

APPLICATION REF: 12/00531/FUL

PROPOSAL: 2 BARN CONVERSIONS AND 3 NEW DWELLINGS

SITE: WISTERIA FARM, 31 WEST END ROAD, MAXEY, PETERBOROUGH
APPLICANT: MILTON ESTATES CO

AGENT: HEReward HOMES

REFERRED BY: HEAD OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
REASON: OFFICERS OPINION IS THAT THE CURRENT SCHEME IS NOT ACCEPTABLE NOTWITHSTANDING IMPROVEMENTS OVER PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SCHEME. OFFICERS FEEL COMMITTEE SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE MERITS OF THIS SCHEME.

SITE VISIT: 22.05.2012

CASE OFFICER: MR D JOLLEY

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RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal

Site and surroundings

The site lies within the Maxey conservation area and occupies a position to the rear of the listed building known as Wisteria Farm, with an established access onto West End Road. The site currently contains a main threshing barn with other attached barns in a U shaped configuration and a detached barn to the rear of the threshing barn. An additional open cart shed barn lies adjacent to the sites access. A 5.0 metre strip to the far north of the site lies outside of the village envelope.

Proposal

Permission is sought for the conversion of the main threshing barn and attached smaller barns, for the conversion and extension of the barn to the rear of the threshing barn and the conversion and extension of the cart shed adjacent to the access. Permission is also sought for the construction of two new dwellings.

2 Planning History

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Date
04/00807/LBC	Part demolition and conversion of barns and outbuildings, and erection of new buildings to create 5 dwellings	Application Permitted	27/07/2005
04/00809/FUL	Conversion of barns and outbuildings, and erection of new buildings to create 5 dwellings	Application Permitted	27/07/2005

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan polices below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)

CS16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

CS17 - The Historic Environment

Development should protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment including non scheduled nationally important features and buildings of local importance.

CS14 - Transport

Promotes a reduction in the need to travel, sustainable transport, the Council's UK Environment Capital aspirations and development which would improve the quality of environments for residents.

CS13 - Development Contributions to Infrastructure Provision

Contributions should be secured in accordance with the Planning Obligations Implementation Scheme SPD (POIS).

Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) (2005)

LNE09 - Landscaping Implications of Development Proposals

Adequate provision should be made for the retention/protection of trees and other natural features and for new landscaping.

T10 - Car and Cycle Parking Requirements (Outside of the City Centre)

Parking should be provided in accordance with the identified standards.

H16 - Residential Design and Amenity

Permission will only be granted for residential development (including change of use) where adequate amenity for the residents is provided.

4 Consultations/Representations

Refuse and Recycling

No comments received

Building Control Surveyor (01.05.12)

The following matters will need to be addressed at Building Regulations approval stage:

- Surfacing from parking areas to principal entrances is level and suitable, and that each property has a level access.
- The fire engine turning area between Plots B and C appears to have inadequate radiuses.
- Ensure access road is suitably surfaced and suitable for 12.5 tonnes.
- Escape windows are required to
 - Study and first floor bedrooms to Plot A
 - All first floor bedrooms to Plots B and C
 - Gallery and guest bedroom Plot D.

Landscape Officer (18.05.12)

Requests that the applicant provides an appropriate tree survey as per BS5837:2012 addressing existing tree cover, retained trees, tree removals and mitigating planting.

Conservation Officer (17.05.12)

Objection - Seek amendments

Plot B

The new build element of this projects too far beyond the retained barn, harming the significance of the heritage asset. Also, the westernmost element of the new build element should be moved into the site and used as the parking for the property. The garage for plot B could then be given to plot

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C therefore the proposed new garage to plot C barn visible from the site access could be removed.

Plot C

This has a number of rooflights (four) on the eastern elevation close to the boundary which creates a cluttered appearance. It is suggested that they could be reduced in number.

Plot D

Whilst elements of the proposed conversions have some merit the East elevation within the courtyard does not show the necessary sensitivity to the existing stable buildings. To overcome this, it is suggest that boarding is used instead of brick infill and the number of windows is reduced.

Rights of Way Officer

Objects - The 1.8m high close boarded fence and 1.5m (minimum footpath width) will correspond to a section of 1.8m close boarded fence on the opposite side and form a narrow corridor with little amenity value. Suggest that a wider path is made available of 2 to 2.5m width with open slotted fencing which would provide a less 'solid' intrusive surface.

