

Planning Statement

**Planning application for the
Change of Use of Existing
Building to Residential**

at

**Sladacre Barn
Bath Road
Blagdon
BS40 7TH**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the agricultural building at Sladacre, Blagdon to residential use. Planning consent was previously granted on 24 January 2017 under reference: 16/P/2804/F that has since expired. This application uses the same site and layout plans as previously approved.
- 1.2 The planning application is supported by the following drawings:
 - DWG 218138 PL_EL 100 – Proposed plans, elevations & section
 - DWG 218138 SP 101 – Proposed site plan
 - DWG 218138 PL 102 – Proposed site & location plans
 - DWG 218138 PL 200 – Existing plans & elevations

2.0 BACKGROUND & PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Sladacre barn is a stone barn under a clay tiled roof, situated alongside the A368 Bath Road, in the centre of the village of Blagdon. The area is within the Mendip Hill Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and just outside the Conservation Area of Blagdon.
- 2.2 The barn has previously been in agricultural use but is now redundant. It is positioned within agricultural land, overlooking the orchard and Mead playing fields to the north.
- 2.3 The proposal is to change the use of the barn to residential, to provide 2 bedroom accommodation with open plan living/dining space in the main area of the barn, with the smaller lean-to providing the kitchen. Externally, a garden area will be located to the south and east of the barn, within the existing walled area and a parking area to the north west.
- 2.4 There is an existing vehicular access to the field, located to the west of the barn, which will be extended towards the barn to allow access and parking for the proposal.



3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning consent was previously granted on 24 January 2017 under reference: 16/P/2804/F which has since expired. This application uses the same site and layout plans as previously approved.
- 3.2 Access to the field was granted consent on 02 April 2015 under reference: 15/P/0399/F. This has been implemented and is currently in use. This access forms part of the application site as access from the public highway to the barn.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in July 2019, is of material importance to the consideration of this application and continues to place an emphasis on sustainable development.
- 4.2 The NPPF supports the conversion of rural buildings under paragraphs 79 & 80. Paragraph 79 states development in rural areas “... *should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services...*”. The reuse of this building would support the existing services within the village, all of which are easily within walking distance, particularly as there is pavement access directly opposite the subject barn in both directions.
- 4.3 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF goes on to say that, the creation of dwellings would be supported if “...*the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting...*”. It is felt that this proposal would enhance the immediate setting of the barn by tidying it up and ensuring it remains rather than falling into disrepair and disappearing altogether. Native planting is also proposed around the site that would further enhance the setting.



4.4 In terms of local policies, the Core Strategy adopted in January 2017 and the Development Management Policies, Sites and Policies Plan adopted in July 2016 are relevant to this application.

4.5 The village of Blagdon does not have a settlement boundary. Therefore, the area is considered “Open Countryside” for the purposes of development. However, Policy CS33 of the adopted Core Strategy supports the conversion of redundant rural buildings for residential use.

4.6 In addition, Policy DM45 of the adopted Development Management Policies, Sites and Policies Plan covers the conversion of rural buildings for residential use. This policy states:

“The conversion or re-use of rural buildings for residential use will be permitted provided that:

- *they are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;*
- *any extension as part of the conversion or subsequently should not be disproportionate to the original building and respect the scale and character of the building and its setting;*
- *the proposal would result in an enhancement of the immediate setting, and*
- *the impact of external facilities (such as curtilage treatment, parking) is minimal and landscaping respects the local rural character;*
- *any architectural and historic significance of the building and its setting is conserved;*
- *it would not have a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers or adversely affect the operation of working farms; and*
- *the building is not in an isolated location remote from a settlement with a range of services and facilities or where access to those services and facilities would be poor.”*



4.7 To address these points in turn:

- The barn is of substantial construction, evidenced by the Statement of Condition enclosed with this application and the proposed drawings submitted which demonstrate that very little alteration is required for the conversion.
- No extension of the existing barn is proposed, only the reinstatement of the existing lean-to.
- It is considered that the barn is important to the local character of the rural area, it being of traditional construction and in a prominent location adjacent to the public highway and just outside of the Conservation Area. Being redundant from agricultural use, it has become overgrown and will further deteriorate if an alternative use is not found. Therefore, this proposal allows for the enhancement of the immediate setting through sympathetic conversion and clearance of undergrowth as well as supporting the retention of a locally important building, ensuring its contribution to the landscape.
- The proposed parking area is located behind the barn, in an area that would not be visible from the public highway. It is located between the existing former farmyard walls and the proposed area of planting, allowing sufficient area for turning and the parking of 2 vehicles. The residential curtilage is contained within the existing farmyard walls to the front of the barn, along with a small area to the side of the barn, on the south east elevation.
- As above, the barn is a locally significant landmark in a prominent position on the A368. It is of traditional construction and therefore worthy of retention.
- The barn does not have any immediate neighbours so would not have any adverse impacts on any adjoining occupiers or the operation of working farms, it being on the edge of a field.
- The building is within the centre of Blagdon village within easy walking distance of local shops, pubs, Village Club, school, playing fields, church and the bus stop so is not in an isolated position.



