

Planning Statement



In respect of:

Barn at Pitchers Barn

Bullocks Farm Lane

Wheeler End

Buckinghamshire

HP14 3NQ

Date:

October 2021

Reference:

AT/EA/

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Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Site location, Description and Proposals	3
3.0	Planning Policy Context	6
4.0	Planning Considerations	14
5.0	Conclusions	19

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report is prepared by Emma Adams & Partners Ltd on behalf of Mr & Mrs Andrews in support of an application seeking consent for the conversion of an existing barn presently used for ancillary purposes associated with the domestic occupation of Pitchers Barn for use as self-contained holiday accommodation.
- 1.2 The Statement assesses the application proposals in relation to the relevant statutory duties, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted regional and local policy documents including the Local Development Framework.
- 1.3 *Section 2.0* of this statement highlights the site and its wider context and describes the proposed application.
- 1.4 *Section 3.0* sets out the national and local planning policy context relevant to the site and proposals.
- 1.5 *Section 4.0* examines the key planning considerations and provides a detailed assessment against adopted planning policy, with conclusions at *Section 5.0*.

2.0 Site location, Description and Proposals

Site Location

- 2.1 The application site is located to the south-east of Pitchers Barn, with the outbuilding to the north-east. The site is located to the east of Wheeler End.



Figure 1 - Aerial View of Denham Farm (site arrowed), (Google, 2020)

- 2.2 The planning policy map shows the site is located within the Green Belt and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Site Description

- 2.3 The site currently forms part of the curtilage of Pitchers Cottage which was originally converted from a barn consented under application number W/89/7943/FF. The building which is the subject of this application was subject to a recent application for a Certificate of lawfulness for existing residential use of detached outbuilding under reference 20/08473/CLE.



Figure 2 – Existing Site Plan

Proposals

- 2.4 The proposal seeks consent for the conversion of the existing ancillary buildings for use as self-catering holiday accommodation, the detail of which is shown on the plan extracts included below.



Figure 3 – Existing Site Plan

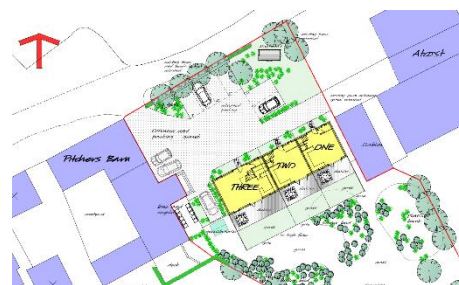


Figure 4 - Proposed Site Plan

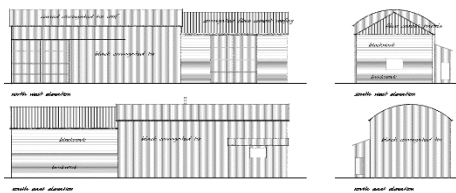


Figure 5 – Existing Elevations



Figure 6 – Proposed Elevations

- 2.5 The proposal seeks consent to convert the building to form 3 self-contained holiday lets, in the main containing the building within its existing envelope, albeit with a small

extension to the roofline of the pitched roof element. The proposal is deliberately designed and sited to assimilate into the existing architecture and arrangement of the building using materials and details to reflect the existing materiality and detail. The minor alteration to the roofline has been designed to be traditional in style and thus in keeping with the character and appearance of the host building. The design and materiality have been chosen as it assimilates the application design into the existing, taking a design theme from the building itself.

3.0 Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 The proposals for the application site will need to be considered in light of policy and guidance set out for tourism facilities in green belt areas. The statutory duties, national guidance and local plan policies relevant to the proposals supported by this statement are summarised below:

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in 2012 and replaced all Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance notes. It was further updated, and a new version published in July 2018 and further revised in February 2019 and July 2021.
- 3.3 The three key dimensions to sustainable development as stated in the Framework are economic, social and environmental. The planning system's purpose is to contribute to these sustainable development aims, and each dimension should be sought jointly and simultaneous through the planning system to achieve sustainable development.
- 3.4 **Paragraph 84** relates to the importance of supporting a prosperous rural economy noting;

‘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;'**
- 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."**

3.5 **Paragraph 85** is also relevant in relation to rural facilities and business, in particular in relation to previously developed land. The guidance 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."***

3.6 In relation to required good design and architectural styles, **Paragraph 126** notes that;
'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'

3.7 **Paragraph 130** notes certain design criteria that applications should address;

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'

3.8 **Paragraph 134** of the NPPF in relation to poor design requires that permission should be refused for development that is not well designed noted that significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies along with outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area.

3.9 In relation to the protection of the Green Belt, **Paragraph 148** states that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to the prevention of harm to the Green Belt.

