

Planning Statement

Including Statement of Heritage Significance

Conversion and extension of existing redundant agricultural barn to form holiday letting accommodation for people with a disability (sui generis) at land to the southwest of Waterside, Yarcombe, EX14 9BQ

Prepared on behalf of Gary Shire

October 2021

Office 1, 14 Seafield Road
Seaton
Devon
EX12 2QS

T: 01297 232 61

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Site and surroundings area	3
3.0	Planning history	3
3.1	Overview	3
3.2	Chaffhay Farm – UPRN: 010000244251	3
3.3	Waterside – UPRN 010000244250	4
3.4	The Shires – UPRN: 010094722300	5
4.0	Statement of heritage significance	5
5.0	Proposal	6
5.1	Background	6
5.2	Overview	7
5.3	Disability specifications	7
5.4	Internal layout	8
5.5	External changes	10
6.0	Policy context	10
6.1	Relevant Local Plan policies	10
6.2	Relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies	12
6.3	National planning policy	13
7.0	Planning considerations	14
7.1	Overview	14
7.2	Use of building as holiday accommodation	15
7.3	Access and parking arrangements	17
7.4	Trees and landscaping	18
7.5	Impact on the setting of nearby listed building	18
7.6	Flood risk	19
7.7	Design of proposal and visual impact	20
8.0	Conclusion	21

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Dalton-Aram Planning Ltd, on behalf of the applicant, Gary Shire, in support of an application seeking planning permission for the conversion, and extension, of an existing redundant agricultural barn to form holiday letting accommodation for people with a disability (sui generis) at land to the southwest of Waterside, Yarcombe, EX14 9BQ.

2.0 Site and surroundings area

- 2.1 Yarcombe is a small village in East Devon situated to the north of the district close to the boarder with South Somerset District Council. Yarcombe is six and a half miles northwest of Honiton and five miles west of Chard (South Somerset). The River Yarly runs to the east of the village at the bottom of the wide valley.
- 2.2 Yarcombe is a compact village and mainly centred around the A30 as it curves down the hillside. The area is characterised by a mix of residential properties, farms and fields. The buildings range across the periods from the C15 Church of St John the Baptist to modern housing.
- 2.3 Yarcombe is a rural village with a church, post office, village hall, pub and B&Bs. It is located within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.4 The application site is located just under a mile to the southeast of the main settlement. It comprises a redundant agricultural building, former milking parlour, located approximately 75m to the southwest of the main dwelling. It is of a steel portal frame construction.

3.0 Planning history

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 There are a number of properties associated with the application site. However, all of the applications across the wider site are listed under one property on the East Devon District Council website.

3.2 Chaffhay Farm – UPRN: 010000244251 (owned by the applicant's mother)

3.2.1 14 applications are listed under this property

- Erection Of Farm Building
Ref. No: [87/P1696](#) Status: [Approved](#)
- Filling Of Pit With Subsoil
Ref. No: [88/P1702](#) Status: [09](#)
- Agricultural Building
Ref. No: [95/P1166](#) Status: [Approved](#)

- Conversion Of Barn To Dwelling
Ref. No: 98/P0273 Status: Approved
- Conversion Of Barn To Dwelling
Ref. No: 98/P0274 Status: Approved
- Replace windows.
Ref. No: 04/3239/LBC Status: Approved
- Erection of isolation building and construction of all weather arena
Ref. No: 06/0643/COU Status: Approved
- Erection of cover for existing cattle feeding area
Ref. No: 08/2526/FUL Status: Approved
- Erection of cover for existing cattle feeding area
Ref. No: 08/2527/FUL Status: Approved
- Construction of replacement milking parlour and installation of dirty water collection tank.
Ref. No: 10/0834/FUL Status: Approved
- Construction of double garage and rear single storey extension.
Ref. No: 11/0422/FUL Status: Approved
- Demolition of oil store, removal of existing garage and construction of single storey extension.
Ref. No: 11/0428/LBC Status: Approved
- Conversion of milking parlour to provide holiday let facilities for the disabled, construction of building to accommodate swimming pool and garage, demolition of existing farm buildings
Ref. No: 16/0939/FUL Status: Approved
- Conversion of milking parlour to enable holiday let
Ref. No: 16/1164/LBC Status: Withdrawn

3.3 Waterside – UPRN 010000244250

3.3.1 No planning history is listed, however, the following applications are directly related to the site.

- Conversion Of Barn To Dwelling
Ref. No: 98/P0273 (Planning Application) Status: Approved
Ref. No: 98/P0274 (Listed Building Consent) Status: Approved
This was converted by the applicant and is now his family home.
- Erection of isolation building and construction of all-weather arena
Ref. No: 06/0643/COU Status: Approved
This is to the north of the application site and is used for horses by the applicant's wife.

