



Design and Access Statement:

Use:

The existing site will be used for the proposal of converting three redundant barns into dwellings.

Amount:

The proposal is to convert three redundant barns to dwellings with associated access and domestic curtilage.

Layout:

It is proposed that access will be taken via the internal private lane (that leads down from the highway) this access has good visibility onto the highway.

Two of the barns are within a large courtyard, with the third barn set slightly to the North of the other two (and outside of the courtyard). Vehicle parking is set next to the dwellings with a modest amount of garden curtilage proposed for each. The layout has been configured to respect and work with the gentle sloping terrain, and well considered private garden space.

Scale:

Barn 1 - principle elevation is 13.2 metres wide x 6.1m deep with a height to eaves of 2.2m and an overall height of 3.9 metres. The footprint internally is approximately 59 square metres.

Barn 2 - principle elevation is 16.4 metres wide x 6.8m deep with a height to eaves of 2.8m and an overall height of 4.9 metres. The footprint internally is approximately 77 square metres.

Barn 3 - principle elevation is 16.5 metres wide x 6.3m deep with a height to eaves of 3.8m and an overall height of 6.2 metres. The footprint internally is approximately 107 square metres.

Landscaping:

Where it is feasible disturbance to the existing landscape to be kept to a minimum. It is hoped that over time indigenous plants and trees found in the area will be planted to soften the development.

Appearance:

Barn 1 - The dwelling will be converted to have a rustic look with the majority of the barn in existing Stone, with in-fills of Larch/ Cedar/ Cedral horizontal weatherboarding and render on the exterior finish. The proposed materials include metal/ uPVC/ timber windows and doors and a natural slate roof.

Barn 2 - The dwelling will be converted to have a rustic look with the majority of the barn in existing Stone, with in-fills of Larch/ Cedar/ Cedral horizontal weatherboarding on the exterior finish. The proposed materials include metal/ uPVC/ timber windows and doors and a natural slate roof.

Barn 3 - The dwelling will be converted to have a rustic look with the majority of the barn in existing Stone and render with further in-fills render of on the exterior finish. The proposed materials include metal/ uPVC/ timber windows and doors and a natural slate roof.

Access:

Will be taken via the existing entrance on to the highway, this access has good visibility onto the highway.

It is considered that the dwelling is an appropriate form of development and that the proposal is in line with the relevant national and local policy requirements (below) which establishes the principle of residential development in this location.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 20th July 2021 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

This revised framework replaces the previous NPPF published in 2019, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development remaining at the heart.

Under chapter 12 of the revised NPPF 'Achieving well-design places', paragraph 130 states;

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;*
- 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 users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

Local Policy

The Mid Devon Local Plan (2013 - 2033) which was adopted in July 2020, contains the relevant policies for determining this application. The relevant Local Plan policies for this proposal are S9, S13, S14 and DM9. As part of the Core strategy 2026 (adopted 2007), the relevant policies for this proposal are as follows:

Policy DM9 - Conversion of rural buildings

The conversion of redundant or disused rural buildings of substantial and permanent construction which positively contribute to an area's rural character for residential, tourism or employment uses will be permitted where:

- a) A suitable access to the building is in place or can be created without damaging the surrounding area's rural character and the road network can support the proposed use;*
- b) The building can be converted without significant alteration, extension or rebuilding;*
- c) The design will retain the original character of the building and its surroundings; and*
- d) The development will retain any nature conservation interest associated with the site or building, and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible.*

4.35 The buildings within Mid Devon's countryside are an essential part of its character and when they become redundant or disused they can provide a useful resource to allow the delivery of sustainable economic or residential development. In many cases the conversion of a rural building to an alternative use will be permitted development, requiring only a prior notification to the Local Planning Authority rather than a full planning application. However, if the relevant criteria for permitted development do not apply, planning permission is still required and it is important to ensure that such conversions take into account their rural setting and the need to deliver good design.

4.36 National policy supports the sustainable re-use of rural buildings for economic and residential uses, requiring development to be sustainable and recognise the intrinsic beauty of the countryside. Development must be well designed and achieve a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Specifically in relation to residential conversions national policy states that they should lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

4.37 To ensure a conversion does not have a detrimental impact on the countryside and is sustainable, it is important that its development does not involve works that will have a harmful impact. The building should retain its original character in order that the converted building continues to positively contribute to the area's rural character. It is therefore important that any changes to the buildings are kept to a minimum, as reflected in the policy. Negative impacts could include the creation of a new access across an open field or light pollution in areas away from existing development. In order to ensure highway safety it is also important that a suitable access can be provided and the road network can support the proposed use. The rural nature of Mid Devon's highway network means that traffic intensive uses such as distribution or the movement of heavy and or bulky goods will not be appropriate in many locations. Further, rural buildings' role in the character of the countryside means that buildings in a ruinous state should not be re-used, the visual impact of the converted building should be no greater than that of the original building and local vernacular architecture should be retained. The Council will require a structural survey to be submitted to demonstrate that the building can be converted without significant alteration, extension or rebuilding, and may impose a planning condition which restricts permitted development rights for subsequent extensions and alterations.

4.38 Redundant rural buildings often serve as bat roosts or habitats for other protected species. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and a number of other Regulations and Directives designate 'protected species' with legal protection. It is an offence recklessly or deliberately to kill, injure, capture or disturb protected species, which includes carrying out works which obstruct, damage or destroy access to that species' habitat. The Council will require a habitat survey to accompany any planning application for the conversion of a rural building, to identify protected species within the application site, set out any mitigation measures where appropriate and include recommendations for the enhancement of biodiversity.

4.38a Policy DM9 refers to the conversion of existing buildings to a residential, tourism or employment use. Proposals for new-build employment and expansion of existing businesses will be assessed against DM18. Other policies in the Local Plan will also be applied as appropriate.

Policy S14 Countryside

Development outside the settlements defined by Policies S10-S13 will preserve and where possible enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Detailed development management policies will permit agricultural and other appropriate rural uses, subject to the following criteria:

- a) Affordable and low cost housing to meet local needs, gypsy and traveller accommodation, residential conversion of appropriate existing buildings, replacement dwellings, housing essential to accommodate a rural worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling;*
- b) Appropriately scaled retail, employment, farm diversification, tourism and leisure related development (including appropriate conversion of existing buildings);*
- c) Appropriately scaled and designed extensions and other physical alterations to existing buildings;*
- d) Agricultural and equestrian development;*
- e) Community facilities, such as educational facilities, buildings associated with public open space, transportation and infrastructure proposals (including green infrastructure); and*
- f) Renewable energy and telecommunications.*