring areas are considered sufficient for the proposed development.

The visual impact of the proposed conversion

The proposed conversion utilizes the existing buildings with requiring any major rebuilding or extension. The majority of the openings for the new office buildings are utilizes from existing openings in the building. Therefore, the external appearance of the buildings will not be significantly altered and their traditional character and appearance will be retained. The proposed development meets the requirements of Policy E4 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and EMP4 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1. 1.4A Full Duration Limit (3 years) (Reason: RC2)**
- 2. 2.5B Rem Nat Stone to Match Exg insert: buildings, limestone. (Reason: RC5)**
- 3. The rooflights shall be conservation grade rooflights which shall fit flush with the roof plane. (Reason: RC27A)**
- 4. Full external joinery details of the windows and doors at a scale of 1:20 including across section, material details and colour/finish, shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (Reason: To ensure that appropriate material and finishes are used to preserve the character of the historic building and to comply with policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan)**
- 5. 3.0 Submit Landscaping Scheme (Reason: RC10)**
- 6. 3.1 Impl Landsc Sch and Repts (Reason: RC10)**
- 7. 4.13CC Parking and Mnvrng Area Retnd (Reason: RC13B)**
- 8. 4.14C Cycle Parking (Reason: RC66)**
- 9. 6.1AA Res Opn Fronts-Ret Op Char (Reason: RC34A)**
- 10. 6.15A Use Class (Specified) insert: B1 (Reason: RC40A)**
- 11. Full design details of a lighting scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of the development. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (Reason: RC50)**
- 12. 8.20 Location of Refuse Storage Area (Reason: RC10)**

Reason for decision:

The Council, as the local planning authority, has determined this application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate

otherwise. The development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits as the proposal constitutes a conversion to suitably constructed buildings without harming their external appearance and a proposed use which would not be considered to adversely affect highway safety. As such the proposal is in accordance with Policy E4 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 and Policy EMP4 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and national guidance contained with PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the Council considers that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions, as set out above.

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