- Construction of replacement milking parlour and installation of dirty water collection tank.

Ref. No: 10/0834/FUL

Status: Approved

This is the barn proposed to be converted.

3.4 The Shires – UPRN: 010094722300

3.4.1 No planning history is listed, however, the following application is directly related to the site.

- Conversion of milking parlour to provide holiday let facilities for the disabled, construction of building to accommodate swimming pool and garage, demolition of existing farm buildings

Ref. No: 16/0939/FUL

Status: Approved

4.0 Statement of heritage significance

4.1 The application site, a former milking parlour to the southwest of Waterside, is sited approximately 97m to the southwest of “*Chaffhay Farmhouse*” a Grade II listed building that was listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) for its special architectural or historic interest in 1988 (list entry no. 1333693).

4.2 The list entry description describes the property as follows:

“Probably C17 with a late C19 extension. Plastered local stone rubble, maybe with cob; stone rubble stacks topped with C19 and C20 brick; thatch roof, slate to the late C19 extension. Plan: since no close inspection was possible at the time of this survey it is not possible to describe the building adequately. The farmhouse faces south-east and only the rear can be seen from the road. Nevertheless it appears to have a 3-room plan in which the left (south-western) room is a late C19 extension. The original 2-room house has gable-end stacks. 2 storeys with maybe integral outshots to rear. Exterior: only the rear could be seen at the time of this survey. Here there is a doorway containing a C20 door behind a contemporary porch towards the right end (into the late C19 extension). There is a C20 casement with glazing bars above and another to right. The rest is taken up by the rear outshots. The roof is gable-ended and carried down continuously over the rear outshots. Interior was not available for inspection at the time of this survey although it is said to contain large beams and an open fireplace with a bread oven. Chaffhay looks like an interesting small C17 farmhouse but a full internal investigation should be undertaken to determine the layout and [sic] assess the surviving features before any alterations take place.”

4.3 The list entry highlights that Chaffhay Farmhouse derives much of its significance from its original date of construction with its use of local stone rubble for the walls and thatch for the main original roof.

5.0 Proposal

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for the conversion of a redundant barn, approved under permission 10/0834/FUL, for use as holiday letting accommodation specifically designed for disabled clientele and their families.
- 5.1.2 The barn is redundant as the family took the decision in 2015 to sell their remaining milking herd of 200 cows as the agricultural enterprise was no longer financially viable.
- 5.1.3 Various other barns across the former farm have been removed to clear up the site.
- 5.1.4 The applicant wishes to produce a high-quality holiday facility which specifically caters for the needs of disabled visitors. He has had success with converting two barns to the south of his dwelling into a holiday let and indoor swimming pool, The Shires - 16/0939/FUL, and would now like to replicate that approach with this barn.
- 5.1.5 MindforYou is a travel/holiday company which specialises in helping people with dementia to still have time away with their families. Not all rental properties can fully accommodate some of their clients because they have not been designed to meet the needs of older adults or people with physical or mental disabilities. Mind for You state [see Appendix 1]:

*“This is not the case with the Shires (*16/0939/FUL), we are able to accommodate all potential guests as it has been designed to accommodate people with physical and mental disabilities. Sadly, we have been unable to book The Shires in 2020 and 2021 because it has been fully booked. The development of an additional property which will accommodate more guests and incorporate the learnings for the development and use of The Shires will be something MindforYou will prebook in advance of its completion.”*

“These properties provide organisations like ours and families the opportunity to provide that all important break for family carers and their loved ones they care for. These aren’t just holidays, these improve the health and wellbeing of everybody involved and also take the pressure off our health and social care system (published at the Dementia UK Congress 2019).”

