
APPLICATION NO.	20/00712/LBWN
APPLICATION TYPE	LISTED BUILDING WORKS - NORTH
REGISTERED	23.03.2020
APPLICANT	Mr Simon Prior-Palmer
SITE	Appleshaw House, Biddesden Bottom Road, Appleshaw, SP11 9BT, APPLESHAW
PROPOSAL	Refurbishment of existing barn and former groom's accommodation including removal of modern cross partitions and modern floor boards to attic level of barn. Insertion of WC and steps within stables, structural repairs and thermal insulation to both buildings
AMENDMENTS	
CASE OFFICER	Katie Nethersole

Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is reported to the Northern Area Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Lashbrook, for the following reason:

'Whilst I understand the Conservation Officer's reasoning, I feel that this is outweighed by the practicality of the Applicant's proposal, which brings life to an otherwise empty and unused barn. In doing so, the Applicant celebrates the craftsmanship and sheer skill of bygone days through exposing the rafters of this magnificent old structure. This does not harm, destroy or in any way diminish the purposeful appearance of the barn and its character. In fact this promotes and enhances the character of the barn and delivers a wonderful working structure that can be enjoyed for many years to come.'

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site comprises of a large detached two storey dwelling with a detached barn and stables located in the village of Appleshaw. It is accessed from Biddesden Bottom Road and set back from this road via a track that leads to a courtyard parking area adjacent to the barn and stable block.

2.2 Appleshaw House is a Grade II listed building and is also within the Appleshaw Conservation Area. The barn and stables are considered to be curtilage listed. The stables are still in use and the barn is used for ancillary purposes to the main dwelling. The ground floor of the barn is a games room and the first floor is used as a library and storage. The second floor is currently empty aside from a small amount of storage. This building, along with the main dwelling and the adjacent dwelling Mead House were historically used in the wool trade and were considered as a small estate with the buildings being historically linked.

3.0 **PROPOSAL**

3.1 It is proposed to refurbish the existing barn and loft space above the stables to provide improved ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling. The space above the stable would become a guest bedroom and guest office and the first floor above the existing games room in the barn would be used as a dining and family room. This would include the removal of some partitions and existing floor boards and some external alterations to include the lowering of the access door and the addition of stone steps to provide access, as well as the insertion of a conservation rooflight to the rear elevation. Both the barn and stables would be structurally repaired and thermal insulation installed within the roof structure.

3.2 Two previous applications have been submitted for a similar scheme (19/02067/FULLN & 19/02068/LBWN and 19/02512/FULLN & 19/02513/LBWN) and both have been withdrawn due to objections from the Conservation team. This application seeks to address these concerns by omitting proposed windows to the west and south elevation of the barn and a window to the W.C in the stables; as well as omitting the landing and steps to the east elevation of the barn. A full application was also submitted (20/00711/FULLN), however it was considered that the majority of the works would be permitted development and the only aspect that required permission was the insertion of a rooflight. As a result the description of the full application was amended and permission has been granted.

4.0 **HISTORY**

4.1 20/00711/FULLN The installation of a conservation rooflight in the east elevation of the stable block (AMENDED DESCRIPTION). Permission subject to conditions and notes 25.6.2020.

4.2 19/02067/FULLN Removal of modern partitions and second floor within Barn, conversion of first floor of adjoining stables to residential (annexe) accommodation, addition of internal and external steps/stairs and remedial works to structure. Withdrawn 17.10.2019.

4.3 19/02068/LBWN Removal of modern partitions and second floor within Barn, conversion of first floor of adjoining stables to residential (annexe) accommodation, addition of internal and external steps/stairs and remedial works to structure. Withdrawn 17.10.2019.

4.4 19/02512/FULLN Refurbishment of existing annexe barn and former Groom's accommodation over stables, to include removal of modern cross partitions and modern floor boards to upper level of barn, insertion of WC and steps within stables, and structural repairs and thermal insulation to both buildings. Withdrawn 24.12.2019.