3.10 **Paragraph 145** states that *“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”*

3.11 **Paragraph 149** states that the local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. However, it goes on to mention certain exceptions which are acceptable, the following of which is relevant to these proposals;

‘c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development;

3.12 In addition, **Paragraph 150** is of relevance, specifically;

‘Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;’

- 3.13 The site is located within the Chilterns AONB, **Paragraph 176** of the NPPF states;

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues...'

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)- updated 2019

- 3.14 The Planning Practice Guide (PPG) provides further details to support the policies within the NPPF.

Local Policy and Supplementary Guidance:

Wycombe District Local Plan (2019)

- 3.15 The Wycombe District Local Plan defines how future development should take place for the whole area and was adopted on 19 August 2019.

- 3.16 **Paragraph 219** of the NPPF guides that weight shall be given to saved policies of pre-2004 Act plans where these policies are in consistency with the NPPF; the greater the consistency, the greater the weight and vice-a-versa.

- 3.17 The following Core Strategy policies are considered relevant to proposals:

- 3.18 **Policy CP8** relates to the Green Belt noting;

'The Council will:

3. Protect the Green Belt identified on the Policies Map from inappropriate development.'

3.19 **Policy DM30** relates to development affecting the AONB, it states;

'1. The Council will require development within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to:

a) Conserve, and where possible enhance, the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB;

b) Be appropriate to the economic and social wellbeing of the local communities within the AONB, or to promote the understanding or enjoyment of the AONB;

c) Deliver the highest quality design which respects the natural beauty and built heritage of the Chilterns and enhances the sense of place and local character.'

3.20 **Policy DM35** relates to Placemaking and Design Quality laying down the key criteria in relation to creating quality design and places.

3.21 In relation to small scale non-residential development **Policy DM37** is a generic policy for non-residential development which is intended to promote high quality design in new development that respects the character and appearance of buildings and their surroundings whilst also preserving the amenities of neighbouring properties.

3.22 **Policy DM42** relates specifically to the management of development within the Green Belt, of relevance;

'1. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate. Exceptions to this in Wycombe District comprise:

b) Development that the NPPF classifies as not inappropriate, but only when subject to the following clarifications:

iii The replacement or extension of dwellings only when they accord with DM43;

2. Inappropriate development will be refused unless there are very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will exist when the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'

3.23 **Policy DM45** relates specifically to the conversion of existing buildings in the green belt and other rural areas.

'1. The conversion of existing buildings to new uses in the Green Belt, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and elsewhere in the countryside is acceptable where:

a) The existing foundations, floors, walls and roof of the building are of sound and permanent construction suitable for the proposed use;

b) The building is not a building that was erected within the preceding 10 years;

c) The proposed use will support the vitality and sustainability of the local rural community, the rural economy, or local services.'

Other Material Considerations

Chilterns Building Design Guide (2010)

3.24 The Chilterns Building Design Guide contains practical advice on how to build or rehabilitate properties in keeping with the special qualities of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It covers such topics as the setting of buildings, the design of vernacular features and the use of traditional local materials. The Guide was originally published in 1999 and was adopted as Supplementary Planning

Guidance (SPG) by local planning authorities within the AONB. A second edition of the Guide was published in 2010.

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024

- 3.25 The Chilterns AONB Management Plan sets out the vision, policies and actions for the management of the Chilterns AONB for the period 2019–2024, and describes how best to conserve, enhance and enjoy the Chilterns. Its creation is led by the Chilterns Conservation Board, and it is the only plan which guides the management of the AONB as a whole.
- 3.26 **DP6** of the Management Plan supports sustainable farming and forestry, nature conservation and facilities for visitors appropriate to the special qualities of the AONB. The Plan states that planning policies and decisions should encourage the Chilterns' role as a haven for wildlife, a place to experience history and enjoy the outdoors. The Management Plan identifies the types of developments most likely to benefit from the AONB, and in return bring benefits to the AONB, are those that are most compatible with conserving and enhancing its character and supporting public appreciation. These include sustainable farming and forestry, *tourism businesses (e.g. accommodation, food and drink and visitor attractions etc.*

4.0 Planning Considerations

- 4.1 On review of the policy framework, it is considered that the key planning issues to be addressed will be the appropriateness of the use, the potential effects of the conversion on the AONB and Green Belt, the suitability of the access/parking area and the impact on residential amenity.

