

Planning Statement - Barn at Orchard Brow Barn, Haile

Proposal:

Conversion of Grade II Listed barn from agricultural to residential use to facilitate the extension of the existing dwelling.



Applicants: Mr and Mrs Douglas, Orchard Brow Barn, Haile, Egremont, Cumbria

January 2023

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The owners of the property, Mr & Mrs Douglas, live at the property which is a three bedroom barn conversion that occupies approximately a third of the footprint of the grade II listed building. The remainder of the barn was previously used for agriculture but has been used as ad hoc storage relating to the residential property in recent years.
- 1.2 The owners are seeking planning permission and listed building consent to convert the remainder of the barn into a residential use. The remainder of the barn will be incorporated into the existing residential property. The lower ground floor will act as a 'granny annex' that will provide additional ancillary accommodation to the residential property.
- 1.3 It is contended that the proposed works could be carried out in a sensitive manner which will both conserve and enhance the grade II listed building, the setting of the grade II listed building and the neighbouring listed building. Furthermore the works will protect the heritage asset by ensuring that the large barn will become financially viable to maintain by maximising the viable use of the property in accordance with national planning policy.
- 1.4 Over the last 12 months the applicants have been working with the Council's planning officers and the Conservation and Design officer to propose a scheme which is in accordance with the Council's local plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.0 Planning history

2.1 Planning ref 4/82/0536/076 - conversion of barn into 3 dwellings

2.2 Planning ref 4/87/0630/076 - outline application for conversion of barn to two houses

2.3 14th July 1989 – property becomes a Grade II Listed Building

3.0 Design & Access Statement

3.1 Access

3.1.2 Access from the highway to Orchard Brow Barn is currently by a driveway that is located immediately south of the barn. This would remain the same once planning permission was granted. The highway, Hardgates Road runs from Blackbeck Roundabout in the south, past the barn and through the centre of Haile.

3.2 The Site

3.2.1 The land is located in the village of Haile which is approximately 1 mile east of Thornhill and 2 miles south east of Egremont. The land under the applicant's ownership equates to 2.06 hectares but the part of the barn that is subject to this application for planning permission and listed building consent is 136 square metres. The site has been utilised as predominantly residential property for the last 30 years. Directly to the west is the highway. To the eastern rear of the barn is a hard surfaced area, amenity space and then grazing land which is also under the ownership of the applicants. To the north of the site is the grade II listed Orchard Brow Farm which is a residential property too.

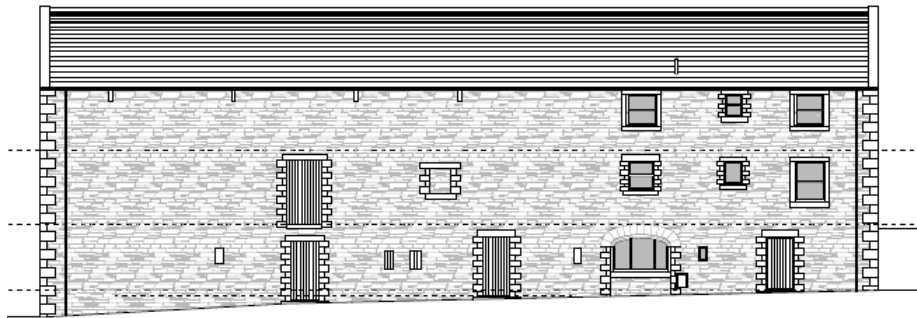
Facing west towards the barn



3.3 The Proposal

- 3.3.1 This application seeks to materially change the use of the remainder of the barn to residential use and incorporate the remainder of the barn into the existing residential property. The lower ground floor would act as a 'granny annex' that will provide additional ancillary two bed accommodation to the residential property. Overall the property will be a four / five bedroom property with two additional bedrooms available for family or guests in the granny annex.
- 3.3.2 To facilitate the residential use it is proposed to utilise existing openings where possible to keep physical changes to the barn to a minimum. The most prominent elevation is the western elevation and thereby it is proposed to utilise the existing openings on the elevation. There is only one new opening proposed which is designed to match three of the four existing openings.

Existing Western Elevation



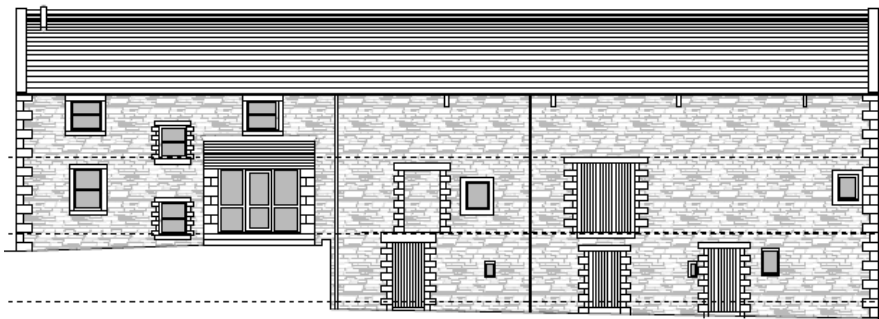
Proposed Western elevation



The proposed development does not try to mimic the initial conversion style when the first third of the barn was converted in the 1980s. The original conversion was achieved by regular and close knit openings which have caused harm to the heritage asset. The proposed works therefore will demonstrate that this is a barn that has been converted in stages with the second stage more sensitive and conservative in its approach.

3.3.3 The eastern elevation is the least prominent elevation as it can not be viewed from any public viewpoint. Notwithstanding this it is proposed to continue a sensitive and conservative design approach where possible by utilising existing or historic openings. There will be one new opening on the second floor. Solar panels have been included on the Eastern roof face to reduce the carbon footprint of the property.

Existing Eastern Elevation



Proposed Eastern Elevation



4.0 Heritage Asset Statement (“HAS”)

4.1.1 This HAS assesses the significance of the heritage assets at Orchard Barn, Haile and what impact the proposed residential conversion of the remainder of the barn will have on the historical and architectural interest of the listed building and the neighbouring listed building, Orchard Brow Farm.

4.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 128 that:

‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.

4.1.3 In order to meet this requirement, most local authorities require a HAS to be prepared to inform and accompany proposals affecting heritage assets by including the requirement in their local list. It is our understanding that a HAS is not a requirement in Copeland Borough Council’s local list but we have provided a HAS to assist the Council in assessing the impact of the proposed development on the heritage assets that are within the vicinity of the proposed development.

4.2 Assessment of the Heritage Asset

4.2.1 The barn was listed on the 14th July 1989 and appears to have been listed primarily for group value rather than any individual architectural or historical interest: -

*HAILE - NY 00 NW 3/27 Barn immediately to south of Orchard Brow (qv) GV II Bank barn. Early C19. Dressed stone with slate roof. West elevation has 3 cow house entrances and larger elliptical-headed entrance. Groups of 3 ventilation slots. Winnowing door above. East elevation similar, with barn entrance. **Included for group value.***

4.2.2 The barn would have been historically associated and connected by Orchard Brow Farm itself which is listed separately:-

GV II House. Early C19. Roughcast stone with ashlar dressings and slate roof. West elevation of 2 storeys and 3 bays. Windows have plain stone surrounds and are sashed with glazing bars. Entrance has overlight and 6-panel door. Gable-end stacks. Rear similar.

Grey UPVC downspout and stonework in need of repair on western elevation Original arched opening concealed by porch added in 1980s on eastern elevation



4.2.3 The existing residential conversion has been carried out in a somewhat unsympathetic manner with a considerable number of new and uniformed openings created in the fabric of the listed structure, a mixture of grey and dark plastic UPVC downspouts and a porch that conceals an original opening. The remainder of the barn that has not

being converted is looking tired and in need of repairs. Notwithstanding the above the property is still an attractive feature. The barn is a large red sandstone structure with slate roof. Due to its size and location immediately abutting the highway it represents a substantial and prominent traditional feature within the village of Haile. The building is the dominant feature when entering the village of Haile from the south and sets the tone for the village's predominantly vernacular design, rural character and attractive setting.

4.2.4 The condition and appearance of the barn that has yet to be converted is showing signs of wear and tear and there is a danger that the heritage asset could deteriorate further if the remainder of the building continues to be vacant in the future.

4.3 Impact of the proposed development

4.3.1 Due to the prominence of the barn when entering Haile from the south there is a danger that a badly designed proposal would have had a noticeable and negative impact on the setting of the heritage asset. However it is argued the proposed works are sympathetic and will improve the condition and appearance of the grade ii listed building. We therefore assert that the proposed development would have no negative impact on the setting of both listed buildings.

4.3.2 It has to be considered whether the barn can be converted to a residential use without causing any structural harm. A non intrusive survey was carried out on the 17th March 2017 to support this application. Although the footings were not exposed the first floor of the barn was used as a hayloft and therefore loading of the barn walls would have been much greater than they would be for the proposed residential use. That coupled with the already successful conversion of part of the barn removes any element of concern that the structure could not support a residential conversion. The survey recommends that the walls are cleaned down and repointed. Furthermore that timber lintels and inserts are removed and replaced with concrete and or stone elements. The proposed conversion

would be in accordance with the survey and utilise sandstone lintels to stay true to the original build material of the barn. Due to the low number of new openings it is contended that the proposed works can be carried out without any harm being caused to the structural integrity of the building.