4.5 19/02513/LBWN Refurbishment of existing annexe barn and former Groom's accommodation over stables, to include removal of modern cross partitions and modern floor boards to upper level of barn, insertion of WC and steps within stables, and structural repairs and thermal insulation to both buildings. Withdrawn 24.12.2019.

5.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 **Ecology** – No objection subject to a condition.

5.2 **Conservation** – Objection

The proposed works would not make a positive contribution to sustaining the significance of the heritage asset, contrary to Policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2016.

Whilst the scheme is objected to there are some aspects of the proposal which are considered acceptable. The proposed insertion of an internal staircase would be positioned in a part of the floor structure that is modern and so there would be loss of historic fabric. It would not result in harm to the significance of the heritage asset as it would not affect how the building is experienced and interpreted. The proposed insulation to the walls and roof would result in some harm to the character of the heritage asset but would be outweighed by the overall benefits resulting in a sustainable use.

6.0 **REPRESENTATIONS** Expired 24.04.2020

6.1 None received.

6.2 **Appleshaw Parish Council** – No response received.

7.0 **POLICY**

7.1 Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

7.2 Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016)(RLP)

COM2: Settlement Hierarchy

E5: Biodiversity

E9: Heritage

LHW4: Amenity

7.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

None relevant

8.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area and Listed Building
- Biodiversity

8.2 **Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area and Listed Building**

The proposal affects buildings that are within the curtilage of a Grade II listed building and are within a conservation area and therefore consideration needs to be given to policy E9. Any development affecting a heritage asset will be permitted provided that:

- a) it would make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing the significance of the heritage asset taking account of its character, appearance and setting; and
 - b) the significance of the heritage asset has informed the proposal through an assessment proportionate to its importance
- 8.3 Development that would result in the substantial harm to or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset will not be permitted unless:
- a) it is outweighed by the substantial benefit to the public of bringing the site back into use; or
 - b) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable use; and
 - c) its conservation cannot be achieved by either a viable alternative use, support from public ownership or funding from other sources; and
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use
- 8.4 Local Planning Authorities are also required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses as set out in Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 8.5 Acceptable works
There is no objection to the proposed conversion of the former groom's accommodation, the installation of an additional toilet to the rear of the existing stable block or the proposed internal stairs. The proposed internal staircase would be inserted through part of the floor where it is of a modern date and would therefore not result in the loss of historic fabric. This conclusion is supported by the heritage assessment that has been submitted with the application. Therefore, although there is no evidence that there was a staircase in this location historically, on balance it is considered that there would be no harm to the significance of the building as a heritage asset.
- 8.6 The proposal to create a larger opening from the barn to the space over the stable would result in a short section of the underside of the stair being visible in the stable below. This would result in a small degree of harm, however given the degree of existing alterations to the stable (principally the insertion of modern block-work partitions) it would not have a great impact on the overall significance of the building. If permission were to be granted then details of this aspect of the proposal would be secured through a condition. As the works are internal and not visible in the public realm they would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Appleshaw Conservation Area.
- 8.7 Removal of upper loft floor covering and proposed insulation to walls to the barn
It is acknowledged that the floor covering to the second floor of the barn to be removed is modern. However its removal would have a harmful impact on the building's significance as it would remove the historic understanding of this barn and how it was used as a wool barn. The presence of the floor is part of the original design and is considered to be important when understanding the importance of the building's significance. This is supported by the applicant's Heritage Assessment, paragraph 6.6., which confirms this interpretation:

'Important elements of the interior of the barn are those which reflect its original use and intensity of storage, including the exposed brick walls, plainness of detail and multi-storeys.' It also notes that *'the second floor relates to the loading bay within the east gable.'*

This is supported by the Conservation Officer's comments in that;

'...the importance of how the building is experienced is evident in the attic, where the trusses are seen and can be passed through. These will be divorced of much of their meaning should the floor covering be removed.'

