

Proposed conversion of barn to one dwelling
(Revised Scheme),

Barn at Penlanlas Farm, Old Hereford Road,
Abergavenny, NP7 7HN

PLANNING STATEMENT

Existing building The proposal comprises a traditional stone built barn with attached outbuildings within a complex of farm buildings around a yard area at Penlanlas Farm, which lies in open countryside to the north of Abergavenny. The site is served by a private farm access road from the public highway Old Hereford Road.

Planning history An application – Appl. No. M/4218 – was approved for the conversion of the barn to a dwelling in January 2000. Subsequently Building Regulation approval (FP0095/00) was granted for the scheme in April 2000.

Works relating to the installation of the first floor structure and supported by RSJ's within the barn, has been carried out (see attached photo). The applicant has confirmed that these works were carried out in the early 2000's following the Building Regulation approval.

A letter from a carpenter/joiner confirming that he worked on the installation of the first floor structure in 2003 has been provided and is attached (Appendix A). A domestic electricity supply was also provide to the barn at that time by Western Power Distribution – a confirmation letter of this is being sought from the company. In addition, groundworkers were contracted to commence adjacent groundworks, levelling, etc. which was partially carried out around the barn – a confirmation letter is also being followed up on this.

Such works indicate that planning application No. M/4218 was implement but never completed.

Pre-application enquiry A Pre-Application Enquiry (DM/2021/00945) was made to the Council in May 2021 for the conversion of the barn to a dwelling, particularly in view of the earlier approval of planning permission. At that time, it was thought that the earlier permission had lapsed – however it has since come to light that that assertion was incorrect. A subsequent site meeting to discuss the proposal and possible amendments was held with the planning case officer in March 2022.

Essentially, the applicants wanted to carry out the conversion work in a similar manner to that previously approved, but to re-arrange the internal layout and provide a large glazed opening (similar to a cart entrance) on the north elevation. Such an opening would be instead of previously approved openings, a number of rooflights and an external porch. In addition, clerestory windows below the eaves line were suggested (by the planning case officer) as a way of providing natural daylight to first floor areas. In addition, the front wall of the existing single storey side extension could be replaced by a new timber clad wall. Overall, it was considered and agreed that the character and appearance of the barn would be enhanced by such changes.

The submitted scheme has incorporated the suggested amendments outlined above.

Current planning application The new revised planning application involves the original barn structure previously considered as part of the earlier approved planning application, together with a small single storey link structure that was previously proposed to be demolished. The garden curtilage to the new dwelling will be part of the field area on the northern side as previously proposed and approved, together with a new sewage treatment plant and soakaway to be sited in the area previously approved.

The main two storey barn structure will provide the main living area with three bedrooms and a study to the first floor area. Former blocked window/door opening will be re-opened, and others blocked up. The new large glazed full height opening will be the main feature, providing natural daylighting to the internal areas of the new dwelling. Clerestory windows, set within a narrow band of stained timber cladding under the eaves level at either side of the

main barn, are proposed to provide natural daylighting to the various rooms and circulation space at first floor level. These windows will obviate the need for the roof-light windows that were a feature of the previous scheme.

The existing single storey wing to the west will be enlarged by the demolition of an unsightly lean-to building, the re-location and re-building of the side wall to the yard, and the installation of a new roof structure clad in natural slate. This area will contain the kitchen and dining areas. Externally, the elevation to the yard will be clad in stained timber boarding.

As the principal elevation and main entrance will now be on the north elevation, a new driveway and associated parking area is proposed to be located within this area, with the garden curtilage area beyond. This will be demarcated by new post and wire fencing backed by hedge planting.



PHOTO: New floor (installed 2003) constructed above existing steel beams (RSJ's)

Principle of development It is considered that the principle of development was established by the implement planning approval in 2000, and that planning policy today generally supports the re-use of rural buildings to provide a range of housing provision in such areas.

Policy H4 of the LDP states that such conversions will be allowed where they respect the character of the building, is in scale and sympathy, and does not require substantial reconstruction (marginal cases will require a structural survey). In addition, the structure should be of a traditional type of stone construction (not modern/utilitarian construction), capable of providing adequate living space, and care in the design requirements of new door and window openings, etc.

Welsh Government's view generally supports the circular economy of the re-use of redundant buildings, the aims of which are to keep materials, products and components in use for as long as possible providing social, economic and

environmental benefits. The proposal provides additional housing through re-use/conversion rather than new build and therefore accords with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10).

In terms of business use potential, it is considered that a commercial use of this building would adversely affect the residential amenity and privacy of the adjacent farmhouse due to proximity. Other more modern farm buildings to the south-east of the farm yard have been used for commercial purposes in the past and could be available in the future.

The proposed garden curtilage area is the same as previously approved, and will be enclosed by a stock proof fence back by hedging. An area of the garden will be set aside as a pollinator meadow. Further tree/shrub planting is proposed to help blend into the local landscape.

