

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 27 August 2008

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	08/00485/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	8 August 2008
WARD/PARISH:	HEIGHTINGTON AND LOW CONISCLIFFE
LOCATION:	Moor House Farm, Newbiggin Lane
DESCRIPTION:	Conversion of agricultural building to form residential dwelling
APPLICANT:	Mrs Gillian I'Anson

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Moor House Farm consists of a farmhouse and associated farm buildings. The proposal involves the conversion of a milking parlour, equipment store, byre and equipment shed, which are surplus to the present production of the farm, to a three bed residential dwelling with an attached garage. These buildings are adjacent to the farmhouse.

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan are relevant:

- E2 Development Limits
- E8 The Area of High Landscape Value
- H7 Areas of Housing Development Restraint

Government guidance is contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 – Housing (PPG3) and Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS 7)

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

No objections have been received following the Council's publicity and consultation exercise.

Heighington Parish Council

Heighington Parish Council have recommend approval for the proposed development

Northern Gas Networks

Northern Gas Networks have no gas mains in the area. They state that gas pipes owned by other Gas Transporters and also privately owned may be present in the area.

Northumbrian Water

Northumbrian Water have raised no objections to the proposed development

CE Electric UK

CE Electric UK have no objections to the proposed development

Natural England

Natural England have commented that based on the information provided it is unlikely that the proposal would have an adverse effect on species protected by law

PLANNING ISSUES

The main issues to be considered are whether or not the proposed development is acceptable in the following terms:

- Planning Policy
- Highway Safety

Planning Policy

Policy E2 (Development Limits) of the Local Plan states that most new development will be located inside the development limits defined on the Proposals Map. The application site lies outside of the defined development limit. The reasoned justification for the policy states that outside the development limits, development will be strictly controlled. This policy is consistent with national policy contained within PPS7 and PPG3.

Policy H7 (Areas of Housing Development Restraint) permits a number of exceptions to the general policy of restraint. Policy H7 states that in the countryside, outside the development limits, new residential development will be permitted where:

1. It is essential for the proper functioning of a farm or forestry enterprise for a farm or forestry worker to live at or in the immediate vicinity of his/her place of work;
2. It involves the conversion of an existing structurally sound building without adversely affecting its character or that of its setting;
3. It involves the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
4. It extends an existing residential building without materially detracting from its character or that of its setting;

New residential development does include the conversion and change of use of an existing building. From the information supplied with the application, which includes a Structural Survey and a Method Statement, the proposed conversion retains almost all existing wall structures, with the exception of an area of stone wall to form a garage door opening. The existing roof covering would need to be removed and replaced with a slate roof. It would appear that the proposal complies with criterion 2 of Policy H7, as the building appears structurally sound and the scheme would not harm its character, although the overall height of the building would be raised 1.2m at the rear section due to the need to remove the asbestos roof covering and create a first floor. However, the reasoned justification for the Policy, which carries the same weight as the policy statement, makes it clear that this provision is intended to apply to rural buildings of visual, architectural or historic interest. This is a method of strictly controlling the number and types of rural buildings, which are converted to residential use, and this has been supported by Planning Inspectors when considering appeals in other areas of the Borough.

The existing single storey building is constructed from a mixture of materials such as stonework; blockwork; brickwork and timber cladding. The roof covering consists of asbestos cement sheets. There are a number of existing window and door openings throughout the structures, some of which have been bricked up. The existing building does not fall within the category of being a building of visual, architectural or historic interest and therefore the proposal would not comply with criterion 2) of Policy H7.

Highway Matters

The proposed conversion includes the creation of a garage and the site would be accessed directly off the highway to the front. The Council's Traffic Section has raised no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of a condition ensuring a satisfactory visibility splay.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

CONCLUSION

The application is for the conversion and change of use of agricultural buildings to form one residential unit. Whilst the existing building appears structurally sound and the scheme can be considered as not having an adverse impact upon its character or that of the area, the existing building must be of a visual, architectural or historic interest to fully accord with Policy H7 (Areas of Housing Development Restraint) of the Local Plan. Officers do not consider that the existing building falls into any one of these categories and the development would amount to sporadic development in the open countryside.

RECOMMENDATION

PLANNING PERMISSION BE REFUSED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

The existing building is not of a visual, architectural or historic interest and therefore the change of use to a residential dwelling would not accord with Policy H7 (Areas of Housing Development Restraint) and would lead to a sporadic and unjustified development in the open countryside contrary to Policy E2 (Development Limits) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan.