

17/03101/APP



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REFERENCE NO	PARISH/WARD	DATE RECEIVED
17/03101/APP	WINGRAVE	11/08/2017
CONVERSION OF STABLE BLOCK TO DWELLING WITH ERECTION OF FRONT PORCH WOODLANDS BARN CRAFTON LODGE ROAD CRAFTON MENTMORE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MR W CROTHERS	The Local Member for this area is: - Councillor Peter Cooper	
STREET ATLAS PAGE NO. 90		

1.0 The Key Issues in determining this application are:-

- a) **The principle of the development, the planning policy position and the approach to be taken in the determination of the application**
- b) **Whether the proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development:**
- **Building a strong competitive economy**
 - **Promoting sustainable transport**
 - **Delivering a sufficient supply homes**
 - **Achieving well designed places**
 - **Making effective use of land**
 - **Promoting healthy and safe communities**
 - **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**
 - **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**
 - **Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding**
 - **Supporting high quality communications**
- c) **Impact on residential amenity**

The recommendation is that permission be **GRANTED subject to conditions**

1.0 Conclusion and recommendation

- 1.1 The application has been considered against all relevant Development Plan policies and NPPF guidance. The application has been assessed against the overarching objectives, and on the basis of its sustainability, as set out in the NPPF. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for decision taking means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting

permission unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. In this instance, Policy RA11 of the AVDLP is of relevance as this sets out the Council's approach for the conversion of buildings within the countryside.

- 1.2 The proposals are considered to retain the character of the original building, particularly through the retention of the original openings, with the stable doors bolted onto the wall and only localised repair work required to the existing structure. There are four new conservation style rooflights and a front porch proposed, however it is considered that that, in accordance with the advice contained in "The Conversion of traditional Buildings" design guide, the existing traditional agrarian appearance of the buildings would be retained. Porches have traditionally been considered acceptable on residential conversions.
- 1.3 On balance, while the application site could be considered to be isolated due its location, it is not considered remote due the village of Mentmore being in close proximity., The dwelling is a conversion of an existing building (which is supported by paragraph 79 of the NPPF and does not conflict with policy RA11 of the AVDLP) adjoining an equestrian site with other buildings situated to the east along Lodge Road. Furthermore, the main housing area of Crafton is a few minutes' walk to the west with the village of Mentmore less than a five-minute drive from the application site, which contains a number of amenities. Officers do note that the occupants of the dwelling would have reliance on the motor vehicle, which does weigh negatively against the scheme, however this is tempered by the ease in which occupants could cycle to the neighbouring settlement.
- 1.4 In addition, no ecology, heritage or highway safety objections are sustained by the respective technical consultees. In addition, sufficient amenity space is provided for the future occupants and that there are no neighbouring residential properties which are prejudiced by the development. The proposals would also provide an additional dwelling in the local area, which can be served for local needs and maintain the vitality of rural communities.
- 1.5 Of note is that the site has an elapsed planning permission for the conversion of the building to residential use (05/02688/APP), in which the building was considered suitable for conversion in consideration of Policy RA.11 of the AVDLP, with no objections raised from the Heritage Officer at the time. Therefore, it is considered the development put forward in this application is acceptable in principle.

- 1.6 When considering all the relevant factors, and having regard to the NPPF as a whole, all relevant policies of the AVDLP and supplementary planning documents and guidance, in applying paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is considered that proposal accords with Policy RA11 of the AVDLP and that the benefits outlined above would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the impacts, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole.
- 1.7 As such, Officers recommend that the planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by

2. Notwithstanding the original drawings submitted to support this application and identified in the approved plans listed outlined in this notice, the development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with drawing No. PD01 Rev P1 Proposed Site Plan submitted under cover of agent's letter/e-mail dated 20th May 2019 received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th May 2019.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the details of the development are acceptable to the Local Planning Authority and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. No work permitted by this consent shall be carried out until a detailed specification including sample sections of joinery work (glazing bars, sills etc.) or working drawings (scale 1:20, 1:10, 1:5, half or full size etc.) fully detailing the new / or replacement openings (cross sections for full glazing bars, sills, heads etc.) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out using the approved specification and retained thereafter. Please also see note nos. 5 and 6.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to comply with policy GP35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework..

