

Contact: Matthew Jackson DDI No. 01494 421522

App No : 19/06544/FUL App Type : FUL

Application for : Change of use and conversion from equestrian stables to 2-bed detached dwelling with study room (C3). Erection of front/side infill extension, construction of new steps to side & retaining wall to rear, re-surface existing rear patio & hardstanding to front & bin store

At Stables Opposite Mapledurham, Bryants Bottom Road, Bryants Bottom, Buckinghamshire

Date Received : 26/06/19 Applicant : Mr J Novelli

Target date for decision: 21/08/19

1. **Summary**

- 1.1. The application is recommended for approval.
- 1.2. Full planning permission is sought for the change of use and conversion of the existing stables, to a 2 bed detached dwelling and the creation of a hardstanding and new steps.
- 1.3. The proposal respects the openness of the Green Belt and is in accordance with Adopted Green Belt Policy. The impact on the wider character of the area in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is acceptable. Neighbour concerns and highways safety issues are addressed in the report, as are other matters, including those relating to foul sewage and ecology.

2. **The Application**

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for the change of use and conversion of the existing stables to a 2 bed detached dwelling, the creation of a hardstanding and new steps.
- 2.2. The existing external stable structure is retaining. The area beneath the overhanging roof is infilled to create more internal space with new windows and timber boarded added. Conservation rooflights, solar power PV cells and a flue for a wood burning stove are all added to the roof. Internally it would be insulated and the internal layout is altered to provide 2 bedrooms, a bathroom, and an open planned kitchen, dining living area.
- 2.3. The existing driveway, which is constructed from concrete, is in a state of disrepair and is proposed to be resurfaced. New steps are added to the side of the building.
- 2.4. The application site is a stable block located at the bottom of the valley on the Eastern side of Bryants Bottom Road. The current building forms what were previously 4 stables with a tack room and WC in an "L" shaped layout. The building is constructed from brickwork with some flint inlays and blockwork with a concrete floor. The roof is slate, the existing stable doors are timber and the windows are metal framed.
- 2.5. A concrete courtyard is proposed to the front of the building with a modest garden and greenhouse to the side. A small strip of land runs across the rear of the stables in an elevated position in line with the rise in ground levels.
- 2.6. The site is surrounded by open fields and is designated as being within the Green Belt and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.7. The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Ecology report
 - b) Design and Access Statement
 - c) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

d) Flood Map Planning

3. Working with the applicant/agent

- 3.1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF2 Wycombe District Council (WDC) approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 3.2. In this instance a local Councillor has requested that if the application is recommended for approval it be brought to Planning Committee for determination.

4. Relevant Planning History

PI18/01560/PADO – Initial planning advice on the conversion of the existing stables to a dwelling. Reply 21.01.2019.

91/06472/FUL - Change of use of existing farm buildings from agriculture to stables (retrospective). Permitted 06.11.1991.

5. Issues and Policy considerations

Principle and Location of Development

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (Settlement Strategy), DM30 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation) DM42 (Managing Development in the Green Belt) and DM45 (Conversion of existing buildings in the Green Belt and other rural areas)

- 5.1. The conversion of the stables to a residential dwelling is acceptable in principle.
- 5.2. Policy DM45 of the Adopted Local Plan 2019 applies to the conversion of existing buildings in the Green Belt, Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and elsewhere in the Countryside to new uses. Conversions are considered acceptable where the building has been erected for over 10 years and the existing structure is sound and suitable for the proposed use. The proposal should also support the rural community, the rural economy or local services.
- 5.3. In this instance the existing stables are over ten years old, constructed with brick and flint and breeze block walls, with timber doors, metal framed windows and a slate roof. The structure is therefore permanent and the stables are suitable for conversion in accordance with policy DM45.
- 5.4. The impact upon the Green Belt is considered to be acceptable subject to permitted development rights for further extensions being removed so the impact of any future proposals can be assessed against their impact upon openness.
- 5.5. The conversion of the stables to a house will also allow the occupants to support local businesses and services.