Therefore the removal of this floor is objected to as it would result in less than substantial harm to the understanding of this buildings' importance and significance.

- 8.8 It is also proposed to add wall insulation and plasterboard wall coverings to the barn and the stable. It is considered that this would result in a change to the character of the internal appearance that would harm the buildings' significance. This is supported by the submitted heritage assessment in paragraph 6.6. The interior of these buildings is characterised by internal exposed brickwork which is considered to be normal for agricultural buildings of this type. As the Conservation Officer concludes:

'...the unlined walls reflect the historic function of the barn and stables and the proposed lining of these walls would therefore change their character and impact on the buildings' significance.'

Therefore the proposed insulation is objected to as it would result in less than substantial harm to the understanding of the building's importance.

- 8.9 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2019) states that where less than substantial harm is identified;

... 'this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

It is acknowledged that there would be some public benefit through the proposed reinstatement of the ceiling in the stable loft. The application states that the lath and plaster ceilings survive in the loft space and that as part of the insertion of the staircase they would be amended. However from a site inspection it is clear that these ceilings do not survive. Their reinstatement would be a public benefit, however it is not clear when they were removed and no information has been provided on this. The applicant also lists the following as being the refurbishment of the grooms' accommodation bringing the building back into a useful purpose for its long term survival and future maintenance, the repair of structural defects, and the reduction in energy demand and sustainability.

8.10 The proposed insulation would ensure the long term use of these buildings and would reduce the energy demand too through added sustainability as a result of the proposed insulation. Whilst it is considered that these may constitute public benefits to the proposal, these do not outweigh the harm identified. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2019) states that where there is harm identified:

'...great weight should be given to the asset's conservation...This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'

8.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst it is acknowledged that some of the aspects of the proposed would be acceptable and there would be some public benefits to the scheme, the harm identified would not be outweighed by these. As such it is the removal of the upper loft floor covering and proposed insulation that would conflict with policy E9. The presence of this floor covering is essential in understanding the significance of the building and therefore its removal would not make a positive contribution to sustaining the historic significance of the building. Furthermore the proposed insulation and line walling would alter the character of the buildings and affect the understanding of their historical use. It is acknowledged that the proposal would not harm the character of significance of the Appleshaw Conservation Area, however it is the less than substantial harm to the listed building that is objected to. The proposal therefore fails to accord with the requirements of policy E9 of the RLP.

8.12 **Biodiversity**

The application has been supported by a bat survey report which identified that the existing barn provides numerous points that can be used by bats for roosting and/ or access to roosts. Subsequent emergence and re-entry surveys identified a small day roost was present under the roof tiles of the western and southern roof tiles. A number of other bat species were also recorded foraging and commuting across the site.

8.13 Two swallow nests were recorded during the survey which would be lost as a result of the development. Mitigation measures include the installation of swallow nest bowls post works and ecological enhancements would include the installation of 2 bat boxes. It is considered that provided that the recommended mitigation measures are carried out there would be no objection on ecological grounds.

8.14 The application has been reviewed by the Ecology Officer who is satisfied that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity and therefore there would be no conflict with policy E5 of the RLP.

9.0 **CONCLUSION**

9.1 In conclusion the proposed development would accord with policy E5 in terms of its impact on biodiversity. However the proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the buildings' significance and would therefore fail to accord with policy E9 of the RLP.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the reason:

- 1. The proposed development, specifically the loss of the second floor covering and insulation, would have a harmful impact on the significance of the listed building as it would adversely affect the understanding of its importance and historic significance. Therefore it would not make a positive contribution to sustaining the significance of the heritage assets affected. The less than substantial harm identified as a result of the proposal would not be outweighed by the benefits of the scheme and would be contrary to policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2016.**

Note to applicant:

- 1. In reaching this decision Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. TVBC work with applicants and their agents in a positive and proactive manner offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of issues that may arise in dealing with the application and where possible suggesting solutions.**
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