

CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference: 18/00147/FUL
Date of Inspection: 19/02/2018
Date site notice posted: 19/02/2018
Date of press notice: N/A

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) CP1 - Settlement Strategy; CP2 - Delivery Strategy; CP15 - Melksham Community Strategy; CP48 - Supporting Rural Life; CP57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping and CP58 - Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Keevil Conservation Area Leaflet

National Planning Policy Framework

ISSUES

- Planning history of the site
- Principle of development
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Impact on highway safety
- Impact on the adjacent conservation area

REPRESENTATIONS

Keevil Parish Council – No comments received
Neighbour Consultation – No comments received

ASSESSMENT:

This is a full planning application for the 'redevelopment' of an existing outbuilding to provide a holiday let at Southview Farm, Main Street, Keevil. For the avoidance of any doubt the applicant has confirmed that 'redevelopment' means conversion of the existing building rather than demolition and re-build. The applicant also asserts that the change of use to holiday let has already been gained through a previous consent of application W/04/00157/FUL.

Planning history of the site: Officers confirm that application W/04/00157/FUL granted planning permission for the same outbuilding to be converted into a holiday let. However, this contained two pre-commencement of development conditions which the Council has no record of ever being discharged. The applicants were asked to provide details of any discharge of conditions but have not provided anything. Therefore any implementation of W/04/00157/FUL is unlawful and unauthorised.

The existing floor plan indicates that one half of the building was converted and is used as a 'gym/home office'. On the site visit the case officer confirmed that this part of the building had been converted (whilst the rest had not) but also contained a double bed. The presence of a double bed implies that someone is at least sleeping in the outbuilding but it is not known whether it is linked to Southview Farm or in a separate use.

The W/04/00157/FUL application only showed that the existing plans (at the time) was that the building was used as a store but it is not known whether this is a domestic store or an agricultural storage space. The building does have a simple agricultural appearance and character. Additionally the case officer report states "Council policy allows for the conversion of rural buildings in the open countryside for business uses" which clearly implies that the building was not residential and had some form of agricultural use. Therefore the existing use is clearly

unauthorised. This is a valid issue given the proposed intention to use the building as a holiday let which could result in future Council Planning Enforcement action.

Principle of development: As the current conversion is unauthorised the building has to be considered as being a rural building in the open countryside. WCS CP48 allows proposals to convert and re-use existing rural buildings for tourism providing they satisfy 5 criteria including;

- Being structurally sound and capable of conversion without major re-building
- The use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape
- The building can be served by adequate access and infrastructure
- The site has reasonable access to local services
- The conversion or re-use of a heritage asset would lead to its viable long term safeguarding

Unfortunately the application has been submitted relying completely on the principle that permission was previously given in 2004 under the W/04/00157/FUL application. No supporting statement has been provided nor any indication as to how CP48 has been satisfied, which is a serious failing of the application.

However, each case has to be judged on its own merits. The structural survey submitted in the 2004 application was found to be satisfactory and it also has to be considered that as there is a bed in the converted room. Therefore, it has to be reasonably concluded that the building is of sound construction. It does not therefore require a structural survey to confirm that it is structurally sound and from the site visit it is clear that the building is not suffering with any signs of structural weakness or is in need of repair.

The conversion would not detract from the character of the area and the building has a good access. The site is located outside the existing built up area of the village, and has no footpath link to the main village, but the site is only 100 metres from the built up area of the village and the start of its (limited) facilities. The 5th criteria of CP58 does not apply in this instance as it is not a designated heritage asset. Therefore it is considered that CP48 is satisfied in this instance.

However, for the avoidance of any doubt, only the principle of a holiday let is acceptable (and it has been researched that Southview Farm is on the air b'n'b website – so it should be used as a holiday let) and not for a new separate dwelling. Therefore restrictive conditions shall be added to the permission.

Impact on neighbouring amenity: The holiday let would be located within the curtilage of Southview Farm to which there is only one immediate neighbour No 82a, to which no objection has been received. The holiday let would cause some additional noise through outside entertainment and car use but it is not considered that it would be significantly different to what could already be enjoyed by Southview Farm. Therefore it is considered that no harm would be caused to neighbouring amenity.

Impact on highway safety: The site has a good access and plenty of parking provision to accommodate both the holiday let and Southview Farm. Therefore there should be no adverse impact on highway safety.

Impact on the adjacent conservation area: Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in the exercise of any functions, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in this Section, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The application site is only adjacent (but not immediately adjacent) to the conservation area. The conservation area extends over most of the village buildings but also includes large areas of open countryside. The reason for this is not entirely clear but it is assumed that the open countryside allows for views into and out from the conservation area to be maintained. It is considered that the proposed change of use from an agricultural building to a holiday let (that is already within the residential; curtilage of Southview Farm) would preserve the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation area. It is also considered that no harm would be caused to the significance of the adjacent conservation area as the proposal would not adversely affect the adjacent open countryside buffer around the built up part of the village.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions