

Heading:

REFERENCE NO. 20/2014/0965/PF
BRYN COCH
LLANFAIR DYFFRYN CLWYD, RUTHIN

Graham Boase
Head of Planning & Public Protection
Denbighshire County Council
Caledfryn
Smithfield Road
Denbigh
Denbighshire LL16 3RJ

Tel: 01824 706800 Fax: 01824 706709

 Application Site



Date 5/1/2015

Scale 1/2500

Centre = 314415 E 353724 N

This plan is intended solely to give an indication of the LOCATION of the application site which forms the subject of the accompanying report. It does not form any part of the application documents, and should not be taken as representative of the proposals to be considered, which are available for inspection prior to the meeting.

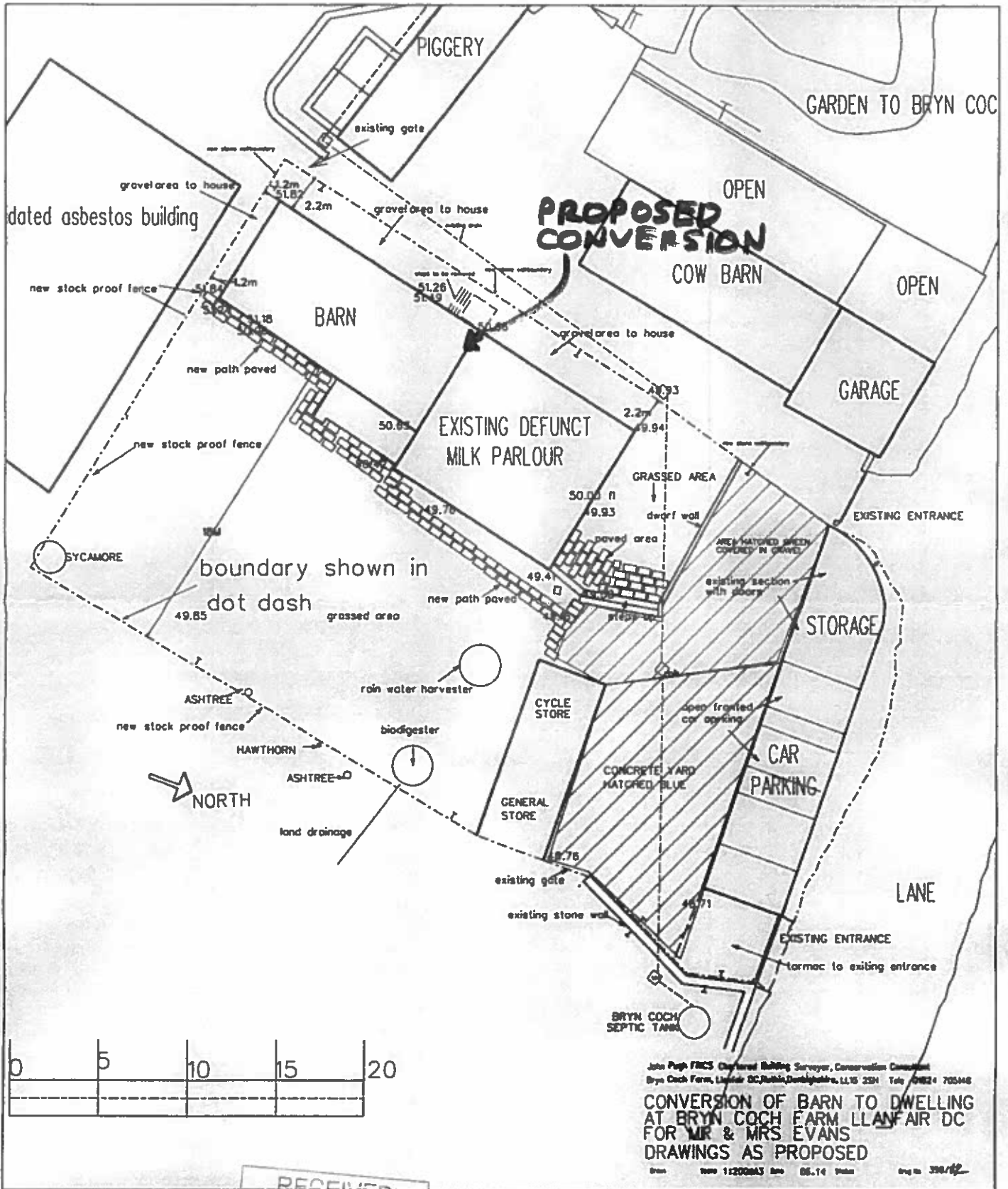


