

Officer Report On Planning Application: 15/05750/FUL

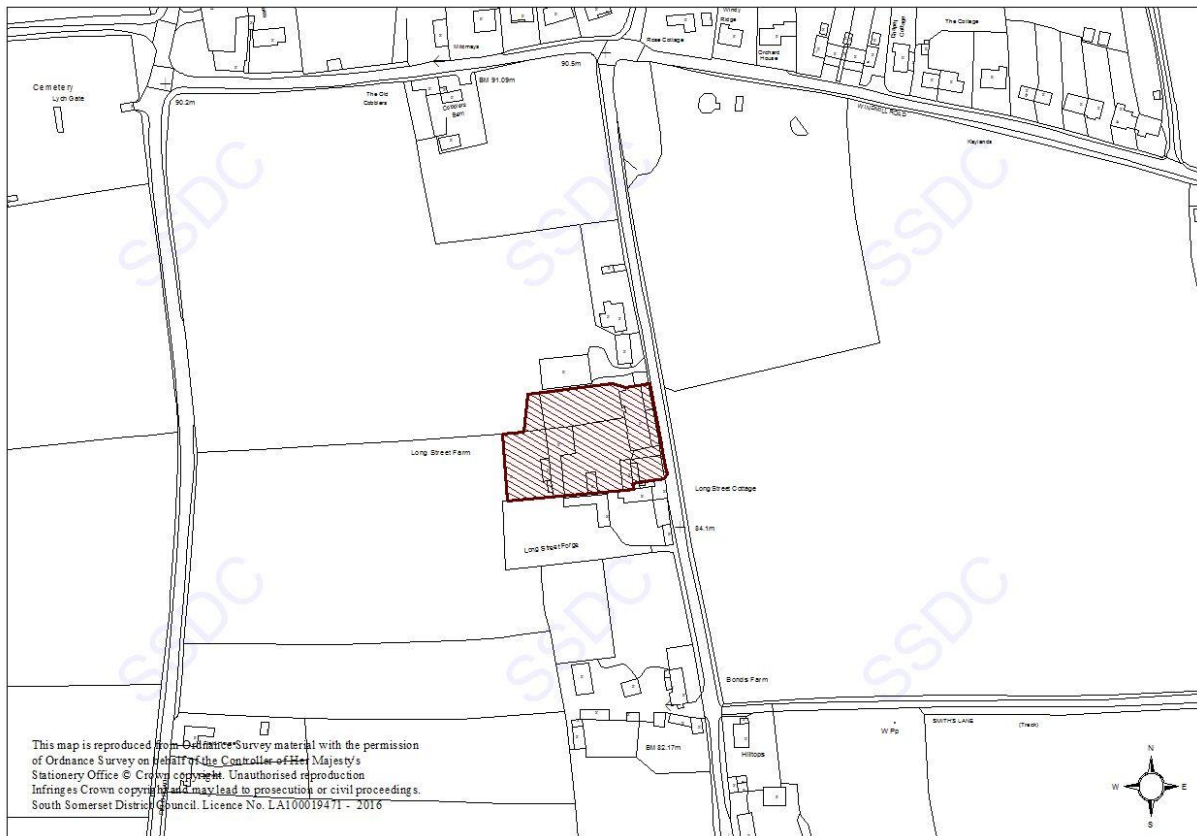
Proposal :	Proposed conversion of outbuildings into 2 no dwellings with associated infill extensions, and the erection of a single storey detached car port. (GR:342765/130489)
Site Address:	Long Street Farm, Long Street, High Ham.
Parish:	High Ham
TURN HILL Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr Shane Pledger
Recommending Case Officer:	John Millar Tel: (01935) 462465 Email: john.millar@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	31st March 2016
Applicant :	Mr S Pledger
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr Francesco Della Valle, Lake View, The Maltings, Charlton Estate, Shepton Mallet BA4 5QE
Application Type :	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is before Area North Committee as the applicant is a member of this committee. As such, this application may not be dealt with under delegated powers.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





This application relates to a group of traditional farm buildings, forming a courtyard to the rear of Long Street Farmhouse, which fronts Long Street. The site is within ribbon development to the south of the main core of the village of High Ham. There are other dwellings to the north and south, with open countryside to the east and west. The local recreation ground is situated close to north east of the application site.