- 4.3.3 Historic England provide further guidance that relates to traditional farm buildings; ‘The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice’ and ‘Living Buildings in a living Landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings’. The guidance encourages developers to understand “the farm building’s historical, structural and spatial attributes” to inform the subsequent design work”. Furthermore that developers should avoid extensions that compromise the setting and character of the farm buildings. The proposed design of the conversion respects the barn’s historical use as a hayloft and the large opening to the rear elevation utilises an existing large opening and emphasises the historical use of the opening to store and remove hay in an efficient manner. No extension is proposed as the rear elevation backs on to the historic farmyard and any extension will compromise the historical context and setting of the barn and harm the uniformity of the building at present.
- 4.3.4 The guidance encourages applicants to ‘minimise loss and intervention in significant historical fabric during repair and conversion’. The proposed openings in the elevations are predominantly created by utilising existing openings. This was clearly not the practice in the previous conversion works. Utilising the existing openings where possible will ensure the minimum intervention in the historical fabric of the building.
- 4.3.5 The guidance encourages to maintain the open character of farm buildings by open planned living and the openness of roof structures. Both recommendations are at the heart of the proposed conversion in relation to the internal works., particularly the proposed kitchen
- 4.3.6 As well as encouraging developers to utilise existing openings the document tries to prevent ‘domestic’ window styles. The large opening proposed for the first floor on the rear elevation is not domestic in its style and

all other openings are either utilising existing openings or repeating the style of openings already on the second floor of the existing residential conversion. It should be noted that some harm has already been carried out to the converted part of the property where domestic windows predominate.

- 4.3.7 The guidance encourages applicants to consider the impact that works could have on the historic farmstead and the local landscape. The proposed conversion will leave the concreted farm yard to the rear of the barn untouched and no extension is proposed which could interfere with the pattern of the historic farmstead. As the conversion would just utilise the existing barn this will have a minimal impact on the local landscape too.
- 4.3.8 The guidance encourages conversions to keep farm buildings open rather than to subdivide excessively. The proposed layout achieves this by proposing an open plan layout with the kitchen/diner being a large room that is the centre piece of the conversion and that will allow occupants to appreciate the historical and architectural significance of the building by having the original roof king post trusses exposed above. Furthermore rather than split the property into three separate residential units, as planned in 1982 (planning reference 4/82/0536/076) It will be one large residential property that will retain the open character of the barn.
- 4.3.9 The guidance emphasises how the materials used in constructing farm buildings can impact on the character of a rural landscape. The barn's imposing elevations are constructed of salvaged St Bees sandstone like many historic buildings in Copeland; particularly in the Egremont area. The proposed conversion will allow the pointing and repairs to be carried out to the elevations which will improve the landscape amenity when entering Haile.
- 4.3.10 The guidance sets out that residential use is often the most damaging in terms of its impact on the historic features of agricultural buildings. In this instance the possible damage has already been carried out with the insensitive

conversion of a third of the barn into a residential property. Notwithstanding the above it must be noted that the residential conversion did not prevent the barn becoming listed two years later in 1989. However we believe our proposed conversion of the remainder is more sensitive and will ensure the barn is put to a financially viable use and thereby ensure the heritage asset is not lost in the future.

4.3.11 The guidance suggests the following are the key and defining characteristics that should be retained:

- walling materials and finishes;
- the pattern of existing doors and windows;
- roof form, materials and details;
- reducing the need for new external openings, through careful attention to the existing character of internal spaces;
- historic features including door and window treatment, exposed roof trusses, floor structure, machinery, floor surfaces;
- significant aspects of internal layout;
- prominent elevations;
- the building or farmstead setting, including hard landscaping, ancillary structures and service provision, and its relationship to the landscape; and
- boundaries and hard landscaping materials.

Our design proposal takes into account all of the above bullet points to ensure that the barn will be sensitively converted.

4.4 National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) Test

4.4.1 It is contended that there is no harm to the significance of Orchard Brow Barn as a grade II listed building. However, if the Council disagrees, it must be agreed by all parties that the harm is less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF. More than substantial harm equates to the loss of a grade II listed building.

4.4.2 The NPPF states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to a significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (para 134). It must be highlighted that the heritage asset has already been harmed due to the unsympathetic residential conversion prior to the building being listed and the current condition of the remainder of the barn which is no longer used for its original purpose as an agricultural barn. The proposed conversion predominantly utilises existing or historical openings and enhances the heritage asset. Rather than cause needless harm to the significance of the heritage asset by attempting to subdivide the building into two or three residential properties that would have required numerous additional new openings, the property will remain one residential property and thereby retain as much character of the property as possible whilst enabling a more viable use so as to secure the heritage asset for future generations. Therefore this proposed development does secure the grade II listed building’s optimum viable use.

4.6 Conclusion

4.6.1 It is contended that the proposed development conserves the significance of the heritage asset. Furthermore it will ensure that cosmetic and structural repairs are carried out to enhance the appearance of the heritage asset. If the Council disagrees the proposed development ensures the future of the heritage asset by providing a financially

more viable use of the Orchard Brow Barn which has been designed in a sympathetic manner and minimises any change to the barn on the most prominent roadside elevation.

5.0 Planning Policy and its application to the proposed development

5.1 The following policies from the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (December 2013) (“Local Plan”) have been identified which are relevant to the proposal:-

5.2 The principle of residential conversion

5.2.1 Policy ST2 restricts development outside the Council’s defined settlement boundaries to that which has a proven requirement for such a location. The proposed development site is not located in a settlement boundary; as is the rest of the village of Haile.

5.2.2 One example of a proven need is *“Development providing homes to meet the defined needs of the population, with need for rural/non-settlement location to be proven in each case.”*

5.2.3 Paragraph 3.5.17 of the Local Plan lists exceptions when residential development can occur outside settlement boundaries as conversion of rural buildings to residential use (subject to Policy DM15A); but development would be restricted by s106 agreement to secure local occupancy restriction

5.2.4 Policy DM15A states conversion of buildings to residential use in rural will be permitted so long as **all** of the following are fulfilled:

A - Applicants can demonstrate that alternative employment or mixed use live-work accommodation or community use is not viable –

- A community or live work use will likely have an unreasonable impact on residential amenity in this location and conversion works are likely to be expensive due to the property being a Grade II listed building. Therefore it is unlikely to be financially viable or desirable due to the close proximity of two residential properties.

B - Where the subject building is currently or was last used for agriculture, applicants can demonstrate that there is no alternative site or premises available in the locality within existing settlements –

- There is no alternative location within the village

C - The building is structurally sound and is capable of accepting conversion works without significant rebuilding, modifications or extensions

- The building is in need of minor cosmetic repairs but is structurally robust and watertight. The concern is that the property could need more extensive repairs in the future if it is not brought into a viable use. A structural survey has been provided with this application.

D - The building in its existing form is of a traditional construction and appearance and the proposed conversion works conserve the essential character of the building and its surroundings. In this regard existing features of interest and external facing materials should as far as possible be retained

- We propose to utilise all the existing openings as well as reveal openings that have previously been bricked up. This ensure that there are only three new openings required overall on the two primary elevations.

E - The building is located within or adjacent to a village or existing group of buildings

- The property is located within Haile village

F - The building is served by a satisfactory access from the public highway network without the requirement for extensive private roads or tracks and domestic services such as water supply and electricity must be readily available to the site

- Existing parking is located to the rear of the barn for at least 4 vehicles. Further parking spaces can be provided if required by Cumbria Highways

G - The conversion works incorporate reasonable standards of amenity

- The proposed new openings will have limited impact on the nearest property Orchard Brown Farm located to the north east of the barn and there will be no direct overlooking of either property.

H The number of dwellings proposed is appropriate to the scale of adjoining development and will not substantially increase the number of dwellings in the countryside

- No new dwellings are proposed but the extension of an existing dwelling.

5.2.5 Policy SS2 aims for 50% new housing to be provided on brownfield land. Although not a proposal for a new house it will significantly increase the size of the existing house and utilises previously developed land. Therefore the proposal complies with the aims of the strategic policy.

5.2.6 Policy SS3 states that applications for housing development should demonstrate how the proposal helps to deliver a range and choice of good quality and affordable homes for everyone. Paragraph 5.1.1 states

“Socio-economic and marketing assessments have repeatedly identified a shortage of ‘executive’ quality housing, resulting in the socially mobile looking for homes outside the Borough and acting as a potential disincentive to inward investment”

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2011) highlights a general lack of choice with the current stock, and a need for family homes and for housing to accommodate the ageing population. The extension of the existing three-bedroom property into parts of the existing barn will ensure the property is an attractive, large family/executive home that will contribute towards this identified shortfall. Furthermore, the granny annex will

provide flexible living arrangements for future occupiers with ageing parents or young adults being able to live with their family.