4. No repair work shall take place on the building hereby permitted for conversion until samples/details of the materials proposed to be used on all of the external surfaces of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out using the approved materials unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Please also see note no. 5.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to comply with policy GP35 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to the occupation of the development, the existing access shall be upgraded and designed/constructed in accordance with; 'Buckinghamshire County Council's Guidance note, "Private Vehicular Access Within Highway Limits" 2013.

Reason: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the development and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework

6. Prior to the occupation of the development, minimum vehicular visibility splays of 43m from 2.4m back from the edge of the carriageway from both sides of the upgraded access shall be provided in accordance with the approved plans, and the visibility splays shall be kept clear from any obstruction between 0.6m and 2.0m above ground level.

Reason: To provide adequate intervisibility between the access and the existing public highway for the safety and convenience of users of the highway and of the access and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Prior to occupation of the development, space shall be laid out within the site for

parking and manoeuvring in accordance with the approved plans. This area shall be permanently maintained for this purpose

Reason: To enable vehicles to draw off, park and turn clear of the highway to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the adjoining highway and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations and mitigations detailed in section 7.2 of the Bat and Nesting Bird Survey from the ecological consultant Eco Check Consultancy Ltd. dated September 2018. Any variation to the approved plan shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority before such change is made. The condition will be considered discharged following a written statement from the ecologist acting for the developer testifying to the plan having been implemented correctly.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, ODPM 05/2006, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no development of the types referred to in Classes A, B, C, D, E, F, G H of Part 1, or Class A of Part 2, relating to works including extensions, roof alterations, porches, chimneys/flues, outbuildings, hard surfaces, fencing and microwave antennae, shall be undertaken within the application site without the Local Planning Authority first granting planning permission.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the building in accordance with policy RA.11 of the AVDLP 2004 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1. It is an offence under S151 of the Highways Act 1980 for vehicles leaving the development site to carry mud onto the public highway. Facilities should therefore be provided and used on the development site for cleaning the wheels of vehicles before they leave the site.

2. The applicant is advised that a licence must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. A period of 28 days must be allowed for the issuing of the licence, please contact the Area Manager at the following address for information.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The application is to be determined by Planning Committee as Mentmore Parish Council has objected to the planning application and has requested to speak at Planning Committee. Officers are recommending approval for the scheme, which is therefore contrary to the recommendations of the Mentmore Parish Council.
- 2.2 Officers would like to make Members aware of a small change in the description of development, which was considered necessary to capture all the development proposed in this application. There is a small front porch proposed on the southern elevation, which is new-build. It was considered unnecessary to re-advertise the proposal as no neighbours or consultees were disadvantaged as a result of the change in description. The proposed porch formed part of the development as originally proposed and was shown clearly on the submitted drawings. Objections raised by the Parish Council relate to the overall principle of development, rather than individual elements of the proposal.

3.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site relates to an existing stable block located off Crafton Lodge Road, Crafton, Mentmore. The application site is part of a wider 1.35 hectare plot, located on the north-eastern side of Crafton, approximately one kilometre west of Mentmore. A separate timber building is located in front (south) of the stable block being converted in this application. It adjoins a large stable block and manège to the west. Open fields are located to the east and south.
- 3.2 The site consists of a redundant block of stables. The stables have a simple traditional building form with a pitched roof and are positioned parallel to the highway. The main openings are located on the southern side of the building, directed towards a courtyard area and the adjoining open fields. They are constructed in facing brickwork under a clay tiled roof.
- 3.3 A row of trees and vegetation, located along Crafton Lodge Road, partly conceals and filters views of the stables from the public realm. These trees are not subject to a TPO but are protected through Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 due to their siting within a Conservation Area.