The proposed development includes the conversion of the traditional buildings, along with new build elements, to form two residential units around a central courtyard. It is also proposed to provide a car port for parking vehicles related to Long Street Farm.

HISTORY

None

POLICY

The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) was adopted on the 5th March 2015. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the adopted local plan now forms part of the development plan. As such, decisions on the award of planning permission should be made in accordance with this development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Legislation and national policy are clear that the starting point for decision-making is the development plan, where development that accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

SD1 - Sustainable Development
SS1 - Settlement Strategy
SS2 - Development in Rural Settlements
SS4 - District Wide Housing Provision
SS5 - Delivering New Housing Growth
HG4 - Affordable Housing Provision
TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development
TA6 - Parking Standards
EQ1 - Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset
EQ2 - General Development
EQ4 - Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework

Core Planning Principles - Paragraph 17
Chapter 4 - Promoting Sustainable Transport
Chapter 6 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes
Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design
Chapter 10 - Climate Change and Flooding
Chapter 11 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

National Planning Practice Guidance

Design
Natural Environment
Rural Housing

Policy-related Material Considerations

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (September 2013)
Somerset County Council Highways Development Control - Standing Advice (June 2015)

CONSULTATIONS

Parish Council: The Parish Council unanimously supported the application. It is noted that this decision was made on the basis that the foul water will go into the mains sewer.

County Highway Authority: Standing Advice applies.

Council Highway Consultant: Consider sustainability issues (transport). Traffic impact of the development on the approach road is unlikely to be significant given the extant use of the building. Taking into account the extent of blue-edged land, recommend the provision of 2.4m x 43m visibility splays at the site access. The access should be properly consolidated/surfaced (not loose stone/gravel) for the first 6.0m and measures implemented to ensure surface water does not discharge onto the highway. The gradient of the access should not exceed 1:10. On-site parking should accord with SPS optimum standards and I would support the provision of on-site turning facilities as shown.

Wessex Water: No objection raised. It is advised that new water and waste water connections will be required from Wessex Water. It is also advised that separate systems of drainage will be required to serve the new development and no surface water connections will be permitted to the mains foul sewer system.

Somerset Wildlife Trust: Support the findings and outcomes of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, in particular the requirement to carry out further bat surveys. Would also like to see

further enhancements across the site once the further surveys have been carried out

SSDC Ecologist: I've noted the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (First Ecology, February 2016). Although the survey recorded a badger sett and evidence of bats, these were recorded in buildings outside of the application boundary.

The small central barn along the southern boundary is regarded as having a high potential for roosting bats and the ecological consultant has recommended summer emergence surveys.

I agree with this recommendation for further bat surveys. Normally the further bat surveys would be required before planning consent could be given in order to comply with wildlife legislation. However, I consider it unlikely that any of the barns will contain a bat roost of significant conservation importance, due to the lack of obvious evidence of bats, data search results, the small size of the central barn, the poor state of repair of the barns, and the absence of any large areas of high quality bat foraging habitat close to the site.

I consider any bat roosts that might be present are likely to be limited to low numbers of common species of bats. With the development proposals it would be feasible to provide appropriate mitigation/compensation for this scenario, and I consider the development would be unlikely to be detrimental to the maintenance of favourable conservation status of bats (one of the three Habitats Regulations derogation tests). I therefore recommend further bat surveys are made a requirement by condition.

REPRESENTATIONS

None

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

The proposal involves part conversion of existing former agricultural buildings and part new build to provide two new dwellinghouses (one four bedroom unit and one five bedroom unit). Unit 1 is formed by converting three existing barns and providing new build links. Unit 2 comprises more new build, however does retain the general footprint and key character details of the existing open barn, such as natural stone walls and feature columns.

In policy terms, the conversion of redundant farm buildings for residential use is acceptable in principle, where this would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting. While this is given consideration, it is also clear that the proposal goes beyond mere conversion and in many respects includes substantial new build. In considering this element, it is noted that the site is located within close proximity to the village core of High Ham, a rural settlement with access to several key services. The site itself is opposite the recreation ground and play area, and just a short distance from the local primary school. If considered strictly in accordance with Local Plan policy SS2, the need to further demonstrate that the proposal met an identified local housing need would be a consideration, however it is of course acknowledged that the Local Planning Authority are currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing sites. As such, consideration will need to be given to whether any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. In this case, noting that the site is relatively well-related to a number of key village services, and taking into account the lack of 5 year land supply, it is considered that the development of this site for residential purposes could now be acceptable in principle,

notwithstanding the conversion element, subject of course to the assessment of other appropriate local and national policy considerations, to determine whether there are any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The main considerations are assessed, as follows.

Scale, Design and Appearance

The proposed conversion makes use of the better preserved elements of the existing buildings, with new build elements of an acceptable design to respect and relate to the character of development in the area, as well as generally respect the traditional character of the existing buildings to be retained. The proposed use of natural stone, reclaimed double Roman roof tiles, timber cladding and glazing will ensure that the dwellings are completed to a high standard.

Overall, the proposed development will form a high quality courtyard development that further retains the historic form of this traditional farmyard. The sub-division of the site and associated boundary treatments have also been carefully considered, and subject to pre-application discussions with officers, to ensure that the traditional open nature of the internal courtyard is retained. Subject to agreement of materials, and withdrawal of permitted development rights for the alteration of the buildings and rearrangement of boundary treatments, etc, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

The proposal also included the erection of a four bay carport to provide parking for the Long Street Farmhouse. The proposed structure is also considered to be acceptable and of appropriate scale and appearance to respect the character of the area.

Highway Safety

The County Highway Authority have advised that standing advice should be taken into account, which usually includes the provision of visibility splays of 43m in each direction, provision of properly consolidated access, provision of adequate levels of parking and turning space within the site and the ability to ensure that surface water is adequately controlled to avoid discharge onto the highway. The Council's Highway Consultant has considered the proposal too and made specific comment in relation to these matters, recommending that these requirements are adhered to.

The proposed scheme includes provision for the appropriate visibility, parking provision of four spaces per dwelling, as well as a further four spaces within the proposed carport for the existing Long Street Farm dwelling, which complies with Standing Advice. Furthermore, the proposal is able to be conditioned to comply with the other requirements, such as provision of drainage and properly consolidated access. Overall, the proposal complies with Highway Standing Advice and therefore it is considered to be acceptable from a highway safety point of view.

Residential Amenity

The proposed development is also considered to be have no unacceptable impact on residential amenity. The new build elements of Unit 1 will be built along the boundary of properties to the south, however the heights of the build, along with the positioning of the adjoining dwellings, and associated windows and amenity space, mean that there will be an acceptable relationship that will not lead to unacceptable harm by way of overshadowing or general overbearing impact. Similarly, there are no openings proposed in the south elevation that would lead to overlooking. Conditions will be imposed to restrict future provision of openings.

In respect to the relationship with each other, and the existing main farmhouse at Long Street Farm, all three properties will overlook the central yard, however are at an appropriate distance to avoid harmful overlooking of each other. The two new units also include private garden areas, extending westward in line with the garden of the property to the south.

Other Issues

An ecological survey has identified evidence of bat activity in a barn adjoining the main farmhouse, however no activity was found in the buildings to be converted, although the central barn forming part of Unit 1 was regarded to have high potential for roosting bats, with further summer emergence surveys recommended. The Council's Ecologist has considered the proposal and whilst raising no objections in principle, has recommended a condition requiring no works to be carried out in respect to this particular building, until the appropriate survey has been carried out. Following this survey, details of any mitigation that may be required should be provided. This is not however considered to be a constraint to development and subject to appropriate mitigation, if needed, the proposal is not considered to be detrimental to the conservation of protected species.

The Parish Council have mentioned in their comments that they support the proposal on the basis that the dwellings will be linked to the mains sewer. Wessex Water have indicated that public water mains and foul sewer system are available, therefore subject to appropriate consent being gained directly from Wessex Water, it is expected that connection will be made to the mains sewer, as indicated within the application form. Surface water will be disposed of via soakaways. A foul and surface water drainage condition can be imposed to ensure details are agreed.