- 5.1.6 Sleeps12 is another holiday company who support the prospect of a disabled friendly accommodation being available in the South West. They state [see Appendix 2]:

“Almost half a million British adults with an impairment state lack of accessibility as a reason for not going on holiday in the UK; this is wrong and that is why we strive to offer accommodation to everyone - so that people with disabilities, their families and carers are not missing out.”

“...the type of holiday accommodation we provide – with a focus on large groups with exclusive use of facilities such as swimming pools, hot tubs, saunas and games rooms. It is a sad but documented fact that more often than not, people with accessibility issues don’t like to use public facilities such as swimming pools and saunas because they feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. A private property with facilities that people can enjoy in a relaxing environment with friends and family, that also has the necessary provisions for carers, is the perfect solution. This type of accommodation also reaches those with conditions such as autism or Tourette syndrome, as well as those with religious restrictions (for example remaining fully clothed in public bathing areas).”

“The applicant is very sensitive to the need for this type of accommodation, hence the considerations given to Shires and the fact that he donates two holidays each year to the Make A Wish Foundation for families with terminally ill children.”

5.2 Overview

- 5.2.1 It is proposed to convert, and extend, the existing barn to provide a dedicated disabled-friendly property where families can holiday as a group and, if needed, also take careers with them.
- 5.2.2 The existing barn would be used as the living accommodation, split across two levels, with the new extension housing the purpose-built disabled access swimming pool.
- 5.2.3 The property is proposed to have nine double bedrooms.

5.3 Disability specifications

- 5.3.1 Disabled people have been thought about in every aspect of the design of the proposed holiday let.
- 5.3.2 Four of the bedrooms would have en-suites which would be fully DDA (Disability Discrimination Act 2005) compliant for fully accessible toilets and go beyond this minimum standard with additional space left for adult changing tables and hoists.
- 5.3.3 According to Changing Places, <https://www.changing-places.org/>:

“Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. Over ¼ million people in the UK with a disability need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably.”
- 5.3.4 Design considerations for a disabled bathrooms include:
 - More space: The room should provide adequate space for the user, turning space for a wheelchair and room for two careers if required. The floor surface should be non-slip and there should be plenty of space for a privacy screen and waste bins.

- Toilets: Centrally placed, peninsular toilet with room either side for a wheelchair user, and wall mounted vertical grab rails and drop-down support rails on either side to offer support while transferring and while seated.
- Washbasin: Should have clear space below the bowl, to allow a wheelchair user to access it comfortably. Ideally a height adjustable washbasin is preferred so that the height can be adjusted to suit the needs of the user.
- Shower: Used either with a wall-mounted tip-up seat or changing bench. The shower seat will be centrally placed, with room either side for a wheelchair user, and wall mounted vertical grab rails and drop-down support rails on either side to offer support while transferring and while seated. The seat can be tipped up to allow for the changing bench to be located under the shower if required. Both a fixed and an adjustable shower head should be installed with separate independent controls.
- Changing Bench: a height adjustable, adult sized changing bench to provide a comfortable, stable platform for people who use incontinence pads or who need help bring changed or undressed to the use the toilet.
- Hoist: A ceiling track hoist eliminates the need to lift a person manually and removes the risk of injury to the carer or the person being transferred. It allows someone who cannot self-transfer to move about the room with comfort and dignity.
- Doors should be outward opening and are fitted with a horizontal closing bar fixed to the inside face.
- An emergency assistance alarm system be reachable from the wall-mounted tip-up seat or the floor.
- Blue colour contrasting grab rails installed against white background walls for the visually impaired.

5.3.5 The swimming pool is an integral feature for the holiday let as it provides, according to sport England [see Appendix 3],

“Swimming provides independence and freedom for the physically impaired person who can move independently in water, outside the confines of a wheelchair and without a walking aid or prosthesis.”

5.4 Internal layout

5.4.1 It is proposed to use the existing barn for the living accommodation and the extension for the swimming pool.

5.4.2 The living accommodation would be split over two floors with two bedrooms on the ground floor and seven on the first floor.

5.4.3 It is proposed to have a central staircase to the north of the main building, a lift in the central section and then an external fire stair to the south of the building.

5.4.4 A large open plan living area is proposed to the south of the ground floor, with a separate snug for the family to separate out when needed.

- 5.4.5 A cinema room is also proposed as disabled people often don't get chance to get to go to commercial cinemas due their individual needs/disabilities. With a private cinema it means that if the disabled person needed to leave the room for treatment etc the projection can be paused while they are being tended to. The room is also spaced adequately to fit a number of wheelchairs within it.
- 5.4.6 A gym is proposed in the link building between the main living accommodation and swimming pool. People with disabilities are often given set exercises and activities to help increase the body's ability to function or to aid in the recovery after operations.

5.5 External changes

- 5.5.1 The form of the main building would stay the same with a smaller 'barn like' building proposed to the west to house the swimming pool. A low-level building is then proposed to link the two buildings together with a glazed roof terrace above.
- 5.5.2 The main building would continue to look 'barn like' with a fibre cement corrugated roof, vertical timber cladding and large openings mimicking the original cattle doors.

6.0 Policy context

6.1 Relevant Local Plan policies

- 6.1.1 Planning legislation requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the development plan comprises the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 (the "Local Plan") and the Yarcombe and Marsh Neighbourhood Plan (the "Neighbourhood Plan"),
- 6.1.2 It is noted that the site is in a rural location beyond any built-up area boundaries designated by the Local Plan and is consequently within an area classified as countryside.
- 6.1.3 Strategy 3 (Sustainable Development) seeks to promote sustainable development and ensure it is fully taken into account when considering development.
- 6.1.4 Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside) highlights that development in the countryside will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy that explicitly permits such development and where it would not harm the distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities within which it is located, including:
- Land form and patterns of settlement.
 - Important natural and manmade features which contribute to the local landscape character, including topography, traditional field boundaries, areas of importance for nature conservation and rural buildings.
 - The adverse disruption of a view from a public place which forms part of the distinctive character of the area or otherwise causes significant visual intrusions.
- 6.1.5 Strategy 33 (Promotion of Tourism in East Devon) highlights that the Council will support and facilitate high quality tourism in East Devon to promote a year-round industry responsive to changing visitor demands. It explains that tourism growth should be sustainable and should not be detrimental to the District's natural assets but aim to attract new tourism related businesses that can complement the high-quality environment of East Devon.

- 6.1.6 Strategy 38 (Sustainable Design and Construction) seeks to encourage proposals to include sustainable design and construction methods to ensure the development would be resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- 6.1.7 Strategy 39 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Projects) seeks to promote renewable or low-carbon energy projects in domestic and commercial developments.
- 6.1.8 Strategy 46 (Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs) explains that development will need to be undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to, and helps conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of, the natural and historic landscape character of East Devon, in particular in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6.1.9 Policy D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) states that to ensure new development, including the refurbishment of existing buildings to include renewable energy, is of a high-quality design and locally distinctive. Proposals will only be permitted where they:
- Respect the key characteristics and special qualities of the area in which the development is proposed.
 - Ensure that the scale, massing, density, height, fenestration and materials of buildings relate well to their context.
- 6.1.10 Policy D8 (Re-use of Rural Buildings Outside of Settlements) permits proposals to re-use or convert buildings in the countryside subject to several considerations.
- 6.1.11 Policy E5 (Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas) highlights that in villages and rural areas small scale economic development (not including retail use classes/other uses in Classes A1 – A4) and expansion of existing businesses designed to provide jobs for local people will be permitted where, among other things, it involves the conversion of existing buildings.
- 6.1.12 Policy E16 (Proposals for Holiday or Overnight Accommodation and Associated Facilities Proposals) states that:
- “hotel development, conversion of dwellings into self catering accommodation, guest houses and upgrading of existing holiday accommodation will be permitted within the Built-up Area Boundaries of towns and villages provided the following criteria are met in full:*
- 1. The scale, level and intensity of development is compatible with the character of the surrounding area, including adjoining and nearby settlements.*
 - 2. The proposal does not harm the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties.*
 - 3. On-site servicing and parking facilities are provided commensurate with the level and intensity of the proposed use.*
 - 4. The proposal is accessible on foot, by bicycle and public transport and will not impair road safety or the free flow of traffic.*

Conversion or use of existing buildings in the open countryside, within close proximity to the main farm house or country house, for small-scale holiday accommodation uses will be permitted where compatible with the above.”