5.3 How the proposed development will impact on the heritage asset

- 5.3.1 **Policy ENV4** supports proposals for heritage led regeneration, ensuring that any listed buildings are put to an appropriate, viable and sustainable use and strengthening the distinctive character of settlements, through the application of high quality urban design and architecture that respects this character and enhances the settings of listed buildings. Paragraph 7.5.5 elaborates on this policy and suggests the main risk to listed buildings is that they fall into disuse, become derelict and have to be demolished. It asserts the Council is keen to avoid situations like this and therefore will be supportive of any proposal that can bring a vacant listed building back into use, where that use is viable, sustainable and appropriate to its location.
- 5.3.2 The proposed residential use of the remainder of the barn will ensure that the listed building does not fall into disuse and optimises its viable use. A residential use is both practical and desirable in this residential location but, at the same time, does not overdevelop the site by trying to provide additional residential units within the barn which would have led to ore inappropriate openings being required to accommodate the additional units.
- 5.3.3 **Policy DM27** states development that protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character of the Borough's historic sites and their settings will be supported. For listed buildings it states that development requires development proposals to only be permitted if it respects the architectural and historic character of the building, avoids any substantial demolition and does not have a significant adverse effect on the setting or important views of the building. Furthermore changes of use are only permitted which contributes to the conservation and overall economic viability of the building, and where the use can be implemented without any adverse alterations to the building.

5.3.4 The **National Planning Policy Framework** states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to a significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (para 134). Although we assert that the conversion of the remainder of the barn will conserve and enhance the heritage asset. If the Council disagree or has concerns relating to how the barn will be converted, it has to consider the benefit of the provision of a much needed 'executive home' and securing the viable use of the barn as a heritage asset and then make a balanced judgment on whether ensuring the viable use outweighs the less than significant harm to the heritage asset. It must be noted as a material planning consideration that the Council's Conservation and Design Officer supported the principle of a residential conversion and their main concern with the applicant's initial proposed plans was the number of new openings being proposed. On the rear elevation it was initially proposed to provide six new openings and enlarge an existing opening. Therefore the plan submitted have reflected the officer's comments by reducing the number of new openings to two whilst retaining an enlarged opening.

5.3.5 For further analysis of the impact of the development on the heritage assets please view the Heritage Asset Statement (part 4 of this document)

5.4 Amenity and design

5.4.1 **Policy DM12** recommends that new residential developments should incorporate minimum separation distances whereby a minimum of 21.0m is retained between directly facing elevations of dwellings containing windows of habitable rooms and a minimum of 12.0m is retained between directly facing elevations of dwellings containing windows of habitable rooms and a gable or windowless elevation.

5.4.2 These standards are more appropriate for new residential development but are still a material planning consideration when considering whether a converted barn to residential would impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties. The below photo demonstrates the view of the neighbouring property from the southern boundary of Orchard Brow Barn.



The ground floor windows are approximately 12 metres away from the barn and only provide partial overlooking of the barn and vice versa. It must be noted that there would be no direct overlooking which was envisaged in policy DM12. This partial overlooking could be addressed by a boundary treatment, landscaping or extension if considered more harmful than the benefit of providing an additional residential unit and providing the listed building with a viable future.

5.5 Paragraph 14 and 49 NPPF

- 5.5.1 Copeland Borough Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing and therefore it's planning policies are considered out of date. Paragraph 14 requires that when a local plan is considered out of date planning permission be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.
- 5.5.2 This document has set out that the proposed development does comply with the local plan but if the local planning authority disagrees they must either assert there is significant and demonstrable harm that outweighs the benefit of the scheme or contend that the proposed development does not comply with paragraph 134 of the NPPF. The benefits of this scheme are it facilitates much needed executive housing within the borough and provides a viable use for a grade ii listed building

5.6 Conclusion

- 5.6.1 During the pre application advice stage the Planning Officer and Conservation & Design Officer on behalf of the local planning authority agreed with the principal of converting the remainder of the property to a residential use. This is a material planning consideration. The advice provided expressed concerns at the number of openings and this advice has been taken on board and incorporated into the submitted plans.

5.6.2 It is contended that this application has demonstrated that the proposed development is in accordance with both the Council's local plan and the NPPF and there are no other material planning considerations to refuse planning permission or listed building consent. The proposed works will improve the condition and appearance of the grade ii listed property, improve the area's provision of executive homes and provide a viable use to secure the future of an important and visible heritage asset within the village of Haile.