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ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL				
No.	FN	60	08	

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**DESIGN/ACCESS STATEMENT
CONCERNING
PROPOSALS TO CONVERT A STABLES
BUILDING AND A STORAGE BUILDING
INTO TWO SELF-CONTAINED
HOLIDAY LET UNITS OF
ACCOMMODATION
AND PROVISION OF ANCILLARY PARKING
AT
PONY FARM, PONY FARM LANE
FINDON, WEST SUSSEX
BN14 0RS**

**APPLICANT:
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The Design Component

Amount of Development

Consent is here sought to convert two buildings at Pony Farm, Pony Farm Lane, Findon, West Sussex to two small self-contained units of holiday let accommodation. In respect of Building A (the storage building), a self-contained studio is proposed whilst, in the case of Building B (the stables) a one bed unit of accommodation is proposed.

Layout

These two existing buildings lie at the north end of a small block of land located to the rear (east) of residential properties in Pony Farm Lane. In the case of the storage building, the site consists of two thirds of an existing building with the remaining third lying within the curtilage of no.6 Pony Farm Lane. The two buildings, the subject of this application, adjoin each other and are separated by an existing parking area.

This proposal does not seek consent to change the layout of the site. The two buildings will continue to be accessed via a private drive running parallel to the east side boundary of the site. Parking will be accommodated within the existing surfaced area between the two buildings. It is not proposed to provide for any formal domestic curtilage with the buildings given their holiday let use. Nonetheless, a small patio/amenity area to the front could be created if this is required.

Landscaping

Whilst the application is not presented with a detailed landscaping plan there is some scope to undertake additional tree planting to the south of the existing surfaced area in front of the buildings. The applicant is prepared to undertake a belt of tree planting along the edge of this access and turning area in order to screen the buildings from view to the south.

Scale

In both instances, the buildings are single storey structures having a modest massing and bulk.

Appearance

Building A is a Victorian structure originally constructed in flint and having a pitched slate roof. The flint finish is still evident on the rear elevation but the front (south) has been more recently rendered with a rough cast finish.

Building B (the stables building) is a modern rendered block work structure having a pitched slate roof. There are also elements of brick quoining and weatherboarding on the gable ends.

Involvement

Given the modest nature of this proposal no pre-application discussion has been undertaken with either the local residents or the Local Planning Authority.

Planning Policy Context

Given that the application site lies within the rural area for the purposes of the operation of planning policy, advice contained within PPS7, 'Sustainable Development In Rural Areas 2004', is appropriate. With regard to the reuse of buildings in the countryside, PPS7 emphasises that it is the Government's policy to support the reuse of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Reuse for economic development purposes is stated as being preferable. Further it stresses that Planning Authorities:

'...should be particularly supportive of the reuse of existing buildings that are adjacent or closely related to country towns and villages for economic or community uses or to provide housing in accordance with policies in PPG3...'

With regard to tourist accommodation, paragraph 38 states:

'The conversion of suitable existing rural buildings to provide hotel and other serviced accommodation should be allowed, taking into account the policies on the reuse of rural buildings contained in paragraph 17 and 18.'

The key policy within the Arun District Local Plan 2003 is DEV1, 'Conversion of Rural Buildings for Industrial or Business Uses'. Given that this proposal seeks consent for holiday let accommodation it falls within the definition of a business use as opposed to a residential use. Policy DEV1 states that the conversion of rural buildings to business use will be permitted provided that:

1. The building is structurally sound, is of permanent construction and is capable of conversion without rebuilding or significant alteration or extension;
2. The resultant building and use will not have an adverse effect on the rural character of the area in respect of the nature and level of activity likely to be generated;
3. The resultant building is sympathetic to its setting in terms of form, bulk and visual design;
4. Where the building is of historic or architectural importance there is no undue effect on its character or appearance.

In general terms therefore the change of use of rural buildings to holiday let/tourist accommodation is generally permissive.

The Context Appraisal

The appeal site lies on the eastern edge of the Downland village of Findon. To the immediate west lies modern residential development contained within Pony Farm Lane. The built up area to the village consequently runs along the west side boundary of the application site. At present, this part of the east side of Findon has an urban fringe feel and contains a number of significant equestrian establishments.

The site is relatively self-contained having a mature tree and hedge screen along its east side boundary. There is a further paddock area to the north whilst, to the front (south), lies an unused, undeveloped open area.

Whilst not having an entirely rural character, the site is nonetheless over washed by the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation.

Evaluation

This is a modest proposal that seeks consent to provide, through the conversion of existing buildings, two small units of holiday let accommodation. The site lies within a sustainable edge of settlement location and occupants of the holiday lets would have easy and convenient access to the village centre and all its amenities. The two subject buildings are small simple structures that sit comfortably within the surrounding landscape. The conversion proposals would not alter their massing and bulk and nor would their character or form be unduly changed. It is the only front (south) elevations of both buildings that are proposed for significant alteration. The rear elevations, backing onto open countryside to the north, remain largely unaltered.

The applicant's family currently run tourist accommodation within the village centre. This business revolves around the John Henrys Bar and, at present, six self-contained rooms are let for holiday and bed and breakfast purposes. During periods of peak demand these rooms are heavily booked with the result that customers are often turned away. Findon remains an attractive Downland village where bed and breakfast and holiday let accommodation is in relatively high demand. These two small units would be offered as holiday let accommodation but could also double as short term tourist accommodation when rooms at the John Henry Bar are fully booked.

In structural terms, both buildings are solid and capable of conversion without requiring complete rebuilding. This fact is attested to in the brief report prepared by a building surveyor (Julian Wilkins Chartered Surveyors) that accompanies this application.

The holiday let use here proposed does not require the provision of any formal domestic curtilage and this is shown on the proposed layout plan. Occupants would have the ability to sit out in front of the building during periods of good weather but it is not considered necessary to provide a formal garden. The lack of a domestic curtilage is seen as minimising the impact the conversion proposal will have on the semi-rural character and appearance of this part of the AONB.

An adequate existing parking area is available and this proposal does not require the creation of any additional hard surfacing.

There remains policy support for the conversion of small rural buildings such as this to holiday let accommodation. This support not only derives from advice contained within PPS7 but also from the Arun District Local Plan 2003. The applicant acknowledges the need for any consent to restrict occupation of the units to holiday let accommodation and this can be achieved through the imposition of an appropriate condition.

In conclusion, it is considered that this is a low key conversion proposal that is fully supported by national and local policy. The two subject buildings are small permanent structures that are solidly constructed and capable of conversion without significant rebuilding. They lie within an area attractive to visitors on the edge of a Downland village having a reasonable level of services and amenities. The site is therefore considered sustainable and appropriate for the proposed use.

The conversion proposal does not involve significant alteration to the character or form of the buildings and would retain their simple form. The converted buildings would continue to sit comfortably and unobtrusively within the surrounding landscape and the conversion scheme would not have a harmful impact on landscape character, particularly given that no formal domestic curtilage is proposed.

Access Design Philosophy on the Scheme

This proposal seeks the provision of holiday let accommodation on the edge of a reasonably substantial village having a relatively good range of services. It is therefore, in terms of access, considered to represent a sustainable and appropriate form of development.

Sources of Advice and Guidance

In preparing this application particular regard has been had to the Building Regulations (2000) (as amended) and British Standards 8300 and 5588 concerning Codes of Practice for the design of buildings to meet the needs of disabled people in terms of access and means of escape. The holiday lets would be accessible to

persons with a disability and the conversion has otherwise been designed to meet Part M of the Building Regulations.

26.9.08