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PROPOSED SITE PLAN



John Pugh FRICS Chartered Building Surveyor, Conservation Consultant
 Bryn Coch Farm, Llanfair DC, Rhinwyl, Denbighshire, LL15 2SH Tel: 01824 705448

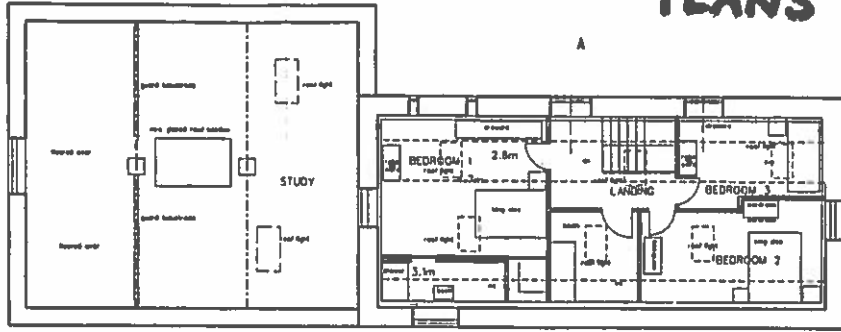
**CONVERSION OF BARN TO DWELLING
 AT BRYN COCH FARM LLANFAIR DC
 FOR MR & MRS EVANS
 DRAWINGS AS PROPOSED**

Draw: 11200043 Date: 05.14 Scale: Orig: 350/12

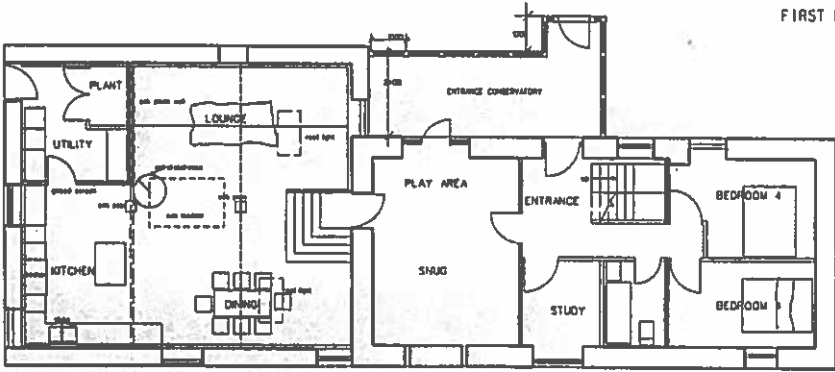
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 29 AUG 2014
 CALEDFRYN RECEPTION

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18 AUG 2014
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A
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

