

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**REF NO:** FN/60/08/**LOCATION:** Pony Farm Stables
Pony Farm
Findon**PROPOSAL:** Conversion and change of use of stables and storage buildings to 2 holiday let units of accommodation**SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	Proposal is to convert a group of 3 stables and part of another building, used as a store, into 2 holiday units. One would have a bedroom and the other would be a bedsit.
SITE AREA	.2 hectares.
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY (NET)	10 dwellings per hectare.
TOPOGRAPHY	Site is located on a slope. The entrance to the site is lower than the stables.
TREES	None of any significance affected by the proposed development.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	To rear open wire fencing. To side to field hedging ranging in height. Fencing to bungalows rear boundaries 1.6m high close boarded.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	Unit A is an older storage building with rendered elevations and a slate roof. Main elevational materials are blockwork. Stables 'Unit B' have white rendered elevations, slate roofs. Timber boarding to gables. Concrete surface immediately in front. Beyond this area surface is flattened and gravelled. Land adjacent to access roadway has been the subject of some dumping.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	Predominantly rural. Fields to rear with other stable block in vicinity. One group adjoins to the east. Residential to west. Entrance to site is through this residential cul de sac.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

FN/20/01/	Outline application for 2 no residential dwellings and garaging (Departure from the Development Plan)	Refused 03-05-2001
FN/29/92	Proposed refurbishment of existing building	Refused

	to form tack room and the erection of 6no.loose boxes and food store with ancillary access and paddock.	04-11-1992
FN/34/94	Proposed refurbishment of existing building to form tackroom and erection of 3 no loose boxes with ancillary access and paddock.	Refused 25-11-1994 Appeal: Allowed 06-JUN-1996
FN/48/01/	Outline application for 1 no residential dwelling and garaging (Departure from the Development Plan)	Inc Docs Ret'nd 30-07-2001
FN/71/88	Outline application for 3 no. dwellings with garaging	Refused 17-10-1988
FN/76/00/	Outline application for existing paddock with barn and 3 No stables and the provision of 3 No residential dwellings and garaging. (Departure from the Development Plan)	Refused 09-01-2001
FN/6/78	Outline application for detached chalet bungalow and garage	Refused 15-03-1978
FN/69/85	Erection of 2 no loose boxes and tack room(1 building) 3 sided hay barn and fencing to south boundary	Approve Cond 07-10-1985

REPRESENTATIONS

Representations received:

Findon Parish Council

No objection provided no precedent would be set for residential use outside current building line and short term holiday letting only.

10 letters of objection. Proposal is tantamount to residential use. Adverse affect on character of the area in respect of nature of use, noise and level of activity. Access is via a man made road which is deteriorating and bad rutting is likely to worsen. Site does not have an urban fringe feel. Would be an impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Historically residential use of the site has been refused. Use has stables has never been implemented. Village is already adequately served by holiday accommodation. Approval would be a green light for residential use and further development on the site. Would set a precedent. Loss of privacy and security. Site has been subject to asbestos contamination. Site is too remote and inaccessible from village centre for its intended purpose with no amenities nearby or lighting en route. Concern re package treatment plant requiring continuous running of a pump.

Unit A is linked to the outbuilding in the garden of the adjoining property.

Comments on Representations received:

Concern regarding effect on residential amenity are shared, given that Unit A is attached to an annexe building in the garden of No.4 Pony Farm. Proposal would increase level of activity at site given that stables appear to have been little used. Proposal would adversely affect the character of the area. Two residential units would be created in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in buildings which could not be easily converted. Lighting would

be likely to be necessary further detracting from the character, given the remote location of the site.

A precedent is unlikely to be set. Each application is determined on its own merits. A condition could be imposed restricting length of occupation

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Highways and Transport

South Downs Joint Committee

Engineers (structural)

Consultations responses received:

South Downs Joint Committee : No objection.

South Downs Society : Concern there are a number of buildings on this site which could be suitable for conversion to holiday accommodation. Stables should be retained.

Engineers : Unit A justification of existing foundations for suitability required. Damp proofing required.

Unit B : Footprint of building increased by 32.5%

New front elevation. New foundations, etc.

Both buildings would need thermal efficiency.

Tourism : welcome proposal, self catering is popular and in short supply. Conversion to a sustainable way of increasing accommodation. Other applicant's accommodation is of high quality.

Comments on Consultation responses:

Comments noted

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:

Within Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Outside Built up Area Boundary

Area Special Control for Adverts

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

West Sussex Structure Plan:	LOC2	The Countryside
	CH2	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	DEV1	High Quality Development
Arun District Local Plan:	DEV1	Conversion of Rural Buildings for Industrial or Business Use
	GEN7	The Form of New Development
	AREA9	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	GEN1	Sustainability
	GEN3	Protection of the Countryside

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies combine to describe the criteria against which the application will be

assessed particularly with regard to visual and residential amenity.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The proposal is considered to conflict with relevant Development Plan policies in that it would have a materially adverse effect on residential amenities of the adjoining properties and the character of the area and would not comply with conservation policies.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

CONCLUSIONS

The stable building was originally granted planning permission in 1985 and has been constructed sometime after this. It does not appear to be well used and certainly has not been used recently. It is of modern construction and is a purpose made stable. Therefore, in order to comply with Building Regulations, the building would require significant alteration. It is only a permanent construction when considered against its future of stabling animals.

