

Item No	Application No. and Parish	Proposal, Location and Applicant
(5)	10/02090/FULD Beech Hill Parish	Replacement of existing barn with barn-style dwelling and conversion of existing traditional brick and timber cart house to provide ancillary accommodation. Demolition of remaining barns and outbuildings. Trunkwell Farm, Beech Hill Road, Beech Hill, Reading Mr Robert Walton

Recommendation Summary: The Head of Planning & Countryside be authorised to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION**

Ward Member(s): Mrs M Lock
Mr K Lock

Reason for Committee determination: Called in by Councillor K Lock: Site has been the subject of more than one application and as this is another change it is considered that Committee should see it.

Committee Site Visit: 24.11.2010

Contact Officer Details	
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1. Site History

05/02807/FULD	Withdrawn 3/2/2006	Conversion of traditional barns to create a single dwelling and annexe. Demolition of modern farm buildings and landscape re-instatement.
05/02808/FUL	Approved 8/2/2006	Demolition of part of ground and first floor of Trunkwell Farmhouse and replacement with a new extension and conversion of existing outbuilding New barn-style garage and demolition of modern farm buildings
06/00958/FULD	Refused 29/06/2006	Conversion of traditional barns to single dwelling and annexe. Demolition of modern farm buildings, landscaping.
06/02155/FULD	Approved 8/9/2007	Conversion of traditional brick and timber farm barns to create a single dwelling and B1 (live/work office space). Provision of sustainable development works. Demolition of modern farm buildings and landscape re-instatement.
09/00736/FUL	Approved 15/12/2009	Demolition of existing farmhouse buildings and erection of a replacement dwelling house and a detached triple garage. (Adjacent site)
09/01864/FUL	Withdrawn 6/11/2009	Change of use of land from agricultural to commercial.

2. Publicity of Application

Neighbour notification expired 12th October 2010
Site notice expired 21st October 2010.

3. Consultations and Representations

Beech Hill Parish Council:

The majority of BHPC consider that this site is too remote for low cost or starter homes. We support the replacement of the barn with a residential dwelling.

With the building of a new house under application 09/00736/FUL, it is important that the two properties complement each other. We would not want these two houses to become a gated community.

The house will be prominently visible from the footpath that runs from Great Park Farm to the Beech Hill Road. Currently a farm track runs through the farm and could provide access to this footpath to make a circular walk on the North side of the Beech Hill Road. We want this track to be retained and eventually made available as a Permitted Path.

We assume that this new dwelling will provide some Section 106 money to the village.

Highways:

No objections

Archaeology

No objections subject to building recording condition

Environmental Health	No objections subject to contaminated land and dust conditions, informative re noise during demolition
Thames Water	No objections
Ecology	No objections subject to conditions
Developer Contributions requested	
Highways	£4000
Education	£5785
Open Space	£2364
Health Care	£221
Adult Social Care	£759
Correspondence:	One letter of support from nearby residents

4. Policy Considerations

Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
 Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing
 Planning Policy Statement 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
 Regional Spatial Strategy (temporarily re-instated)
 CC1 – Sustainable Development
 CC6 – Sustainable Communities and Character of the Environment
 C4 - Landscape and countryside management
 The following policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 are relevant:
 OVS1 – Overall Strategy
 OVS2 - Core Policy
 OVS3 – Planning and Community Benefits
 ENV1 – The Wider Countryside
 ENV.20 The Redevelopment of Existing Buildings in the Countryside
 Quality Design – Supplementary Planning Document

5. Description of Development

The application is for the erection of a new dwelling to replace a number of existing barns around Trunkwell Farm. One building referred to as the cartshed is to be retained as ancillary accommodation to the proposed dwelling. The site is accessed via an access track off Beech Hill Road which serves the Farm and Trunkwell Lodge which is under separate ownership. There is an extant planning permission for the replacement of the existing farmhouse (09/00736/FUL) and the demolition of farm buildings to the east of the access road. The current application is for the demolition of a number of farm buildings to the west of the access road and building a new detached house in addition to the already permitted replacement farmhouse.

6. Consideration of the Proposal

The main issues raised by this proposal are

- 6.1. The principle of the development
- 6.2. The impact on the character of the area
- 6.3. Other matters - Developer contributions

6.1. The principle of the development

6.1.1 The site lies outside the identified settlement boundaries in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 (WBDLP) where development is severely restricted. National guidance in PPS7 states that the replacement of non-residential buildings with residential development in the countryside should be treated as new housing development. It also states that new house building should be strictly controlled in the countryside, away from established settlements or from areas allocated for housing on development plans.

6.1.2 The application falls to be considered under Policy ENV.20 of the WBDLP. This Policy relates to proposals for the redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside. The Policy states that proposals for the redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside will be permitted where the proposal is in a sustainable location and particularly where it will assist the diversification of the rural economy and secure environmental improvements. Additionally proposals must meet a number of criteria.

6.1.3 It is not considered that the proposal is in a sustainable location. The location is not well related to the existing settlement pattern, is in a relatively isolated location and is only accessible by private car. The proposal does not therefore meet the principal requirement of this policy.

6.1.4 The proposal should also be viewed against the criteria which need to be met in this policy. Criterion (a) states that the redevelopment should have no greater impact (in terms of the size and bulk of buildings or site coverage) than the existing development. Whilst there are a number of barns to be removed, the proposed new dwelling would be built roughly on the footprint of the large steel framed open sided barn furthest to the west on the site. The proposed building, although barn like in shape, is taller by over a metre and has large areas of glazing which would render the building very prominent in the landscape, particularly in view of its elevated site with extensive views to the north and west. Whilst there is an expectation of seeing modern and traditional barns within the landscape, the proposed building clearly has a domestic appearance and would have a greater impact on the character of the area than the existing barns.