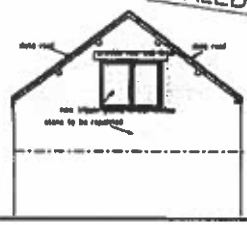


GROUND FLOOR PLAN

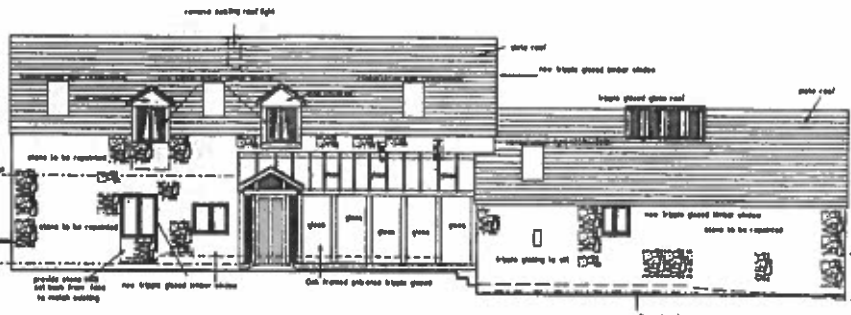
FLOOR PLANS

John Pugh FRCS Chartered Building Surveyor, Conservation Consultant
Bryn Coch Farm, Llanfair DC, Llanfair, Denbighshire, LL58 2BN Tel: 01824 783418
CONVERSION OF BARN TO DWELLING
AT BRYN COCH FARM LLANFAIR DC
FOR MR & MRS EVANS
SKETCH PLANS
Date: 11/08/2014 Scale: 1:500 Sheet: 2 of 2

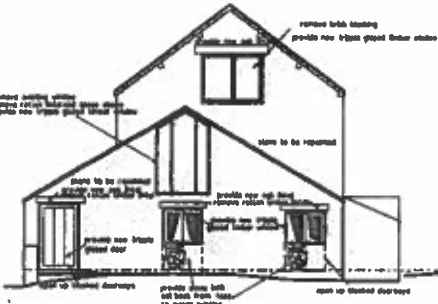
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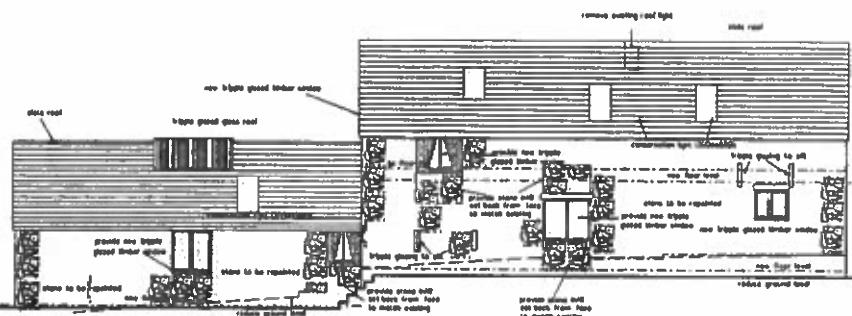
SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

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Bryn Coch Farm, Llanfair DC, Llanfair, Denbighshire, LL58 2BN Tel: 01824 783418
CONVERSION OF BARN TO DWELLING
AT BRYN COCH FARM LLANFAIR DC
FOR MR & MRS EVANS
DRAWINGS AS PROPOSED
Date: 11/08/2014 Scale: 1:500 Sheet: 3 of 2

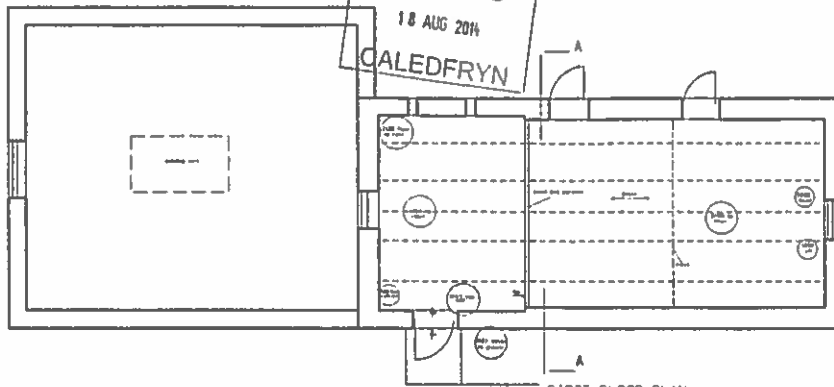
ELEVATION PLANS

EXISTING

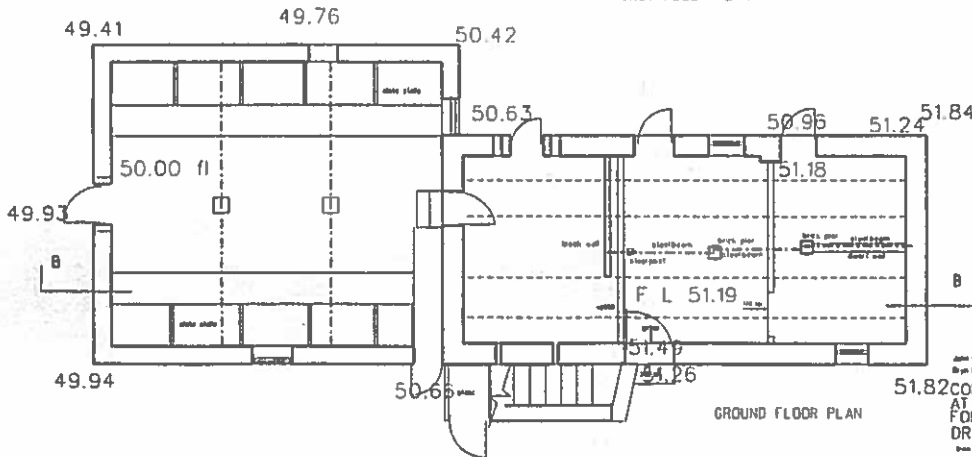
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

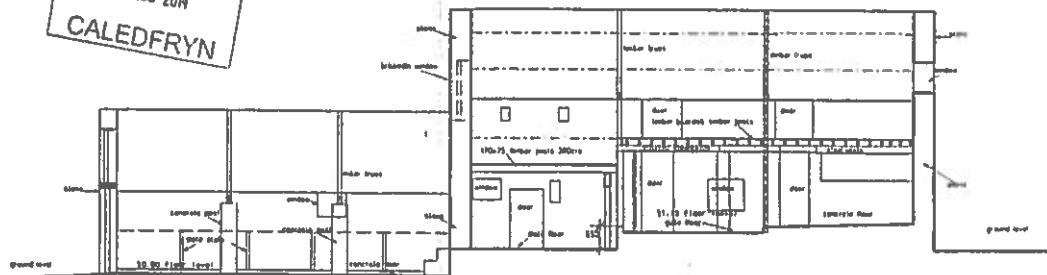
FLOOR
PLANS

John Pugh FRCS Chartered Building Surveyor, Conservation Consultant
Bryn Coch Farm, Llanfair DC, Llanfair-ym-Muallt, LL50 2SN Tel: 0824 793148
CONVERSION OF BARN TO DWELLING
AT BRYN COCH FARM, LLANFAIR DC
FOR MR & MRS EVANS
DRAWINGS AS EXISTING
Date: 08.14 Issue: 001

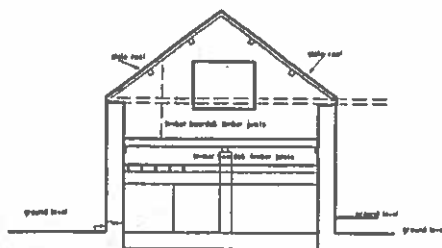
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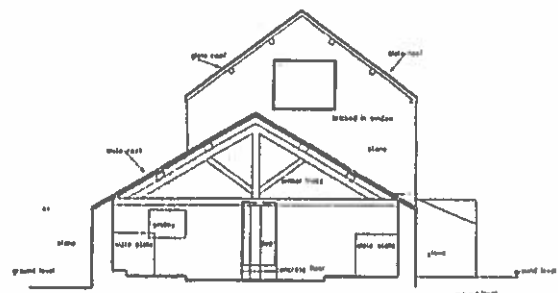
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18 AUG 2014
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SECTION B-B



SECTION A-A



NORTH ELEVATION

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CONVERSION OF BARN TO DWELLING
AT BRYN COCH FARM, LLANFAIR DC
FOR MR & MRS EVANS
DRAWINGS AS EXISTING
Date: 08.14 Issue: 001

ELEVATION
PLANS

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WARD : Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd / Gwyddelwern

WARD MEMBER(S): Cllr Hugh Evans

APPLICATION NO: 20/2014/0965/PF

PROPOSAL: Conversion of outbuildings into 1 no. dwelling

LOCATION: Outbuildings at Bryn Coch Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd Ruthin

APPLICANT: Mr & Mrs Owen & Rebecca Evans

CONSTRAINTS:

PUBLICITY UNDERTAKEN: Site Notice – No
Press Notice – No
Neighbour letters - Yes

REASON(S) APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE:
Scheme of Delegation Part 2

- Referral by Head of Planning / Development Control Manager

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

LLANFAIR DC COMMUNITY COUNCIL:

"My members having scrutinized the details have made no comments and fully support the application."

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES:

No objections

DWR CYMRU / WELSH WATER:

No objections

CLWYD POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTEES –

Head of Highways and Infrastructure

- Highways Officer: No objections

Ecologist: No objections

RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY:

In support

Representations received from:

M. M. McDonald, Cartref, Llanfair D.C., Ruthin

EXPIRY DATE OF APPLICATION: 01/12/14

REASONS FOR DELAY IN DECISION (where applicable):

- awaiting consideration by Committee

- additional information required from applicant

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

1. THE PROPOSAL:

1.1 Summary of proposals

- 1.1.1 The application proposes the change of use and conversion of an outbuilding to form a new dwelling at Bryn Coch, Llanfair DC.
- 1.1.2 The scheme of conversion would create a five bedroom dwelling with associated living accommodation. The scheme involves the creation of a glazed/oak framed entrance vestibule, and whilst most of the original openings are proposed to be retained or altered to create windows from doorways, 8 velux windows would be installed.
- 1.1.3 Vehicular access would be direct from the lane to the north, utilising an existing agricultural access point. The site plan shows some hard and soft landscaping, an enclosed garden area to the east of the proposed dwelling and parking and turning to the north.

1.2 Description of site and surroundings

- 1.2.1 The barn is located in open countryside to the east of the dwelling Bryn Coch, a former agricultural complex to the west of the village of Graigfechan, and south of Llanfair DC.
- 1.2.2 The area of land indicated as part of the site is approximately 1.1 hectares and comprises a long, roughly rectangular shaped barn, with attached former milking parlour, a calf/sheep pen with attached bulling pen, storage buildings along the site frontage, access and open grassed area.

1.3 Relevant planning constraints/considerations

- 1.3.1 The site is located outside any defined development boundaries of settlements defined in the Local Development Plan, and there are no hamlets identified in this area.

1.4 Relevant planning history

- 1.4.1 None

1.5 Developments/changes since the original submission

- 1.5.1 Following discussions with Officers, two proposed dormer windows have been removed from the scheme.

1.6 Other relevant background information

- 1.6.1 Information submitted with the application states the agricultural use has ceased, stating that:
“Bryn Coch Farm was a full working farm with cows and hay making. The full time farming has reduced to renting out the fields to a local farmer and keeping several fields for family use as sheep rearing or calf rearing. After 15 years away from Ruthin, Mr and Mrs Evans have returned to bring up their two children in NE Wales. It is their dream to live in Pentrecelyn and be part of the rural community and culture they know and love. Likewise, the village needs young Welsh speaking families to sustain and preserve its schools, businesses and values.”
- 1.6.2 In support of the application the following details were also submitted:

- DAS referring to the design principles and LDP planning policies.
- Protected Species Report covering bats and nesting birds.
- Structural Survey to demonstrate the building is structurally sound.

2. DETAILS OF PLANNING HISTORY:

2.1 None

3. RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE:

The main planning policies and guidance are considered to be:

Denbighshire Local Development Plan (adopted 4th June 2013)

Policy BSC 4 - Affordable Housing

Policy BSC 11 - Recreation and Open Space

Policy PSE 4 - Reuse and Adaption of Rural Buildings in the Open Countryside

Policy VOE 5 - Conservation of Natural Resources

Supplementary Planning Guidance

SPG Residential Space Standards

SPG Conversions of Rural Buildings

SPG Nature Conservation and Species Protection

National Policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7) (PPW)

TAN 15 - Development and Flood Risk

3.1 Other material considerations

4. MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

In terms of general guidance on matters relevant to the consideration of a planning application, Planning Policy Wales Edition 7, July 2014 (PPW) confirms the requirement that planning applications 'should be determined in accordance with the approved or adopted development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise' (Section 3.1.2). PPW advises that material considerations must be relevant to the regulation of the development and use of land in the public interest, and fairly and reasonably relate to the development concerned, and that these can include the number, size, layout, design and appearance of buildings, the means of access, landscaping, service availability and the impact on the neighbourhood and on the environment (Sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4).

The following paragraphs in Section 4 of the report therefore refer to the policies of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan, and to the material planning considerations which are considered to be of relevance to the proposal.

4.1 The main land use planning issues in relation to the application are considered to be:

- 4.1.1 Principle
- 4.1.2 Visual amenity
- 4.1.3 Residential amenity
- 4.1.4 Ecology
- 4.1.5 Highways (including access and parking)
- 4.1.6 Recreation and Open Space

4.2 In relation to the main planning considerations:

4.2.1 Principle:

Policy BSC 4 relates to affordable housing, and states that all homes provided through a number of LDP policies including policy PSE 4 will be affordable dwellings for local needs. Linked to this policy is Policy BSC 6 Local Connections Affordable Housing in Hamlets, which is of relevance as it provides a definition of the term 'local affordable housing need'.

Policy PSE 4 Re-use and Adaption of Rural Buildings in the Open Countryside is the most relevant policy for this type of development. The policy permits proposals for the conversion of buildings in the open countryside where the following tests are met, i) that an employment use has been demonstrated not to be viable, and ii) that the dwellings are affordable to meet local needs. SPG Conversions of Rural Buildings provides advice and guidance to supplement LDP planning policies. The SPG advises on the scale of the marketing exercise required for planning proposal as well as providing a best practice guide to the detailing of conversions, the point of which is to retain the character and architectural merit of redundant outbuildings.

In relation to the terms of PSE 4, the application has stated that the demand for such a building for an employment use would be limited and that the proposal satisfies criteria i) because an employment use would not be viable, as demonstrated below. To convert the barn for employment use would, in the opinion of the applicant, necessitate expensive infrastructure, prior to any occupation, which would have to be taken into consideration for the rental of the unit. The supporting statement highlights a number of commercial units which are vacant in the nearby town of Ruthin, and considers the location of the barn is not suitable for commercial uses.

With regard to criteria ii) of Policy PSE 4, the application indicates it is not proposed to make the dwelling affordable for local needs. By way of a justification, the application suggests that it would not be economically viable to convert the building and make it available for affordable local needs. Figures in the submitted Design and Access Statement have been questioned and a more detailed assessment of the costs involved has been submitted, including:

-A letter from a local estate agent which states the sale value of the building to be in the region of £35,000 to £50,000, suggesting a £30,000 architect's fee.

-Information from a local chartered building company providing a breakdown of the building costs for the project, totalling £220,000.

-In addition to this, the agent states that a further £28,300 must be added for the electricity supply, installation of water connection, installation of telephone, and oil fired heating (including tank).

-The agent also advises that it is intended to install green energy in the form of air recirculation, geothermal heating, solar panel heating for water, PV panels for electricity, rainwater harvesting and triple glazing. These measures carry a suggested overall cost of £60,000. The scheme as proposed, would on the basis of the additional information submitted, cost in total, £388,422.64

ITEM	COST
Cost of purchase of site with planning permission	£80,000.00
Conversion costs	£220,123.00
Services: water, electricity, green energy heating, electrical generation	£88,299.64
Total	£388,422.64
Council's costing for an affordable dwelling	c.£130,000
	<i>(Officers calculate this to be in the region of £104,000)</i>
Shortfall / loss	£258,422.64

In assessing the principle of the conversion, the tests of Policy PSE 4 require evidence that employment use is not viable and that the proposed dwelling would be made available for 'local affordable housing need'.

With regard to the employment use test, the submitted information states that there are commercial units available in the nearby town of Ruthin. Respectfully, this does not establish that there is no demand for the building to be used for commercial purposes; it is not impossible that a commercial use may be appropriate in such buildings. Without evidence of a realistic marketing exercise, such a possibility cannot be categorically ruled out.

With regard to the requirement for the dwelling to be for local affordable needs, the financial information submitted is not considered to demonstrate that the building cannot be viably converted and made available to such needs:

1. The cost of purchase of the site with planning permission is questioned, as the submitted Estate Agents letter suggests a purchase price of £50,000, leaving £30,000 for architect/application fees. This is considered excessive.
2. The assertion that the installation of green energy measures is required as a 'directive of the Welsh Government' is not accepted – Officers are unaware of which directive this is, and having discussed the issue with colleagues in the Building Control Department, Officers are of the opinion that there are no requirements that compel the installation of any of the stated measures. In addition it is noted that the proposed specification for the conversion is at the higher end of the options (a £10,000 kitchen, triple glazing over double, use of geothermal heating for example) as a matter of personal choice. How much of the proposed cost of the proposal is as a result of the options chosen and how much it could be reduced by a lower specification is clearly debatable. Officers are of the opinion that the conclusion that the unit can not be affordable is not demonstrated in the submissions and that the estimates for such an argument should be based in more reasonable development costs.
3. The application has been made on the basis of providing a single 5 bedroom conversion. No consideration has been given to subdividing the building into two smaller units, which would potentially offer economies of scale, and increase the total sale value. For example, it would be reasonable to suggest a two bed affordable unit would attract a sale price of approximately £85,000, and a three bed affordable unit, £94,000; resulting in a total of £179,000 (based on 2013 CACI pay-check Data). It is therefore not considered that the potential for the building to be converted for affordable housing use has been fully explored.

Notwithstanding the above consideration of viability issues, it should be noted that even if it was concluded that conversion to an affordable local needs dwelling is not viable, Policy PSE 4 does not state that the building may then be converted to an open market. Planning Policy PSE 4 is quite clear that conversions of rural buildings to residential use should be for affordable local needs purposes only.

In conclusion, it is considered that although a detailed breakdown of the costs involved has been submitted, the figures do not clearly demonstrate that the proposed dwelling would not be viable if it were to be for affordable purposes because of a) the approach and options taken could be cheaper, and b) alternative options for subdividing the building have not been explored.

With regard to the argument that the building would not be suitable for a commercial use, it is considered that without a full marketing assessment it is difficult to draw such conclusions.

It is therefore the opinion of Officers that the proposal does not make a compelling case as to why the building should not be used for commercial purposes or for it to be an open market dwelling. The proposal is not therefore considered acceptable in principle and fails to meet the requirements of Policy PSE 4 – Re-use and adaptation of rural buildings in open countryside.

4.2.2 Visual amenity

In referring to what may be regarded as material considerations, Planning Policy Wales 3.1.4 refers to the number, size, layout, design and appearance of buildings, the means of access, landscaping, service availability and the impact on the neighbourhood and on the environment. The impact of a development on visual amenity is therefore a relevant test on planning applications. Policy PSE 4 states that conversion proposals are expected to make a positive contribution to the landscape and ensure any architectural or historic features are retained. SPG No. 16 relates specifically to conversion of outbuildings, where the general guidance includes a section on the 'quality of conversions', and refers to alterations and extensions and elevation changes. It is recommended buildings are converted without the need for extensions and alterations, rooflines should not be altered and new openings should be kept to a minimum.