Transport and Engineering Services (21.05.12)

Objects - The proposed access to the site should have visibility splays with an x distance of 2.4m and a y distance appropriate to the 85th percentile speed of West End Road. The applicant should provide details of the proposed waste collection arrangements for the site including the location of the waste collection storage area. A more detailed site plan should be provided to demonstrate clearly the parking provision for each dwelling.

Wildlife Officer (18.05.12)

No objection - I am satisfied with the proposed recommendations and mitigation measures set out in the report and would therefore recommend that the following mitigation measures with respect to bats and birds be secured through the use of a suitably worded planning condition to include:

- Provision of additional ledges suitable for nesting swallows within the open fronted car ports which are open to the ridge.
- Four House Sparrow nest boxes to be erected across the development.
- Incorporation of two under-felt bat roosts on the south facing roof pitch of building C (as per drawing in report).

I would also support the following recommendations highlighted within the ecology report including:

- External lighting for the development to be directional and not illuminate the bat roosts or vegetation on site.
- Landscape planting to include native species or species known for their pollen/ nectar production.
- The north boundary of the development should be a hedge and not timber fencing.

Archaeological Officer (10.05.12)

No objection – Requests a 'watching brief' condition to attached to any permission as there is a known historic and archaeological background to the site.

Education Department

No comments received

FAO Emma Doran Pollution Team

No comments received

Ramblers (Peterborough)

No comments received

Peterborough Local Access Forum

No comments received

Police Architectural Liaison Officer (09.05.12)

No objection - I have examined Police Records for this address and surrounding area. No

objection history in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour. The proposed boundary treatments are appropriate for this rural, low crime area. The layout and orientation of the homes will provide an acceptable level of cross surveillance between homes which I anticipate will provide for a high 'self policing' element to the development.

Auto-Cycle Union

No comments received

Cyclists Touring Trust

No comments received

The British Horse Society

No comments received

The Open Spaces Society

No comments received

British Horse Society (Central Office)

No comments received

Welland & Deeping Internal Drainage Board

No comments received

The Wildlife Trust

No comments received

Natural England (10.05.12)

Please consult standing advice

Parish Council

We are concerned to notice the number of roof windows in the properties. Some are one and a half stories, which is acceptable but others are not. At meetings with the developers we were assured that there were no plans to build the properties in such a way to make the use of the roof space easily convertible in to a third story. MPC requests that this made a condition of the granting of permission.

Local Residents/Interested Parties

Initial consultations: 11

Total number of responses: 0

Total number of objections: 1

Total number in support: 0

We object. Buildings are too large for plot. Some of the building are too high and should be single story, no upstairs/loft conversion else skyline / view out of Maxey across farm and open space is impacted.

Proposed plot next to public foot path leading from West end Road shows a garden boundary fence that is far too high and encroaches on public foot path effectively enclosing path between existing property and new fence creating perception of an unsafe and dark place as path is no longer open. There should not be a fence and there never has been, the farm does not have one.

Proposal is backfill and infill which local policy is against and is no different that someone with a large garden selling off plots to build on which again in not meant to be local policy.

Proposal blocks view across and out of the village from public footpath, 12a and 14 West End Road upper floors. There are too many proposed properties and the 2 existing barns could be designed to have a larger footprint on one ground floor only with larger grounds/gardens and better materials/finish providing a profit margin for developer in order that 3 new properties are not needed to be built.

Plan alters plot to much and takes away the historic local value the farm has. Space next to the public footpath bordering West end Road should not be included in any development even if just garden space and should be handed over to parish under covenant to leave as open space so public footpath boundary does not have a garden fence built along it as this alters the existing spaces appearance from the street view too much and the plan should be designed such that the existing street view is unaltered.

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Proposed materials are poor quality.

Space will be polluted by additional lighting.

Existing space houses wildlife.

Plan has too much impact on what is historically an open space and a non residential use should be sought with agricultural links is in keeping with its farming history.

Do not need 5 houses with 3 cars each (15 in total) plonked in the middle of farm with local community historic value.

