

Application Number: 18/11596 Listed Building Alteration

Site: AVON FARM, RINGWOOD ROAD, AVON, SOPLEY BH23 7BQ
Development: Conversion of West Range Barn to single dwelling and The Stable to Annex associated with the function of the main Farm House Building; Internal alterations; External alterations to replace existing windows and doors (Application for Listed Building Consent)

Applicant: Messrs Bath

Target Date: 25/01/2019

Link to case file: [view online here](#)

1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The following matters are the main issues to be considered when determining this application. These, and all other relevant considerations, are set out and considered in Section 11, of this report after which a conclusion on the planning balance is reached.
 - 1) Effect of the proposed works on the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Buildings and the impact on their significance and setting
- 1.2 A separate Planning Application has been submitted for the proposed conversion of the 'West Range' building to a single dwelling and the 'Stables' building into ancillary accommodation to Avon Farmhouse, under reference 18/11595 at Item 3e on this Agenda.

2 THE SITE

- 2.1 The application site relates to an attractive group of outbuildings at Avon Farm, and occupies a prominent location situated along the main road between Sopley and Ringwood. This complex of buildings including Avon Farmhouse are arranged around a rectangular courtyard sitting alongside the main road. The buildings are individually and curtilage Grade 2 listed buildings and comprise the principle farmhouse, which is divided into two elements, one of which is being rented out as a dwelling known as 'Dairy House'. The outbuildings are currently in ancillary use to the farmhouse, including workshop, domestic storage and office use. A large garden area serving the farmhouse lies to the west, with the River Avon just beyond. Historically the buildings were used for agricultural activities, but the farming use ceased many years ago. There are two accesses into the site from main road, and car parking is currently provided within the existing courtyard.
- 2.2 The site lies within a rural context. A terrace of 5 cottages lie to the north of the site and there are some scattered dwellings in the locality. Directly opposite the site are agricultural buildings and fields currently. The site lies within the countryside and designated Green Belt. To the

west of the application site, within 200m, is the Avon Special Protection Area and Ramsar, and the River Avon SAC. The application is also within 200m of the River Avon System (Bickton to Christchurch) SSSI.

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 This Listed Building application proposes to convert the existing outbuilding known as 'West Range' into 1 separate dwelling and the outbuilding known as 'The Stables' into an 'annex' which will be used in association with the function of Avon farmhouse. The 'West Range' building is currently used as a workshop and office ancillary to the main farmhouse. The proposal entails internal and external alterations.
- 3.2 The outbuildings which are not proposed to be converted into dwellings would continue to be used for incidental purposes in association with the existing and proposed dwellings. A new brick wall and post and rail fence is proposed between the main farmhouse and the building known as 'West Range'. Car parking to serve the proposed development would be provided within the existing courtyard. The proposal would entail re-using the existing window and door openings within the outbuildings. Very few new openings and doors would be created. This also includes replacement roof light, extracts for kitchen and bathroom. The proposal would entail internal alterations including removal of part of the existing internal fabric, the installation of new partitions, floors and insulation.
- 3.3 In support of the application, the Design and Access Statement states that the buildings are deteriorating, and considerable investment is needed to be able to continue to preserve them and the scale and number of buildings is disproportionate to serve the existing dwellings on the site. As such, the supporting statement claims that there is limited incentive to invest in significant maintenance and the conversion of these buildings will enhance their value providing the opportunity for investment securing their long-term future. The application is accompanied by a Heritage Assessment.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

None of direct relevance

5 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER NFDC GUIDANCE

The Core Strategy

CS3: Protecting and enhancing our special environment (Heritage and Nature Conservation)

Local Plan Part 2 Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document

DM1: Heritage and Conservation

The Emerging Local Plan

The Local Plan Review 2016-2036 is in what can be considered an 'advanced stage' in its preparation, in that it has been submitted to the Secretary of State

and the Examination has been concluded. The Local Plan Review sets a housing target of 525 dwellings per annum and will allocate sufficient land to meet this new housing target. The Local Plan Inspectors have indicated that, subject to modifications, the plan be made sound. Public consultation on modifications commence in December 2019 and will run until the end of January 2020. It is therefore a material consideration which can be given weight in decision-making.

Policy 11 (Saved DM1) Heritage and Conservation

6 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT ADVICE

Relevant Legislation

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) requires that special regard shall be paid to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or exercise of any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Habitat Regulations 2017

63 – assessment of implications for European sites etc.

64 – considerations of overriding public interest

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that “where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.

Relevant Advice

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

Para 7 - Sustainable development

Para 79 - Rural housing

Paras 143 -147 Protecting Green Belt land

Paras 184-192 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

7 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Sopley Parish Council: Agree with the application but would accept a delegated decision. All Council members agree with this application.

8 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

None

9 CONSULTEE COMMENTS

The following is a summary of the representations received which can be read in full via the link set out at the head of this report.

9.1 Conservation Officer:

This is a large former agricultural complex of listed buildings and curtilage listed buildings. In general, the complex is in good condition and the barns are still in a very good state of repair with some minor maintenance needs. The layout is rectangular creating a contained courtyard sitting alongside the main road. The courtyard plan is typical of the area and a well laid out and nicely preserved example of this type of farmstead.

At present the site is formed of a farmhouse which is divided into two elements with one element being rented out. The associated barns are currently in ancillary use to the main farmhouse as storage and outbuildings. The one barn on the west range has had some historic alterations forming an office and storage spaces. This building in particular is one where options for some change of use is supported.

The Heritage Assessment goes some way to address the wider assessment of the farm complex and the connection between the Farmhouse and its overall significance.

The level of harm now proposed has been reduced considerably from the initial scheme for 3 dwellings. The proposed internal and external alterations of the West Range and The Stables have now reached a point of acceptability, subject to detailed elements, which can be dealt with by condition.

The use of the West Range to create an additional residential unit is not fully supported because this would entail the 'breaking up' of Heritage Assets into separate elements. In addition, the justification in relation to optimum viable use has not been fully explored.

In order to balance off the heritage benefits against the concern raised, there is the potential inclusion of the small Cob building to include repair and renovation works. If the Cob building is included and the renovation works secured, this would weigh in favour of the proposed development.

Comments in full are available on website.

10 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

None received

11 OFFICER COMMENTS

Introduction

- 11.1 There is one main issue in this case, the effect of the proposed works on the special architectural, historic interest, on its significance and setting.

Effect of the proposed works on the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Buildings and the impact on their significance and setting

- 11.2 Section 66(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas applies. It requires that special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- 11.3 Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM1 states that development proposals should conserve and seek to enhance the historic environment and heritage assets, with regard to local character, setting, management and the historic significance and context of heritage assets. This includes a balancing exercise between impact on Heritage Assets against public benefits which is also referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019.
- 11.4 Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF 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, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.
- 11.5 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement. Avon Farmhouse and its barn are separately listed and included within the list description are the attached buildings to the barn. Accordingly, all buildings within the courtyard are Grade 2 listed and are all designated heritage assets. The significance of the buildings derive from their architectural and historic interest.
- 11.6 Historically, Avon Farm forms part of a collection of farms in the area associated with former arable (corn) and cattle rearing, dating back to the 17th Century. Avon Farm is of a regular courtyard plan with linked buildings ranged around a yard. These farmsteads generally represent the application of modern farming methods of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries with regard to management of farm methods and processes.
- 11.7 At present, the site is under one ownership, and is formed of a farmhouse which is divided into two elements with one element being rented out. The associated outbuildings are currently in ancillary use to the main farmhouse as storage, home office and workshops. The farmhouse and outbuildings are a set of attractive and well-proportioned farm buildings constructed of locally used red/orange brick with clay tiled roofs, similar to other local farmsteads at Court Farm and London Farm. In general, the complex of buildings is in good condition. The main structures, roofs, walling, openings, arrangement, courtyard siting and some internal features all survive with little alteration or adaptation.
- 11.8 The applicant considers that the proposal to convert the two buildings would accord with Paragraph 192 of the NPPF which seeks the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses. In particular, it is stated that there have been several unsympathetic alterations to the 'West Range' building including modern ceilings, first floors and staircases and the proposal would re-introduce the historic features.

- 11.9 The proposed conversion of the 'West Range' would be all contained at ground floor and would result in the removal of stud walls, first floor, staircase, ceilings. As such, the conversion would reveal the historic features of this former agricultural barn internally, by opening the full height space to expose the roof. In addition, the proposal would not create any new openings externally. It is considered that this would be a significant benefit.
- 11.10 The conversion to the 'Stables' building would all be contained on the ground floor and it is considered that the internal and external works would be at the lower level of harm. Indeed, the proposal would result in low key changes and function as ancillary accommodation can be tied to the main dwelling. Overall, it is considered that the proposal has demonstrated how both buildings can be serviced with indiscernible changes to the internal and external appearance. This view is agreed by the Conservation Officer.
- 11.11 It should be noted that the existing group of buildings including the farmhouse are not in need of urgent repair, although there is small cob building which is a Building at Risk sited within the garden of the farmhouse. Although it is considered that the best use for a historic building is its original use, which in this case is ancillary accommodation to the main farm house, as stated above, the proposed conversion works to the 'West Range' which include the removal of the unsympathetic ceiling and floors would be an improvement to this Heritage Asset.
- 11.12 The Conservation Officer takes the view that the creation of a new dwelling on the site, would result in the 'breaking up' of Heritage Assets. In particular, the Conservation Officer considers that Avon Farmhouse and its outbuildings, form a coherent historic group and as such, the subdivision of the outbuilding would erode the existing group setting of a farmhouse and its ancillary buildings.
- 11.13 In order to balance off heritage assets against this issue, the Conservation officer has suggested that the proposal could secure the repair and renovation to the Cob building, which is the Building at Risk within the existing garden of the farmhouse. This would essentially be 'enabling development' and would accord with the criteria set out under Paragraph 79 of the NPPF, which states that 'new dwellings in the countryside should be avoided, unless it would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets. It is considered that this would provide an overriding benefit.
- 11.14 In response, the applicant has considered alternative uses for the 'West Range' and the 'Stables' taking advice from land and building surveyors. It has been concluded that office use would require significant investment and the repayment period would be extensive. Equally, the conversion of the 'West Range' to a holiday let would be similar to that of a dwelling, but the repayment periods would also be extensive.
- 11.15 Accordingly, all the proposed alternative uses do not release profit within a reasonable time after expenditure of costs. Whereas, a dwelling would have greater certainty on capital or sale to enable the applicant to spend on the repair and renovation works to the Cob building. On this basis, the applicant is prepared to offer a pre-commencement planning condition that states that prior to the commencement of the work on the 'West Range' building, a schedule of works to be agreed for the repair of the

Cob building with implementation and completion prior to commencement of works on the West Range.

- 11.16 In summary, the impact on heritage assets is very balanced, as there are some benefits and a degree of harm. The balancing exercise, as set out in both local plan policy and the NPPF, together with the statutory test will be applied at the end of the assessment under the Planning Balance and Conclusion section.

12 CONCLUSION ON THE PLANNING BALANCE

- 12.1 In conclusion, it is considered that special regard has been be paid to the desirability of preserving the setting of the Listed Building as set out Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 12.2 Moreover, in accordance with paragraph 193 of the NPPF 2019 it is considered that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance and setting of the Heritage assets. It is noted that the degree of harm would be at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial harm.
- 12.3 In applying the balancing exercise, the proposal would secure the long term use of the buildings and would result in improvements to the 'West Range' through the removal of existing unsympathetic features.
- 12.4 The negative impact would be the 'breaking up' of the existing Heritage Asset removing its significance which is derived from a farmhouse and its ancillary outbuildings. This weighs against the proposal.
- 12.5 In balancing out the issues, and the inclusion of the repair and renovation works to the small Cob outbuilding, acceptable heritage benefit would be provided, which far outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the Heritage Assets and therefore a policy exception can be made in this case. Accordingly, permission is recommended.

13 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Other matters

Human Rights

In coming to this recommendation, consideration has been given to the rights set out in Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Whilst it is recognised that there may be an interference with these rights and the rights of other third parties, such interference has to be balanced with the like rights of the applicant to develop the land in the way proposed. In this case it is considered that the protection of the rights and freedoms of the applicant outweigh any possible interference that may result to any third party.

Equality

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual

orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. The Committee must be mindful of this duty *inter alia* when determining all planning applications. In particular the Committee must pay due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

14. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Proposed Conditions:

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

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The development permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, Block plan, 2016-28-19 Rev B, 2016-28-18 Rev C, 2016-28-14 Rev A, 2016-28-21 Rev B, 2016-28-22 Rev B, 2016-28-13, 2016-28-21 Rev A.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of the development.
3. Before development commences, the following details shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - a) typical joinery details including windows, stable and barn doors, eaves, verge, barge boards, guttering,
 - b) the details of typical roof lights shown in situ. All new roof lights shall be of a 'Conservation' type as shown on approved plans and shall be fitted so that, when closed, their outer surfaces are flush with the plane of the surrounding roof covering.
 - c) the details of the large glazed opening to the 'West Range' building.
 - d) the details of all kitchen, bathroom and utility room extractions, all external service pipe/runs
 - e) the details of all internal partitions
 - f) the details of the sewage treatment plant
 - g) the details of the finished ground floor
 - h) the details of the internal finishes, door blocking, partitions and insulation

Development shall only take place in accordance with those details which have been approved.

Reason: To protect the character and architectural interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park. (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

4. No works authorised by this consent shall take place until a programme of building recording and analysis has been undertaken and that programme shall accord with a Level 3 record (English Heritage 2006) and that record has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement in writing. The drawn component of the record should show individual components of the timber framing as well as studs and rafters. A written scheme for the recording shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the recording commencing.

Reason: To ensure that the listed buildings special significance is recorded prior to change of use and to reflect the requirements of NPPF.

5. Any repairs or re pointing of brick work shall be undertaken using bricks and lime mortar to match existing colour, texture, finish and bond of adjacent work and any replacement bricks shall be of matching size.

Reason: To protect the character and architectural interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park. (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

6. No external fixing (including flues, alarm boxes, satellite dishes, vents and extract equipment) other than those that have been approved shall be attached to the external walls and roof of the buildings hereby approved without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the character and architectural interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park. (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

7. All existing useable tiles and facing bricks are to be reused, and any new tiles and bricks should match the existing colour, size and texture, unless otherwise been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the character and architectural interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park. (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

8. Before development commences, the following details shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- a) the details of boundary wall to include its materials, design, appearance and detailing

- b) the details of the post and rail fence
- c) a sample panel of brickwork showing the brick, bond, mortar and joint details for the boundary wall hereby approved shall be made available on site for the inspection and approval by the Local Planning Authority.

Development shall only take place in accordance with those details that have been approved.

Reason: To protect the character and architectural interest of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park. (Part 2: Sites and Development Management).

Further Information:

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PLANNING COMMITTEE

January 2020

Item No.:

Avon Farm, Ringwood Road
Avon, Sopley
BH23 7BQ
18/11596

Scale 1:2500

N.B. If printing this plan from the internet, it will not be to scale.