- 3.4 The ground levels within the site appear relatively flat and there are no topographical features which would constrain development.
- 3.5 With regards to planning constraints, the site lies within the Crafton Conservation Area. There are no Listed Buildings adjacent to the existing stables. The Grade II* Mentmore Towers Park and Garden is located approximately 74 metres to the east of the stables, with the medieval remains of Crafton Village located approximately 128 metres to the west of the medieval remains of Crafton Village. The site is located within Flood Zone 1

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of a stable block to dwelling with the erection of a front porch. The existing stable block has a length of 23.1 metres and a width of 5.17 metres with a dual pitched roof, with a height to the eaves and ridge of 2.4 and 5.45 metres.
- 4.2 The proposed porch would have a projection off the front elevation by 1.05 metres, with a width of 2.65 metres and a height of 3.7 metres with an apex roof. This is the only extension proposed as part of the conversion. A small store on the north east elevation will be removed.
- 4.3 The existing openings in the south-east elevation would be replaced with glazed doors to serve the habitable rooms. The timber stable doors would be retained adjacent to the openings. The only new openings that are proposed are four conservation style rooflights on the north-west roofslope facing Crafton Lodge Road.
- 4.4 Parking is proposed to the north-west elevation of the existing block, with parking and manoeuvring space for two vehicles.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

05/02197/APP – Conversion of agricultural building to dwelling – Refused (Insufficient information relating to appropriate measures to minimise the interference and avoidance of harm to the protected species and their habitats found on site).

05/02688/APP – Conversion of agricultural building to dwelling – Approved. *Members should be aware that the scheme proposed in 05/02688/APP is similar in internal layout and appearance to that proposed in this application, albeit a porch was not proposed in 05/02688/APP. Officers considered that the building was considered appropriate for*

conversion in consideration of Policy RA.11 of the AVDLP. No objections were raised by the Heritage Officer.

08/11579/DIS2 - Discharge of Condition 5 regarding details of all screen and boundary walls, fences and any other means of enclosures relating to planning permission 05/02688/APP – Partly satisfies

08/11656/DIS1 - Discharge of Condition 4 - bat survey with reference to planning permission 05/02688/APP – Partly Satisfies

6.0 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

- 6.1 Mentmore Parish Council - The Parish Council objects to the application on the grounds that this development is within the Crafton Conservation Area which recognises that Crafton is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Parish Council consider that the application is lacking in proper detail which will ensure that the character and appearance will be appropriately preserved. Mentmore Parish Council would like to have sight of a detailed Design and Access Statement before we could support this application.

Comments: Officers made the Parish Council aware that a Design and Access Statement was submitted – however the Parish Council wished for their objection to be upheld.

7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

AVDC Building Control Officer

- 7.1 Building Control officers reviewed the report by Kirsop & Company, Chartered Building Surveyors, dated 20th September 2017, ref: N:\12954\Structural\Inspection report, V1 which relates to the structural aspects of the barn and its suitability for conversion. With regards to the report, Officers are of the opinion that there is sufficient structure to allow for a conversion of the barn / stable block to a domestic situation.

AVDC Ecologist

- 7.2 Following initial objections to the scheme, the Ecologist noted in their final comments of 8th November 2018 that they had no objections subject to a condition relating to implementing the scheme in accordance with recommendations and mitigations from the submitted ecological assessment which supported the application.

AVDC Historic Buildings Officer

- 7.3 The Historic Buildings Officer noted in their original comments of 1st November 2017 that while the application is considered acceptable in heritage terms, as it will cause minimal harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets. Officers queried whether the Historic Buildings Officer meant 'minimal harm' or 'no harm' given the lack of objections on heritage grounds in the past, in which the former requires an assessment under Paragraph 196 of the NPPF on whether the public benefit of the scheme outweighs the harm. The Historic Buildings Officer reviewed these comments on this basis and provided additional comments on 17th May 2019 which stated that the proposal would have no harm and would preserve the character of the Conservation Area. A condition on fenestration previously recommended by the Historic Buildings Officer in their 1st November 2017 comments will still be recommended on the decision notice.

BCC Highways

- 7.4 No objections to the proposal from a highway perspective, subject to conditions relating to upgrading of existing access, implementation of visibility splays and parking to be implemented prior to occupation.