The application proposes conversion of the outbuilding to a single dwelling comprising 5 bedrooms. It would be a substantial sized dwelling. The northern single storey section of the building is primarily proposed to house a kitchen/diner/living room and a utility area. The two storey element would contain a snug/playroom and the 5 bedrooms. The Agent has advised that floor levels are to be dropped to allow the creation of headroom. 10 roof lights are proposed but other new openings are kept to a minimum with existing openings being used where possible. A large glazed entrance porch/conservatory is proposed to the east elevation.

The physical detailing of the proposed alterations are considered generally acceptable, although the submitted details relating to fenestration (including roof lights) require further clarification along with the material and construction detail of the entrance porch. It is considered these can be suitably controlled through planning conditions should planning permission be granted. Having regard to the scale of alterations, in relation to the character and appearance of the outbuilding itself, the locality and landscape, it is considered that the proposals would comply with the requirements of the policy and guidance, and would not have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity.

4.2.3 Residential amenity

Planning Policy Wales 3.1.4 refers to the number, size, layout, design and appearance of buildings, the means of access, landscaping, service availability and the impact on the neighbourhood and on the environment as potentially material considerations. The impact of a development on residential amenity is therefore a relevant test on all planning applications.

Given the location of the outbuilding, and distances to adjacent properties it is not considered that the proposal would impact unacceptably on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties if permitted. It is also considered that sufficient garden area is proposed for the benefit of the occupants of the proposed dwelling.

It is considered that the proposals would comply with the requirements of the policy and guidance, and that the impact on residential amenity would be acceptable.

4.2.4 Ecology

Policy VOE 5 requires due assessment of potential impacts on protected species or designated sites of nature conservation, including mitigation proposals, and suggests that permission should not be granted where proposals are likely to cause significant harm to such interests. This reflects policy and guidance in Planning Policy Wales (Section 5.2), current legislation and SPG 18 – Nature Conservation and Species Protection, which stress the importance of the planning system in meeting biodiversity objectives through promoting approaches to development which create new

opportunities to enhance biodiversity, prevent biodiversity losses, or compensate for losses where damage is unavoidable.

A Bat and Bird survey has been submitted with the application. The survey found no evidence of bats or birds in the building.

It is considered the proposal would not conflict with the tests relating to biodiversity, ecology of nature conservation.

4.2.5 Highways (including access and parking)

Policy ASA 3 requires adequate parking spaces for cars and bicycles in connection with development proposals, and outlines considerations to be given to factors relevant to the application of standards. These policies reflect general principles set out in Planning Policy Wales (Section 8) and TAN 18 – Transport, in support of sustainable development.

The application proposes access off an existing access from the minor road and parking will be provided on site for the proposed dwelling. This access road and track is deemed acceptable for the conversion scheme and Highway Officers have not objected to the proposal.

It is considered the proposal would not lead to any conflicts with highway safety.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

5.1 Whilst it is considered that the physical impacts of the proposal are acceptable, the fundamental principle of the proposal is not. The submitted information does not demonstrate adequately that there is no demand for the building to be used for employment purposes, and does not demonstrate that its use for affordable housing is not viable.

5.2 The proposal therefore fails to meet the two key criteria of the relevant planning policy; Policy PSE 4 Re-use and adaptation of rural buildings in open countryside.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE- for the following reason:-

The reason is:-

1. It is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that the principle of the conversion is unacceptable, as the application fails to show how the requirements of Policy PSE 4 Re-use and Adaption of Rural Buildings in the Open Countryside are met, in that it has not been demonstrated that an employment use is not viable or that the dwelling is affordable to meet local needs, and there is no material planning consideration to justify a departure from adopted planning policy. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the adopted Denbighshire Local Development Plan Policy PSE 4 and guidance as contained in Planning Policy Wales 7.

NOTES TO APPLICANT:

None