

16 November 2021

Reference: KR:301:6.01a

Cowley Farm Barn & Calf Sheds
Preston Bissett, Buckinghamshire. MK18 4DR.
Planning Statement

This report provides information for consideration of the planning submission to amend approved scheme 19/00603/COUR which was for the conversion of an existing barn into 3 dwellings via Prior Approval.

As site works progressed to implement the approved scheme for 3 dwellings, it became apparent to the applicant that there was significantly greater local need for smaller properties in the area and works were varied on site to meet this demand with the as-built scheme providing;

3 x 1 bedroom units &
1 x 2 bedroom unit

No additional footprint of the existing barns has been utilised for this reconfiguration and therefore there is no change of use required; the application seeks to increase the number of dwellings to 4 No from the approved 3 No.

This additional unit falls outside of the cumulative number of units permitted under Class Q and so a full planning application is required.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Cowley Farm lies in a rural position to the South of Preston Bissett and the larger centre of Buckingham. Cowley Farm comprises a number of properties in the vicinity including a Grade II listed farmhouse, farmland (approximately 489 acres) and a number of traditional and modern farm buildings that now meet the need of this working farm (details from the owner included below):

The farm is 489 acres in total owned by the King family with additional land rented in at other times of the year for sheep grazing. The farm is roughly split 50/50 grass and combinable crops.

The grass supports a flock of 1000 ewes, replacements and lambs plus additional cattle are grazed in the summer.

Combinable crops consist of Winter Wheat and Spring Oats and Barley.

The traditional barns are no longer viable for modern farming practice and are redundant.

The barns that are subject of this application are not curtilage listed structures and in footprint/volume already have consent for residential use.

Historic England Guidance Note 10 is clear and supported by Case Law that demonstrates that dedicated farm buildings that are not ancillary to the residential farmhouse do not fall under Listed Building status and this was fully demonstrated and supported under the Prior Approval Class G (a) & (b) application.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The modification seeks consent to convert the agricultural building into 4 separate dwellings (3 of which have already been approved under 19/00603/COUAR) by means of a revised internal layout utilising the pre-approved footprint.

The structures are sound, of solid (coarse) brick enclosed on 2 principal elevations and weathered and constructed in the early 1900s. The remaining elevations are a combination of cast-iron door openings and bay windows that the owner can retain being in use during his lifetime. There is no sign of structural failure with all structures being structurally sound and true.

The approved conversions (x3) are now completed and have proven successful rental properties that are in high demand.

All existing brick elevations and gables will be unchanged using a combination of the existing facing brickwork and timber weatherboard cladding with timber glazed windows/screens largely to existing structural openings.

The existing courtyard setting will be largely unchanged from any external viewpoints and remains distinct from the main activity of the farm which is now separated from the yard and the farmhouse (set each of which has its own access/driveway/parking and garden).

The existing courtyard will provide parking (6 spaces) and shared amenity space for the dwellings.

Highways considerations under 19/00603/COUAR have been addressed by the adaptation of the adjacent land/hedge row in the vicinity of the road junction to Cowley Farm to provide the necessary visibility splay in excess of 200m. Vehicle movements created by 3 additional dwellings on this access are considered to be negligible.

CONCLUSION

The principle of residential use within the barn footprint is established and approved. It is submitted that the increase in residential units from 3 to 4 has no detrimental impact on the setting of the listed farmhouse given that there are no external alterations proposed to the existing buildings/consented scheme.

Officers will see that the current scheme preserves/excludes the larger barn closest to the farmhouse which remains in general agricultural use.

There is no impact on highways or amenity and we conclude that this falls within Local and National Planning Policy on the conversion of vernacular buildings into residential use. We trust that this will be determined accordingly.