8.0 REPRESENTATIONS

- 8.1 None received

9.0 EVALUATION

a) The planning policy position and the principle of conversion for residential use.

- 9.1 Members are referred to the Overview Report before them in respect of providing the background information to the Policy. The starting point for decision making is the development plan, i.e. the adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (and any 'made' Neighbourhood Plans as applicable). S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are both important material considerations in planning decisions. Neither changes the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making but policies of the development plan need to be considered and applied in terms of their degree of consistency with the NPPF.
- 9.2 The site is not located in an area that has designated or emerging Neighbourhood Plan

- 9.3 A number of general policies of the AVDLP are considered to be consistent with the NPPF and therefore up to date so full weight should be given to them. Consideration therefore needs to be given to whether the proposal is in accordance with or contrary to these policies. Those of relevance are GP.8, GP.24, GP.35, GP38 – GP.40, GP.45, GP.86-GP.88.
- 9.4 The application site is located in the open countryside, outside a defined settlement. Policy RA11 of the AVDLP advises that outside settlements, the Council will endorse the re-use of buildings subject to a number of criteria to form dwellings if a commercial re-use of the building is proven to be unviable or unsuccessful. However, this policy pre-dates the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which does not require an economic use to be considered first before a residential use. Consequently, this aspect of Policy RA11 is not entirely consistent with the Framework.

b) Whether the proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development.

- 9.5 The most up to date national policy is set out in the NPPF published in July 2018. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) in both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 9.6 The NPPF states at paragraph 8 identifies that there are three objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).
- 9.7 These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9).
- 9.8 The Government's view of what "sustainable development" means in practice is to be found in paragraphs 7 to 211 of the NPPF. Paragraph 12 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning

authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

9.9 The presumption in favour of sustainable development in decision-taking is explained at paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

9.10 For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁶; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

9.11 Policy RA11 also requires that buildings to be converted are of permanent and substantial construction, do not involve major reconstruction or significant extensions and should respect the character of the building and its setting. These aims closely align with the overarching objectives of the Framework, to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives). Furthermore, the NPPF advises that planning decisions should contribute to the natural and local environment by amongst matters recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and should therefore be afforded material weight in the assessment of this application. Similarly, they are broadly consistent with one of the special circumstances cited in paragraph 79 of the Framework, that where development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.

9.12 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support local services. Paragraph 79 states that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the

identified circumstances apply which includes inter alia where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.

- 9.13 In consideration of the Braintree DC v SSCLG [2018] EWCA Civ. 610, the context of the site is important in the assessment of this application against Paragraph 79 as to whether the site is considered an isolated dwelling. The proposed unit would be a conversion of an existing block, adjacent to an existing stable block to the south and an existing block to the west. The nearby village of Mentmore is a five-minute drive from the site.
- 9.14 Therefore, on balance and in consideration of the decision Braintree DC v SSCLG [2018] EWCA Civ. 610, the dwelling could be considered isolated as it is not located within the built up area of Mentmore. However, despite its location; it is not considered to be remote as the nearest settlement with amenities (Mentmore) could be accessed comfortably by bicycle. . The building is also considered to be of permanent and substantial construction to permit conversion without requiring significant rebuild. Furthermore, the proposals with the advice contained in "The Conversion of traditional Buildings" design guide, as much of the existing traditional agrarian appearance of the buildings would be retained.
- 9.15 With regard to the requirement in Policy RA.11 for a commercial use to be considered first; no information has been provided by the applicant relating to this. The NPPF imposes no presumption in favour of commercial re-use (para 79), and appeal decisions have accepted that this part of the policy does not accord with the NPPF. In view of this, it is considered that a residential conversion is acceptable in principle.
- 9.16 Turning to the second part of policy RA.11 relating to the extent of rebuilding, extension and alterations, the majority of the conversion can be achieved without substantial re-building of the main bodies of the buildings. The Design Guide expands further on what is acceptable in the context of RA.11 stating that conversion schemes should be true conversion schemes retaining the existing structure without significant re-building or extension. Re-building should be avoided, as much of the original structure should be retained as possible.
- 9.17 The application was supported with a Structural Inspection Report provided by Kirsop (dated 19th July 2017). The Structural Inspection Report notes that there are a number of localised repairs are proposed to the following areas:
- Ground bearing floor slab: the structurally sound however and is adequate to receive an insulation and screed finish required for conversion to light load residential use.

