Planning Committee: 25 April 2016 Item Number: 12

Application No: W 16 / 0379

Registration Date: 29/02/16

Town/Parish Council: Hunningham **Expiry Date:** 25/04/16

Case Officer: Emma Spandley

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Elm Farm, Long Itchington Road, Hunningham, Leamington Spa, CV33 9EA

Conversion and extension of two agricultural buildings and a former water tower to create 1no. dwellinghouse and 1no. holiday cottage and erection of car port after demolition of Dutch Barn and existing outbuildings (resubmission of application ref: W/15/1647) FOR Mr & Mrs Wardle

This application has been requested to be presented to Committee by Councillor Doody.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee are recommended to refuse planning permission, for the reasons set out at the end of the report.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Conversion and extension of two agricultural buildings and a former water tower to create 1no. dwellinghouse and 1no. holiday cottage and erection of car port after demolition of Dutch Barn and existing outbuildings (resubmission of application ref: W/15/1647).

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

The application site is located within the small village of Hunningham which is washed over by Green Belt. The site forms part of a farm, which currently has three buildings which are of substantial construction and are able to be converted. The site also includes an open sided pole barn.

PLANNING HISTORY

W/14/0913 - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for existing use of building 1 for vehicle repair and storage; use of building 2 for vehicle storage; use of area of hardstanding 3 for vehicle storage and repair; use of area of hardstanding 4 for vehicle storage - Lawful Use.

W/14/1294 - Proposed road - prior approval not required.

W/14/1420 - Agricultural prior notification for cattle shed - refused.

W/14/1565/AG - Agricultural prior notification for a cattle shed - prior approval not required.

W/15/1647 - Demolition of Dutch barn and existing outbuildings and conversion of two agricultural buildings and a former water tower to create one dwellinghouse and one holiday cottage - withdrawn.

RELEVANT POLICIES

• National Planning Policy Framework

The Current Local Plan

- DP1 Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- DP2 Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- DP3 Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- DP4 Archaeology (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- DP6 Access (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- DP7 Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- DP8 Parking (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- DP13 Renewable Energy Developments (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 -2011)
- RAP1 Directing New Housing (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)
- RAP7 Converting Rural Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 2011)

The Emerging Local Plan

- BE1 Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- BE3 Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- NE2 Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 - Publication Draft April 2014)
- HE6 Archaeology (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- TR1 Access and Choice (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- TR2 Traffic Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- TR4 Parking (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- CC2 Planning for Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Generation (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- BE4 Converting Rural Buildings (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- DS19 Green Belt (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Draft April 2014)
- SC0 Sustainable Communities (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 -Publication Draft April 2014)

Guidance Documents

- Agricultural Buildings and Conversion Barns (Supplementary Planning Guidance)
- Residential Design Guide (Supplementary Planning Guidance April 2008)
- The 45 Degree Guideline (Supplementary Planning Guidance)
- Sustainable Buildings (Supplementary Planning Document December 2008)

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Parish Council: No objection.

Clir Doody: Supports the application. Requests referral to Planning Committee if case officer minded to recommend refusal.

WCC Archaeology: No objection, subject to conditions.

WCC Ecology: No objection, subject to conditions.

WCC Highways: No objection, subject to conditions.

ASSESSMENT

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Whether the proposal constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt, and if not, whether there any very special circumstances which outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm identified.
- Design and the character and appearance of the area
- Whether the proposal would be a sustainable form of development having regard to the NPPF
- Parking and Highway Safety
- Ecology
- Archaeology
- Trees
- Renewables.

Green Belt

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the essential characteristics of Green Belt are openness and permanence. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the extension or alteration of a building is appropriate development in the Green Belt provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It also states that the replacement of a building is appropriate provided that the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. Policy RAP2 of the Local Plan goes on to clarify that extensions which represent an increase of more than 30% of the original building will be considered to be disproportionate.

Paragraph 90 in the NPPF states that the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt includes the re-use of existing buildings as long as they are of permanent and substantial construction. This is echoed in Policy RAP7 in the Local Plan which states reuse is acceptable provided:-

- the building is of permanent and substantial construction;
- the condition of the building, its nature and situation, makes it suitable for re-use or adaptation;
- the proposed use or adaptation can be accommodated without extensive rebuilding or alteration to the external appearance of the building;
- the proposal retains and respects the special qualities and features.

The Council also has Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) entitled "Agricultural Buildings and Conversion - Barns", which sets out design advice to help prevent the introduction of inappropriate design elements which can be highly destructive to the character, historic fabric and setting of a former barn or agricultural complex. It states that conversion works must be contained within the existing buildings and that new extensions, glazed links, etc. will not be permitted.

Structure 1 is the brick built barn that is proposed to be converted to a house. The building satisfies the criteria to be converted due to the conversion being kept to the existing building and the additional openings respect the vernacular character of barns and is considered acceptable in principle.

In terms of the proposed car port, however, paragraph 89 of the NPPF states the erection of new buildings within the Green Belt is inappropriate development. Therefore, the erection of the car port is considered to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is harmful by definition. It is acknowledged that the proposed building is a replacement for existing buildings which are proposed to be demolished, however, the proposed building is not in the same use as the existing as required by para 89 of the NPPF.

Structure 2 is a brick built building and Structure 3 is the water tower which together are proposed to be converted to a holiday let. The buildings satisfy the criteria for reuse; however, the proposal also includes a link extension to join the two structures together which is considered contrary to Policy RAP7 and the SPG. Policy RAP7 states that the reuse of existing buildings within the Green Belt is acceptable but where proposals include extending rural buildings as part of their conversion this will not be approved unless it can be demonstrated that the extension is essential for the retention of the building. The applicant has not demonstrated that this is the case. Furthermore, the proposed extension is in the order of 60% greater than the combined floor area of structures 1 and 2 and the proposal therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is harmful by definition and by reason of harm to openness.

Also, the proposed unrestricted use as a dwelling would be likely to result in an increase in domestic activities as a result of the nature of the permanent occupation, particularly in terms of the curtilage and associated domestic paraphernalia. The proposal would be likely to have a material impact on the character, appearance and openness of the Green Belt and would be contrary to the NPPF.

Design and the character and appearance of the area

The Agricultural Buildings and Conversion - Barns SPG states that the introduction of inappropriate design elements can be destructive to the character, historic fabric and setting of former barns or agricultural complexes. The prevailing vernacular is with brick built buildings with clay tiled roofs and further states that the conversion work must be contained within the curtilage of the existing builds: New extensions, glazed links or conservatories will not be permitted.

The proposed glazed link will therefore add an alien and incongruous feature to the former brick built stable block and former agricultural water tower which would harm the integrity of the former agricultural buildings and is contrary to the Agricultural Buildings and Conversion SPG.

Sustainability

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as where housing would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

Hunningham is a small and isolated settlement with only a Public House and a Cricket Club. There are no local services or facilities that would meet the day-to-day needs of the occupiers of the proposed dwelling without the need to travel by private vehicle. There is no regular public transport provision to link the settlement to other larger villages or towns. Consequently the additional car journeys likely to be generated as a result of the proposed development would not accord with the NPPF's objective to balance the transport system in favour of sustainable travel. A case for special circumstances has not been made and it is considered that none exist.

Parking and Highway Safety

The application proposes to erect a 2 bay car port for the house. There are no designated spaces marked out for the holiday cottage, however, there is enough space on site to accommodate a further 2 vehicles off road. This can be controlled by a suitably worded condition.

The existing access onto the highway is substandard and the Highway Authority initially objected to the planning application due to a lack of information regarding associated trip journeys to and from the site. The applicant has provided additional information setting out that the existing parking arrangements for at least 3 dwellings in the local vicinity would cease and only parking for the proposed house and holiday cottage would be permitted for the development within the site. On this basis, the Highway Authority have removed their initial objection and now raise no objection, subject to conditions.

Ecology

A bat survey was submitted with the application. No evidence of bats has been found, however, it is considered that there are numerous opportunities for roosting bats and therefore Ecology have requested that further activity surveys are carried out prior to any development (including demolition) being carried out on the site. This can be controlled by a suitably worded condition. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy DP3.

Archaeology

The outbuildings to be converted are shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map which indicates that the buildings existed by the mid 1880's. The proposed development is likely to alter, damage or obscure elements of the historic building fabric, which are important in understanding the nature, extent and function of this structure. The Archaeology Officer raises no objection, subject to a photographic record of the buildings. This can be controlled by a suitably worded condition.

