

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Bryn Williams

Proposal: Conversion of existing barn and associated out-building/stables to residential use. Raise roof of out-building/stables by 860mm. New single storey extension to rear with living roof

Ward: Deddington

Councillors: Cllr Bryn Williams
Cllr Hugo Brown
Cllr Mike Kerford-Byrnes

Reason for Referral: The applicant is one of the Ward Councillors

Expiry Date: 14 March 2018 **Committee Date:** 12 April 2018

Recommendation: Refusal

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1. The application relates to an existing stone barn with natural slate roof, which is part of a wider complex of buildings in a linear arrangement, and which is considered to have previously formed part of Park Farm. Land levels drop across the site from east to west down from the access into the site. To the west of the barn are adjoining stables and previously converted buildings now in residential use. Attached to the south of the main barn is a single storey outbuilding which is of stone and red brick construction again under a natural slate roof. Whilst only single storey this outbuilding is on two levels, given the topography of the site, with only the top (eastern) section falling within the application's site boundary.
- 1.2. To the east of the barn are again adjoining buildings which have been converted to residential use, with grade II listed Park Farm House further to the east fronting on to New Street (A4260), one of the main routes through the village of Deddington. Adjacent to the south is a residential property and walled garden, whilst to the north there an agricultural building with residential properties beyond. The proposed site is accessed via an existing vehicular access off New Street which also serves Park Farm House and other previously converted building.
- 1.3. In terms of site constraints, the application building is a grade II listed building (curtilage listed by association to Park Farm House) and sits within the Deddington Conservation Area, which is considered of archaeological interest. The southern boundary wall is a grade II listed structure in its own right with further grade II listed buildings to the south, including Deddington Manor. There are records of protected and notable species (including Eurasian Badger and Common Swift) within the vicinity of the site. The site also sits within a buffer zone surrounding an area of potentially contaminated land north of the site; and further an area where the geology is known to contain naturally occurring elevated levels of Arsenic, Nickel and Chromium; as seen in many areas across the district.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1. The application seeks listed building consent for works associated with the alterations and extension to and conversion of the existing stone barn and outbuilding to form a 5-bedroom residential property, with integral garage, residential garden and associated parking. An associated application for planning permission has also been submitted and is being dealt with under ref. 18/00098/F.
- 2.2. Alterations to the main barn would include: the introduction of a new floor to provide first accommodation 4 no. bedrooms, all with en suite bathroom; new openings through the historic fabric of the building to provide access through to the outbuilding and new window openings in the northern elevation; the introduction of 4no double-pane rooflights to the northern roofslope; the introduction of 2no new small rooflights in the southern roofslope; the glazed infilling of the main barn opening in the southern elevation and the erection of a single storey flat-roofed extension across the main barn opening on the northern elevation with glazing above. The extension would be constructed in Hornton stone under a living green sedum roof.
- 2.3. With regards to the proposed alterations to the outbuilding, these would include: The raising of the overall roof height by ~0.8m; the introduction of a new floor to provide first accommodation play-room and bedroom with ensuite; the introduction of 3no new rooflights in the eastern roofslope; glazed door with Juliet balcony to the southern elevation; alterations to the eastern elevation, including the enclosing of existing opening and creation of new garage door/entrance, glazed section and front door; infilled using a timber frame construction, clad in horizontal weather boarding.
- 2.4. During the course of the application and following a site meeting with the applicant and his architect, revised plans were received, making minor amendments to the proposed development. Officers had raised concerns as to the acceptability of the proposals as originally submitted. Unfortunately these revised plans have not sufficiently addressed the concerns of officers to the extent that the application could be considered acceptable by officers. However, accepting amended plans has resulted in the application going beyond its original determination target; through the need for the appropriate consideration and re-consultation of the amendments and to allow for the applications to be presented to planning committee.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

<u>Application Ref.</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
CHN.635/91	Alterations to existing accesses vehicular and pedestrian. Conversion of existing agricultural barns into dwellings - 3 No. new houses proposed.	Application permitted
96/00518/F & 96/00519/LB	Renewal of CHN.635/91. Alterations to existing accesses vehicular and pedestrian. Conversion of existing agricultural barns into dwellings - 3 No. new houses proposed.	Applications permitted
01/00597/F & 01/00598/LB	Renewal of 96/00518/F alterations to existing vehicular and pedestrian accesses. Conversion of agricultural barns into dwellings - 3 No. new houses proposed.	Applications permitted

7.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The Local Plan 2011-2031 – Part 1 replaced a number of the ‘saved’ policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the development plan. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District’s statutory Development Plan are set out below:

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 2011 - 2031 PART 1 (CLP 2031)

- ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 1996 SAVED POLICIES (CLP 1996)

- C18: Development affecting a listed building
- C21: Proposals for the reuse of a listed building
- C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development

7.3. Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Deddington Conservation Area Appraisal 2012
- Deddington Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-submission version) (DNP)

The neighbourhood plan for Deddington, which also covers the villages of Clifton and Hempton, is still at an early stage. A pre-submission version of the plan has been accepted by the Parish Council and has been submitted to Cherwell District Council as part of the consultation process. Given the early stages of the plan, in accordance with Paragraph 216 of the NPPF, no significant weight can be given to it as a material consideration at this time.

- Historic England - Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings: Best practice guidelines for adaptive reuse (2017).
- Cherwell District Council’s informal guidance - Design Guide for the conversion of farm building (2002)

8. APPRAISAL

8.1. The key issue for consideration in this case is the impact on the historic significance and setting of the listed building(s).

8.2. Section 16(2) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) states that: *In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.* Further, under Section 72(1) of the same Act the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

8.3. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets, and Paragraph 129 of the NPPF states that: *Local planning authorities should identify*

and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.