The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the stables.

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

- 5.6. The conversion of the existing stables to a dwellinghouse would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building.
- 5.7. **Subject to conditions to ensure that the materials used for the infill to the front of the building the impact is acceptable.**
- 5.8. The addition of conservation rooflights, photovoltaic solar panels and water heating solar panels to the roof would not be out of character. Other than that the exterior will be

untouched.

Raising the quality of place making and design

DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure), DM16 (Open space in new development)
Housing intensification SPD

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), DM30 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

- 5.9. The site is opposite a ribbon of residential development on a plot that is a similar size to the neighbouring dwellings. Its conversion to a residential use will not appear isolated or out of context given the location.
- 5.10. The conversion of the stables would bring a new use to a building which has been redundant for many years. Adding to the usefulness of the site and bringing vitality to the community and local economy.
- 5.11. The land is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy for development in the AONB requires development to be of the highest quality materials and design, whilst in sympathy with local traditional building styles. The original stables were extremely well built as they were constructed from brick and flint. This proposal retains the appearance of the existing building so respects the built heritage of the Chilterns maintaining the sense of place and local character.
- 5.12. The design and layout separates the private and public areas of the site with convenient bin storage and domestic garden storage.

Amenity of existing and future residents

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM36 (Extensions and alterations to existing dwellings), DM40 (Internal space standards)

- 5.13. The conversion of the stables would not result in a loss of privacy to any of the neighbouring dwellings. There is residential development across the road from the stable, but there are no immediate neighbours to the site.
- 5.14. The proposal exceeds the minimum area of accommodation required in for a new dwelling and has sufficient amenity space for the occupants. It therefore complies with DM40 of the technical standard for residential development set out by Government.

Transport matters and parking

DSA: DM2 (Transport requirements of development sites)

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

- 5.15. Buckinghamshire County Highways agrees that the existing parking layout meets the requirements for a dwelling of this size, in this location, under the Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking standards.
- 5.16. However, as it is in a remote location and only has access to shops and community facilities via cars, they have reservation that the location of the site is not sustainable.
- 5.17. The NPPF states "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". But caveats this as "opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas" It goes onto say that "this should be taken into account in decision-making".
- 5.18. The application site is 5.5 miles from High Wycombe town centre, but only has a limited bus service which operates on school days. It runs through Bryants Bottom at 07:36 every Monday to Friday and returns at 16:41. An additional bus runs on Tuesdays and Fridays at 12:42. So the options for public transport are extremely limited.

- 5.19. Realistically the site will only be accessed via car and the proposal would not promote sustainable transport. However, the application provides the opportunity to re-use an existing, currently unused, building in the Countryside. The proposed dwelling provides just 2 bedrooms and is estimated by Bucks County Council to create a similar amount of trip movements daily as the existing lawful use (as a stable).
- 5.20. The site is small and is in a rural location which is rather remote. So opportunities for sustainable transport would not be viable or necessary as it is not thought that there will be a major increase in traffic movements to and from the site due to the conversion to a dwelling.
- 5.21. In their consultation response Buckinghamshire County Council referred to a recent planning appeal (17/08111/FUL) for the conversion of stables to a dwelling. One of the reasons the application was refused was on the grounds that the location was not sustainable due to the poor access to facilities via public transport. And their recommendation is that this scheme should be refused for the same reason.
- 5.22. In considering that appeal the inspector gave some weight to the location but greater weight appears to have been put on other reasons for refusal. These included the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area and whether the building was suitable for conversion.
- 5.23. Since that decision was made this Authority has adopted a new Local Plan. Transport policy T2 has been replaced with a more comprehensive policy DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions: Transport and Energy Generation). The policy requires development to “reduce reliance on single occupancy car trips and to increase the use of sustainable transport modes”.
- 5.24. In this instance it is not felt that this can be reasonably achieved on this site however a condition can be added to any permission that ensures the conversion will include wiring for an electrical vehicle charging point to increase the potential for the use of more sustainable vehicles
- 5.25. Having regard to the NFFP planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. The proposal is not considered to result in any significant harm and so would not be refused on this matter.

Environmental issues

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF)

- 5.26. The proposal will not create any environmental issues which would have a detrimental impact on any of the neighbouring dwellings.
- 5.27. The conversion is proposed for residential use and so would generate noise associated with that use. No information has been provided that indicates the potential noise generated would not be unusual for a residential dwelling.
- 5.28. The building is single storey and is located on the opposite side of the road from the existing houses in the area. Therefore light contamination will be kept to a minimum as similar to everyday relationships between dwellings found elsewhere in the district.

Flooding and drainage

CSDPD: CS1 (Overarching principles - sustainable development), CS18 (Waste, natural resources and pollution)

DSA: DM17 (Planning for flood risk management)

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM39 (Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems)

- 5.29. The existing site is not within a flood zone and the existing hardstanding is proposed to be repaired but not extended. So the proposal would not result in an increase of

hardstanding.

- 5.30. The ground water levels are estimated to be at least 5 metres below the surface and the potential for surface water flooding on the site are limited.
- 5.31. In the design and Access statement provided in support of the application, it is proposed for surface water run-off to be controlled via rainwater harvesting/storage and excess run-off to be taken to below ground soak-aways. Details on surface water drainage and surface water runoff will need to be agreed in writing before the building is occupied as a dwelling.

Landscape and visual Impact

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), DM30 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) DM32 (Landscape character and Settlement Patterns)

- 5.32. The application dwelling is located at the bottom of the hillside and so is not in a prominent location. However, a Public footpath HUG/39/3 runs to the north and eastern side of the site and so the site is overlooked from an elevated position. The rooflights in the rear roofslope of the building would appear as the only significant alteration from this vantage point. They are proposed to be conservation style, within a grey slate roof. The impact of their appearance would be acceptable as the glass and dark frames of the rooflights would blend in with the dark grey appearance of the roof.
- 5.33. In terms of landscape, the boundary treatment on the site is proposed to be retained as is the tree which is protected by a preservation order.
- 5.34. The application proposes a new area of landscape planting to the rear of the vision splays in the paddock proposed to be used as a garden with timber post and rail fences demarking the extent of this. The proposed landscape planting will need to be controlled by condition.
- 5.35. The existing tree and hedges will need to be protected during the conversion work. This can be controlled by condition.

Ecology

CSDPD: CS17 (Environmental assets)

DSA: DM13 (Conservation and enhancement of sites, habitats and species of biodiversity and geodiversity importance), DM14 (Biodiversity in development)

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

- 5.36. There was a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted with the application which suggested that the building was suitable as a bat roost. An emergence survey was subsequently undertaken that found no evidence of bats in the building.
- 5.37. The ecology statement also uses a Rapid Risk Assessment to consider whether great crested newts are likely to be on site. The report concludes that it is unlikely great crested newts would be on site.
- 5.38. Based on the information submitted and the survey the conversion is not considered to have a detrimental impact upon protected species. The planting of additional screening will potentially provide ecological improvement to the site.

Building sustainability

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM41 (Optional Technical Standards for Building Regulations Approval)

- 5.39. Following the Adoption of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (July 2013) and in particular policy DM18 (Carbon Reduction and Water Efficiency) it would have previously been necessary to impose a condition to secure the required 15% reduction in carbon emissions as well as reducing future demand for water associated with the proposed dwelling. However, this was superseded in October 2016 by ministerial policy to transfer the issue to Building Regulations. It is only considered necessary to

condition water efficiency.

