

PLANNING RESPONSE

TOWN COUNCIL:
Stratford County Council

APPLICATION NUMBER:
16/02363/FUL

DESCRIPTION:

Change of use of redundant agricultural barns to one dwellinghouse with ancillary outbuildings and associated works. Doctors Barn, Francis Leys Hill, Whichford, CV36 5PW



5-Aug-16

RESPONSE:

The Cotswolds Conservation Board wish to make the following comments:

The Board notes that the starting point under Paragraph 55 of the NPPF is that local planning authorities should “avoid new isolated homes in the countryside.” The local planning authority should first consider whether this location at the end of a long access track and away from any nearby settlement will actually constitute sustainable development in the first place.

The Board does note that under the “special circumstances” of Paragraph 55 of the NPPF there is provision to consider the re-use of redundant or disused buildings but the phrase “and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting” is a specific additional requirement.

However, the application has not been supported by any additional information that indicates how the scheme will lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting. Indeed there does not appear to have been any detailed thought given to the Cotswolds AONB as a nationally protected landscape; Paragraph 115 of the NPPF that affords “great weight” to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs; the legal protection afforded under Section 85 of the CRoW Act to “conserve and enhance” the AONB; consideration of the AONBs statutory Management Plan; and its Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

This area is heavily crossed by public rights of way including along the access track and around the edges of the barns themselves.

The Board therefore recommends (i) before a decision is made on the planning application a landscape assessment is provided to confirm how this scheme will lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting particularly when viewed by public users of the surrounding rights of way. This should include details of the condition and management of existing and proposed tree and hedge planting around the development and details of hard and soft landscaping. Specific measures should be included that retains the existing farmstead character from outside the site and to avoid domestication of what will be isolated development in a nationally protected landscape. Further to this (ii) the development includes far too many new window openings. The scheme includes 23 new rooflights alone, where none exist at present together with substantial and multiple new window openings. Light pollution is a significant issue within the AONB and should be avoided through new development. Light pollution can also harm ecology, specifically bats. The Board recommends the removal of all rooflights and a far stricter and more sensitive re-use of existing openings. Additional consideration within the landscape assessment, should consider measures to minimise the effects of light pollution through mitigation and design. Specific reference should also be made to Historic England’s guide to the conversion of traditional farm buildings as to how

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Cotswolds Conservation Board Fosse Way Northleach Gloucestershire GL54 3JH

Tel: 01451 862000 Fax: 01451 862001 Email: info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk Website: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

the design and layout has evolved to ensure some form of enhancement is offered by this development:

<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conversion-of-traditional-farm-buildings/traditional-farm.pdf/>

The local planning authority should also seek confirmation (and control by conditions) to avoid domestic entrance features from the public highway like gate piers, bin stores etc. Strict limitation of numbers, design and location of any external lighting to ensure external lighting is of a dark night skies compliant design. Approval of boundary fencing to avoid domestic style fencing. Limitation of the domestic curtilage to a specific area. Measures to safeguard the existing rights of way network through and around the site. Containment of car parking areas within the courtyard areas not to the edges of the development.

In conclusion, even if the Council approve of the principle of this development, amendments and additional information is still required to ensure this scheme passes the required tests of “conserving and enhancing” the character and special qualities of the nationally protected Cotswolds AONB

PLANNING OFFICER:

Andrew Lord

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Cotswolds Conservation Board Fosse Way Northleach Gloucestershire GL54 3JH

Tel: 01451 862000 Fax: 01451 862001 Email: info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk Website: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk