DESIGN & ACCESS

Croppings Green Wood Stables, Warbage Lane, Dodford, DY9 0AN

McTERNAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

BARN CONVERSION TO ANCILLARY ACCOMODATION UNDER CLASS Q

INTRODUCTION

McTernan Design Associates have prepared this statement to support an application for prior approval for the proposed change of use of an agricultural building to a dwelling house at Croppings Green Wood Stables, Warbage Lane, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire DY9 0AN under Class Q parts (a) & (b) of the GPDO.

SITE CONTEXT

The site forms part of the private equestrian development located off Warbage Lane north of Dodford.
The site is relatively well contained by existing landscaping and fencing around the perimeter, with opening grazing land to the north. The site benefits from an existing gated vehicular access from the highway in the northeast corner.
The stable block is a brick and block-constructed building with a pitched roof overlain with cement tiles and corrugated metal sheeting.

Planning permission was originally granted for the stable block in November 1988 under application B16,922.
In recent years, a steel portal frame building was added to the northeast of the site to support the family business.
A residential usage has been established on the site for the applicant's son and his young family, with the conversion of the adjacent steel portal frame barn to the southwest under application 22/01546/FUL.
The stable is located within fifty metres of the nearby properties, The Whitehouse & The Nuttnalls, with eight dwellings.

Google Earth screenshot

EXISTING USAGE

The building was built as a stable, but was used predominantly as a sheep shed. It was used briefly as a stable, but mainly used to store farming machinery and animal feed.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to convert the barn into a single residential dwelling comprising two bedrooms and modern open-plan living. The proposed scheme is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and uses the current openings where possible. With this kind of development, new openings must inevitably be created to provide natural light for a pleasant living experience.
It is considered that this proposal is entirely in keeping with and sensitive to the existing buildings and landscape setting, as it does not propose any additional impacts on the surroundings.
The existing barn is of no Architectural merit, and the design seeks to enhance the current building with new timber cladding and traditional shutters to provide more of a country-style aesthetic.

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Interior photographs of Croppings Green Wood Stables

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The applicant wishes to downsize from their existing house off Victoria Road in Dodford. The proposals would create a small two-bed bungalow, with the applicants keen to become energy efficient. They would look to incorporate suitable renewable energy features such as ground source heat pump, rainwater harvesting, etc., into the proposed conversion to become as self-sufficient and sustainable as possible. The applicants have been looking to downsize locally, but no suitable single storey flexible properties are available.

The proposed building works which are reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwelling, include:

- The existing concrete tiled and metal roof will be replaced with a new tiled roof, maintaining the same pitch and ridge height.
- Line the roof with insulation and an inner lining.
- Lining the walls internally with insulation and an inner lining supported by the sheeting rails
- Overlay the existing floor with damp-proof membrane, insulation and screed
- Installation of new windows and doors
- Provision of new timber cladding
- The design has included the introduction of RSPB-approved bird and bat boxes.
- The new walls, roofing and glazing would meet or exceed Building Regulations standards for insulation.
- Rainwater will be discharged to existing soakaways. Foul water will be discharged to a new Klargester septic tank.

SUSTAINABILITY

In refurbishing and converting the stables, the applicants are committed to trying and achieving level 6 in the code for sustainable homes, i.e. zero carbon, achieved through the integration of maximum levels of insulation, water harvesting/management, grey water recycling, ground source heat pump and the possibility of solar.
Regarding environmental impact, it should be noted that the embodied carbon to construct a new average-sized house is 50-80 tonnes, whereas refurbishing the existing stable block with reclaimed materials (where possible and practicable) will create no more than 5-8 tonnes of embodied carbon.
The stable has electricity and water already connected.
The proposals submitted are intended to promote environmental and economic sustainability, which will be achieved using modern building standards, methods and materials exceeding current Building Regulations, including insulated floors & cavity walls, double-glazed windows, highly insulated roofs, LED lighting and an efficient hot water and heating system.
Renewable energy solutions, including solar PV panels, are proposed. Other options (e.g. Air Source Heat Pump} may be utilised to provide heating and hot water to the proposed dwelling.
The intention is to use as many locally sourced materials as possible.
The accommodation provision and layout on the ground floor of the dwelling have addressed the needs of disabled persons. These include doorways of sufficient width and open-plan living to enable wheelchair users to gain unobstructed access to ground-floor rooms.

ACCESS

The proposed bungalow will utilise the existing vehicular access off Warbage Lane.

LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY

The proposals have no impact on any existing significant landscape feature or the landscape character of the local area. The proposals would not require the removal of any existing established tree or hedgerow.

The site has been subject to an ecological appraisal undertaken by Focus Ecology Ltd. After a detailed internal and external inspection, no signs of bat roosting activity in the building were found. No further specialist survey work is deemed to be required, as the potential for bats to be present and impacted by the proposed development is considered negligible. A copy of these findings is submitted as part of this application. The report's recommendations would be fully adhered to and can be controlled by condition, according with Policy BDP21 of the District Plan and paragraph 175 of the NPPF.