- Existing external walls: Provision of additional support is recommended to the bulged panel of brickwork on the North west elevation, in order to stabilise and prevent any future movement of the wall. It is understood that due to the nature of the solid wall construction, it can receive internal insulation and finishes, and therefore suitable for conversion to residential use.
- Internal masonry walls: The robust nature of the wall is considered to receive only lightweight construction over to extend up to the underside of the ridge and internal finishes, and therefore suitable for conversion to residential use.
- Roof: It is understood that the roof is structurally sound but localised repairs, preservative spray treatment and strengthening works are recommended to the existing roof frame, fully in accordance with Structural Engineers design and details. An "aged" metal strapping detail sympathetic to the age of the building, to tie the truss members and the perimeter walls could be a possible solution.

9.18 Officers do note some internal alterations which remove some of the partitions of the horse boxes to accommodate the internal arrangements, with some new walls included particularly to accommodate the hallway to link the bedrooms to the main dwelling. However, Officers consider that these are necessary for the functioning of the unit as a dwelling.

9.19 The Council's Building Control Team have concurred with the findings of the structural inspection report in that the building is of sufficient structure to allow for a conversion of the barn / stable block to a domestic situation. Officers do not consider that the findings of the structural inspection report are no longer relevant, having regards to the time that has elapsed following submission of the application.

9.20 The Settlement Hierarchy Assessment for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan to accompany Proposed Submission Plan September 2017 notes that Mentmore is defined as a 'Smaller Village' in the 'Settlement Hierarchy Assessment for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan to accompany Proposed Submission Plan September 2017' – which formed part of the evidence base for the draft VALP 2013 - 2033. These settlements typically have a population of between 200 – 700 and are fourth in the hierarchy of settlements within the District (out of five). It is of note that Crafton does not appear as a settlement assessed and considered in the settlement hierarchy.

9.21 'Smaller villages' have been considered as not sufficiently sustainable to accommodate further significant development because of the limited or no services or facilities. However, the document notes that a small level of development is unlikely to lead to any environmental harm as there is already built form and will contribute towards providing

locally needed homes for families to remain in the same communities and contribute to vitality.

- 9.22 The proposed dwelling is located outside of the settlement boundaries of both Crafton and Mentmore. However the development is small scale, conversion of an existing building which is considered of permanent and substantial construction, unlikely to lead to unacceptable environmental harm (as discussed further in this report) and is considered that the dwelling would provide local need housing. The future occupiers would likely rely on Mentmore for its services and the scale of development proposed would not undermine the Councils housing strategy moving forward.
- 9.23 The proposal does not conflict with RA11 of the AVDLP, the Design Guide on Conversion of Traditional Buildings and the NPPF. As such, this should be afforded significant weight in the planning balance.
- 9.24 It is recommended that a planning condition is imposed, restricting the provision of further development or works under the General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The removal of permitted development rights would ensure the rural character of the existing building is preserved, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Building a strong competitive economy

- 9.25 The Government is committed to securing and supporting sustainable economic growth and productivity, with this also achieved in a sustainable way. Paragraph 80 states that planning policies and decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 9.26 There would be limited economic benefits in terms of the construction of the development itself and the resultant increase in population contributing to the local economy. Therefore, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with Paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

Promoting sustainable transport

- 9.27 The NPPF sets out that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages, and should include the impact of development on the network, opportunities from transport infrastructure, promoting walking, cycling and public transport, environmental impacts of

traffic and transport infrastructure, patterns of movement. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health (Paragraphs 102-103).