Trees

There is a large Sycamore tree to the west of the existing pole barn which is in good condition and provides a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the locality. This tree is to be retained as part of the development. A tree report has been submitted which that the development can take place without compromising the root protection area required to safeguard the tree. It also suggests mitigation measures to ensure the tree is protected during the course of the development. The development can be conditioned to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations in the report.

Renewables

The conversion of the buildings will require the conversion to achieve a fabric first approach or for each dwelling 10% of the predicted energy requirements are required to be produced by green technology. This can be controlled by a suitably worded condition.

Summary/Conclusion

It is therefore concluded that the application site would not provide a suitable site for housing having regard to the principles of sustainable development, Green Belt and character and appearance. These adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits that one dwelling and one holiday let would provide for the acknowledged local lack of housing land supply. The proposal is therefore contrary to the aforementioned policies.

REFUSAL REASONS

The buildings, subject of this application, are within the Green Belt, wherein the Local Planning Authority is concerned to ensure that the rural character of the area will be retained and protected in accordance with national policy guidance contained in National Planning Policy

Framework 2012. The NPPF states that the reuse of permanent and substantial buildings is not inappropriate provided that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Policy RAP7 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 (WDLP) sets a number of criterion for the appropriate conversion of rural buildings which is also echoed within the "Agricultural Buildings and Conversion - Barns" Supplementary Planning Guidance (2010).

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, it is considered that the proposed development, due to the extent of the proposed extensions and associated bulk and mass would radically alter the scale and character of the original structures, detrimentally affecting the character and openness of this rural locality and thereby constituting inappropriate development, harmful by definition and by reason of openness, conflicting with the aims of the aforementioned national and local Green Belt policy.

The proposed unrestricted use as a dwelling would also result in an increase in domestic activities as a result of the nature of the permanent occupation, particularly in terms of the curtilage and associated domestic paraphernalia. The proposal would be likely to have a material impact on the character, appearance and openness of the Green Belt and would be contrary to the NPPF. No very special circumstances have been demonstrated and none are considered to exist that outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Policy DP1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 states that development will only be permitted which positively contributes to the character and quality of its environment through good layout and design.

The Council has also adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance "Agricultural Buildings and Conversion - Barns" which states that the introduction of inappropriate design elements can be destructive to the character, historic fabric and setting of a former barn or agricultural complex. The prevailing vernacular is with brick built building with clay tiled roofs and further states that the conversion work must be contained within the curtilage of the existing builds: New extensions, glazed links or conservatories will not be permitted.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed glazed link will add an alien and incongruous feature to the brick and tile former stable block and former agricultural water tower which will be harmful to their integrity, character and appearance.

The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the Agricultural Buildings and Conversion SPG and Policy DP1 of the Local Plan.

Policy RAP1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011 only permits the conversion of rural buildings to unrestricted residential use where all of the following criteria are met: (a) the building is located within or

adjacent to a village; (b) the housing meets an identified local need; and, outside of the Limited Growth Villages, the applicant can demonstrate that other uses or a mixed use (where the residential element is subordinate to a business use) are not appropriate or viable. This policy is in accordance with the NPPF, which states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (para. 6). The NPPF goes on to state that local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside (para. 55). One exception to this is where the development would reuse redundant or disused buildings, but only where this would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

The application site is a small rural Hamlet, not within or adjacent to the built up area of a village, being separated from the town of Royal Leamington Spa by approximately 3 miles of open fields and the village of Weston under Wetherley by 1.5 miles. Furthermore, the roads between the site and the nearest town and village are in the main single track country roads which have no foot way and are subject to national speed limits (60mph). Consequently, it is not considered a safe or attractive walking or cycling route and it is therefore highly unlikely that occupants of the proposed dwelling would walk or cycle the distance into the nearest town or village to use the facilities there. Therefore occupants of the proposed dwellings would be very much car dependent and the proposals would represent an unsustainable form of development that would be contrary to the objectives of the NPPF.

The proposal will result in an unsustainable isolated dwelling and there are no special circumstances to justify approval and the proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the aforementioned policies.