Green Belt

- 4.2 National and local policies seek to control what is identified as inappropriate development. This is further strengthened by the imposition of the site also being situated within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.3 With regards to National Policy, alterations to buildings within Green Belt is identified as inappropriate with certain exceptions, by virtue of Paragraph 149 of the Framework, one of these exceptions being paragraph c:

'c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

- 4.4 It is considered that the scheme presented does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and thus the proposal adheres with the NPPF in this respect.
- 4.5 Likewise in terms of the change of use, it is noted that Paragraph 150 states that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it of specific relevance to this application is section d which states;

d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and

substantial construction;

- 4.6 It is confirmed that the building is of permanent and substantial construction, and as the changes proposed are considered minimal, they will preserve its openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
- 4.7 It should also be noted that the NPPF promotes the beneficial use of Green Belt land in providing access and in particular in creating opportunities for outdoor recreation which would be facilitated by this use.
- 4.8 This national policy position is reflected in Wycombe District Local Plan Policies CP8, DM42 and DM45 which confirms that development is acceptable if it adheres to policy within the NPPF including small extensions and conversions where the existing foundations, floors, walls and roof of the building are of sound and permanent construction suitable for the proposed use, the building is not a building that was erected within the preceding 10 years; and the proposed use will support the vitality and sustainability of the local rural community, the rural economy, or local services. Once again it is considered that the proposals therefore accord with the criteria laid down in the Local Plan. As with the reasons stated above with regards to the NPPF it is considered that the proposals adhere to these local policy requirements.

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 4.9 In addition, the proposal site also sits within the Chilterns AONB and as such, the development proposals will need to consider the impacts of the development in relation to the conservation of this nationally important natural landscape.
- 4.10 The NPPF confirms (Para 176) that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is also reflected within local policy which notes proposals should conserve or enhance

the natural beauty of the AONB and be appropriate to the economic and social wellbeing of the local communities within the AONB (DM30), whilst Policy DM45 brings the same tests into consideration in terms of conversions as applies to the Green Belt.

- 4.11 It is considered that the proposals conserve the beauty of the AONB, whilst their revised use will enhance the economic and social wellbeing of the local communities within the AONB. In addition (as noted above regarding the Green Belt) it is considered that the proposals adhere to constraints regarding conversion.
- 4.12 Taking note of the minor nature of the alterations, it is concluded the proposals conserve the beauty of the area and thus adhere with adopted policy.

Access and Parking

- 4.13 The tourist accommodation will be served by the existing access from Bullocks Farm Lane. The accommodation will utilise and slightly extend the existing permeable hardstanding to accommodate 6 allocated spaces (2 spaces per unit). The proposal will also provide additional space for visitors and bike storage facilities to encourage visitors to the accommodation to use alternative modes of travel to the car whilst staying at the accommodation.
- 4.14 There is no specific locally adopted parking standard for tourist accommodation, however, bearing in mind the scale of the proposals and the limited vehicular movements that would be generated it is considered that parking provision is adequate and proportionate for the operational needs of the accommodation and the proposal will not result in any unacceptable impacts on highway safety and will therefore accord with Para 111 of the NPPF and policies of the adopted local plan.

- 4.15 The boundaries of the site and parking area will be further enhanced by the planting of additional trees and shrubs improving biodiversity on the site.

Design

- 4.16 The current building, although used for ancillary domestic purposes, still maintains its agricultural character consistent with the rural nature of the area. The design of the alterations, fenestration and roof alterations will maintain the quality and characteristics of the building, retaining the general form and scale of the buildings and minimising external alterations.
- 4.17 It is considered the proposals offer a sensitive design solution sympathetic to the character of the building and the character and appearance of the area. The proposals would have a neutral effect on the character of the area and thus conserving the natural beauty of the AONB.

Residential Amenity

- 4.18 The building to be converted is detached and separated from the adjoining residential property. The proposal will not result in any significant overlooking, loss of privacy or noise/disturbance impacts. It is considered the proposed use of the barn for tourism purposes will therefore not result in any significant loss of residential amenity to neighbouring properties.

Economic and Tourism benefits

- 4.19 Although relatively small scale the construction and provision of tourism

accommodation will provide economic benefits and employment through the construction and operational stages. In addition, the visitors to the area will also assist local businesses in terms of additional spend on shops, leisure and services whilst on vacation.

- 4.20 Paragraphs 84 and 85 of the NPPF specifically seeks to support a prosperous rural economy and promotes new rural businesses, conversion of existing buildings and the provision of sustainable rural tourism facilities.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The site is situated within an area that is subject to several specific planning designations; therefore, the Policy requirements associated with these designations are a key consideration when establishing the suitability of the conversion and alterations proposed.
- 5.2 On review, however, it is apparent that the proposal is a well-designed, detailed and arranged proposal that assimilates itself with both the building, but also the wider setting, maintaining the character and openness of the Green Belt and AONB.
- 5.3 The proposal will utilise an existing building, making effective use of previously developed land and providing tourist accommodation which is supported by both local and national policy.
- 5.4 It is therefore concluded that the proposals fully accord with Policy and thus we respectfully request that they be approved.