- 9.28 It is necessary to consider whether the proposed development is located where the need to travel will be minimised, the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised, and that safe and suitable access can be achieved, taking account of the policies in the NPPF. Decisions should take account of whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limits the significant impacts of the development. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.
- 9.29 The site is located approximately 1 mile from the centre of Mentmore, which contains a public house, church, community centre and sports club. This is approximately 5 minutes' drive from the application site. Pedestrian access to the site is not possible via footpath, with pedestrians requiring walking on road or on verge. The reliance of the use of the motor vehicle is likely, given the location of the proposed dwelling, which does weigh negatively against the scheme. However it is considered this negative aspect of the scheme is tempered by Mentmore being accessible by cycle.
- 9.30 The Highways Officer has not objected to the proposals on highway safety grounds and has recommended a number of conditions relating to upgrading of existing access, implementation of visibility splays and parking to be implemented prior to occupation.
- 9.31 As such, subject to conditions, it is considered that the proposals are in a sustainable location and no highway safety issues would arise. It is considered that the proposals are in accordance with Paragraphs 102, 103 and 109 of the NPPF. As such, some negative weight should be attributed to this matter, however this is quite minimal given that the proposal complies with RA11 of the AVDLP and that Mentmore would easily be accessible by bicycle.

Deliver a sufficient supply of homes

- 9.32 In respect of affordable housing, the scheme does not meet the thresholds for securing such provision on site, as outlined in AVDLP Policy GP.2, which refers to the provision of 25 dwellings or more or a site area of 1ha or more. The provision of additional dwellings would add to the local housing stock and contribute towards the Authority's housing need.

9.33 Due to the scale of the proposed development, it is considered that the housing can be delivered without delay and thus contributing to housing land supply, with this benefit maintained in the reserved matters application, in accordance with NPPF advice. This is afforded a limited degree of positive weight in favour of the development proposal.

Achieving well-designed places

9.34 The NPPF in section 12 states that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

9.35 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space).

9.36 Permission should be refused for developments exhibiting poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments comply with key criteria such as whether the development will function and add to the overall quality of the area, is visually attractive in terms of built form, layout and landscaping and sympathetic to the local character and history of the area.

9.37 Policy GP.35 of the AVDLP requires development to respect and complement the physical characteristics of the site and the surroundings, the building tradition, ordering, form and materials of the locality, the historic scale and context of the setting, the natural qualities and features of the area and the effect on important public views and skylines.

9.38 The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance in the form of Design Guide 2 for the Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings allows for new dwellings to be created by

the conversion of an existing structure of permanent and substantial construction, subject to there being no major extension or reconstruction.

9.39 Design Guide 2 notes that:

“Too many doors and windows, the insertion of dormers, roof lights and chimneys and the alteration or removal of roof trusses will devalue the character of traditional farm buildings and that of the environment.”

9.40 The proposed conservation style skylights on the northern roof slope are considered acceptable, given that they are well screened from the road through the existing foliage and trees. They are also restricted to one corner of the building, as opposed to spread across the roofscape. Therefore, the majority of the existing roofscape would remain unaltered (except for localised repair works).

9.41 Localised repair works, including fixing bulging brickwork on the North West elevation and repairs to the roof, are considered to improve the existing appearance of the converted building. It is of note from site visit that there was likely to have been some aesthetic repairs to the building as there are variations in the brick used. However, to ensure that the character of the building is retained, officers will condition the requirement to provide samples/details of external materials which will be used in the repair work.

9.42 Furthermore, the resultant dwelling would make use of the existing openings, with the stable doors attached to the wall adjacent to these openings, which would reflect the original use of the building as a stable block.

9.43 The proposed porch would provide a covered entrance for the resultant dwelling. Given its size, and its limited enclosure (more akin to a canopy), it is considered subservient to the wider building and therefore does not detract from the wider building. Indeed, the introduction of such porches/canopies are not uncommon on buildings as such as this and, given the sympathetic approach to retaining existing openings with stable doors pinned back ensures that the building is read in its original context. To ensure that the alterations are undertaken in a sensitive way, it is recommended that that the proposed materials and appearance are covered by planning condition.

9.44 As such, subject to conditions on materials the proposals are considered in accordance with policy GP.35 of the AVDLP and Paragraph 127 of the NPPF which weighs in favour of the proposal being acceptable.

