

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Steve Holland	Proposed extension to form corridor link. The Byre, 2 Bittell Farm Barns, Bittell Farm Road, Barnt Green	06.10.2020	20/00942/FUL

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **Refused**

Councillor Hotham has requested that this application be considered by Planning Committee rather than being determined under delegated powers.

Consultations

Conservation Officer

Objection. It is concluded that the proposed corridor link would harm the significance of the curtilage listed building, as it would be odds with the original plan form of the barn and detract from its simple appearance. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the Planning(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Worcestershire County Council Countryside Service

No objection

Alvechurch Parish Council Consulted 12.08.2020

Objection. The proposal does not accord with Policy HDNE1 of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan and Section 8: Examples of detail design from within the parish of the Alvechurch Parish Design Statement.

Publicity

3 neighbour letters were sent on 14th August 2020 and expired 7th September 2020.

A site notice was placed onsite on 17th August 2020 and expired on 10th September 2020. A Press Notice was placed in the Bromsgrove Standard on 21st August 2020 and expired 7th September 2020.

No comments received.

Councillor Hotham

This application has been called into Committee for members to consider the Conservation assessment

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles
BDP19 High Quality Design
BDP20 Managing the Historic Environment

Others

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
 Bromsgrove High Quality Design SPD
 Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan

Relevant Planning History

19/01125/FUL	Domestic extension to form new kitchen, utility and circulation corridor. Conversion of garage block.	Withdrawn	15.10.2019
19/01126/LBC	Domestic extension to form new kitchen, utility and circulation corridor. Conversion of garage block.	Withdrawn	15.09.2019
20/00006/FUL	Domestic extension to form new kitchen, utility and circulation corridor. Conversion of garage block.	Approved	21.02.2020
20/00007/LBC	Domestic extension to form new kitchen, utility and circulation corridor. Conversion of garage block.	Approved	21.02.2020

Assessment of Proposal

The application site is located within the Green belt and comprises of a converted barn which is curtilage listed with the main dwelling Bittell Farmhouse. This application follows the granting of planning permission and listed building consent to extend the barn to the north east end, following the linear form of the original building. The current application is looking to enlarge the accommodation further, by constructing a small extension to create a short corridor running along part of the front of the north west elevation connecting the south west part of the 'L' to the lobby adjacent to the dining room in the centre of the north east range, thereby avoiding the need to walk through the living room to access the lobby. The proposed structure would comprise a flat roofed box clad in waney edged boarding to match the finish to the new extension with a rooflight and a door and simple metal framed window to the north west elevation.

New buildings within the Green Belt are considered to be inappropriate development subject to a closed list of exceptions. The relevant exception to this application is the extension of a building provided the extensions are proportionate to the original. BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan quantify a proportionate addition to be 40% above the original. The proposed extension does not exceed this limitation and is therefore considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt. Furthermore given the courtyard form of development and the low lying height of the extension it is not considered to have a detrimental impact on openness.

2 The Byre comprises an 'L' shaped 19th century barn in a much larger complex, originally forming the agricultural buildings to the adjacent Bittell Green Farmhouse (listed Grade II). The north east south west part of the 'L' comprises a linear range which is a continuation of the adjacent and separately occupied Dove Barn immediately to the south west. The other part of the 'L' lies at a right angle to the north west. The barns, which are constructed in local redbrick beneath pitched clay tile roofs, were converted in the late 1980s to residential use. From this historic maps it is clear that the buildings are very linear in form and have been since originally constructed.

The farmstead comprising the farmhouse to the south and the surviving barns, provide evidence of the past working arrangements of the farm, from the 17th century when the farmhouse was originally constructed and through to the early 20th century, the barns dating from the 19th century. The significance of the barns is derived from their architectural and historic interest, including their simple utilitarian, linear form, their contribution to local distinctiveness, and the fact that they provide a tangible reference to the county's past agricultural heritage.

Section 16 (2) and 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires LPAs to have regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This is supported by the Historic Environment policies in BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan, which, amongst other things, state that development affecting heritage assets, should not have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance or significance of the heritage asset or heritage assets. In addition, guidance in the NPPF must also be considered. Paragraph 189 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, the level of detail being proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on significance; Paragraph 190 requires LPAs to take account of the significance of affected heritage assets when considering the impact of a proposal, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal; Paragraph 193 requires great weight to be attached to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of the level of potential harm. Any harm to or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, including its setting, requires clear and convincing justification, Paragraph 194; and Paragraph 196 requires less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

In addition, guidance in respect of rural buildings is contained within the adopted High Quality Design SPD, this replaced the previous SPG 4, 'The Conversion of Rural Buildings'. The guidance in this document highlights that barn conversions should retain the original, utilitarian character of the building and that they should be capable of conversion to a new use without significant enlargement and alteration. Section 3.10.1 states that 'Extensions will not normally be permitted as these would detract from the plain, simple and utilitarian appearance of most rural buildings.' Section 3.10.2, states that where extensions are proposed they 'must reflect the form, character and utilitarian nature of the building and proposed openings should reflect the character and scale of the original building'. Further considerations are required within policy HDNE1 of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan which states that all development proposals for Alvechurch Parish should continue to maintain, conserve and enhance the designated built heritage assets of the parish and their settings.