Planning Obligations

Policy HG4 requires a contribution to be paid towards the provision of affordable housing. In Rural Settlements such as High Ham, and surrounding open countryside locations, this is payable at a rate of £40 per square metre of internal floor space within the development. If the application is otherwise acceptable, the applicant will be required to enter into a s.106 agreement with the council to secure such a contribution.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be appropriate in this location, will lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting, will have no adverse impact on highway safety and will cause no unacceptable harm to residential amenity.

RECOMMENDATION

That application reference 15/05750/FUL be approved subject to:-

a) The prior completion of a section 106 agreement (in a form acceptable to the Council's solicitor(s)) before the decision notice granting planning permission is issued to:-

- 1) Secure a contribution of £40 per square metre of gross internal floor space towards the provision of affordable housing in the district, in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan policy HG4.

b) The following conditions:

01. The proposed development, by reason of its size, scale and materials, is considered acceptable, has no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the traditional elements of the former agricultural buildings, respects the character of the area and causes no demonstrable harm to residential amenity, ecology or highway safety, in accordance with the aims and objectives of policies SD1, SS2, TA5, TA6, EQ2 and EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028 and the provisions of chapters 4, 6, 7, 11 and the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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: 'F1274-001D', 'F1274-100B', 'F1274-101B', 'F1274-102a', 'F1274-103a' and 'F1274-104A'.

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

03. No development hereby approved shall be carried out until particulars of following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority;

- a) details of materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for any new and replacement external walls and roofs;
- b) details of all hardstanding and boundary treatments;
- c) sample panels of any new stonework (including boundary walls) shall be provided on site for inspection;
- d) details of the design, materials, external finish and recessing for (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for all new doors, windows (including roof lights), boarding and openings. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the roof lights shall be top hung and flush with the roof covering;
- e) details of any new guttering, down pipes, other rainwater goods, and external plumbing;
- g) details of the design, materials and finish of the any new entrance gates.

Once approved such details shall be fully implemented and thereafter shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapters 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

04. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until 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 interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapters 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

05. No works shall be commenced in respect to the central barn, referred to as 'Little Barn' on submitted 'Reference Plan and Site Sections CC' drawing no. 'F1274-002', until a bat survey report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The survey(s) shall be undertaken by an appropriately qualified person (preferably a licenced bat consultant), in accordance with current best practice, and shall ascertain to a reasonable degree of certainty the likelihood of presence and impact to bats.

In the event of the above survey(s) concluding any potential impact to bats, full details of a mitigation plan containing measures for the avoidance of harm, mitigation and compensation, shall also be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved mitigation plan shall be implemented in complete accordance with its contents, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect legally protected species of recognised nature conservation importance in accordance with Policy EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2008 and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations 2010.

06. Details of foul and surface water drainage to serve the development, including details to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved drainage details shall be completed and become fully operational before the dwellings hereby approved are first occupied. Following its installation such approved scheme shall be permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the site is adequately drained, in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety, in accordance with policies TA5, EQ1 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of chapters 4, 10 and the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

07. The proposed access over the first 6.0m of its length, as measured from the edge of the adjoining carriageway, shall be properly consolidated and surfaced in accordance with details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved details shall be carried out prior to the occupation of the dwelling hereby approved and thereafter be maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapter 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

08. There shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 900mm above adjoining road level in advance of lines drawn 2.4m back from the carriageway edge on the centre line of the access and extending to points on the nearside carriageway edge 43.0m both sides of the access. Such visibility shall be fully provided before the development hereby permitted is first brought into use and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapter 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

09. The areas allocated for parking on the approved plans shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapter 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. The gradient of the proposed access shall not be steeper than 1 in 10. Once constructed the access shall thereafter be maintained in that condition at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapter 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows, including dormer windows, or other openings (including doors) shall be formed in the buildings, or other external alteration made without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapters 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), there shall be no extensions to the building and no buildings or other structures including walls, fences and ponds to be built within the curtilage of the dwellings, other than those permitted in relation to this consent, without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of chapters 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
