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Rutland County Council

Catmose,
Oakham,
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Application:	2016/0972/FUL	ITEM 3	
Proposal:	Change of use of two barns into a single dwelling.		
Address:	Meadowsweet Farm, Knossington Road, Braunston In Rutland, OAKHAM, Rutland, LE15 8QX		
Applicant:	Mr Richard Gale	Parish	Braunston-in-Rutland
Agent:	N/A	Ward	Braunston and Belton
Reason for presenting to Committee:	Applicant is a County Councillor		
Date of Committee:	20 December 2016		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the countryside, a change of use of a non-historic barn into residential use, but not restricted to occupancy by a farmer or other rural worker, is normally contrary to Policy. However, a 2015 appeal decision has already established the principle of residential use on this site, via the Prior Approval process. There are no other material considerations that would dissuade from approval of the current application.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL, subject to the following Conditions:

- The development shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
REASON – To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans: unnumbered site location plan and unnumbered site layout plan.
REASON - For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Note to Applicant

- The developer is reminded that this planning permission is only for a change of use, not any associated operational development. A further application should be submitted if any external changes are required in order to implement this permission.

Site & Surroundings

- Meadowsweet Farm is located on the southern side of Knossington Road, approximately one mile from the centre of Braunston village. The complex of farm buildings includes (from east to west):
 - A farmhouse
 - An “L” Shaped group of four barns facing onto a central courtyard, two of which are subject to the current application
 - Two larger barns further west.

Relevant Planning History

- The following table sets out the planning history of Meadowsweet Farm, where relevant to the current application. In summary:

- Planning permission was granted in 1993 for relocation of an existing farmstead from elsewhere in Rutland into Meadowsweet Farm. The permission was conditional on the farmhouse being occupied by a farmworker and their dependants.
- A further permission was granted on appeal in 2002 for the change of use of two of the smaller barns into residential use as holiday lets.
- Prior Approval (Part 3Q of the General Permitted Development Order) was then granted on appeal in 2015 for the Change of Use of three of the smaller barns into individual dwellings, including one of the two that already has permission for use as a holiday let.
- Consequently, of the four small barns located around the central courtyard, one has planning permission for use as a holiday let (and has been converted as such), two have Prior Approval for Change of Use to dwellings, and one has both planning permission (albeit not implemented) and Prior Approval. The Layout Plan at **Appendix A** to this report identifies each of these barns.

Application	Description	Decision
F/93/0199	Relocation of farmstead, including farmhouse	Approved 29/09/93
FUL/2002/0063	Change of use of agricultural storage buildings to form two holiday lets	Refused 16/04/02 Appeal Upheld 16/10/02
2015/0289/PAD	Prior Approval of Change of Use of three barns into three dwellings	Refused 22/05/15 Appeal Upheld 17/12/15

Proposal

3. The current application involves two of the smaller barns. They are adjacent to each other and share a party wall. The larger of the two has planning permission for use as a holiday let; the other has Prior Approval for Change of Use to a dwelling.
4. The proposal is for the change of use of these two barns into a single (larger) dwelling. As this is just for the change of use rather than conversion, there are no available details regarding elevational treatments. However, it is likely that such changes would be modest, given that a domestic door and windows are already installed in the holiday let and that limited additional work would be required to the smaller barn.
5. The Applicant's Supporting Statement also specifies that one internal door would be created in the internal wall currently separating the two barns.

Planning Guidance and Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 3 Rural Economy
- Section 6 Housing

The Rutland Core Strategy (2011)

- CS1 Sustainable Development
- CS4 Location of Development
- CS15 Tourism
- CS16 Rural Economy

Site Allocations and Policies DPD (2014)

- SP1 Sustainable Development
- SP6 Housing in the Countryside

Consultations

6. Braunston Parish Council

The Parish Council has submitted the same comments as for the other current application (2016/0971/FUL – removal of agricultural occupancy condition from the farmhouse). The Parish Clerk confirmed by telephone to the Case Officer that this was their intention; it was not a clerical error.

7. This is the same summary of the Parish Comments:

“Concerned at the justification for this application, as the need to remove the agricultural occupancy condition from the existing farmhouse and then re-impose it on a new dwelling closer to the farm buildings has only arisen from the applicant’s recent successful applications to convert other existing buildings from agriculture to residential, thereby separating the remaining farm buildings from the farmhouse.”