Unit 'A' is an older style unit, but much of this has been rebuilt with breeze block construction and it is limited in size. This building too would require significant alteration and rebuilding to facilitate residential occupation. The structure survey submitted with the application does not satisfactorily demonstrate that the buildings are capable of conversion without involving significant alteration.

In addition, building 'A' is joined to a building in the neighbouring garden and it is likely residential occupation, albeit for holiday lets would generate an unacceptable level of noise and activity adjacent to the rear boundary of 4 Pony Farm which has a limited garden depth. Indeed, all of the properties at Pony Farm are close to the application site and its access way and would be adversely affected by the increase in noise and activity.

The applicant has repeatedly tried to gain residential use on this site and it is considered this is a precursor to it. Demand for holiday accommodation could be met within the village boundary and does not need to encroach into the countryside. A recent holiday let for self catering accommodation in the village (at Fig Tree Cottage) has not been occupied for holiday purposes since its completion. The agent's statement does not quantify the number of tourists that cannot currently be accommodated at peak times and does demonstrate a clear demand for this type of accommodation.

The additional activity that the use as holiday lets would generate would be harmful to the rural character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would extend residential use into an area where it has been strictly controlled in the past contrary to Policy GEN3 since it is not accepted that the proposal complies with DEV1.

PPS7 states that new development in open countryside should be strictly controlled to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty. Paragraph 9 (ii) suggests that new house building (including single dwellings) in the countryside away from established settlements or areas allocated for housing, such as that proposed, shall be strictly controlled.

Paragraph 10 states that isolated new houses in the countryside will require special justification for planning permission to be granted. It is preferable that the reuse of buildings in the countryside should be for economic development purposes and account should be taken of the set of criterion which include assessing the impact on the countryside, local economic and social needs and opportunities, settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, suitability of buildings.

Paragraph 40 suggest that Local Planning Authorities should support the provision of self catering holiday accommodation where this would accord with sustainable development objectives; where it may have other benefits e.g. As a farm diversification scheme.

The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism states that most tourism accommodation requiring new buildings should be located in, or adjacent to, existing towns and villages. Planners and developers should ensure that new developments are as sustainable as possible in transport terms, accessed by means other than just by private car and where they do not have an adverse impact on sensitive environments. They need to respect their environs and complement them rather than detract from them. They should be designed to have a positive impact upon landscape and ecology.

The proposal is not considered to adhere to this advice. The site is in a rural area detached and separated from the village boundary and residential development in an area of open countryside.

There are no tourism Local or Structure Plan Policies which support this proposal which places greater emphasis on the requirement to prove there is a local need for such a scheme.

In this instance, the use as a holiday let, although it will result in economic gain in a limited sense, is not considered to outweigh the negative impact that domestication of the plot of land which is currently very rural in character. Further, Unit B is recently constructed and it is questionable whether use as a stable has ever been implemented, and there is no evidence within the design and access statement to support the proposal as a farm diversification scheme.

Structure Plan policy LOC2 The Countryside states that development in the countryside should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated to require a countryside location, including that required to meet identified local social or economic needs in order to sustain the countryside. It goes on to state that in exceptional circumstances, development which would not normally be acceptable outside built-up area boundaries, should be permitted where it is necessary to maintain the social and economic well being of the County.

In this instance with particular reference to the type and scale of the proposal and in the absence of compelling supporting information/evidence it is considered unlikely to have a

material beneficial effect on the social or economic well being of the area.

Local Plan policy GEN1 Sustainability seeks to protect the environment and conserve energy and where possible enhance the Plan area's essential character and environmental assets such as; the general attractiveness and diversity of the landscape and the open and undeveloped nature of the countryside. The proposal is not considered to comply as the resultant design is in effect 2 domestic dwellings which would appear out of context with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would appear intrusive within the landscape.

Local Plan policy GEN3 Protection of the Countryside states that development will not be permitted unless for the diversification of the rural economy among other requirements; this proposal is not likely to be materially beneficial to the diversification of the rural economy due to the type, scale and residential nature of the scheme. It is unlikely to generate notable employment prospects and unlikely to materially improve or support the local rural economy.

The application is therefore recommended for refusal for the reasons given below.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

- 1 The proposal is unacceptable to the Local Planning Authority as the site lies outside the built-up area boundary, within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the buildings cannot be converted without significant alteration, which in the case of unit B includes extension and replacement of the south elevation. The proposal for holiday-let accommodation therefore comprises an undesirable obtrusive development in an open and visible location which would adversely affect the rural character of the area. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies LOC2, CH2 and DEV1 of the West Sussex Structure Plan and policies GEN1, GEN3, GEN7, DEV1 and AREA9 of the Arun District Local Plan.
- 2 Having regard to the limited area of unit A and its relationship to 4 Pony Farm the proposal would give rise to an unneighbourly form of development which would be prejudicial to the amenities and environment of the locality in conflict with policies DEV1, LOC1 of the West Sussex Structure Plan and GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan.
- 3 The application contains insufficient information to demonstrate that there is significant demand for holiday lets in the area and the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that a tourism business use at the site would be viable. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies DEV1 of Arun District Local and policy LOC2 of West Sussex Structure Plan.