

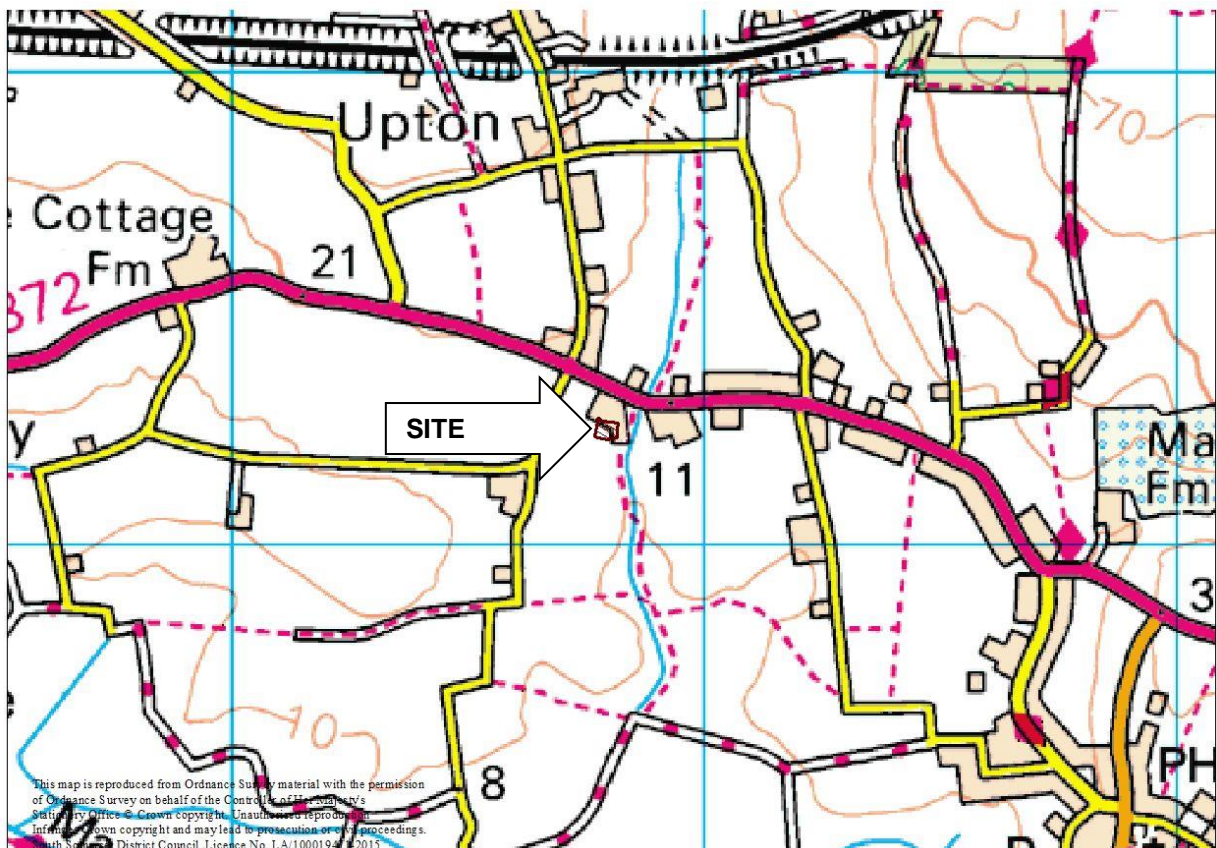
Officer Report On Planning Application: 14/04506/FUL

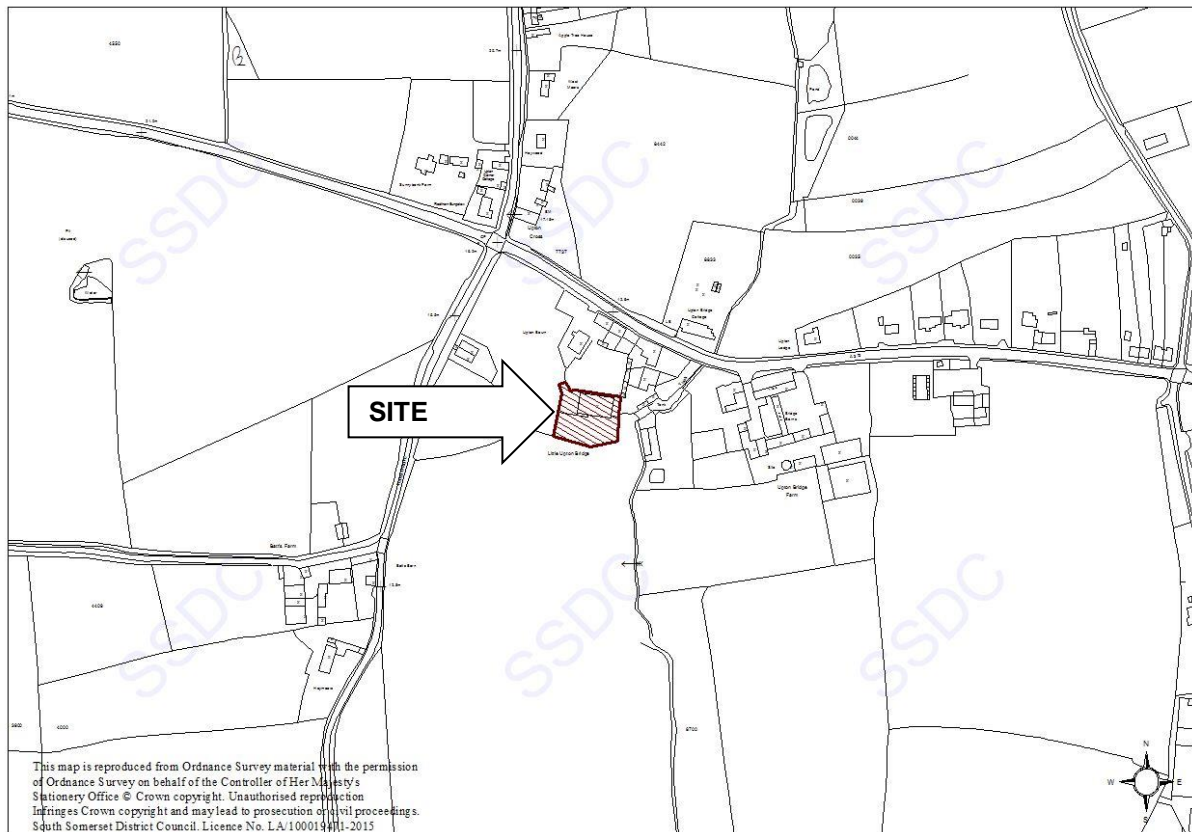
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| Proposal : | Conversion of an unused Industrial Building to a 4 bedroom dwelling (GR:345802/126247) |
| Site Address: | Little Upton Bridge Farm, Langport Road, Long Sutton. |
| Parish: | Long Sutton |
| TURN HILL Ward (SSDC Member) | Cllr Shane Pledger |
| Recommending Case Officer: | Alex Skidmore Tel: 01935 462430 Email: alex.skidmore@southsomerset.gov.uk |
| Target date : | 2nd December 2014 |
| Applicant : | Mr Simon Hart |
| Agent: (no agent if blank) | |
| Application Type : | Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha |

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application has been referred to committee at the request of the Ward Member and with the agreement of the Vice Chair in view of the Parish Council and third party comments so that the issues raised can be further debated.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





This application is seeking alterations to and change of use of an existing industrial building to a four-bedroom dwelling.

The application site is located in the open countryside approximately 1km from Long Sutton's defined development area. The application building forms part of a cluster of buildings a number of which formed part of a historic farmstead and have been converted to three separate units of accommodation, currently used for holiday let purposes. There is also a bungalow within this group used as a fourth holiday let and the original farmhouse used by the applicant's as their private dwelling. The application building is situated at the very rear of this group of buildings where is well screened visually from the road to the north, there is, however, a public right of way which passes alongside the eastern perimeter of these buildings. A natural stonewall and hedge planting separates the application site from the farmland beyond and there is some existing tree / shrub planting within the site to the south side of the building.

There are two existing accesses serving this group of buildings both of which egress directly on to the A372 to the north. The proposed development is seeking to utilise the western most access which currently only serves the bungalow known as Upton Bourne.

The site is bounded by agricultural land to the west, south and east and a grade II listed residential property (Upton Bridge Cottage) on the opposite side of the main road to the north. There is a working farm and light industrial units situated to short distance to the east.

HISTORY

11/00475/FUL: Change of use of the Cider Barn to holiday let (retrospective). Permitted.

10/00938/FUL: Conversion of two barns into one dwelling and one holiday let together with

associated access, parking and turning. Permitted.
09/01896/FUL: Formation of a vehicular access with turning and parking area. Permitted.
882456 (Reserved Matters): Erection of a bungalow. Permitted.
872219 (Outline): Erection of a bungalow. Permitted.
841682: Carrying out of repairs and improvements to existing workshop storage buildings. Permitted.
771352: Continued use of building as a handicraft workshop. Permitted.
35239/B: Erection of bungalow and alterations to vehicular access. Permitted.
35239: Erection of a deep litter house for poultry. Permitted.
35239/C: Change of use of building to handicraft workshop. Permitted.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan comprises the South Somerset Local Plan and the policies of most relevance to the proposal are:

ST3 - Development Areas
ST5 - General Principles of Development
ST6 - The Quality of Development
EH5 - Development Proposals Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings
EC3 - Landscape
EC7 - Networks of Natural Habitats
EC8 - Protected Species
ME10 - Tourist Accommodation

National Planning Policy Framework:

Part 1 - Building a strong, competitive economy
Part 3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy
Part 4 - Promoting sustainable transport
Part 7 - Requiring good design
Part 10 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Part 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Part 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

CONSULTATIONS

Long Sutton Parish Council: Object to the application for the following reasons:

- Design - There is an opportunity to create a building of good design both externally and internally. The use of natural stone would enhance the appearance, that the number of openings be reduced and that additional light should be added to the bedrooms that currently lack natural light. The use of velux windows would have minimum impact.
- Landscaping - A landscaping scheme should be provided to soften the impact of the proposed dwelling, especially to the south elevation.
- Permitted development rights for the dwelling should be withdrawn or conditioned that no additional outbuildings etc be created without the express grant of planning

permission. The redline area around the proposed site is relatively large and appropriate conditions should be put in place.

Should the applicant address points 1-3 then the Parish Council would have no grounds to object.

County Highways: Referred to their standing advice.

Environmental Protection: No objections. Our records indicate that this department has received no complaints with regard to noise from these premises.

Natural England: Raised no objection and referred to their standing advice.

Ecology: No comments or recommendations to make.

REPRESENTATIONS

Written representations have been received from two adjacent neighbours raising the following objections and concerns:

- Overdevelopment of the site with the commercial aspect now dominating the domestic part.
- The application should be viewed not in isolation but as part of a wider plan for this site.
- The application is contrary to planning policy.
- When the 2009 application was granted altering their personal access and parking arrangements for safety reasons the flood gates have opened. This was followed in 2010 by an application to convert a barn to a family home and a second barn to a holiday let, both of which are now used for holiday let purposes. The domestic parking arrangements that now serve this is not fit for commercial and family use for which it is now being utilised. The gates and planting scheme that formed part of this consent have not been instigated.
- Impact on grade II listed building opposite which to date has been entirely ignored.
- Highway safety concerns. Increased traffic movements and car parking demand are in breach of the highway authorities guidelines.
- A succession of further developments on the site has resulted in the conversion of various buildings offer a commercial scale 33 bed holiday let enterprise, at odds with Policy S1. The site is outside the development boundary where development should be strictly controlled. The owners themselves state that the development will increase traffic to the site.
- The applicants are openly targeting stag and hen parties and other mixed groups who unlike families generally come in their own individual transport and far exceed vehicle numbers for normal domestic use. In these circumstances the car park is completely filled with cars having to reverse out on to the A372.
- The applicants state this is for residential use, we have sadly heard this before for previous applications. This will undoubtedly become yet another holiday let. If allowed most likely more applications will follow.
- The south façade would change from mostly concrete blockwork to predominantly glass windows which together with the solar panels will be obtrusive and highly visible from the nearby footpath and up to a mile away across open countryside. The amount of glass needs to be reduced and a landscaping scheme put in place.
- At the PC meeting the applicants stated that the proposed dwelling is to be used to

provide an extra 10 to 12 beds for their holiday let business that already has 33 beds. This markedly increases the traffic that will use the Upon Bourne entrance onto the A372 so highways should reconsider their comments. It would be better to provide new / extra parking facilities for the existing holiday let enterprise so that total numbers do not increase on site.

CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed development is seeking alterations and change of use of an existing, barn that had previously been used by a picture framing business but currently does not appear to have any clear use, to a four-bedroom dwelling.

Principle:

The application site is located in the open countryside approximately 1km from Long Sutton's defined development area and is not generally considered to be a sustainable location for new residential development. In this instance, however, the proposal seeks the conversion of an existing building rather than a new build dwelling. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF makes provision for the reuse of redundant buildings in the countryside provided the development would lead to an enhancement to its immediate setting.

The application building is of reasonably substantial construction being mostly blockwork for the walls and appears to be capable of conversion without significant levels of rebuild. Current light industrial use that the building retains is no longer particularly desirable given its very close proximity to the adjacent residential / holiday let units. Furthermore, the proposed alterations to the building, including the installation of timber cladding to hide the existing unsightly blockwork, will be an improvement to its appearance. On the basis that some additional modest planting is carried out to offer additional screening from views to the south it is accepted that the scheme offers a level of enhancement to the setting of this building and its immediate vicinity that is in compliance with the provisions of para. 55 of the NPPF and which overrides the usual sustainability concerns. For this reason the principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.

Visual amenity and landscape character

The application building has a relatively unobtrusive presence by virtue of its relatively low profile and position set at the back of this group of buildings where it is screened from view from the main road. The building is of little architectural merit with exposed blockwork for the majority of the walls and corrugated roof, the proposed works to clad the walls with natural timber boarding and install water tabling at the gable ends should be an improvement to that existing.

A public footpath passes along the east side of the property and from north to south in the adjacent field and there are views from this right of way into the application site. The boundary treatment on the south side of the site is a low hedgerow with fencing and it is not considered to be inappropriate for this to be supplemented in the interests of enhancing the rural characteristics of the vicinity. It is envisaged that additional planting to bolster the existing hedgerow with a couple of specimen trees would be sufficient to achieve a reasonable level of screening from the footpath, details of which can be secured by way of landscaping condition. On this basis the development should respect the rural setting of the locality and cause no demonstrable harm to visual amenity.

Impact on adjacent listed building

Given the position of the application building at the back of this site and the relatively modest nature of the proposed works the scheme is not considered to be detrimental to the setting of

the adjacent listed building (Upton Bridge Cottage) located on the north side of the A372. Whilst the neighbour's comments relating to the

Residential amenity

There is no reason why it should be assumed that the change of use of this building to a single dwelling would lead to any demonstrable harm to the residential amenities of surrounding neighbours. The single-storey nature of the proposed dwelling, its set back position and general design is such that it should not lead to any new significant loss of privacy or, given its residential nature, be incompatible with neighbouring residential houses.

