

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Buildings at Lower Woodhouse Farm, Fernhill, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4LU

Conversion of 2 no. agricultural buildings to flexible business use - (Building A) to flexible meeting space with associated facilities (Class E) and conversion of 1 no. agricultural building (Building B) to guest/business accommodation (Class C1).

Proposal

The application is for the conversion of 1 no. agricultural building to provide a meeting space with associated facilities (Class E) and the conversion of 1 no. agricultural building to guest accommodation (Class C1). The buildings are considered to be curtilage listed or otherwise the proposal would be a Class R permitted development application.

Background

The site comprises of one traditional stone barn and a stone and block built barn, both under pitched tiled roofs. The buildings are not ideally suited to the applicant's current agricultural enterprises and welfare regulations and are therefore used for the storage of agricultural sundries. They are underused and well suited to a proposal for conversion to ensure that the buildings potential is maximised and so they do not fall into disrepair.

The buildings adjoin the main farmhouse with access available directly off the existing farm driveway. There are no access amendments arising from the proposal.

The proposal has the ability to host small conferences and business meeting. The application also provides guest accommodation for business users, The Applicants have a history of providing farmhouse B&B and are well suited to the proposal.

It is considered that the proposal will be an effective use of an underused agricultural building, whilst providing a diversified income for the Applicant. It is well located for regional access and the North Bristol business districts and the provision of bookable meeting rooms, capitalises on the recent trend to home working.



Location

The buildings are accessed directly from the council adopted highway and are ideally located for business meetings and accommodation, being in commutable distance to regional cities and in a semi-rural location.

Design

The proposal is sympathetic to the traditional form of the buildings and will provide well-proportioned meeting space and accommodation. The conversion utilises existing openings, including glazing panels to maximise natural light.

Building B is subject to an application for change of use from an agricultural building to form three separate accommodation units, as follows:

Building B1: 23.4m²

Building B2: 45.3m²

Building B3: 28.7m²

Each unit will provide a bedroom(s), open plan kitchen/living space and bathroom, providing overnight guest accommodation to those utilising the flexible business space (Building A).



Access

Access will be taken from the highway, leading to a parking area to accommodate the development.



Ecology

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment accompanies the application, confirming moderate suitability for roosting bats. Since the report two dusk surveys have taken place and DNA analysis on Building A. The report contains mitigation and enhancement measures.

Structural

A structural report accompanies the application, judging the existing structures to be suitable for conversion.

Heritage

A Heritage Statement accompanies this application and confirms that the proposed restoration, refurbishment and repurposing of the outbuildings has been considered in detail and concludes that there will be no harm in respect of the significance of the buildings. It was additionally considered that the works were beneficial to protect and maintain the buildings into the future.

This would serve to create an area of former agricultural buildings repurposed for the modern farm environment and the changing economic landscape of the farming industry where diversification is often key to survival.

Policy

Policy PSP28 relates to the Rural Economy, whereby proposals for business development outside defined urban areas and within the Green Belt will be acceptable in the case of the conversion or re-use of existing buildings, where:

- (a) the building is of permanent construction; and
- (b) the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings in terms of character, form, bulk, and overall design; and
- (c) the proposal(s) is of a scale which is consistent with its function, use and rural location.

The proposal is considered to achieve the policy objective of proposing a flexible business use for underused agricultural buildings.

The proposal is respectful of the historical origins of the traditional buildings and puts them to beneficial re-use without substantial alteration to the fabric of the building. Renovation of the building ensures preservation for future generations.

In terms of wider planning policy, Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies should enable: a) the sustainable growth of business in a rural area through conversion of existing buildings; b) the development and diversification of agricultural business, c) sustainable rural tourism which respect the character of the countryside; and d) the retention and development of accessible local services such as local shops and public houses.

Conclusion

The application is compliant with both National and Local Policy for the following reasons:

- The proposal represents a significant investment in a farming based business which should be encouraged for the benefit of the rural economy.
- The proposal represents appropriate farm diversification providing income opportunity to the core business.
- The proposal provides an opportunity to meet increasing demand for rural based accommodation providing access opportunity to the countryside to a wider community.
- The proposal provides much needed flexible working space to the community in a well-connected area.

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For and on behalf of David James