6.1.5 Criterion (b) relates to visual impact on the character of the area which will be discussed more fully in the next section.

6.1.6. Criterion (c) states that the redevelopment respects local building styles and materials. Whilst the barn-like structure of the design is appropriate, it is not considered that the extensive glazing is appropriate in this rural location visible from public viewpoints. Criterion(d) is not relevant as it relates to listed buildings. There are no listed buildings affected by the proposal.

6.1.7 Criterion (e) relates to the extent of the curtilage. The red line boundary encloses the area covered by barns as existing. Criterion (f) relates to traffic generation. Highways have

no objection to the proposal and therefore there are no objections with regard to the impact on the highway.

6.1.8 Criteria (g) and (h) refer to environmental issues and protected species. A protected species survey has been submitted with the application and the Council's Ecologist has no objections subject to conditions.

6.1.9 The notes which relate to this policy state in paragraph 2.47.2 of the WBDLP that redevelopment would not be acceptable in cases where the existing buildings are in an advanced state of dereliction and vacant, as the introduction of a new use in new buildings would be intrusive in a rural area. It should be noted that a permission granted in 2006 was for the redevelopment of the existing brick built barn as a dwelling and live work unit. However, half of this barn has now collapsed and the other half is derelict. The buildings all appear to be derelict and little used and the area is overgrown. It is therefore considered that this proposal does not comply with either the principles or the some of the detailed criteria of Policy ENV.20 of the WBDLP.

6.1.10 Policy OVS.1 of the WBDLP states that development should be in sustainable locations which follow the existing settlement pattern and minimise the need for travel. The council will prefer to see the redevelopment of brownfield land than the use of 'greenfield' land. Agricultural land is classified as 'greenfield' land and therefore this proposal also does not comply with the requirements of this policy.

6.1.11 Therefore in summary the proposal is not acceptable in principal as it is contrary to Policy PPS7 and to Policies OVS.1 and ENV.20 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

6.2. The impact on the character of the area.

6.2.1 The site is in an elevated location with extensive views across the countryside to the north and west. At present the cluster of farm buildings is not prominent in the landscape and consists of a small brick built traditional barn, a block built barn, the low roofed cartshed and a large steel-framed, corrugated iron roofed, open-sided storage barn. Although the site is now derelict and overgrown, the cluster of buildings is what would have been expected in the countryside for a working farm.

6.2.2 Trunkwell farm is typical of many clusters of farm buildings in the locality. The fact that the buildings are no longer in agricultural use and are deteriorating is not sufficient reason to allow the construction of a new dwelling in order to remove some of these 'untidy' agricultural buildings. Planning guidance does not encourage granting planning permission to allow the 'tidying up' of sites as this could act as an incentive to landowners to allow buildings and sites to become derelict and unsightly.

6.2.3 The proposal to remove most of the buildings and replace them with one taller building to the extreme west of the site will render that new building more prominent and inappropriate in the landscape. The proposed building has a smaller footprint but is nevertheless a large dwelling, taller than the modern barn and characterised by extensive areas of glazing covering the whole of the gabled parts of the dwelling. The dwelling would be clearly visible from the nearby public right of way (footpath BeechHill 4/1) and from further afield, particularly from the north.

6.2.4 It is therefore considered that the proposal is inappropriate in its design and character to this rural location and would be visually harmful to the amenities of the surrounding countryside. Furthermore the extensive use of glazing is inappropriate and would result in the building being more visible in the countryside. The proposal is therefore contrary to criteria (b) and (c) of Policy ENV.20 and is also contrary to Policy OVS.2 of the WBDLP.

6.2. Developer contributions

No s106 has been signed in respect of developer contributions.

7. Conclusion

The proposal is to replace a traditional cluster of vacant and derelict farm buildings with a new dwelling. The proposal is in an unsustainable location and does not comply with other criteria in Policy ENV.20 of the WBDLP. It is also contrary to Policies OVS.1 and 2 of the WBDLP and national guidance in PPS7 and would have an unacceptable impact on the character and amenity of the local countryside. It is therefore recommended that the application is refused

8. Full Recommendation

That the Head of Planning and Countryside be authorised to **REFUSE** planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The application sites lies outside any identified settlement boundaries on the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and within a rural location in the countryside. The application site is in an isolated location, not well related to settlements and is not readily accessible by means other than the private car which would be needed to reach the nearest services and facilities. As such the proposal is considered to be in an unsustainable location and the proposed replacement of farm buildings would be contrary to national guidance within PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, Core Policy OVS.1 and Policy ENV.20 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan which seek to ensure that development is in sustainable locations which are well related to existing settlements and accessible by means other than the private car.
2. The proposal is for the replacement of a number of rural barns with a new dwelling house in a rural location. It is considered that this would have a greater impact than the existing buildings in terms of its prominent siting in this rural location where it would be visually harmful to the surrounding countryside. In addition the design of the proposed building with extensive use of glazing is likely to increase the impact of the proposal and result in a greater loss of visual amenity in this rural location. This is contrary to the guidance in PPS7 and Policy ENV.20, and OVS.2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 which seek to ensure that proposals show a high standard of design which is appropriate to the rural location and would not be visually harmful to the surrounding countryside.
3. The development fails to provide an appropriate scheme of works or on and off-site mitigation measures to accommodate the impact of the development on local infrastructure, services, or amenities or provide an appropriate mitigation measure such as a planning obligation. The proposal is therefore contrary to government

advice on mitigating the impact of development, Policy OVS3 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007 as well as the West Berkshire District Council's adopted SPG4/04 'Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development'.