A neighbour has raised the concern that the dwelling, if approved, might be used as a further holiday let in association with the applicant's existing holiday let business, which they also state is promoted for use by stag and hen parties. The use of a dwelling for holiday let purposes does not normally require planning permission as a holiday let falls under the same use class as a dwellinghouse, i.e. Class C3. Therefore, whilst the application is seeking change of use to a dwellinghouse given it has potential to be used for holiday let purposes the impact of this use should also be given consideration.

The occupation of a dwelling whether as a primary residence or a holiday let is residential in nature with a level and range of activities that are not dissimilar to each other and as such there is no reason why use as a holiday let should result in any significant additional disturbance to neighbours over and above that which might be expected from a primary residence. The Council's Environmental Health team has raised no objection to the application and confirmed that they have no record of any complaints being received in respect of the existing holiday let business.

Without any evidence to indicate that the current activities on site are causing any significant disturbance or loss of amenity to surrounding neighbours and bearing in mind the similar nature of a holiday let to a primary residence it would not be reasonable to impose a condition to prevent its use as a holiday let.

For these reasons the development is unlikely to give rise to any demonstrable harm to neighbour amenity.

Highway safety

A couple of neighbours have raised the issue of the cumulative increase in activity on the site resulting from the various developments made in the last few years and that the current proposal should be considered in conjunction with the wider enterprise. They have raised the issue of the dwellings being used for holiday let purposes rather than primary residences and that this has led to four separate lettable units sleeping a total of 33 people. They note that this has led to a much higher parking requirement over and above that available on site and can lead to vehicles reversing on to the main road as there is no room available to turn.

The current proposal is not seeking to utilise the parking area referred to which is in front of the original farmhouse rather it proposes to use the access serving the bungalow known as Upon Bourne to the west and to be served by a new separate parking area. The proposal includes the provision of four parking spaces as well as additional space for turning, which is in compliance that set out within the highway authority's standing advice, and as such should not exacerbate any existing parking issues that may arise for the existing units of accommodation and is therefore considered to be satisfactory. It would not be reasonable to object to this application on the basis of the existing parking arrangements given this proposal should not affect this.

As already noted, the development is to utilise the Upton Bourne access to the west of the

site which is considered to have a good level of visibility and to comply with the highway authority's recommended visibility splays of 43m in either direction. As such the development is not considered to be prejudicial to highway safety.

Other matters

Concerns have been raised by a local resident in relation to the manner in which the wider site has been developed over the past few years and suggested that this proposal will represent an overdevelopment of the site. Given the considerations above it is not considered that the current proposal to make use of an existing redundant building will lead to an accumulation of residential units, and associated activities, that represents overdevelopment or that will be significantly harmful to the rural amenities of the area.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the local concerns in respect of this application, the proposed development is considered to represent an appropriate reuse of an existing redundant building without causing any substantive harm to rural, visual or residential amenity and without being prejudicial to highway safety. The scheme therefore accords with the aims and objectives of the NPPF and Policies ST5, ST6, EH5, EC3, EC7 and EC8 of the South Somerset Local Plan and as such is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant permission for the following reason:

The proposed change of use is considered to be an appropriate re-use of this redundant building, that respects the setting of the nearby listed building and the rural surroundings and has no significant adverse impact on highway safety, visual amenity or residential amenity in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies ST5, ST6, EH5, EC3, EC7 and EC8 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

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

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans location plan, site plan, combined layout and roof plan and combined elevation and floor plan (drawing number 1113-02) received 07/10/2014.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

03. No works shall be carried out unless particulars of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority;
 - a) materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for all external walls and roofs;
 - b) details of the material and finish for all external doors, windows, boarding and openings;
 - c) details of the surface material for the parking and turning area.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity to accord with Policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development, as well as details of any changes proposed in existing ground levels; all planting, seeding, turfing or earth moulding comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interest of the rural amenities of the area to accord with Policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

05. The area allocated for the access drive, parking and turning on the approved drawings shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the purpose of access, parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety to accord with Policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.