4.8 Policy DM11 of the adopted Development Management Policies, Sites and Policies Plan covers development in the AONB. This policy sets out to ensure any development within the AONB does not have an adverse impact on the character or landscape. This proposal provides a sympathetic conversion of an existing traditional building. The siting of any outside space has been tucked behind the barn, primarily using the existing farmyard walls as boundaries. No alterations are proposed to the roadside elevation of the barn.

4.9 DM13 of the adopted Development Management Policies, Sites and Policies Plan covers Conservation Areas. This policy seeks to conserve and where possible enhance North Somerset's Conservation Areas. Policy DM3 States:

"When considering proposals within a Conservation Area, the council will seek to:

- *Secure the retention of existing buildings, features, hard and soft landscaping that contribute to its special character*
- *Ensure that new development will not cause harm to the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area and wherever possible positively enhance it....*

...When determining applications for new development, the council will have regard to matters such as bulk, height, materials, colour, vertical or horizontal emphasis and design...."

This policy supports the proposal to retain and enhance the existing traditional building, utilising existing stone boundaries and improving the street scene by tidying up the external appearance of the building but not making significant alterations. The overall height and bulk of the building will remain largely unchanged, with the reinstatement of the lean-to altering the external appearance.

5.0 ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION

5.1 An ecological appraisal and bat survey was carried out by Crossman Associates on 17 June 2021 and is included as part of this application. This has confirmed that there is no evidence of the presence of bats using the building. Similarly no other protected species have been identified that would be affected by the proposed development.



5.2 The subject building and site itself are not within any heritage designations, lying just outside the Conservation Area. However, only minimal alterations are proposed to convert the barn to a dwelling so this would conserve the character of both the building and surrounding area. A search of the Historic Environment Records (HER) has been completed which suggests there *may* be a well nearby but the Applicant has owned the site for many years and is not aware of any well in this location. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect any heritage assets. The results of the HER can be seen in Appendix Two.

6.0 DESIGN & ACCESS

6.1 Design

The proposal will retain the existing stone wall and tiled roof structure, utilising the lean-to with the same materials. Roof lights are proposed to allow sufficient daylight into the first floor and one further opening in the south east elevation. Apart from the reinstatement of the lean-to, no other alterations are proposed to the existing building.

6.2 Materials

The barn itself is of stone construction under a clay tiled roof, these aspects will not alter. Timber framed double glazed doors and windows are proposed within the conversion, with Velux style roof lights, principally on the field side of the barn. uPVC guttering and downpipes will be used. The existing stone walls around the farmyard area are to be retained, with the existing walling along the southern boundary extended to meet and form the garden boundary.

6.3 Access & Parking

The agricultural access is already in place, with wide splays on to the public highway. A gravelled driveway is proposed to continue from the existing access way, onto the parking area, located to the west of the barn. It is proposed that a post and rail fence is erected along the boundary of the driveway.

6.4 Other Matters

- There are no trees affected by this development.



- The land falls within Flood Zone 1, the lease at risk of flooding, so this proposal should not cause any additional risk to flooding elsewhere, particularly considering the surface materials proposed.
- The building has not been used for livestock for many years so there is not thought to be any contamination risk.
- The proposed dwelling would be connected to mains services.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed scheme was granted consent under the same North Somerset planning policies in 2017.
- 7.2 The conversion of the existing traditional building to residential use is supported by local planning policies as evidenced above. The conversion would conserve the local character of the area within the AONB and on the edge of the Conservation Area.
- 7.3 The proposal complies with all relevant Development Plan Policies. The Council is therefore respectfully requested to grant this application planning permission.

APPENDIX ONE

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1: Southern Elevation



Figure 2: Western Elevation



Figure 3: Northern Elevation



Figure 4: South & East Elevations



Figure 5: Rafters



Figure 6: Existing Floor Joists & internal walls



Figure 7: North East View of existing access from road



Figure 8 :South West View of existing access onto Road



APPENDIX TWO

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SEARCH