6.1.13 Policy TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access) states that planning permission for new development will not be granted if the proposed access, or the traffic generated by the development, would be detrimental to the safe and satisfactory operation of the local, or wider, highway network.

6.2 Relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies

6.2.1 The relevant policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are listed below.

6.2.2 Policy NE1 (Retaining and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of our Parish) of the Neighbourhood Plan highlights that:

- (i) development proposals that demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts on the natural environment (landscape and biodiversity) (or satisfactorily mitigate these impacts), and enhance the natural environment where there is the opportunity to do so, will be supported.
- (ii) Where mitigating measures are unavoidably required for development to be acceptable within its landscape setting, appropriate landscaping should be employed to mitigate the impact of the development, and such measures should include the use of native species of trees and hedges where planting is required.
- (iii) Where change to existing traditional Devon banks is unavoidable, proposals for development which affect traditional Devon hedges will only be supported where they have demonstrated that options have been assessed and, as a result, have proposed the least damaging option (to the hedgerow / bank, setting in the landscape, biodiversity and habitats).

6.2.3 Policy NE3 (Preserving Tranquillity and Our Dark Skies) of the Neighbourhood Plan highlights that development should maintain the tranquillity and dark skies of the parish.

6.2.4 Policy BHE1 (To maintain the Built Character of our parish through High Quality Design) highlights that to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the traditional built character of the parish:

- (i) proposals for residential development should be of a high quality design and take account of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Design Guide for Houses.
- (ii) proposals for any development should enhance the visual amenity of the setting and minimise any adverse visual impact on the essential character of Yarcombe, and on neighbouring properties to the proposed development site. Particular attention should be paid to:
 - a) ensuring that the size, scale and location of the development is appropriate to the form, scale and setting of the surrounding built environment;
 - b) ensuring that materials and design of the development are in-keeping with the character of the surrounding built environment;

- c) ensuring that it is designed in such a way as to minimise its impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape, on views of the proposed development and on the biodiversity and geodiversity.

6.2.5 Policy EE1 (Conversion of Agricultural Buildings) explains that when considering proposals for the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for business, or business related purposes, regard will be had to:

- (i) The surrounding rural landscape;
- (ii) The local road network and highway safety;
- (iii) Agricultural and other land based activities in the area;
- (iv) The amenities of neighbouring residents and other uses; and
- (v) Whether the buildings can be converted without requiring substantial rebuilding or disproportionate extension.

6.3 National planning policy

6.3.1 The 'golden thread' running through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the presumption in favour of sustainable development the meaning of which is set out by the Government in Section 2, paragraphs 7 to 14 of the Framework. The NPPF explains that the planning system has three overarching objectives, economic, social and environmental, to achieve sustainable development.

6.3.2 One of the NPPF's core objectives (Section 6) is to support a prosperous rural economy as part of building a strong competitive economy. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states:

"Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship".*

6.3.3 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF states:

"Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.

6.3.4 Another of the NPPF’s core objectives (Section 9) is to promote sustainable transport Paragraph 104 of the NPPF states:

“Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals, so that:

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places”.*

6.3.5 Paragraph 105 of the NPPF states:

“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”.

6.3.6 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”

7.0 Planning considerations

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 The existing milking parlour was approved under permission 10/0834/FUL and consequently the principle of the construction of the building has already been accepted. It is the proposed conversion for use for holiday accommodation purposes that is for consideration under this application.