Biodiversity Although development has already commenced in terms of the principle of conversion work, the applicants commissioned a bat survey of the buildings by Celtic Ecology and Conservation Ltd. This was undertaken between March and May 2022. The report findings were that although bats were observed in close proximity of the buildings, no bats were seen to emerge from, return to or take any interest in the building. The conclusion was that it was considered that the application building at Penlanlas Farm is not currently used by bats for roosting purposes. However, an ecologist should be present during initial works to the building to check for evidence of bats. In addition, ecological enhancements should be provided at the site and its curtilage.

Any new external lighting will be restricted to the main entrance areas only and will be restricted to LED downlit lights which will be PIR controlled. Light spill if any will be strictly controlled to maintain potential dark bat flight corridors around the farm buildings, and to minimize light pollution. Luminaries with a high UV content will be avoided.

Further ecological enhancements are proposed by way of an area of the proposed garden to be set aside and planted as a pollinator meadow, together with a mixed local species new boundary hedgerow planting, and bat and bird (swift) boxes located on the gables of the barn, together with a further pole mounted bat box.

Visual amenity The site is in open countryside to the north of Abergavenny, and on the lower, eastern slopes of the Sugar Loaf Mountain. To the west and north lies the boundary to the Brecon Beacons National Park.

PPW Underlines the importance of protecting and enhancing a rich a varied landscape but at the same time understanding the social and economic benefits they can provide. All development is expected to respect the setting of the area and its characteristics, as well as protect the general landscape. In this case the building already exists, and the proposed conversion will have very little if any visual impact on the wider landscape. Given the above, it is considered that the conversion is in keeping with the rural character of the area and would respect the existing character of the site/location, in accordance with Policies DES1 of the LDP.

Affordable housing The proposal to provide a single dwelling by the conversion of an existing rural building means there will be no requirement for an affordable housing contribution as single barn conversions will be exempt from paying a contribution (Affordable Housing SPG 2019).

The applicants' daughter, who was born and brought up at Penlanlas Farm, now wants to return and carry out the conversion work on a 'self-build' basis for her own and family occupation.

Transport/Access Although located in a rural area, Penlanlas Farm is in a reasonably sustainable location as there are footpath links to the nearby village location of Mardy – a suburb of the town of Abergavenny, as well as to Abergavenny itself. The local primary school at Mardy lies approximately 200 metres to the east of the farm. It is accepted however that many journeys to and from the site will be made by car.

Access from the farm complex to the public highway is via an existing driveway. It is considered that the small increase in additional traffic generated can be accommodated by that highway with little or no detriment. The proposal is to connect the new driveway and parking area to existing driveway at a point just before it enters the existing farmyard area. A minimum of three car parking spaces will be provided within the application site. In addition a secure cycle storage shed will be provided adjacent to the converted barn.

Access for disabled persons will be provide from the parking area with a level hard surface access into the dwelling and is ground floor WC.

Environment Sustainability The re-use of an existing building that is no longer required for its original agricultural sue is a sustainable use of this resource to provide a new dwelling rather than a complete new build. This is an excellent example of 're-cycling' when applied to buildings.

The structure will be renovated using sustainable materials and features such as lime mortar, natural slate roofing, roofing insulation, energy efficient windows/glazing & doors, underfloor heating, wood burning stoves, pv solar panels, etc. In addition, there is sufficient adjacent land to provide the installation of an energy efficient ground source heat pump to provide heating and contribute to hot water needs. Other sustainable features will be rainwater storage and recycling, together with a log store/cycle storage shed.

Drainage Foul drainage is proposed to be taken to a new treatment plant (in lieu of the previously approved septic tank) with run off to a designed soakaway. The previous percolation test results, carried out to BS 6297:1983, will again be used to determine the soakaway area.

Surface water drainage from the proposed scheme will be upgraded from that that already exists. The new roof areas to be drained will be similar to those that already exist. Roof rainwater will be taken firstly to 2no. x 200 litre water storage butts so that the water can be used/recycled for various purposes, with the over-flow being taken to ground soakaways.

The driveway and parking areas will be constructed with a permeable gravel surface to allow natural drainage to the subsoil.

Conclusion The proposal will provide a new family dwelling within this existing group of farm buildings and provide much needed housing for local residents. The principle of the residential use has already been established by the extant earlier planning permission granted in 2000 when conversion works were subsequently commenced.

The proposal complies with local and national planning policies for the re-use of building in the open countryside for residential use.

Robert James

Planning and Development Consultant

October 2022

Kevin Davies
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NP23 4TE

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to confirm working on the building at Penlanlas Farm which in April 2000 had received planning approval to be converted to a dwelling.

I am a qualified carpenter and undertook structural work at the request of Mr & Mrs Jones to the upstairs floor after Mr Jones's father had finished work on the RSJ supports.

This was done both prior to the building inspectors visit in May 2003 and following that visit where alterations needed to be made.

I can confirm I was there during the actual visit helping Mr Jones (senior) remove some old unwanted metal work.

Yours sincerely



9/10/22

Kevin John Davies