

LSL Architecture ltd

PLANNING STATEMENT

Conversion of existing outbuilding to a Holiday Let

At

28 Kirlegate
Meare
Glastonbury
BA6 9TA

09th November 22

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support an application for the change of use and conversion of a redundant stone former farm building to a holiday let at 28 Kirlegate, Meare, Glastonbury, BA6 9TA.
- 1.2 This statement provides an assessment of the proposals against the relevant planning policy framework and development plan. The statement focusses on the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which requires decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Such material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 1.3 28, Kirlegate is an existing residential property situated on the northern edge of the residential development of Kirlegate, Meare, which benefits from a generous garden, on the northern side of the dwelling. The Barn in question is accessed from Meareway, that is split internally between No's 28 and 26 Kirlegate which is used for general domestic storage. The building is a stone structure with a profile metal roof over and it clearly predates the residential development at Kirlegate. It is assumed that the building was a farm building that was assimilated into the development rather than being demolished. These proposals seek to make use of the little used part of the structure apportioned to No. 28 by converting it to a holiday let.
- 1.4 This statement should be read in conjunction with the other supporting information submitted with the planning application and which includes a bat emergence and activity survey carried out by Quantock Ecology.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located on the north-western side of the village of Meare and it is approximately 4 miles west of Glastonbury. The site forms part of the built form of Meare and it lies within the settlement boundary. Meare is large village in the Somerset levels and which, along with the adjacent settlement of Westhay benefits from a number of services along with public transport connections to the wider area.
- 2.2 The application site comprises a single blue lias stone built former agricultural building which lies to the north of No's 26 and 28 Kirlegate which is split between the two properties and falls within their respective gardens. The building is shown on historic mapping dating to the 1890's and at this time the area it fell within was known as Oxenpill, and at this time it had not fully been incorporated within the settlement of Meare.
- 2.3 The building sits within an area characterised by residential development with agricultural land to the north on the far side of Meareway. The building is of sound and substantial construction with a sheet metal roof over which is likely to have replaced an earlier clay tile roof.
- 2.4 The building is used for small scale domestic storage and the owners of No. 28 have found that they are not making full use of their part of the structure and that it is presently a maintenance burden. To ensure the long-term preservation of the building, a new and economically beneficial use is required.
- 2.5 Whilst No. 28 is accessed from Kirlegate, however, the building is accessed from Meareway and this point of access will continue to be used to serve the proposed development.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.3 This application seeks consent for the conversion of the part of the building associated with No. 28 to a single one-bedroom unit of holiday accommodation along with the construction of a parking and turning area. These proposals seek to make use of a largely redundant building which is presently delivering no benefits.
- 3.4 The proposed conversion will make use of the historic stone-built structure which will be re-roofed with clay tiles to match other buildings in the locality and to better accord with the historic character of the building as a former farm building. The proposals will also facilitate the removal of small lean to attached to the southern side of the building and which has clearly been added post the original construction of the building.
- 3.5 The proposals will rely on the existing access from Meareway just to the north. Sufficient space will be provided within the site for parking and turning to ensure all vehicles exit on to the highway in forward gear.
- 3.6 Existing drainage is already present within the building with a loo and sink. Due to this existing connection, we would see that this doesn't contribute to Phosphate and an existing connection to the mains sewer will remain.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 We are not aware of any specific planning history relating to this building.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) provides that planning decisions shall be taken in accordance with the Development Plan (DP) unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The DP in this case comprises:-

- Mendip Local Plan Part I and Part II

5.1.2 Emerging plans have the status of material considerations, the weight to be attached to them dependent upon the stage of their preparation. At present there is no published material relating to any Local Plan Review or similar successor document.

5.1.3 Material considerations include amongst other matters the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

5.2 Mendip Local Plan 2006-2029 Part 1

5.2.1 Relating to the spatial development strategy **Core Policy 1** states as follows with regard to a number of named village locations:

“ All new development is expected to contribute positively towards delivering components of the Vision for the district and the associated strategic objectives.

1. To enable the most sustainable pattern of growth for Mendip district.....

ii Secondary Villages – These villages offer some services and the best available public transport services making them appropriate for development aimed at meeting more localised housing, business and service needs.

....

Meare/Westhay

....”

5.2.2 **Core Policy 2: Supporting the Provision of New Housing** sets out that:

“Delivery of housing will be secured from:

- a. Infill, conversions and redevelopments within Development Limits defined on the Policies Map subject to compliance with national planning policy and specific policies within the Local Plan, particularly matters relating to design, local distinctiveness and identity and amenity.”*

5.2.3 **Core Policy 3: Supporting Business Development and Growth** and relating to economic development states:

“ 1. Proposals for economic development will be supported where they:

- accord with the Spatial Strategy defined in Core Policy 1 and, in rural areas, the principles set out in Core Policy 4;*
- encourage a diverse, robust, thriving and resilient local economy;*
- enhance the image of the area as a business location;*
- limit the growth in demand for private transport and are accessible by sustainable transport modes;*

.....”