Consideration needs to be given to the impact to neighbouring properties view from upper floors as although some consideration has been given to the height of the proposed properties affecting view from ground level there is a considerable impact to 12a and 14 West end Road upper floors that currently have and uninterrupted view across and out of the village.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

The main considerations are:

- The impact upon the character of the area
- The impact upon heritage assets
- The impact upon neighbouring dwelling
- Impact upon trees and protected species
- Impact upon highway and pedestrian safety

The impact upon the character of the area

The site occupies a position close to the village boundary and much of the development would be visible from either the right of way to the side of plot A or West End Road. It is considered that in the broadest sense the design ethos for the new builds and the additional elements to the converted barns would integrate properly with the retained heritage assets and the character of the wider conservation area. The additional 5.0 metre strip taken from outside of the village envelope allows for space between the rearmost elevations of the dwellings and the edge of development. This is considered to be preferable to the extant permission which has no buffer between development and the open countryside. The scheme is therefore not considered to be harmful to the character of the area.

The parish council have objected to the proposal stating that some of the proposed dwellings should not have roofs that are convertible to accommodation and that this should be a condition of the application.

The impact upon heritage assets

The site comprises the curtilage of a listed building containing existing barns with heritage value, the applicant has failed to explain and justify a series of alterations proposed as part of the conversion of the existing curtilage listed farm buildings. Given the value of these heritage assets and the proximity of the range to the listed Wisteria Farmhouse a Heritage Statement should have been provided to explain rationale for the overall design of the scheme, individual buildings and how this has been achieved so as not to compromise the setting of the heritage assets or destroy the original character of these buildings. The setting of this development in the wider landscape also appears not to have been considered.

The Conservation Officer has a number of concerns regarding the proposal and these shall be examined below:

Plot B

The new build element of plot B projects almost 4 m further forward than the building line of the original barn. At a site meeting prior to the submission of the application, it was suggested to the applicant that a forward projection of one metre could be considered. The length of this projection affects the setting and views of the smaller barn but also the north elevation of the threshing barn (Plot D) and diminished the significance of the retained heritage asset. This element would need to be reduced to the 1.0 metre projection beyond the barn as previously stated to the applicant.

The single storey family room proposed for the same unit (Plot B) should also be amended to provide integral garaging. With the element moved back into the site this will enable the double garage on the layout plan to be removed from what is really the curtilage of Plot C. The freestanding garage along the drive on the eastern boundary proposed for Plot C can therefore be removed. The location of this garage again was against pre-application advice as it is considered that a garage in this location would be detrimental to views into the development from the street. Also it would leave little space for additional structure planting. This boundary is important as it is clearly visible from the public realm and would provide separation from the adjacent domestic curtilage.

Plot C

Plot C has a number of rooflights on the eastern elevation close to the boundary which creates a cluttered appearance. The bedroom which has the largest roof light already has a window and so this could be dispensed with. One of the two rooflights to the small hall could also be removed.

Plot D

Whilst we are willing to overlook the insertion of a door into the west side of the east range of the courtyard barns for the sake of future occupiers amenity. A new door and ensuite window have been inserted within the eastern elevation of the western range and an existing door has been part filled to form a window and a large opening part filled without a proper justification. These alterations unacceptably alter the character of this part of the barn and could be dealt with in a more sensitive manner. In designing barn conversions new openings are generally best avoided so that the traditional character of the outbuildings with long unbroken elevations and roof pitches are retained in accordance with English Heritage guidance. The ensuite window could be replaced with a roof light. The doorway (for which it is proposed to insert a window and half fill) could have full-length glazing or timber cladding beneath the window so that the evolution of the building could still be clearly read. Cladding may also be the best option for the solid infill of the open bay for the same reasons.

The impact upon neighbouring dwellings

The new build plot A will be located approximately 20 metres from the rear elevation of 29a West End Road. This distance in combination with the orientation of the dwellings is considered to adequately mitigate for any potential overlooking that might occur. The first floor windows of plot A will not permit views directly into the primary habitable room windows of 29a.

A dwelling has been constructed on the paddock land to the east of the application site. To avoid overlooking plot C has been designed with a 1.5 storey projecting element to the rear. All west facing windows in this rear projection are rooflights above 1.8 metres from the floor level at first floor. It is therefore considered that the amenity of the occupiers of the new build within the paddock will not be harmed by construction of plot C.

None of the proposed conversions or new build dwellings will cause unacceptable levels of overshadowing to neighbouring dwellings.

Impact upon trees

The proposed development will result in the removal of a number of trees on the site, in particular a number of trees on the northern boundary with the open countryside beyond. The Landscape officer has objected to the proposal on the grounds that no assessment of the worthiness of the trees to be lost or retained was submitted with the application and no mitigation proposal have been submitted. Whilst it is agreed that this information would normally have to be submitted, the impact on the trees is no greater than the impact of the previously approved and commenced developments. It is therefore not reasonable to insist upon the submission of the information or refuse the application on the basis of its non submission.

