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05 April 2024  
Job Ref: RCA078k  
SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: Holborn Farm, Dane End, Therfield, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9RH – 23/01220/FP**

We write with regards to the above planning application which is described as follows:

*“Conversion of existing barn into one 4-bed dwelling including extensions, detached car port, widening of existing vehicular access, associated landscaping and parking following demolition of existing stable extension, car port and lean-to structure. (as amended by plan nos 301\_R1, 302\_R2, 3010\_R1 & 313\_R1)”.*

Specifically, we address the only objection to the application from Hertfordshire County Council (Highways) which solely relates to the location of the site. The Highway objection states that:

*“Consequently, the site and its access without the provision of safe and lit footway connectivity with established settlements and public transport is not considered acceptable for residential development in such an isolated location because it is not viable for access by non-car transport modes contrary to all policies and guidance’s, in particular the updated NPPF which now gives even greater weighting to seek from new development to provide safe and suitable access for all particularly pedestrians and cyclists, to create safe and secure layouts minimising conflicts between traffic and pedestrians.”*

Whilst the County Council’s concerns are noted, there is policy support for new dwellings in the countryside as set out below.

The principle of development is acceptable given the development is for the conversion of an existing rural building which is supported by the Local Plan and the NPPF. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF clearly sets out that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:*

***b) 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;***

***c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;***

Policy CGB1 confirms that in the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted provided that the development:

***d) Relates to an existing rural building”***

Policy CGB4 also confirms that planning permission for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted provided that:



“b) Any existing building to be converted for re-use does not require major extension or reconstruction;

c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s)”.

Notwithstanding the above, the proposed development will ensure the long term viability of the listed barn which carries substantial weight and in our view clearly outweighs the minor harm associated with the use of the private vehicle for one dwelling.

Importantly, we note that the proposed development has the support from the Council's Conservation Officer who stated within their consultation response:

*“The conversion should secure the long-term viability of the barn and that is of **paramount importance** and the current proposal with reference to above comments are considered to secure that requirement. (our emphasis added).*

An Inspector in a recent appeal decision (South Staffs - APP/C3430/W/21/3283085) discussing the reliance of occupiers of a new dwelling in the open countryside stated that: *“The new dwelling would rely on Main Service Villages for local shopping needs given the absence of a shop in Trysull. The nearest Main Service Village is Wombourne which is a drive away. Access to local services and facilities would, therefore, be limited to a car. **Nonetheless, the harm that would ensue as a result of the development generating an unsustainable overreliance on the private motor vehicle would be limited given that the development is for one dwelling.** Consequently, I give limited weight to the conflict with Policy CPI. Moreover, the limited harm associated with the development's location would be outweighed by the provision of one dwelling within the village of Trysull, for the reasons set out above. As such, the proposal would be in an appropriate location for market housing”* (paragraphs 13 and 14). Clearly, the Planning Inspectorate is taking a pragmatic approach to new single dwellings in rural areas when it comes to location and use of the private car.

The proposals also provide EV charging points and cycle parking to ensure that alternative sustainable transport methods are available for future occupiers if the barn.

In addition to the above, we note that the case officer is also recommending the application for approval and there are no objections from members of the public or the Parish Council.

The proposal will result in the reuse of a redundant building of historic merit and will provide a viable use to secure its long-term future. The historic core of the building will be retained, and the insensitive 20th century additions will be removed which will result in a significant enhancement of the buildings appearance.

To this end, we urge you to support this application to ensure the long term viability of the listed barn, which also provides a high quality designed dwelling for modern day family living.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Lane'.

**Chris Lane, BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI**

Principal Planning Consultant

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