5.2.4 **Core Policy 4: Sustaining Rural Communities** states:

“Rural settlements and the wider rural area will be sustained by:

.....

Making planned provision for housing within the Primary and Secondary Villages having regard to identified constraints and at a scale commensurate with the existing housing stock in line with Core Policies 1 and 2.

.....

Supporting proposals for development of the rural economy as set out in Core Policy 3 which,

- a. deliver modest clusters of flexible premises able to meet the needs of the rural economy in the Primary Villages identified in Core Policy 1, or*
- b. enable the establishment, expansion and diversification of business in a manner and of a scale which is appropriate to the location and constraints upon it, or*
- c. involve the **conversion of existing buildings for an economic use as considered** under Development Policy 22.”*

5.2.5 **Policy DP22: Reuse and Conversion of Rural Buildings** states

1. The reuse or conversion of a building in the countryside (outside of defined development limits) for non-residential uses will be supported where:

- a) the proposed use would not prejudice the use of adjacent land and premises, particularly where such use entails agricultural or other land-based operations.*
- b) the design of the building, and associated development required to facilitate its reuse, respects its surroundings and does not harm the wider landscape character of the area or have an adverse impact on the transport network.*
- c) in the case of a traditional building, the proposal is sensitive to its fabric and character.*
- d) the building is of permanent and substantially sound construction and is proposed for re-use and adaption in a manner which would not require major or complete reconstruction.*
- e) any bat roost present is incorporated or replaced, and the external vegetative structure supporting is maintained or replaced within the scheme.*

2. The re-use and conversion of redundant or disused rural buildings in the countryside (outside of defined development limits) for residential use will be given favourable consideration where it would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting and where the above criteria in clause 1 above are also satisfied.”

5.2.5 The accompanying notes to the policy makes it clear that:

*Economic reuse can include commercial, industrial and other employment development, tourism (**including holiday accommodation**), sport, recreation and community uses. Residential re-use may also be appropriate where it would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting. Not all buildings in the rural area will be suitable for reuse. Those that are considered to be incapable of adaptation without substantial reconstruction, or which are regarded as being of a scale which would promote use inappropriate to the location, or whose reuse (including associated development) would result in or contribute to an incongruous effect upon the landscape character of the wider area are examples of proposals which would normally be resisted.*

6.0 OTHER RELEVANT MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

6.1.1 The current version of the Framework was published July 2021. The document sets out the Government's planning principles and policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Annex 3 of the Framework sets out a schedule of those policy documents replaced by the Framework. This includes all Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes.

6.1.2. The Framework's message is clear in that it provides a clear emphasis on the need to support suitable housing growth accordance with the "*presumption in favour of sustainable development*" (paragraph 10). Paragraph 11 goes on to state that:

"...For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."**

6.1.3 Dealing with supporting the Rural Economy, **Paragraph 84** states that Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a. *“The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.*
- b. ***Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;*** and *The Government’s Industrial Strategy sets out a vision to drive productivity improvements across the UK.*
- c. *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.*
- d. *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.”*

6.1.4 The ‘Framework’ contains a clear desire to promote high quality design with Section 12 dedicated to ‘Achieving well-designed places’.

6.1.5 **Paragraph 126** states as follows:

“The creation of high-quality 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process. ”

7.0 DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Principle of Development

- 7.1.1 It is clear that the Development Plan seeks residential and other forms of development within settlement limits and further to this there is also support for rural economic development including tourism. It is plain that the re-use of an existing redundant traditional building is a highly sustainable form of development making the most of the embodied carbon already contained in the existing structure. It is also clear that without an active use the building will deteriorate in appearance over time which will further detract from the character of the area. The proposals also provide the chance to restore and significantly enhance the appearance of part of the building which presently has a utilitarian roof and give it an active use which will deliver economic benefits to the surrounding area.
- 7.1.2 The Development Plan provides explicit support for the principle of the conversion of rural buildings, and whilst policy **DP22** is intended to relate to structures outside of settlement boundaries it is clear that if the 'tests' set out were applied to this case then the proposals would still accord with the requirements of policy.
- 7.1.3 There are also significant economic benefits which weigh in favour of the development. There is no area specific data for average spend per night for staying visitors staying. However, Visit Britain data from 2010 estimated that spend per person per night was £168 with 37% of this being on items other than the overnight accommodation. Once fully established, it is hoped the unit will secure at least 30 weeks per year of occupancy (circa 245 nights). Local businesses such as the village pubs etc are especially well placed to benefit from increased visitor numbers being the type of facility tourists often wish to visit whilst on holiday.