Ecology

The submitted bat and breeding bird survey and report found there is no evidence of bats or active nesting birds and as such the wildlife officer has no objection to the proposals subject to mitigation measures highlighted in the report being conditioned on any approval.

Rights of Way

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The rights of way officer has made comment stating that he is concerned that the 1.8m high close boarded fence and 1.5m (minimum footpath width) will correspond to a section of 1.8m close boarded fence on the opposite side and form a narrow corridor with little amenity value. He suggests that a wider path is made available of 2 to 2.5m width with open slotted fencing which would provide a less 'solid' intrusive surface. It is considered onerous to insist that the path is widened as the section of path lies within the village boundary. As a compromise it is suggested that a 'hit and miss' fence is used instead of the close boarded fencing and that this be conditioned if the application is approved by committee.

Impact upon highway and pedestrian safety

The Local Highways Authority have stated that visibility splays; details of bin collection points and a more detailed site plan showing clearly the parking for each property should be provided. The Local Planning Authority considers that the bin collection point is adequate and that parking provision for each dwelling is acceptable. In respect of these items, the current scheme is not materially different to the previously approved and commenced scheme. This scheme did not show vehicle to vehicle visibility splays and therefore it is not considered reasonable in this instance to insist upon the provision of vehicle to vehicle splays in what is in effect amendments to an approved scheme. It is also acknowledged that West End Road is a quiet rural lane which runs parallel to the main arterial route through Maxey and is generally lightly trafficked.

Fire Safety

Building Control comments state that the turning area for fire vehicles is inadequate. Whilst this may be so, given the highly rural nature of this development it would be detrimental to the design of the scheme to require large turning areas to be provided for the exceptional situations where a fire tender has to leave the site.

Letter of Objection & Parish Objection

The letter of objection received raises many points. These shall be dealt with below;

The objector has stated that:

- the buildings are too numerous, large and tall to the extent that they encroach into and cause the loss of view out of Maxey from the road and footpath across the paddock to the countryside beyond is significantly impacted upon.
- The proposal will result in the loss of wildlife habitat and impact upon the historically open space of the site
- The materials are inappropriate

In response, officers wish to highlight the fact that the site already has an extant planning permission for a similar development on the site which in the context of the scale of development is not materially different to that which has been applied for now. Secondly, the lost views are not of such significance in the context of the character of the conservation area or important views of listed buildings as to warrant refusal of the scheme. Thirdly the site does not have any significant ecological value. Fourthly, the materials proposed are not considered to be of poor quality, as natural stone is proposed for the development.

Both the objector and the parish council have objected to the height of the proposals and that loft space could be converted to living accommodation. This is not a concern of officers unless new windows were inserted that were too many in number or size as this would impact on the appearance of the dwellings and may result in overlooking (the conversion of roof voids to accommodation would not result in the increasing of the height of the units proposed unless a planning application were submitted to specifically do this). The insertion of windows in the roof can be controlled through the removal of permitted development rights.

6 Conclusions

The proposal has some significant improvements over the previously approved scheme; however it is unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. The new build extension to Plot B is oversized to the detriment of the existing barn
2. The garage to Plot C is too visually obtrusive in a sensitive location
3. The alternations to Plot D are unsympathetic due to the number of window and skylight openings and the treatment of some of the retained openings

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7 Recommendation

The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services recommends that planning permission is **REFUSED** for the following reason:

1. The proposal is contrary to policy CS17 of the Peterborough Core Strategy (DPD) 2011 as:

a) The new element of Plot B extends too far beyond the retained existing retained barn, diminishing the significance of a heritage asset

b) The positioning of garaging of Plot C would be visually obtrusive and would leave little space for additional structure planting. This boundary is important as it is clearly visible from the public realm and would provide separation from the adjacent domestic curtilage.

c) The proposed alterations to the stable block element of Plot D unacceptably alters this part of the building, to the detriment of the significance of a heritage asset.

Policy CS17 of the Peterborough Core Strategy (DPD) states that all new development must respect and enhance the local character and distinctiveness of an area in which it would be situated and as the application site falls within the Maxey Conservation Area, the design and appearance of the development is of particular importance.

Copies to Councillor P Hiller