

**ADC Planning Consultation
Response from the Historic Buildings Adviser**

Application Number	FG/6/12 & FG/4/12/L
Address	The Old Barn, Ferring
Description	COU of barn, annexe to A1 and 2 3 bed dwellings. Removal and conversion of warehouses, fenestration etc
Case Officer	Anita Gardner
Site Visit	15 February 2012

Objection

The principal concern with this scheme is the treatment of the main barn which is not considered acceptable. Barns have a very specific character which is of course determined by their original function. Of particular significance here is the simple building form, large interior space and the understated treatment of the elevations. The challenge for any conversion is to retain these characteristics which are fundamental to its special interest as a heritage asset and its broader value as part of the historic environment.

The compartmentalization of a barn interior can often pose the greatest threat as it results in the character of the internal space being lost and the blocking off of light to parts of a building that then require larger openings to be made. This results in direct loss of historic fabric but also erosion of the building's agricultural character. Under the terms of PPS5, such impact and loss is not generally acceptable and requires significant justification.

Here, the introduction of a series of walls to create smaller cellular spaces has resulted in such a problem. The use of walls either side of the threshing area blocks the main source of light to the deeper areas of the building on both floors. On the ground floor this is aggravated by the location of the toilet adjacent to a main opening. The division of the dining room and study from the main accommodation is similarly problematic and results in large windows to be formed. On the first floor the addition of bedroom 2 in the core of the building compounds the problem further as it blocks sight lines up through the building as well as light.

The two-storey atrium like space that results from these changes might be considered to represent some sense of the space if it were not for the staircase that sits between the two principal openings. This compromises any remnants of the space and again obstructs light from permeating through the building.

Please note: The observations and comments expressed on this sheet are the views of the consultee concerned and are in no way binding on either the Council or its senior officers when making a decision on the application. Applicants or their agents should contact the case officer before acting on these views.

The impact of this spatial arrangement on the general fenestration is of course hugely detrimental as wider apertures on the east west elevations are created to compensate this approach. These unfortunately appear overly domestic and alter the character of the building in a manner that is not appropriate for a listed barn. The use of roof-lights in the east elevation compounds this further and is a particular issue, not least because this elevation faces the road and contributes to the conservation area more generally.

The conversion of the annex is more successful and results in little alteration to the exterior. That said, the window design might benefit from referencing the existing and the bay window to the east would be better removed. This is not sympathetic with the building.

Another main issue with the scheme is the treatment of the courtyard. Given that this forms a major part of the setting of the listed building and is highly visible from the road and the conservation area, a more sympathetic approach should be considered. The use of slabs to delineate parking bays, frame trees and form wide paths is overly complex and formal and too urban in nature. The landscaping here should be much more subtle and softer in its appearance and seek to enhance the character of the barn rather than suburbanize it. Policy HE 10.2 of PPS5 asks that planning authorities 'should identify opportunities for changes in the setting to enhance or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset'. Such an opportunity exists here.

Ian Wightman
Historic Buildings Adviser