7.1.4 The Council should also consider that as a building in ancillary residential use the building could be used as additional accommodation ancillary to the occupation of number 28 without further planning consent being required. Such a use could be by friends or family or even by paying guests provided a standalone unit of accommodation was not created. In this regard any development impacts created by such a quasi-residential use could occur in any event without the need for planning consent being engaged.

7.1.5 Overall, given the location of the site within the settlement boundary are acceptable in principle it is clear that there is support for the development proposed. The fact that the proposals seek to make use and restore a traditional former farm building which makes a positive contribution to the character of the area and is a link back to the time when Oxenpill was separated from Meare is a further benefit of the scheme.

7.2 **Design and Amenity**

7.2.1 The existing building is of sound and substantial construction being made of Blue Lias stone with a sheet metal roof over. Whilst the building is little used it remains in sound overall condition. As set out, the proposals will deliver significant design benefits and by virtue of the design approach which seeks to make use of the existing structure, keeping the agricultural form but cladding the roof in a more attractive material suited to the historic character of the structure. Such an approach will make full use of the embodied carbon contained in the existing building whilst improving on the partly utilitarian appearance of the structure.

7.2.3 The development will create a small hardstanding area to be associated with the building to provide parking, with part being given over as a small garden/amenity area. The curtilage area has been kept purposefully small to reduce the potential for impacts.

7.2.4 Overall it is considered the development proposes a design which respects the edge of a rural village character of the area and the historic qualities of the building.

7.2.5 Given the location of the site within an existing residential area and the fact that the building is already used in association with an established dwelling and could be put to a similar use without further consent being required it is considered the development will not generate any significant impacts on the amenity of existing residents.

7.3 **Transport**

7.3.1 The site will be accessed via an existing entrance directly off the public highway to the north and which provides adequate visibility in both directions. This point of access is considered to be safe and suitable for the development proposed.

7.3.2 It is considered that a single holiday let on this site will not generate any significant impact on road capacity with the highway network being sufficient to accommodate the likely additional vehicle movements. It is noted that the www.crashmap.co.uk website records no highway incidents along Meareway or at the junction with the B3151 in the last five years. There is no reason therefore to suppose that there are any significant problems with the layout of the surrounding highway.

7.3.3 As detailed all vehicles will be able to turn within the site and exit on to the public highway in forward gear.

7.3.4 Meare benefits from some public transport provisions in the form of a bus service and therefore it is quite possible that guests staying in the proposed unit will not be wholly reliant on the private car.

7.4 **Landscape**

7.4.1 The application site can be seen from the public road that passes the frontage of the site. By virtue of the design improvements and material choices proposed it is considered the development will deliver an enhancement in landscape terms.

7.4.2 New hardstanding has been kept to a minimum and where required materials suitable for a semi-rural location are proposed.

7.4.3 The applicant is committed to making the site as attractive as possible and whilst it is considered unnecessary, they are happy to accept a condition requiring landscaping to be detailed post consent.

7.5 **Flood Risk and Drainage**

7.5.1 Based on the Environment Agency's flood map for planning, the site lies outside any area which is at increased risk of flooding. Therefore, the building and site are not at any increased risk of flooding and there is no requirement for any flood specific design measures to be proposed.

7.5.2 No additional roof area is proposed and the hardstanding area to be used for parking etc and turning will be constructed of permeable materials. On this basis there will be no increase in runoff rates from the site.

7.6 Existing drainage is already present within the building with a loo and sink. Due to this existing connection, we would see that this doesn't contribute to Phosphate and an existing connection to the mains sewer will remain.

7.7 **Ecology**

7.7.1 The development site comprises an existing former agricultural building and is of type of design that could accommodate protected species. On this basis precautionary bat emergence and activity surveys have been carried out and the report detailing these accompanies the submission and it confirms the existing building and site does not accommodate any protected species.

7.7.3 The applicants are committed to delivering the maximum biodiversity gain possible and therefore are content to propose the installation of a single Schwegler 1FF or 2FN bat box as recommend within the ecology report.

8.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Policy Compliance

8.1.1 The principle of development directly accords with the Development Plan. Furthermore, there are significant material considerations that weigh in favour of consent being given and specifically these principally relate to the fact that the site comprises of an existing redundant traditional former farm building that will be reused the proposals will also deliver significant financial benefits to the surrounding area.

8.1.2 In all regards it is considered that the scheme is compliant with local and national policy.

8.2 The benefits to be derived from the scheme.

8.2.1 There are notable design, economic and other sustainability benefits provided by this proposal.

8.3 Whether the proposals would give rise to any adverse impacts that may outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

8.3.1 As set out in detail within this planning statement, we contend that the development in question would not give rise to any significant adverse impacts.

8.3.2 All potential impacts of these proposals have been considered and assessed and where appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures proposed.

8.4 Conclusion

8.4.1 For the reasons detailed in this report it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.