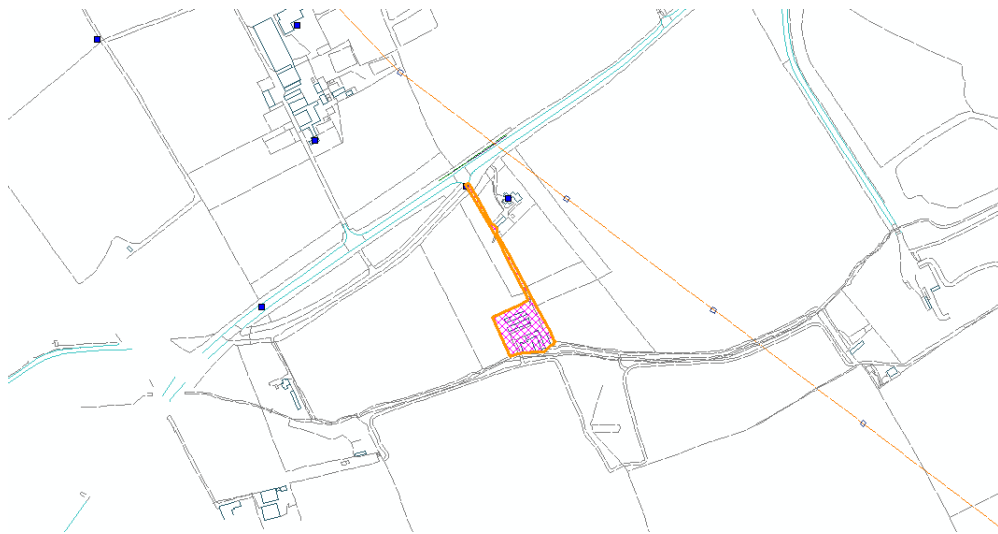


Reference: 14/00731/FUL
Date Submitted: 9th September 2014
Applicant: Brooksby Melton College
Location: Brooksby Grange, Melton Road, Brooksby
Proposal: Conversion of agricultural buildings to single residential dwelling



Introduction:-

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of an existing brick built barn and stables to a single dwelling with outbuildings. The site is situated to the south of the A607 (Melton Road) on Brooksby Grange Farm. The land to which the application relates is part of the campus of Brooksby Melton College; Brooksby Grange Farm to the north of the application site is in separate ownership.

The buildings are considered to be in the open countryside, away from any designated village envelopes. The site is roughly equidistant between the two rural settlements of Rearsby (Charnwood BC) and Brooksby, both about 1 mile from the site. It is situated approximately 7 miles to the south west of Melton Mowbray and is accessed via a long, straight, gated driveway.

It is considered that the main issue relating to the application is:

- **Compliance to the development plan: whether it is justified to make an exception to Development Plan policies**
- **If an exception can be made in this instance for the size of the dwelling proposed**

The application is required to be considered by the Committee as the recommendation represents a departure from the Development Plan.

Relevant History:-

There is no relevant history at the application site.

Planning Policies:-

Adopted Melton Local Plan (Saved Policies)

Policy OS2 states that planning permission will not be granted for development outside village envelopes except for:-

- Development essential to the operational requirements of agriculture
- Limited small scale development for employment, recreation and tourism which is not significantly detrimental to the appearance and rural character of the open countryside
- Change of use of rural buildings
- Affordable housing in accordance with policy H8

(This application does not relate to the provision of affordable housing, therefore policy H8 is not applicable).

Policy BE1 states that planning permission will not be granted for new buildings unless:-

- the buildings are designed to harmonise with surroundings in terms of height, form, mass, siting, construction materials and architectural details;
- The buildings would not adversely affect occupants of neighbouring properties by reason of loss of privacy or sunlight / daylight;
- Adequate space around and between dwelling is provided;
- Adequate public open space and landscaping is provided where appropriate;
- The buildings and their environs are designed to minimise the risk of crime;
- Wherever possible, buildings are designed and sited to maximise solar gain and utilise energy saving features
- Adequate vehicular access and parking is provided

The National Planning Policy Framework was published 27th March 2012 and replaced the previous collection of PPS. It introduces a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ meaning:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole;

or

- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The NPPF offers direction on the relative weight of the content in comparison to existing Local Plan policy and advises that whilst the NPPF does not automatically render older policies obsolete, where they are in conflict, the NPPF should prevail.

It also establishes 12 planning principles against which proposals should be judged. Relevant to this application are those that state that planning should:

- not simply be about scrutiny, but to be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives.
- recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving communities within it
- ensure the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life for this and future generations.

- encourage effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value.

On Specific issues relevant to this application it advises:

Delivering a wide choice of quality homes:

- Local Planning Authorities should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes which widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. These should include a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, and identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations to reflect local demand.
- At paragraph 55 the NPPF advises that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:
 - The essential need for a rural worker to live at or near their place of work;
 - Where such development would represent the optimum viable use of a heritage asset, or would be appropriate for enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
 - Where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting;
 - Or the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- that Local Planning Authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

As stated above, s38(6) requires determination to be in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This is reinforced by paragraph 11 of NPPF. These form the relevant Development plan policies and they remain extant.

Consultations:-

Consultation reply	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Highway Authority: No objection The Highway Officer advises that given the latest Permitted Development rights allowing for the conversion of redundant farm buildings to commercial/business uses, the Highway Authority feel that it would be difficult to argue that the change of use to a dwelling would be any worse than the other permitted uses it could change to, and therefore has no objections.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The new Class MB of the General Permitted Development)Order 2014 came into force on 6th April 2014. This allows for the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule of The Use Classes Order; and covers any building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.</p> <p>The proposal has been received as a formal planning application as it includes a glass corridor extension that would not be allowed under the new permitted development rights. The development without this glass corridor addition would meet the requirements under Class MB, and the conversion would be approved without the need for planning permission..</p>

	<p>It is not considered that the application would cause any undue highways safety concerns, the visibility from the exit of the driveway onto the A607 is very high, and there will be a considerable amount of space to turn around within the site to ensure vehicles leave the site in a forwards direction.</p>
<p>Hoby, Rotherby, Ragdale and Brooksby Parish Council</p> <p>No comments received</p>	Noted.
<p>Conservation Officer: No objections</p> <p>The site consists of a two storey hayloft, with single storey stables attached, formed into an L-shape around a rear courtyard. To the north of the hayloft are two dutch barns, one of which has collapsed, there is also another single stable block to the east of the site. To the south west of the site, adjacent to the courtyard is a further haybarn which is derelict and proposed to be demolished.</p> <p>The two storey hay barn has some heritage value, and whilst it is not listed, it reflect a way of farming from the past. A sympathetic conversion to a dwelling as proposed could offer a viable way of preserving the building into the future</p> <p>In conservation terms the proposal is supported.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The NPPF states at paragraph 140 that Local Planning Authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.</p> <p>It is considered in this case the significance of the heritage asset should be taken into consideration, and therefore should be balanced against the harm of the proposal.</p>
<p>Ecology:</p> <p>The Ecological advisors have advised that the survey submitted identified bats using buildings for roosting. As the development involves the conversion of these buildings a plan showing how the potential loss of these roosts can be mitigated is required. This information was not submitted with the formal planning application, and would normally be required prior to determination, however due to the level of conversion that could take place without the requirement for full planning permission, a pragmatic approach can be taken.</p> <p>Therefore a condition requiring the submission of a plan showing how the potential loss of roosts can be mitigated (both permanent and temporary) would be required prior to the commencement of development. The mitigation should also be in place prior to the commencement of development.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The applicant has advised that they will be able to provide this additional documentation as required and will be able to mitigate any of the impacts upon protected species at the site as required by ecology.</p>
<p>Housing Policy: Object</p> <p>David Couttie Associates conducted a Housing Market Analysis for Melton Borough Council (Housing Stock Analysis, 2006-2011; 2006) which clearly demonstrated that there is a surplus of larger private market homes and a significant</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The proposed dwelling would be a large, four bedroom house with outbuildings and a considerable amount of land. Whilst it is considered that the proposal would add to the oversupply of larger dwellings in the rural south</p>

<p>lack of smaller sized properties within Melton Borough. Future development has therefore to address the imbalance of stock type and size, both by tenure and location to create a more sustainable and balanced housing market. This requires a bias in favour of small units to address both the current shortfall and future demographic and household formation change which will result in an increase in small households and downsizing of dwellings.</p> <p>Within the rural south of the Borough the study indicated that there is a significant surplus of all types of houses, with a need for bungalows for older people and those downsizing. There is a significant surplus of larger family accommodation. In addition, the proposal is considered to be in an unsustainable location.</p> <p>The proposal is considered to exacerbate the oversupply of larger dwellings in the rural south of the Borough and is therefore not supported by housing policy.</p>	<p>of the Borough, there are more issues to be considered.</p> <p>Firstly, the barn(s) can be converted to a dwelling without the need for planning permission, as discussed above, and this makes no allowance for size or 'housing need' issues.. The reason that this application has been made is only due to a small glass link extension. In addition, arequest for the proposal to be altered to provide two or three smaller dwellings, could be argued to create a more unsustainable development, with more households living in a location some distance from services and facilities. This would lead to further reliance upon the private car, and more vehicle movements in and out of the site.</p> <p>Therefore, whilst it is agreed that the proposal would add to the oversupply of larger dwellings in the south of the Borough, it is considered that there are insufficient powers available to secure a preferred house type in the circumstances of this case.</p>
<p>Building Control: No comments</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>It is not considered that the location of the dwelling would cause issues for fire appliances.</p>
<p>Archaeology: No comments</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Representations:

A site notice was posted at the site however no representations have been received.

Other material considerations (not raised through consultation or representation)

Consideration	Assessment of Head of Regulatory Services
<p>Design</p>	<p>The proposal represents a refurbishment of the existing, main two storey hayloft and an adjoining stable block to the south into a single dwelling. There is an existing outbuilding to the east of the main building which is to be reused as two garages, two stables and a workshop.</p> <p>Land to the south and west of the L-shaped main building will be landscaped with timber decking, adjacent to the main building to form a south facing garden area. The existing hay barns to the north, west and south of the site will all be demolished, with the associated concrete hard standing areas broken up and replaced with soft landscaping. To the south of the main hayloft building this will form the garden area, and to the north and west it will form a new paddock area, comprising grassland and other planting. This area has been marked on an amended site location plan as outside of the residential curtilage, so that its use would remain as a paddock rather than residential curtilage.</p>

	<p>The layout of the new design mostly occupies the existing footprint of the buildings on site, with one addition of a ‘sun corridor’ connecting the southern single storey wing to the main two storey building along the west elevation. This corridor is the only part of the conversion that could not be completed under Class MB of the GPDO. It does however make the stable conversion more possible as it allows for separate access to all of the rooms, rather than access through each room. The glass corridor, whilst a very modern addition is removed from the building style and will be immediately apparent as an extension. It is not considered that the glass corridor will in any way harm the historic fabric or appearance of the stable block.</p> <p>In terms of the design of the conversion, the currently blocked up original main barn arches will be reinstated, to the north and south elevations. These openings are considered to give a strong sense of symmetry to the front and rear of the building with full height glazing. Only one new window to provide light to the kitchen has been proposed on the ground floor. The west elevation of the stable block, facing into the courtyard will have full height glazing to provide a corridor; all other openings have been reused. On the east elevation of the single storey stable block, the existing stable doors will be replaced with glazed doors fixed shut to act as windows, and new timber windows in the existing window openings to retain the look and feel of the building will be inserted. The designs of the south elevations reflect that of the north, with full height glazing within the arch which will be restored. Two roof lights will be inserted over the first floor living areas.</p> <p>The outbuilding to the east of the site will be converted as stated above, and timber doors will be inserted into the openings. Two of the pairs of doors will be split at half height to facilitate the use of the spaces for stables.</p> <p>In terms of layout, on the ground floor the accommodation would comprise: dining room, cloak room, WC, hallway, kitchen with breakfast area, utility room and four bedrooms all with ensembles. On the first floor of the hayloft there would be a games room / snug and a further lounge / sitting area.</p> <p>The design of the proposal is considered to respect the historic nature of the barns, and will greatly improve the site from its current derelict nature. It is considered that the proposal meets the overall objectives of policy BE1 in terms of its design.</p>
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<p>Residential Privacy / Amenity</p>	<p>The proposal is located approximately 180 metres from the nearest residential dwelling. This distance is considered to be well in excess of the minimum required to maintain a reasonable level of residential privacy and amenity.</p> <p>Therefore the proposal is considered to meet the objectives of policy BE1 in this respect.</p>
<p>Compliance with Development Plan Policies</p>	<p>The proposal relates to the conversion of a rural building to a dwelling, which is not considered to comply policy OS2 as this only applies to the conversion for commercial, industrial, or recreational use (C6). Policy OS2 is considered to closely reflect the overall aims and objectives of the NPPF in terms of sustainability and countryside protection.</p> <p>New dwellings in the open countryside are usually resisted unless there is special justification, as referred to in paragraph 55 of the NPPF, however there is an allowance for the conversion of redundant or disused buildings where it would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting.</p> <p>In this case, paragraph 55 of the NPPF would apply, even though the site is not particularly visible from the road. It is however very visible from countryside to the south and west, and its conversion would benefit the appearance of the countryside from this aspect</p> <p>However, the changes to the GPDO at class MB as discussed above, allow for the existing buildings to be converted without the need for formal planning permission. The only reason this proposal cannot be dealt with under Class MB due to the addition of a glazed corridor extension to the west elevation of the stables.</p> <p>Therefore, it is considered that whilst the proposal does not meet the objectives of policy OS2 of the Melton Local Plan, it does meet the objectives of paragraph 55 of the NPPF, and the use is permitted under , the provisions of class MB of the GPDO.</p>
<p>Impact upon Open Countryside</p>	<p>The site is surrounded to the south and west by arable and pasture fields with a small woodland habitat immediately adjacent to the northern and eastern boundary. A small stream runs along the southern boundary of the site, and there are views towards open countryside towards to the south.</p> <p>The site is currently overgrown, the buildings are dilapidated and falling into a state of disrepair and some have already collapsed.</p> <p>The proposals to convert the site to the use as a dwellinghouse are considered to enhance the appearance of the site within the open countryside. The amended site location plan</p>

	<p>showing the distinct separation between land to be used as residential curtilage and paddock should ensure the on-going protection of the appearance of the site in the open countryside.</p>
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Conclusion

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of a disused and derelict hayloft and associated barns and stables to a dwelling with outbuildings. The proposal represents a departure from policy OS2 of the Melton Local Plan, however the proposal is considered to meet with the objectives of the NPPF at paragraph 55. Whilst the proposed dwelling does not meet the identified housing needs of the rural south of the Borough, it is considered that requiring fewer, smaller dwellings would exacerbate the lack of sustainability of the site. In addition, the conversion of the existing buildings now comes under the legislative changes to the General Permitted Development Order, Class MB which came into force in April 2014, and as such the use as a dwelling could be completed without the need for formal planning permission. The requirement for planning permission is due only to the proposed glazed corridor extension. As such, on balance, the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Permit, subject to the following conditions: 1. The development shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

2. This decision relates to the approved plans numbered 070.PD.14A, 070.PD.15A, 070.PD.19A, 070.PD.18A, 070.PD.17A and 070.PD.16A received at these offices on 3rd September 2014, and the amended site location plan numbered 070.PD.13B received at these offices on 24th October 2014.
3. The external materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall be in strict accordance with those specified in the application unless alternative materials are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details
4. Prior to the commencement of development, a plan showing how the loss of bat roosts can be mitigated with both permanent and temporary solutions shall have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The mitigation shall have been provided on site prior to the commencement of development and permanent solutions shall remain on site in perpetuity.

The reasons for the conditions are:

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. For the avoidance of doubt.
3. To ensure a satisfactory standard of external appearance.
4. To ensure the ongoing protection of any protected species that may be using the site.

Officer to contact: **Mrs Sarah Legge**

12th November 2014