Making effective use of land

- 9.45 Section 11 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to promote an effective use of land while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions, maintaining the prevailing character and setting, promoting regeneration and securing well designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 9.46 Paragraph 122 of the NPPF relates to achieving appropriate densities states, that in supporting development that makes efficient use of land, it should take into account the importance of the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating development.
- 9.47 The proposals would seek the conversion of an existing building with the only increase in footprint proposed through the porch. As such, the proposals would respect the agrarian and open nature of the wider site and not lead to overdevelopment of the plot.
- 9.48 As such, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with Paragraph 122 of the NPPF.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 9.49 The NPPF seeks to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, promoting social interaction, safe and accessible development and support healthy life-styles. This should include the provision of sufficient choice of school places, access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation and the protection and enhancement of public rights of way, and designation of local spaces.
- 9.50 Policies GP.86-88 and GP.94 of the Local Plan seek to ensure that appropriate community facilities are provided arising from a proposal (e.g. school places, public open space, leisure facilities, etc.).
- 9.51 Tariff-style s106 contributions should not be sought from developments of 10-units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1000sqm. Financial contributions were not sought as part of the outline application as it was considered that the floorspace of the development did not meet the threshold for requiring financial contributions in respect of leisure, recreation or education. There have been no significant, material amendments to the floorspace/ layout of the proposed development that would warrant financial contributions being sought as part of this reserved matters application.
- 9.52 Therefore, the proposals are not considered to contravene GP.86-88 and GP.94 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 9.53 In terms of consideration of impact on the landscape, proposals should use land efficiently and create a well-defined boundary between the settlement and countryside. Regard must be had as to how the development proposed contributes to the natural and local environment through protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and geological interests, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible, and preventing any adverse effects of pollution, as required by the NPPF.
- 9.54 Section 15 of the NPPF states planning policies and decision should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.
- 9.55 Policy GP.35 of the AVDLP requires new development to respect and complement the physical characteristics of the site and surroundings; the building tradition, ordering, form and materials of the locality; the historic scale and context of the setting; the natural qualities and features of the area; and the effect on important public views and skylines. This policy is considered to be consistent with the NPPF.
- 9.56 Policy GP.38 of the AVDLP states that development schemes should include landscaping proposals designed to help buildings fit in with and complement their surroundings, and conserve existing natural and other features of value as far as possible. Policies GP.39 and GP.40 seek to preserve existing trees and hedgerows where they are of amenity, landscape or wildlife value.
- 9.57 Policy RA.8 of the AVDLP states, that development proposals in areas such as Areas of Attractive Landscape should respect their landscape character. Development that adversely affects this character will not be permitted, unless appropriate mitigation is provided.
- 9.58 The proposals have been supported by some landscape details. It is not considered that the conversion of the stable block to a dwelling itself would lead to any adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the area, however the delineation of residential curtilage in this case has the risk of introducing domestic paraphernalia which could have an impact

on the landscape character of this area. No trees or foliage around the site is likely to be compromised by the conversion or by the proposed porch on the southern elevation.

- 9.59 The agent provided additional information on the extent of the fencing and the use of shingle parking for the driveway, which would be a permeable surface and of a sympathetic material given the existing loose gravel and stone access road. New 1.40 metre high post and rail fencing would be located to the south and western boundary of the proposed residential curtilage (which would match existing). The use of post and rail fencing minimises visual intrusion and would fully enclose the property and remove the possibility of horses from the large manège and the stables to west from roaming into the applicant's land. A post and rail sliding gate would be used proposed to access the proposed parking area.
- 9.60 The applicant has also proposed to change the gate to the main shared access from to a 1.80 metre sliding gate. This is outside of this application; however Officers would like to make Members aware that the applicant could replace this gate without the requirement for planning permission, using Permitted Development Rights afforded to them through Schedule 2 Part 2 Class A of the General Permitted Development Order 2015.
- 9.61 Officers consider that in principle, the proposals comply with policies GP.38, GP.39, GP.40 and RA.8 of the AVDLP and paragraph 170 of the NPPF. It is considered that the details submitted are sufficient and no further details are considered necessary, given that post and rail fencing and shingle parking are the only proposed changes to the landscape and is considered sympathetic.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 9.62 The policies of the AVDLP relating to listed buildings are not 'saved' and so this element of the proposal is assessed against the content of the NPPF. The NPPF recognises the effect of an application on the significance of a heritage asset is a material planning consideration.
- 9.63 NPPF Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 9.64 The Historic Buildings Officer noted in their original comments of 1st November 2017 that the proposals will cause 'minimal' harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets, however no objection was stated to the overall principle of the development. However the Historic Building Officer revised their comments, given Planning Officers considered that

