

Planning Registration Team
Development & Environment
North Somerset Council
Town Hall
Walliscote Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

Dear Sir/Madam,

Buildings Adjacent to The Hill, Ham Link, Burrington, BS40 7AR

Planning Portal Ref. PP-12926499

Planning Permission for Conversion and Extension of Buildings to Create 1 no. Dwelling

On behalf of the applicants' Yeo Valley Farms Limited, this letter accompanies a full planning application with proposals to convert and extended buildings at the above site to create a Use Class C3 dwelling.

The application is accompanied by the following information:

- Application form and ownership certificate;
- Site Location Plan;
- CIL Form 1 – Additional Information;
- Structural Condition Report – KB²;
- Arboricultural Report – Silverback Arboriculture;
- Ecological Impact Assessment (Bats and Birds) - GE Consulting;
- Energy and Sustainability Statement – Therm Energy;
- Design and Access Statement – Wotton Donoghue Architects; and
- Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations - Wotton Donoghue Architects.

Application Site

The site forms part of The Hill, a residential dwelling that is currently undergoing renovation and an extension which is owned by the applicants along with adjoining land and sites that include the former Burrington Coombe Inn. The application relates to a stable block and storage building that sit on the eastern side of the house. They can be accessed from one of two entrances off Ham Link, as shown on the site location plan and accompanying photos.

As can be seen, the stables are constructed from concrete blockwork with a clay-tiled pitched roof and the storage building has rubblestone walls and a clay-tiled pitched roof. Both buildings are of substantial construction and capable of conversion. The site adjoins other residential dwellings and is a short walk from the centre of Burrington.

Planning Background

The application follows a similar proposal that was submitted with a Permission in Principle application as ref. 23/P/1708/PIP. This sought to establish if the buildings were suitable 'in principle' for the proposed residential development. The application was ultimately refused permission for the following reason:

'The proposal would be on a site where there is high potential for bat habitats and potential for protected species to be affected by the development. Insufficient information has been provided with the application to demonstrate

that there will not be a likely significant adverse effect on the North Somerset and Mendip Horseshoe Bats SAC, that protected species will not be harmed or that biodiversity will not be harmed. The development is therefore contrary to the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and to policy CS4 of the North Somerset Core Strategy, policy DM8 of the Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1) and the Council's Biodiversity and Trees SPD.'

The Proposed Development

This latest application is for a similar development but provides information identified in the above reason for reason.

As the buildings are surplus to Yeo Valley Farms needs and to make better use of them, they are seeking planning permission to create a residential dwelling by converting each building and constructing a link extension to connect the two. The resulting development will create a 1-bedroom (2-person) house of c. 54m².

Planning Overview

This latest application is for a similar development but one which provides the information identified in the above reason for reason. The proposal seeks to make beneficial use of the 'brownfield' site and previously developed land. The nature of the proposal will potentially create quality residential accommodation.

The site is located beyond a defined settlement boundary, within the open countryside and Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Although new residential development is restricted, the council has adopted policies that allow in principle the conversion of rural buildings to residential use, subject to addressing other policies. Such buildings need to be capable of conversion, i.e. structurally sound. There is also scope to extend such buildings, so long as any addition is not disproportionate.

Policies CS33: Smaller settlements and countryside relates specifically to proposals for new dwellings outside of existing settlements and the policy states "new residential development will be restricted to replacement dwellings, residential subdivision, residential conversion of buildings where alternative economic use is inappropriate, or dwellings for essential rural workers".

Development Management Policy DM45: The conversion or re-use of rural buildings to residential use allows the conversion or re-use of rural buildings for residential use, subject to several conditions. Of particular relevance is that 'they are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; '

A footnote then states: 'To meet the test of 'capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction' 70% of the original exterior walls should be standing and in good condition and the building should have a roof.'

Following investigations by a structural engineer from specialists KB², they have concluded in their Structural Condition Report: 'Based on our observations, we consider that the existing structure is structurally suitable for conversion to residential usage.'

At the national level and as a material consideration, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) within Section 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes, under the heading Rural Housing paragraph 84 refers to planning decisions avoiding the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of several circumstances apply. Of particular relevance are the follow two criterion:

- the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

To specifically address the previous reason for refusal and assess the potential impact on protected species, notably birds and bats, as prompted the applicants to instruct ecologist to survey the building. GE Consulting undertook this work and provided an Ecological Impact Assessment that includes the results of a desk-based study, preliminary roost assessment, three bat emergence surveys and bat dropping analyses.

In providing this information, regard needs to be given to the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and policies CS4 and DM8.

As GE Consulting have found evidence of bats and birds, they have provided detailed guidance on mitigation with a series of items to be undertaken and/or incorporated into the proposed development. Importantly, none prohibit the development taking place. On this basis, the survey work, analysis, and potential mitigation has overcome the previous reason for refusal in that it has now been demonstrated that *'... there will not be a likely significant adverse effect on the North Somerset and Mendip Horseshoe Bats SAC, that protected species will not be harmed or that biodiversity will not be harmed.'*

To ensure there will be no arising impact on trees in close proximity to the buildings, an arboricultural consultant has undertaken a survey. A report by Silverback Arboriculture accompanies the application and this provides details on the trees that with appropriate tree protection fencing erected prior to and throughout the course of the development taking place, there will be no harmful impact on the longevity of the trees. Therefore, the approach is considered to accord with the relevant adopted policies, notably, CS4: *Nature conservation* and CS9: *Green infrastructure of the Core Strategy* and DM9: *Trees* and DM10: *Landscape* of the Development Plan.

All new accommodation will need to comply with the technical requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standard as well as incorporate sustainable construction methods and renewable energy generation in accordance with the council's adopted Policy CS2: *Delivering sustainable design and construction* and the accompanying supplement planning guidance.

To address this, an Energy and Sustainability Statement has been prepared which amongst other items, demonstrates how a 10% saving in on-site renewables is to be achieved with provision of 0.9 kW/peak of solar photovoltaic panels. As such, the proposed development will comply with the policy and guidance requirements.

I trust the above and Design & Access Statement provide a clear explanation of the scheme and that the accompanying technical information is sufficiently persuasive that the local planning authority grant planning permission. Once the application has been registered I'd be happy to arrange a site visit by the planning officer and/or answer any queries. I look forward to working with the council and for a response regarding the registration of the application.

Yours faithfully,



Colin Pemble BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI IHBC
Director, Aspect360 Ltd

Cc: Mr T. Wright - Yeo Valley Farms Limited
Ms S. Lage - Wotton Donoghue Architects