

GREAT SHEFFORD 13/00161  Pins Ref 2197063	No. 1 Northfield Farm Cottages, Great Shefford Mrs L Ahlquist	Change of use of first floor existing storage area above garage to ancillary residential use attached to No. 1 Northfield Farm Cottages	Delegated Refusal	Allowed 6.11.13
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### **Preliminary Matters**

For conciseness the Inspector slightly amended the description of development. Following the site visit, the appellant submitted a copy of Drawing No 286-PSS-2B which the Council confirmed it received on 6 March 2013. The plan is also referred to in the Planning Officer's report. The Inspector therefore took it into account in her determination of the appeal.

### **Main Issue**

The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety.

### **Reasons**

The appeal site includes No. 1 Northfield Farm Cottages and a garage/store building and adjacent area of hard-standing located at the rear of a terrace of three cottages which fronts onto the A338 Wantage Road (Nos. 1 - 3 Northfield Farm Cottages). The dwellings form part of a larger complex of buildings in this rural area within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The garage/store and hard-standing are accessed via a private drive from the A338 to the north of the cottages. The hard-standing has room to park a number of vehicles and there is also a large amount of space for off-road parking in front of Nos. 1 and 2 Northfield Farm Cottages.

The Council's parking standards require an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. Drawing No 286-PSS-2B shows six spaces on the hard-standing without reliance on parking in the garage/store building, and this would more than satisfy the Council's standards for the three cottages. However, the Council is concerned that the red-lined site location plan does not include Nos. 2 and 3 and the plans do not specify the parking spaces allocated for their use. For this reason it considers that the proposal would prevent the occupiers of Nos. 2 and 3 from being able to park in this area.

If this were the case, then the Inspector would accept that additional parking could occur on the lay-by at the front of the properties adjacent to the A338 or on the carriageway itself where there are no restrictions, with implications for highway safety. However, she saw no reason why the proposal would prevent the occupiers of Nos. 2 and 3 from parking at the back of their properties as they do now, notwithstanding the red-lined plan.

The Inspector therefore concluded that the proposal would not materially harm highway safety, and as such would not be contrary to Policy CS13 of the adopted West Berkshire District Core Strategy.

### ***Other Matters***

Whilst not referred to in the reason for refusal, the Planning Officer's report states that the proposal would be harmful to the AONB with reference to a previous appeal decision on the site, but does not explain how. On the basis of the submitted drawings, the Inspector did not consider that the addition of a Juliet balcony on the west elevation of the building and provision of an internal staircase would harm the landscape qualities of the AONB.

### ***Conditions***

Conditions requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, including provision of parking, are required for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning and highway safety. A condition restricting the use of the first floor area above the garage as ancillary to No. 1 Northfield Farm Cottages is necessary to prevent the formation of an



independent unit of accommodation in the countryside. The Inspector did not impose a condition specific to the provision and allocation of parking spaces as she considered that this is adequately covered by compliance with the approved plans. Where necessary she amended the wording of the conditions in order to accord with advice in Circular 11/95.

### *Conclusion*

For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the Inspector concluded that the appeal should be allowed.

### **Decision**

The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of first floor of existing storage area above garage to ancillary residential use at No. 1 Northfield Farm Cottages, Great Shefford, Hungerford RG17 7BY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 13/00161/HOUSE, dated 23 January 2013, subject to the following conditions:-

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: 286-PSS-2B and 286-PSS-04A.
- 2) The development shall not be occupied until the surface parking area has been provided in accordance with Drawing No 286-PSS-2B and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as No. 1 Northfield Farm Cottages and shall not be used as a separate dwelling unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

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