

Planning & Environment Council

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| Date: | 19 December 2017 |
| Title: | Bates Leys Farm, Thame OX9 2HZ |
| Contact Officer: | Graeme Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer |

Background

1. Bates Leys Farm is located west of Moreton Lane, beyond three disaggregated dwellings. Three barns form three sides of a traditional farm yard, adjacent to the Farm and its garden.

Proposed Development

2. Application P17/S4100/PAR proposes the change of use of three agricultural barns to three residential dwellings. This application has been made under Class Q (b) of the General Permitted Development Orders 2015. Comments from the Town Council should be restricted to the usual issues of transport and highways impact, noise impacts of the development, contamination and flood risks, whether the building's location or site makes it impractical or undesirable to be converted to a dwellinghouse, and the design or external appearance of the building.

Discussion

3. The two parking spaces shown to the south of Unit B, and east of Unit A are, presumably hard standing, laid down where none currently exists. Such works would be considered development and are beyond what is permitted under Schedule 2, Part 3, Q. (b) Q.1 (i), of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015. This section prescribes what works are permitted in the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential use.
4. Similarly, the application fails the test of permitted development as although the curtilage shown equals the land area occupied by the agricultural building, building C is using garden curtilage from the adjacent Bates Ley Farm garden. This is conversion of residential land, and is, therefore, development outside Schedule 2, Part 3, Q. (b) Q.1 (i) of the GPDO 2015.
5. Notwithstanding the fact that this application should not be made under permitted development, comments the Town Council should consider making include:
 - The fact the three dwellinghouses will be over 600 metres from the nearest adopted highway is illustrative of the fact that the residents will in rely on private vehicles for access to wider facilities.
 - Access along Moreton Lane is along a single-carriageway trackway. Conflict with pedestrians and cyclists is extremely likely, given that it is a public footpath to Moreton, and a main access point to the Phoenix Trail, Sustrans Route 57. The initial 140 metre section is particularly hazardous for pedestrians as the trackway is flanked by sloping verges that are overgrown. There are no refuge points for pedestrians along this section, nor for most of Moreton Lane.
 - There is only one vehicle passing place, 150m from the public highway.
 - The buildings are described as being made from steel frame and brick, but the dimensions shown suggest the buildings are made of blockwork. The design is, therefore, although sympathetic to their original purpose, extremely utilitarian. Building "B", is particularly compromised with three surface treatments shown on the west elevation.

Recommendation:

6. It is recommended that this planning application is recommended for refusal on the grounds that access arrangements are such that intensification of use would lead to significant safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists; that the remote location of the buildings will lead to an overreliance on private motor vehicles; and that the application includes both works and change of use that do not meet the criteria for permitted development.