7.2 Use of building as holiday accommodation

- 7.2.1 The site is beyond any built-up area boundaries designated by the Local Plan and is consequently within an area classified as countryside. Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside) of the Local Plan permits development where it accords with a *specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy and where it would not harm the distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities within which it is located.*
- 7.2.2 Policy D8 of the Local Plan permits the conversion of buildings in the countryside subject to a number of considerations including where they are sympathetic to and will enhance the rural setting and character of the buildings and the surrounding areas, the buildings are structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for substantial extension, alteration or reconstructions and that the buildings are no longer required for agricultural use.
- 7.2.3 For residential proposals, policy D8 requires the development to be located close to a range of accessible services and facilities to meet the everyday needs of residents, to enhance its setting and that the building is no longer required for agricultural use or diversification. In this instance, the proposed holiday accommodation would not be classed as residential or be able to used as a person's home. Therefore, the requirement to be located close to a range of accessible services and facilities would not apply to this proposal.
- 7.2.4 As the building is a recent, modern construction a structural survey in support of the application is not considered necessary. The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for substantial extension, alteration or reconstruction.
- 7.2.5 Further, the site no longer forms part of an agricultural enterprise, since the sale of the milking herd, and, therefore, the proposal would not undermine the viability of an existing agricultural enterprise or require replacement buildings to fulfil a similar function.
- 7.2.6 In addition, as the existing building is relatively modern it is unlikely that it would make a suitable habitat for protected species for bats or birds. Therefore, it is considered that a Biodiversity Survey is not necessary for this proposal and no such report is submitted with the application.
- 7.2.7 Policy E16 permits, subject to the specified criteria, the conversion or use of existing buildings in the open countryside for small-scale holiday accommodation uses where they are within close proximity to the main country house. It is, therefore, considered that policy E16 relates to the conversion of outbuildings in close proximity to an existing dwelling rather than proposals for the conversion of redundant farm buildings. Therefore, while policy E16 would not strictly be applicable to the submitted proposal its criteria and requirements are assessed below.
- 7.2.8 The first criterion of policy E16 requires the scale, level and intensity of development to be compatible with the character of the surrounding area. In this case the proposal would provide a single unit of accommodation situated in close proximity to the main house, other domestic outbuildings and another previously approved holiday let; 16/0939/FUL. The proposal would, therefore, be compatible with the character of the locality in terms of its scale and intensity.

- 7.2.9 Secondly, while there are neighbouring residential properties to the northeast of the site, they are a significant distance from the proposed holiday accommodation to ensure that its use would not give rise to adverse residential amenity impacts such as noise or disturbance, overlooking and loss of privacy.
- 7.2.10 In addition, the use of the building for holiday accommodation purposes would not harm the residential amenity of the host dwelling, or that of the neighbouring holiday let (The Shires), which is also in the applicant's ownership, or introduce an adverse conflict in this regard for future occupiers of the holiday accommodation.
- 7.2.11 The fourth criterion highlights that proposals should be accessible on foot, by bicycle and public transport. In this instance, it is noted there is a limited public transport option available within the village of Yarcombe with the 682 bus service [Appendix 4] running daily to Honiton and back.
- 7.2.12 However, paragraph 85 of the NPPF highlights that planning decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. Paragraph 85 adds:
"In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport)".
- 7.2.13 In this instance it is considered that the use of the existing building for holiday accommodation purposes would be sensitive to its surroundings and the relatively minor nature and scale of the use is unlikely to have an unacceptable impact on local roads.
- 7.2.14 Policy E16 was not part of the considered as part of the adjacent holiday let, approved under ref: 16/0939/FUL. However, the Council did conclude in relation to the adjacent holiday let proposal, approved under ref: 18/2398/FUL that:
"The proposed conversion of the old milking parlour and its extensions is considered to be acceptable and would not adversely impact upon the setting of the listed Farm house of Chaffhay Farm.
The new swimming pool and garage building together with its use of materials would not harm the setting of the listed building or character and appearance of the AONB. Therefor this application is considered to be acceptable."
- 7.2.15 It is acknowledged that policies D8 of the Local Plan and EE1 of the Neighbourhood Plan require a building to be capable of conversion without substantial/disproportionate extension, alteration or reconstruction.
- 7.2.16 However, paragraph 84 of the NPPF does not contain the same restrictions. It simply states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of 'all types of businesses' in rural areas both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. It also provides support for sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