The proposed corridor link would alter the simple linear plan form of the existing building, forming an obvious projection from the original L-shape structure. The flat roof, and the use of the waney edged boarding against the brick of the original structure would also draw attention to the structure and would be at odds with the simple appearance of the original building eroding its existing agricultural character. It would contrast with the extension to the north east end of the building which, continues the linear form of the barn. The corridor extension would therefore undermine the character of the original barn contrary to the policies outlined above.

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/18/3218845 for a similar scheme at The Barn, Holy Cross Lane, Belbroughton DY9 9SP was dismissed recently at Appeal. In dismissing the Appeal, the Inspector stated 'The proposed extension would be attached to the rear elevation and comprise a lean-to structure. Despite the use of sympathetic materials, the extension would depart from the simple form of the existing building and detract from its character. It would introduce an, albeit small, domestic extension to a currently unadorned elevation of a converted building, that is readily appreciable as a former agricultural building. The introduction of this domestic element would be at odds with the unfussy appearance of the barn and would erode its existing agricultural character'. It is noted that the applicant has suggested that as the corridor is proposed for a rear elevation which is not visible from public views that this will reduce its impact on the significance of the curtilage listed barn. A similar argument was put forward in another appeal case, Appeal A: APP/P1805/W/16/3165990 & Appeal B: APP/P1805/Y/16/3165991 The Granary, Dagnell End Farm, Dagnell End Road, Beoley. In this case the Inspector concluded 'The harm to the listed building (as a result of the proposed extension) would not be mitigated by restricted views or landscaping because listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest. This applies to all listed buildings irrespective of any individual site context.'

The harm is considered to be less than substantial in terms of paragraph 196 of the NPPF and therefore the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The corridor link would not be required to guarantee the future of the barn as it has clearly been in residential use since the late 1980s when it was converted. Although it is accepted that the applicants wish for a corridor to improve the internal layout of the dwelling, barn conversions by their very nature do not always produce perfect residential layouts. This would not constitute a public benefit and therefore would not weigh in favour of this application.

The Conservation Officers comments have been sought on this application and an objection raised. It is also noted that Alvechurch Parish Council have also raised objection.

Given the spacious nature of the plots, orientation and distance achieved to the neighbouring dwellings no concerns are raised in respect of neighbour amenity. No objections have been received from any third parties or consultees on this application and no other planning considerations have been raised.

Give the age, character and rural location of the building it is considered possible that the site may be host to protected species such as bats. BDP21 of the Bromsgrove Plan requires the Council take appropriate steps to maintain the favourable conservation status of protected species. Furthermore, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA)

protects a number of species and their habitats in England, Scotland and Wales. The Local Planning Authority are obligated by law (Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species at a site before they make a decision on a planning application. In the absence of such definitive information the Local Planning Authority are unable consider the likely impact on protected species and their habitat and would be failing in its legal duty if it was recommended that planning permission was granted until this information was forthcoming. In this instance the applicants have undertaken a Bat Survey by Wildlife Consultants Ltd dated September 2019. The survey has not identified any bat roosts within the building and has put forward some recommendations to provide a net gain in biodiversity. Subject to conditioning the recommendations outlined this report no concerns are raised to the proposal on these grounds.

In conclusion, taking all these matters into consideration, it is determined that the proposed corridor link would harm the significance of the curtilage listed building, as it would be odds with the original plan form of the barn and detract from its simple appearance. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, BDP20 Bromsgrove District Plan and Section 5 of the Councils High Quality Design Guide SPD and Policy HDNE1 of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **Refused**

Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposed corridor link would alter the simple linear plan form of the existing building, forming an obvious projection from the original L-shape structure. The flat roof, and the use of the waney edged boarding against the brick of the original structure would also draw attention to the structure and would be at odds with the simple appearance of the original building eroding its existing agricultural character. The harm is considered to be less than substantial in terms of paragraph 196 of the NPPF, but it is not considered that any public benefits exist to justify the harm to these heritage assets. Therefore the proposal fails to preserve the historic and architectural interest of the listed building contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Paragraph 196 of the NPPF and BDP 20 of the District Plan and Policy HDNE1 of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan.

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