- 8.4. The site is part of a complex of buildings that would have previously formed part of Park Farm, and its use, whilst currently unused, would have been agricultural in its nature. From review of historical maps and literature (as noted in the Conservation Officer's comments) the linear form of the agricultural buildings at the site has change very little over the years; with records dating back to the early 1800s.
- 8.5. The proposals would make a number of significant alterations to both the main barn and the outbuilding which projects away from the main barn to the south (these are detailed above). Officers appreciate and support the applicants' desire to bring the building back into use and provide a large family home through a change from agricultural to residential use, and the benefits that this would bring; not only to the applicants personally, but also potentially to the historic building securing its mid- to long term future. However, this needs to be balanced against what can be realistically achieved ensuring the preservation of the historic building and any features that it may have as a designated Heritage Asset and its setting within the designated Deddington Conservation Area.
- 8.6. Historic England considers that traditional farm buildings are among the most ubiquitous of historic building types in the countryside, stating that: *'they are not only fundamental to its sense of place and local distinctiveness, but also represent a major economic asset in terms of their capacity to accommodate new uses. The restructuring of farming and other economic and demographic changes in the countryside provide both threats and opportunities in terms of retaining the historic interest of this building stock and its contribution to the wider landscape'*.
- 8.7. A number of the proposed alterations and the garden room extension are not considered sympathetic to the context and fail to reflect or reinforce the character or architectural/historic interest of these Grade II listed agricultural buildings and the wider farmyard setting.
- 8.8. The Council's Conservation Officer objects to the proposals considering them detrimental to the character and appearance of the building and having little regard to the historic and architectural interest of the former agricultural buildings, causing harm to the Heritage Asset, the historic farm complex and its setting within the Conservation Area; an opinion shared by the case officer.
- 8.9. Of particular concern is the proposed garden room/utility room extension to the northern elevation. This proposed extension not only compromises one of the primary and most significant features of the existing barn, its cart door openings through the building, it would also extends the building in a direction contrary to the predominantly linear nature of the building. This would appear as an incongruous addition, which notwithstanding the proposed green Sedum roof would be visible from the public domain, with views experience from the north-east.
- 8.10. CDC informal farm building conversion guidance advises that accommodation should aim to be contained wholly within the existing buildings and in the rare cases where extensions are proposed they should be of traditional form such as simple lean-to out-shots. It would be highly unusual to have an outshot across the midstrey (main cart door opening) which was a clear opening front to back; it would also be odd to have an outshot near a midstrey due to the turning circles of carts and the need to open the large doors. The opportunity to extend this barn has already been taken on its south elevation, leaving the north elevation simple and free from appendages, which is one of the key features that contributes to the character of the building and its setting within the Conservation Area.
- 8.11. The current proposals also include the raising of the roof of the subservient outbuilding (increasing not only the ridge height increased but also the eaves height)

and alterations to its eastern and southern elevations, not only increasing its prominence within the site, but also changing its general character and appearance from that which would have appeared as a simple cart-shed/store set against and ancillary to the main barn.

- 8.12. A number of other overly domestic features included within the scheme further compound the harm that would be caused, detracting from the agricultural character and nature of the buildings and the wider site. These include: the proposed Juliet balcony, new full height window openings and the introduction of a significant number of rooflights into the roofs of both outbuilding and main barn.
- 8.13. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that: *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm loss should require clear and convincing justification'*. Policy ESD15 of the CLP 2031 echoes this guidance.
- 8.14. Paragraphs 133 and 134 of the NPPF both require the decision maker to weigh the level of potential harm against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case the harm caused is considered to be less than substantial. Where the proposal will lead to a less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 8.15. In this instance whilst the proposals would see a currently vacant building being brought back into use and also provide the applicant with a residential property to meet his family needs, the public benefit of the proposals is not such that it would outweigh the significant harm to the architectural and historic interest of the listed building, identified above. It is to be noted that the Council has previously granted permission for schemes that would not cause the same level of harm.
- 8.16. It is considered that the proposals would cause harm to the grade II listed building and setting of other adjacent grade II listed buildings and boundary wall and the proposals are therefore considered to be contrary to the provisions and aims of both local and national policy guidance with regards to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

9. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the NPPF defines this as having 3 dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Also at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and in the context of this application this would include conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 9.2. It is considered that proposals would result an inappropriate form of development which, by virtue of the additions and alterations proposed, would cause *less than substantial* harm to the historic environment in this location. Officers do not consider that there is a public benefit of this proposal that would outweigh the harm to the character, appearance and significance of the Grade II Listed Building, its setting within the Deddington Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent grade II listed buildings and structures.
- 9.3. The proposals are therefore considered contrary to the above mentioned policies and as such the application is therefore recommended for refusal for the reason set out below.

10. RECOMMENDATION

That permission is refused, for the following reason:

1. The proposals by reason of their siting, scale and design, cumulatively represent an awkward and inappropriate form of development that would result in significant and demonstrable harm to the special character and historic significance of the listed building and its setting within the Deddington Conservation Area. The less than substantial harm caused is clear, significant and demonstrable and is not outweighed by the proposal's benefits. The proposals therefore conflict with saved Policies C18, C21 and C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

PLANNING NOTES:

1. For the avoidance of doubt, the plans and documents considered by the Council in reaching its decision on this application are: Application form, Planning Statement/Heritage Asset Assessment, Windrush Ecology - Bat Survey Report (dated November 2017), and drawings numbered: 981-1, 981-2A, 981-3D, 981-4B, 981-5B and 981-6B, initially submitted with the application; and further revised drawings numbered: 981-3E, 981-4D, 981-5D and 981-6D, received during the application (21/03/2018).

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