- 7.2.17 Further, policy E5 encourages the expansion of existing businesses designed to provide jobs for local people will be permitted where, among other things, it involves the conversion of existing buildings. In this instance, in addition the applicant the proposal would provide 6 x cleaning jobs each working a minimum 12 hours per week.
- 7.2.18 While it is acknowledged that the proposed development would increase the footprint of the existing building, it would primarily be done so via the construction of a new building attached to the existing via a link between the two structures. Consequently, it is considered that the proposed development effectively comprises two elements: the conversion of the existing building to contain the holiday accommodation and the erection of a new section to house the swimming pool and gym facilities. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would not comprise a substantial or disproportionate extension and moreover would gain support from paragraph 84 of the NPPF as it proposes to convert the existing building and construct a well-designed new building.
- 7.2.19 In summary, the proposal would provide a well-designed development that has been specially created to meet a need for holiday accommodation for people with disabilities which is significantly under catered for. Therefore, the proposal would have wider tourism and economic development benefits for the local area and the district. The proposal would enable the expansion of the applicant's existing business which operates from the adjacent site. As a result, the proposal would provide benefits to the local area in terms of direct and indirect job creation for people working at the site and in terms of third-party suppliers in the surrounding area.
- 7.2.20 It is, therefore, considered that the proposal gains, in principle, support from policies D8, E5 and E16 of the Local Plan and policy EE1, as well as paragraph 84 of the NPPF which seeks to promote sustainable growth of all types of businesses in rural areas, including tourism/leisure developments, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

7.3 Environmental sustainability and renewable energy

- 7.3.1 In terms of environmental sustainability, the proposed development is intended to be 'off grid' in terms of its energy supply and would incorporate a range of renewable energy technologies.
- 7.3.2 An array of solar panels capable of generating more than 70 kwh would be installed on the south elevation of the proposed swimming pool building to heat both the pool and the upstairs and downstairs of the building.
- 7.3.3 A ground source heat pump is to be installed within the land to the south of the proposed development.
- 7.3.4 Consequently, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Strategies 3, 38, 39 and policy E5 of the Local Plan in terms of its aims to promote environmental sustainability including the inclusion of sustainable construction methods and renewable/low carbon energy.

7.4 Access and parking arrangements

- 7.4.1 Policy E5 of the Local Plan requires proposals to provide a safe highway access and ensure that the local highway network can accommodate a forecast increase in traffic.
- 7.4.2 In this instance, the site benefits from an existing access onto the rural lane to the north-east of the site which would provide a convenient and safe access to the surrounding highway network. While the site is located in a relatively isolated rural position, paragraph 85 of the NPPF notes that planning decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.
- 7.4.3 In addition, the closure of the farm and milking business could have brought about wider environmental benefits in the form of lower frequency of highway movements and reduced noise disturbance, preserving the tranquillity of the surrounding AONB. The use of the building for holiday accommodation purposes is likely to result in similar benefits to the surrounding area.
- 7.4.4 There is a large area of hardstanding to the northeast of the constructed building where parking space for several vehicles is provided. It is, therefore, considered that there is sufficient space within the proposed development site to accommodate additional vehicles visiting the site, with adequate turning, manoeuvring and parking space for vehicles using the site.
- 7.4.5 In summary, it is considered that the proposal would provide a safe means of access and would not give rise to significant levels of traffic that would harm the safe operation of the surrounding highway network.

7.5 Trees and landscaping

- 7.5.1 It is noted there are trees to the north and east of the building. However, as the application seeks conversion, with an extension to the west, of an existing building no harm to existing mature trees would take place.

7.6 Impact on the setting of nearby listed building

- 7.6.1 It is acknowledged that there is a listed building, Chaffhay Farmhouse, to the northeast of the site. However, there is a distance of separation of approximately 97 metres between the two sites with existing buildings sitting on any sightlines between the two buildings. The distance, and existing buildings, ensures there would be no harm to the nearby heritage asset.
- 7.6.2 Consequently, it is considered that the proposal would not harm the significance, setting or character and appearance of the nearby listed building.

