

OFFICER: Linda Hayden 01935 462534

APPL.NO: 08/00568/FUL APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application

PARISH: Kingsbury Episcopi WARD: BURROW HILL

DESCRIPTION: Formation of access, rebuilding of barn (with some conversion) to form two dwellings and the erection of a garage block (GR 342549/120122)

LOCATION: Bridge Farm, Stembridge, Martock, Somerset TA12 6BP

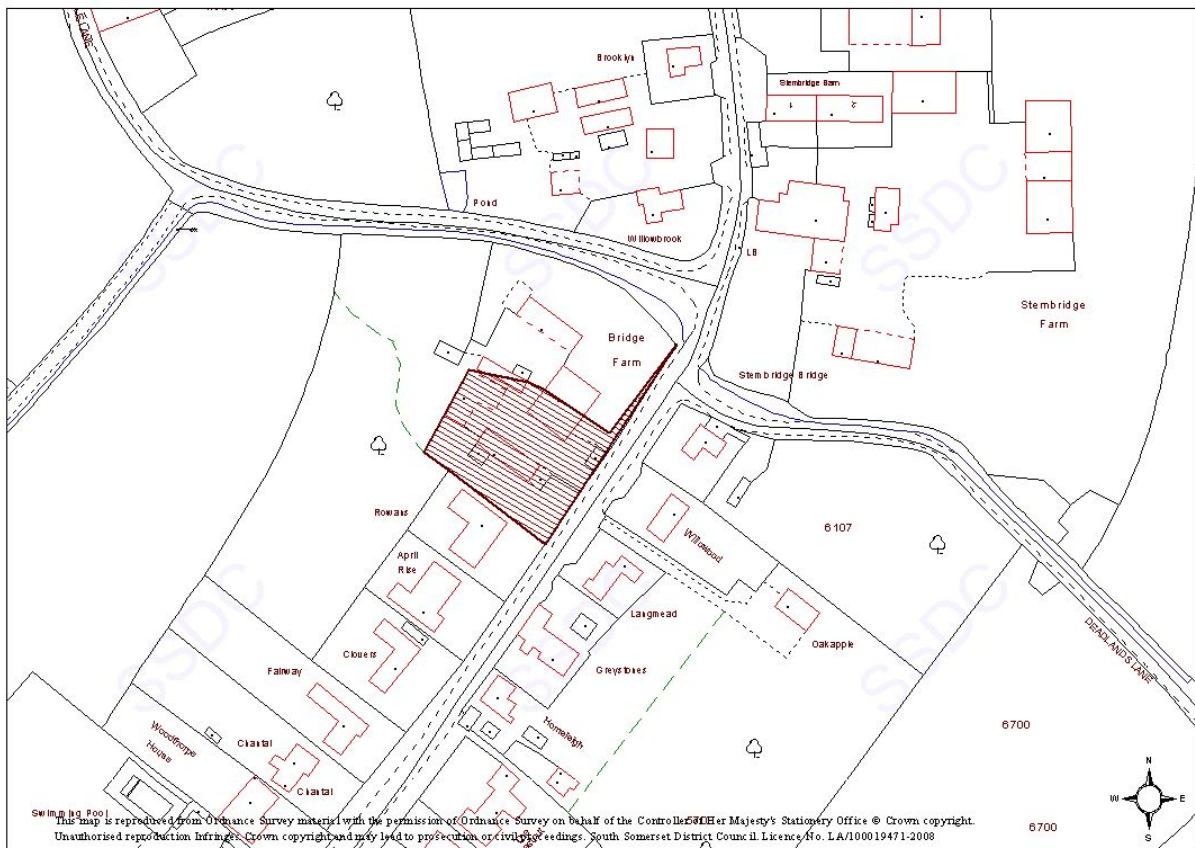
APPLICANT: Miss R Brown and Mrs S Loder

AGENT: Symonds and Sampson, 2 Court Ash, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 1HG

DATE ACCEPTED: 8 April 2008

This application is to be considered by the Committee at the request of Cllr Yeomans with the agreement of the Area Chairman Cllr Palmer in order to allow Members to consider the issues more fully.

Site Description and Proposal



The site comprises a very dilapidated stone barn, with a number of other agricultural buildings. The site has a raised bank on the southern boundary and is adjoined on this boundary by a detached bungalow. This detached property sits very close to the southern boundary and has a number of windows overlooking the site. To the north there are a range of agricultural buildings. Opposite the site are detached residential properties.

This application proposes the conversion of the existing stone barn and the demolition of surrounding outbuildings. It is however considered that the existing structure is not capable of conversion rather the barn will have to be re-built hence the description of development has been change to 'rebuilding with some conversion'. Most of the other buildings on the site will be demolished to make way for the development. An older barn to the north is to remain and a new garage block is also proposed to the north.

Access is to be via an existing opening onto New Cross Hill.

With regard to the existing dilapidated barn proposed for re-building/conversion, it is understood that works began on the conversion a number of years ago under a previous consent but much of the building collapsed whilst undergoing the alterations. There is very little of the western part of the barn left and the remaining portion to the south appears to be in a very poor state of repair. The other existing barns appear to be structurally sound and were being used for agricultural storage at the time of the site visit.

History

There is a lengthy planning history for the site, of particular relevance are:-

04/02814/FUL - Retention of existing three-sided concrete and asbestos barn for dry storage purposes (variation of condition no.2 of 00/01856/FUL). Approved 17/11/2004

02/02917/OUT - Redevelopment of existing agricultural units for residential use. Refused 03/12/2002 and subsequent appeal dismissed 15/08/2003.

00/01856/FUL - Formation of access, conversion of barn into two dwellings and the erection of a garage block (renewal of 94/02120/FUL). Approved 27/10/2000.

94/02120/FUL - Formation of access, conversion of barn into two dwellings and the erection of a garage block (renewal) Approved 21/12/95

902165 - Outline application for the demolition of barns and the erection of two dwellings. Refused 14/12/90, subsequent appeal dismissed 11/9/91.

89/01817/FUL - Conversion of barn into two dwellings and erection of garage block. Approved 03/04/90

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 decisions must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant Development Plan Documents
Regional Spatial Strategy September 2001:
VIS1 Expressing the Vision
VIS2 Principles for Future Development

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011:
Policy STR1 - Sustainable Development
Policy STR6 - Development outside towns, rural centres and villages

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006):
Policy ST3 - Development outside development areas
Policy ST6 - The Quality of Development
Policy EH7 - The change of use of existing buildings outside defined development areas to residential use

PPS7 Sustainable development in rural areas (2004).

Consultations

The County Highway Authority comment:-

'Whilst the site is located within the urban area of Stembridge the site is remote from adequate services and facilities, such as, education, employment, health, retail and leisure. In addition, public transport services are infrequent. As a consequence, occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependant on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice given in PPG13 and RPG10, and to the provisions of policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (adopted policies: April 2000).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned comments, it must be a matter for the Local Planning Authority to decide whether the retention of the building for re-use and/or any other overriding planning need, outweighs the transport policies that seek to reduce reliance on the private car.

In detail, the parking and turning area shown on the submitted plan is acceptable and will enable vehicles in connection with the development to enter and leave the site in a forward gear.

The visibility splays achieved from the access is also adequate for the speed of passing traffic at this point. Therefore, in the event of permission being granted I would recommend that conditions be imposed.'

The Area Engineer, Technical Services Department has no comments.

The Economic Development Officer has no comments.

Natural England advises that having viewed the bat survey and noting that no evidence of bats was found they do not object to the development.

The Council's Ecologist is satisfied with the submitted bat and bird survey report. It concludes that there are not any significant biodiversity issues regarding the proposal. He therefore has no recommendations.

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council have no objection to the conversion of the barns. They were concerned that the proposed new access was too close to the Little Lane junction and opposite Deadlands Lane and therefore could become a highway safety issue.

Representations

The property opposite fully supports the application and do not understand why the previous application could not have been allowed to continue.

Considerations

The relevant planning policy, EH7, requires that:-

1. The building has been marketed for one year to assess the potential for a commercial re-use of the building. In this case, no evidence of marketing has been supplied with the application. However, the planning history shows that the residential conversion of the barns has been previously accepted.

2. The buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major reconstruction.

The barn is in a very poor state and from the evidence of the structural survey submitted, as part of the application would need considerable work in the form of rebuilding to make it into a habitable property. To quote from the conclusions of the structural report:-

'the original roof timbers are on site and can be reused. The timber beams used to support the loft are on site, so basically the materials used to construct the original building are still available on site. This being so, the building could be rebuilt to follow the original pattern...'

Therefore the building would have to be rebuilt to implement this permission, the supporting paragraphs to the policy clearly state that 'Buildings which are not of substantial construction and require major works and/or extension will not be considered suitable for conversion.'

Whilst planning permission was previously granted for the conversion and included a structural survey the building clearly was not structurally sound and collapsed during conversion works. The works now required clearly represent a rebuilding project which amounts to a new dwelling within the countryside outside of a defined development boundary

3. Their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings.
It is considered that what is left of the barn is of an acceptable design that sits appropriately within the agricultural landscape. However, it is considered that the formalisation of the access and the removal of the existing outbuildings and the introduction of a garden, access and parking area along with related domestic paraphernalia would domesticate this piece of land and result in a foreign form of development that would have an adverse impact upon the landscape.

In the circumstances, it is not considered that this proposal represents conversion but amounts to a new dwelling within the countryside and should also be judged against policy ST3, this states that outside the defined development areas of towns, rural centres and villages, development will be strictly controlled and restricted to that which benefits economic activity, maintains or enhances the environment and does not foster growth in the need to travel. The only exceptions to this restrictive policy in terms of housing are if the proposal is for affordable or agricultural workers dwellings, this not being the case the proposal does not accord with this policy.

In conclusion, it is not considered that the building is capable of conversion without major rebuilding works this would represent the building of a new dwelling within the countryside contrary to Policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 and ST3, ST6 and EH7 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Application Refused

01. The building is incapable of conversion without major re-building works and thus represents the building of a new dwelling within the countryside. This is contrary to Policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 and ST3, ST6 and EH7 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

02. Policy ST2 of South Somerset Local Plan 2006 does not define Stembridge as a village, the site is remote from adequate services and facilities, such as, education, employment, health, retail and leisure. In addition, public transport services are infrequent. As a consequence, occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependant on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice given in PPG13 and RPG10, and to the provisions of policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (adopted policies: April 2000).
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