

Planning Statement

Conversion of Barn into Ancillary Residential Accommodation at Greendale Farm, Greendale Lane, Clyst St Mary

Prepared For
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been completed in support of a planning application which seeks approval for the conversion of a disused barn at Greendale Farm into ancillary residential accommodation.
- 1.2 The application seeks full planning approval and is accompanied by a full suite of drawings by In Ex Design along with an ecology assessment.
- 1.3 This statement describes the scheme, sets out relevant planning history and policy and sets out the arguments in support of the proposals.



2 THE SITE

- 2.1 The scheme site comprises a two storey agricultural building which forms part of the Greendale Farm complex which is located within a rural location, approximately 1.5 miles to the south-east of Clyst St Mary.
- 2.2 The building is an attractive building of a traditional brick design with a pitched, slate roof. A photograph of the building is set out below.



View of the Existing Barn

- 2.3 The building forms part of the wider Greendale Farm complex, parts of which have recently been subject to replacement into residential use. Immediately to the east of the building lies three terraced houses, with a mixture of largely disused agricultural buildings located to the north. An area of land, set aside as a car parking area for the three dwellings, is located on land immediately to the west of the scheme building.
- 2.4 In addition to the building, the site includes a small, dilapidated building located to the 20m to the west.
- 2.5 Greendale Court, a large country house, is located approximately 100m to the south of the site.



2.6 Neither the scheme building nor any of the buildings in the immediate vicinity are subject to statutory listing or other designations. The site is not within land which is subject to flood risk.



3 THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The scheme proposes the conversion of the existing building to provide ancillary accommodation for use by the adjacent dwellings.
- 3.2 The ground floor of the building would be used to provide open plan communal studio/workshop space for use by the adjoining residents. In addition, a small W.C. and a plant room would be provided.
- 3.3 The first floor of the building would contain a bat loft and a small mezzanine floor, with the rest being void space above the ground floor.
- 3.4 No major changes are proposed to the exterior of the building, with the existing openings sufficient to provide the required levels of internal light and outlook to the building.
- 3.5 In addition, the scheme proposes the construction of a bat hibernaculum on the site of the dilapidated building. This would comprise a single storey building which would be constructed of brick with a pitched, natural slate roof. The design of the hibernaculum would reflect of the existing buildings in the vicinity.



4 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Planning history which is relevant comprises:

4.1.1 Planning permission (reference 19/0784/FUL) was granted for the demolition of the existing farmhouse immediately to the east of the application site and the construction of the three dwellings. These houses have now been built.



5 TECHNICAL ISSUES

- 5.1 The only technical issue requiring attention for the proposed development relates to ecology.
- 5.2 An ecological assessment of the proposed scheme has been carried out by Ecologic and a copy of their report dated October 2023 has been submitted as part of the planning application.
- 5.3 As part of the assessment, a number of bat surveys were carried out in 2020, in 2022 and in May, June and July 2023. These surveys confirmed that the building used as a roost by a number of different bat species including lesser and greater horseshoe bats, brown long-eared bats, common and soprano pipistrelle bat and natterer's bats.
- 5.4 The surveys also identified that the building was a nesting site for swallows and robins.
- 5.5 Section 6.1.3 of the assessment set out the mitigation required to address the impact of the proposed development on bats, with these measures to include the construction of a bat hibernaculum on a separate site – as is now proposed, the retention of roosting space within the first floor of the barn and the installation of four bat roosting spaces.
- 5.6 Section 6.3 of the assessment also identifies mitigation and enhancement for birds, in the form of a sparrow nesting terrace and three swallow nesting cups.
- 5.7 The mitigation/enhancement measures identified have been incorporated into the proposed scheme.



6 PLANNING POLICY

- 6.1 Under the provision of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), decisions on planning application are to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The development plan for the area is set out in the adopted East Devon Local Plan (2016). Planning policies of relevance to the proposed development comprise the following:
- 6.3 Policy D1 which relates to design and local distinctiveness. The indicates that new development should respect the special characteristics the area, be of a form and scale which relates well to the context, does not adversely affect ecological features in the area and takes account of the amenity of existing and future occupiers.
- 6.4 Policy EN5 relates to wildlife habitats indicates that development should protect wildlife habitats and features and where required make provision for the mitigation of any impacts on these.



7 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 The scheme proposes the conversion of an existing, unused building into an ancillary residential accommodation for use by the residents of the adjacent dwellings. The scheme has been designed in such a way as to allow the building to be used in either a communal manner, by different residents using the space at the same time, or by individual residents at the same time. As such, the scheme will provide residents of the adjacent houses with a much improved range of space capable of being used in a number of different ways, such as for workspace, storage or similar. The scheme therefore represents an imaginative way of improving the residential use of the existing dwellings. It will also be understood that the scheme building has the potential benefit from the provisions under Class Q of the permitted development regulations and which may allow the conversion of the building into an open residential use and this represents a material consideration in support of the scheme.
- 7.2 The use proposed is solely for the purpose of providing ancillary space for the dwellings and as a way of finding a viable use for an attractive building of traditional form. The internal, largely open plan layout of the scheme confirms that the building is to be used in an ancillary manner and there are no features which might allow an independent residential use. If necessary, a suitably worded planning condition can be applied to any grant of planning permission to provide an additional level of control on the use of the building.
- 7.3 The conversion of the building for an ancillary purpose would not interfere with the functioning of the dwellings which could continue 'as is'. There would be no upper floor openings within the building which might generate issues of potential overlooking between occupiers and other residents.
- 7.4 The design of the building and associated hibernaculum would be appropriate for the proposed use and the scheme would protect the long term future of a traditional and attractive building. Very few external changes would be needed to facilitate the proposed use.



- 7.5 The proposed change of use is expected to have an impact on existing bats roosts which are located within the building. However, the potential impact on bats has been the subject of detailed assessment by the Applicant's ecologists and the required mitigation, in the form of a bat loft and the construction of a bat hibernaculum, are proposed as part of the development.
- 7.6 In summary, therefore it is considered that the scheme proposes a form of development which will enhance the residential amenity of the adjacent houses and offers the opportunity to find a creative reuse for an attractive and traditional building which might otherwise decline and be lost. The form and layout of the scheme would not generate any adverse impacts on the surrounding area and, by facilitating the buildings protection, would represent an enhancement to the character of the area. The scheme accords with the requirements of the development plan and as such, planning permission should be granted.