7.7 Flood risk

- 7.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance set out the requirements for the preparation of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Paragraph 164 of the NPPF requires a site-specific FRA to be submitted in support of planning applications for all sites greater than 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1, for sites of any size within Flood Zones 2 or 3 or in an area within Flood Zone 1 which has critical drainage problems.
- 7.7.2 The majority of the application site, including the existing building and its proposed extension, are outside of the Flood Zone 2 and 2. Only a small section of the the access to the site and the track to the barn run through Flood Zone 2. Therefore, an FRA for the site is submitted in support of this planning application.
- 7.7.3 In terms of flood risk vulnerability, land and buildings used for agricultural and forestry are classed as 'less vulnerable' while building used for tourism use would comprise 'more vulnerable'. Therefore, the proposed change of use of the building would increase the flood risk vulnerability of the site.
- 7.7.4 The proposed development would be appropriate, even if located within Flood Zone 2 and 3 (subject to the Exception Test), under Table 3: Floor Risk Vulnerability and Flood Zone Compatibility. However, given that the proposed development falls entirely outside Flood Zones 2 and 3, except for a part of the site's access, it is considered that the development is appropriate in terms of flood risk vulnerability.
- 7.7.5 A safe refuge for occupiers of the building can be provided both within and external to the existing building outside of the Flood Zone.
- 7.7.6 The building is outside of Flood Zone 2 and consequently its floor levels would remain above the depth of flood level. The risk of flooding to third parties off the site as a consequence of the development would be minimal.
- 7.7.7 The proposed change of use would have no adverse effect on the existing watercourse, would not impede flows in times of flood and would not increase the risk of flooding to the property. The proposal, therefore, is unlikely to raise significant flood risk issues.
- 7.7.8 Surface water would be dealt with via soakaways and foul water would be dealt with via package treatment plant. The FRA, therefore, concludes that the proposed development would be appropriate, and the application of the sequential and exception test are not required.

7.8 Design of proposal and visual impact

- 7.8.1 The proposal seeks to convert the existing building and build a new building to contain the swimming pool with very high quality, contemporary design. The development would also be finished with high quality materials. Some of the proposed materials would reflect those used in traditional farm buildings within the surrounding area while other more contemporary materials would be used to provide a high standard of architecture which harmonises with its surroundings.
- 7.8.2 Fibre cement roofing would be used on the roof of the existing building reflecting the vernacular of farm buildings in the area. The asymmetric roof of the proposed swimming pool building would be clad with a metal standing seam. The walls of both buildings would be clad with a mix of vertical timber cladding, render and CorTen steel. These finishes include vertical timber cladding for the walls and a metal standing seam material on its juxtaposed roof slopes. Further, the powder coated aluminium windows and doors would be installed to give a high-quality appearance to the overall development.
- 7.8.3 As shown on the submitted plans, the proposed swimming pool building would be recessed into the ground which has the effect of grounding the building.
- 7.8.4 Landscaping, in the form of additional tree planting, would be provided to the north, west and east of the proposed development to further screen the building from view in the surrounding landscape.
- 7.8.5 It is noted that the application site is located within the Blackdown Hills AONB, however, the site is an existing barn which itself is located to the south of another existing barn with its own manege. The site is also to the southwest of the grouping of buildings forming Waterside, Shires, Chaffhay Farm and Little Chaffhay.
- 7.8.6 It is considered that any views of the proposed development would be viewed in context with, and set against, the grouping of existing buildings adjacent to the site. Further, the high-quality design and appearance of the development would reduce its impact on the surrounding area and give the appearance of a converted former agricultural building.
- 7.8.7 The site's existing boundaries, formed by existing mature trees and hedgerows, would further assist in screening the development from view within the surrounding landscape.
- 7.8.8 It is, therefore, considered that the conversion to a holiday let would not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area nor lead to visual harm to, or undermine, the landscape quality of the AONB.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 In summary, it is considered that the proposal gains, in principle, support from policies D8, E5 and E16 of the Local Plan and policy EE1, as well as paragraph 84 of the NPPF which seeks to promote sustainable growth of all types of businesses in rural areas, including tourism/leisure developments, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.
- 8.2 The proposal would provide a safe means of access and would not give rise to significant levels of traffic that would harm the safe operation of the surrounding highway network.
- 8.3 The proposal would not harm any existing mature trees. Further, the proposal would not be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 8.4 The proposal would not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area nor lead to visual harm to, or undermine, the landscape quality of the AONB.
- 8.5 In addition, the use of the building for holiday accommodation purposes would not result in harm to the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.