the original comments from 1st November 2017 conflicted with their own conclusions and the previous assessments made on similar schemes for this site. The Historic Buildings Officer therefore responded on 17th May 2019 with revised comments noting that there is no harm to the setting of the Conservation Area and that the proposals would preserve its setting.

9.65 However given the objections from the Parish Council, Officers consider that even if the scheme had been considered to have 'minimal harm' (which meant the application would have been assessed against Paragraph 196 of the NPPF), the proposed public benefit of the provision of a single dwelling house outweigh the minimal harm associated with the conversion and extension of the building. It is considered that the proposed porch would be obscured from the street scene and there are no Listed Buildings within or adjacent to the site. It is considered that the public benefit of the proposals through bringing a disused building back into use, the additional dwelling to the local supply and the associated repair works to this building outweigh any harm to the Conservation Area. Therefore, in this situation, the proposals would still be compliance with Paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

9.66 Therefore, it is considered that the scheme does not contravene Paragraph 196 of the NPPF as it has not been considered to cause any harm to the Conservation Area and would continue to preserve its setting. Even if the scheme had been considered minimal harm, this would consider to be acceptable noting that the public benefits would outweigh its harm (therefore this would be in compliance with Paragraph 196 of the NPPF).

Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding

9.67 Paragraph 163 of the NPPF states that applications for some minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the sequential or exception tests; but should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments set out in Footnote 50.

9.68 Footnote 50 of the NPPF 2019 notes that a site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for sites in in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Flood Zone 1 for sites of 1 hectare or more; where land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems; land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.

9.69 The buildings converted as well as the adjacent curtilage are located within Flood Zone 1.

9.70 As such, subject to conditions, the proposals are considered in accordance with Paragraph 163 and Footnote 50 of the NPPF 2019. This matter should therefore be afforded neutral

weight when considering the proposal given that the building is being converted with minimal increase in footprint within Flood Zone 1.

High Quality Communications

- 9.71 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF requires LPA's to ensure that they have considered the possibility of the construction of new buildings or other structures interfering with broadcast and electronic communications services.
- 9.72 Given the location of the proposed development, and bearing in mind that they would be in the most reusing existing building, it is considered unlikely for there to be any adverse interference upon any nearby broadcast and electronic communications services as a result of the development.
- 9.73 It is therefore considered that the proposal would accord with the guidance set out in the NPPF, and this factor is afforded neutral weight in the planning balance.

c) Impact on residential amenity

- 9.74 The NPPF at paragraph 127 sets out guiding principles for the operation of the planning system. One of the principles set out is that authorities should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 9.75 AVDLP Policy GP.8 states that permission for development will not be granted where unreasonable harm to any aspect of the amenities of nearby residents would outweigh the benefits arising from the proposal.
- 9.76 GP.95 states that regard will be had to the protection of the amenities of nearby occupiers. Development likely to exacerbate any adverse effects of existing uses will not be permitted.
- 9.77 The lawful use of the adjacent building to the west of the application site is a stable, with no neighbouring residential units adjoining the site. Therefore, the proposals are considered to not have an impact on the amenity of nearby residential dwellings.
- 9.78 The future occupants are also considered to have sufficient private amenity space.
- 9.79 Therefore, the development is considered in accordance with Policies GP.8 and GP.95 of the AVDLP and Paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

Case Officer: Thomas O'Kane