WATER MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

The site is not located in any designated high or medium flood-risk zone. It is proposed for roof surface water to discharge to a water butt for re-use in the garden, with overflows to an on-site soakaway. All new toilets are to be dual flush 4l/2.6l, with all new taps to be low flow water efficient type and all new shower heads to be water efficient aerating spray shower heads. New white goods to be water/energy efficient type. New areas of hardstanding would be finished in permeable material to allow rainwater to infiltrate naturally. The proposed conversion would not result in any increase in the amount of impermeable surfaces on the site.

Since connection to the mains sewer is not an option in this location, foul water drainage would be discharged to a suitable package treatment plant, following the foul water discharge hierarchy as detailed in the Planning Practice Guidance.

CONTAMINATION

The building was initially constructed for stabling and associated equestrian farm storage. The building has not been used to store chemicals or other products that could give rise to contamination concerns. Furthermore, there are no known cases of spills or leaks from the vehicles that were held, which would give rise to contamination concerns.

PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application. The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14). Paragraph 9 of the NPPF also explains that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment as well as in people's quality of life.

The 12 core planning principles are set out at paragraph 17 and include requirements that planning should:

(a) not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;

(b) always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

(c) support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);

(d) encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;

Paragraph 19 of the NPPF states that "planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth".

The NPPF, within its core planning principles, encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed.

The proposed development would not result in any loss of landscape features or conservation value and would not result in any significant adverse ecological impacts. No valuable trees, hedgerows, habitats, permanent pasture or agricultural land would be lost or affected.

The National Planning Policy Framework deals with the provision of new homes in the countryside at paragraph 55. It states that, to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances. The paragraph then goes on to list some examples of what are considered special circumstances, including where development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting. This circumstance is most relevant to this application.

Paragraph 56 of the NPPF explains that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, and good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The Croppings Green Wood Stables, will embody a high quality development that is locally distinct and has taken inspiration from its existing use. As such, it which will meet the requirements of paragraph 56 of the NPPF.

Section 7 of the NPPF sets out the requirements for good design, including stating that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 56). It further states that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Paragraph 63 states that in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

The NPPF at paragraphs 109 requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The proposed development would not result in any loss of landscape features or conservation value and would not result in any significant adverse ecological impacts. The proposal will lead to enhancements in terms of landscaping and ecology due to the introduction of the RSPB approved bird and bat boxes. As such, the relevant requirements of the NPPF (paragraphs 109) are therefore met.

PART 3 CLASS Q.1

The proposal accords with the requirements of Q.1 as follows:

(a) The site (barns & curtilage), was used for agriculture purposes on 20th March 2013. The barn remains, in part, in very low-key agricultural use with some remaining agricultural storage.

(b) The proposed dwellings gross floor area is 99.18m2 therefore is a ' larger dwelling'.

(c) The proposal is not for a 'smaller dwelling'.

(d) The proposal is for 1 No. 'larger dwelling' and no other buildings have been converted under Class Q.

(e) The site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy.

(f) No agricultural tenancy agreement has been terminated within the last 12 months.

(g) No building operations under Class A(a) or class 1B(b) of Part 6 of the Schedule have been carried out since 20th March 2013.

(h) The development will not result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point.

(i) The proposed development will consist of building operations to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwelling house.

(j) The site is not a site of special scientific interest, a safety hazard area or a military explosives storage area.

(k) The site is not and does not contain a scheduled monument.

(l) The building is not a listed building.

PART 3 CLASS Q.2

The development proposed is development under Class Q (a) and Q (b):

(a) Highway Safety: The existing barn is served by an existing vehicular access and believed to be suitable for residential use with adequate vision splays in both directions of the public highway.

(b) Noise Impacts: The development would not result in any unacceptable noise impact. The site lies in proximity to existing residential properties. The proposed development is consistent with adjoining uses and would not create any unacceptable noise.

(c) Contamination Risks: There has been no intensive agricultural usage and the site is not known to be at risk of contamination.

(d) Flood Risks: The Environment Agency categorises the site as being in Flood Zone 1 - a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

CONCLUSION

The proposals will have a minimal impact on the local area. They will further enhance the existing building, enabling a local worker to modernise it and provide on-site security supervision of local businesses.
The design has been configured to retain as much of the existing structure as possible and minimise the insertion of new structural openings.
The building is a permanent and substantial structure, which is of a higher specification than the typical agricultural barn.
The building is generally in a good state of repair, with a few areas of rendering and new windows required, which would be anticipated during the lifetime of this building type.
The conversion of the building to an alternative use will guarantee the long-term future of the building. The building is underutilised, as modern building maitenance practices have rendered the barn less useful due to mechanisation and economies of scale.
Providing habitable accommodation will, in turn, ensure that the building is maintained, thus guaranteeing the long-term future of the building.

Visualisation - Croppings Green Wood Stables Class Q conversion