Weighing and balancing of issues – overall assessment

- 5.40. This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 5.41. In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- a) Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material
 - b) Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (in this case, CIL)
 - c) Any other material considerations
- 5.42. In this case the key concern is the site is in a relatively unsustainable rural location, not generally suitable for residential use. However, it appears that the stable had been disused for some time.
- 5.43. Alternative options for the use of the building are limited due to its location and size.
- 5.44. As set out above the proposed conversion of the stables to a dwelling house development would accord with a number of development plan policies and subject to the removal of permitted development rights is acceptable in Green Belt terms.
- 5.45. The conversion of the building to a house will have little impact on the external appearance of the building. The footprint, walls and floor area all retained in their current appearance.
- 5.46. The curtilage for the proposed dwelling has been kept to a minimum.
- 5.47. Taking the above into consideration the benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the relatively unsustainable nature of the location and the application is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

- 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 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended).
- 2 Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, a schedule and/or samples of the materials and finishes for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any additional work to the external finish of the development takes place. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: To secure a satisfactory external appearance.
- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers 1127-AA1-BS1-001/c; 1127-AA1-BS1-002/c and 1127-AA1-BS1-003/c unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.
Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.

4 Prior to the occupation of the dwelling, hereby permitted, cabling shall be provided for an electric car charging point, at a point adjacent to the parking area shown on the approved drawings.

Reason: To provide infrastructure for sustainable modes of transport in the locality.

5 Prior to any internal alterations to the building, details of the sustainable drainage and foul sewerage treatment scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the residential use of the building hereby permitted shall not commence until the works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory drainage scheme for the development and to ensure that the use does not increase the risk of flooding in the local area.

6 No trees or hedges shall be cut down, uprooted, destroyed, pruned, cut or damaged in any manner other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Permission is granted having regard to the present screening and boundary planting in existence, the retention of which will ensure a satisfactory visual appearance.

7 Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a scheme for the protection of the retained tree(s), in accordance with BS 5837:2012, including a tree protection plan(s) (TPP) and an arboricultural method statement (AMS) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Specific issues to be dealt with in the TPP and AMS:

a) Details of construction within the RPA or that may impact on the retained tree including any changes to the hardstanding. New hardstanding should be designed with the tree in mind. If the hardstanding is being changed, it should be permeable and designed to minimise compaction.

b) Existing underground services have been shown for removal on the proposed plans. This may have an impact on the TPO'd tree, any new underground services should be located outside the RPA of the retained tree.

c) A specification for protective fencing to safeguard trees during both demolition and construction phases and a plan indicating the alignment of the protective fencing.

The development thereafter shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: This is a Pre-start condition to satisfy the Local Planning Authority that the trees to be retained will not be damaged during demolition or construction and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality, in accordance with Policies DM34 and DM35 of the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019), and pursuant to section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

8 The development, hereby permitted, shall be designed and constructed to meet a water efficiency standard of 110 litres per head per day.

Reason: In the interests of water efficiency as required by Policy DM41 (Optional Technical Standards for Building Regulations Approval) of the Adopted Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019).

9 No development shall take place before a fully detailed landscaping scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme shall include the retention of important trees and the provision for:

- * screen planting to soften the appearance of the proposed development in public views; in particular views from the road to the front of the site.
- * native planting to reflect the rural context of the application site;
- * structural planting of a scale and size relative to the development to soften the appearance of the development and to provide a high quality environment
- * structural planting to help define different areas of outdoor space, in particular to differentiate between public and private space

* native hedge planting, in line with the Council's advice note on hedges, adjacent to the boundaries between the proposed garden areas and the surrounding agricultural land. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: This is a pre-start condition in the interests of visual amenity in this site within the Chilterns AONB and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.

10 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order), no development falling within Classes A; B; C; D; E; F; G and H of Part 1 and Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 shall be carried out without the prior, express planning permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority can properly consider the effect of any future proposals on the character and amenity of the locality.

11 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees, plants or areas of turfing or seeding which, within a period of 3 years from the completion of the development, die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority first gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.

INFORMATIVE(S)

1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF2 Wycombe District Council (WDC) approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance a local Councillor has requested that if the application is recommended for approval it be brought to Planning Committee for determination.