Neighbour Representations

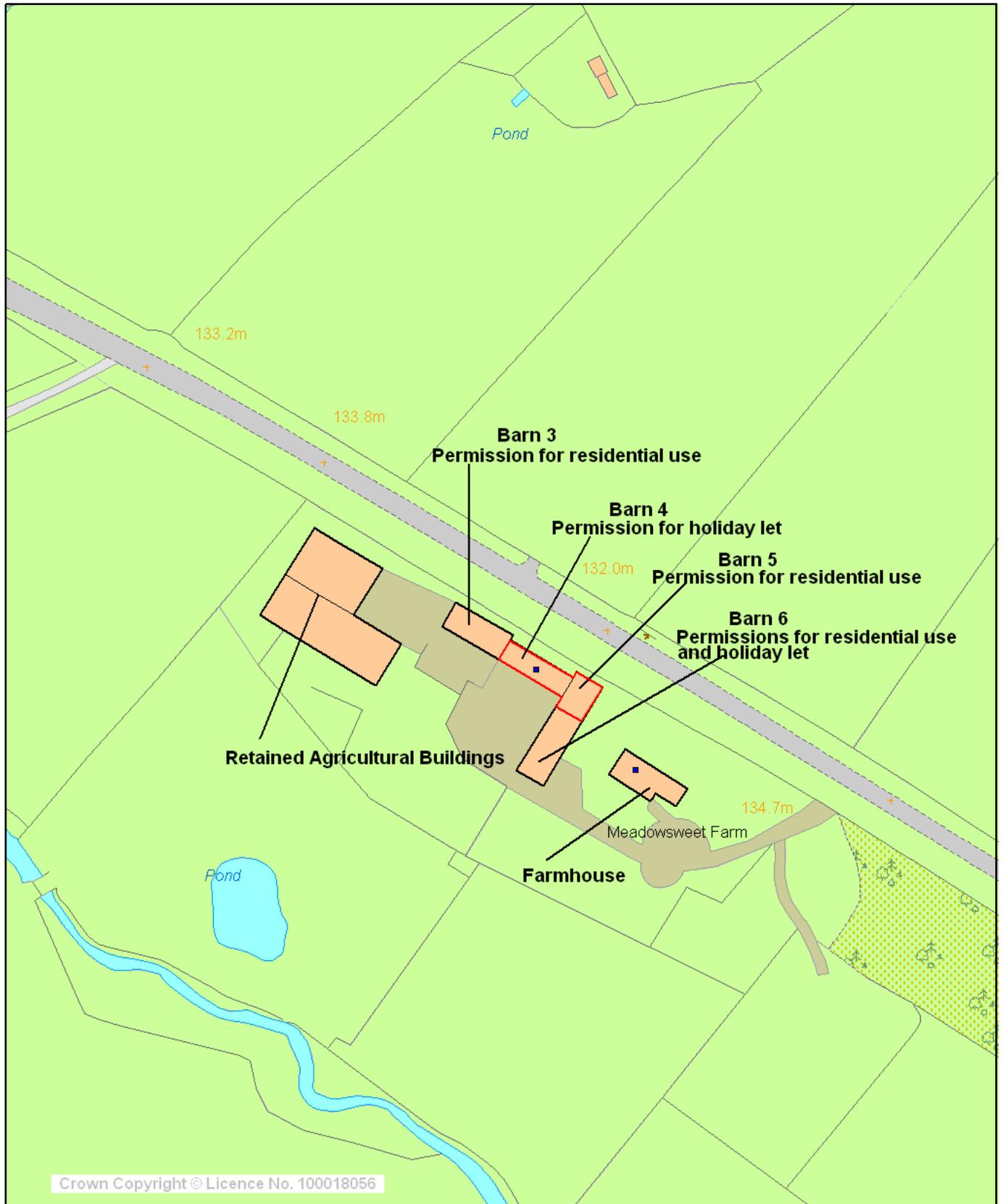
- 8. None received

Planning Assessment

- 9. The main issue is the principle of development; ie the creation of a new dwelling in the open countryside, unrelated to an agricultural or other rural land use.
- 10. Planning Policy imposes significant restraint on the creation of new dwellings in the open countryside, with Planning Permission to be granted only for dwellings that support an appropriate rural land use.
- 11. In this case, the Applicant’s Supporting Statement specifies that there are available approvals for the creation of four separate dwellings from this collection of barns, and that the current proposal would reduce that to just three.
- 12. The two barns subject to planning permission for residential use as holiday lets can, in a similar manner to the existing farmhouse, be justified as one of the permissible exceptions to the normal restraint on new dwellings in the countryside. They do not satisfy current policy (CS15), given that they are modern/functional buildings, rather than historic buildings worthy of retention for their own sake. However, in granting permission on appeal in 2002, the Planning Inspector concluded that the barns were suitable for conversion into holiday units and could be converted without material harm to the character of the surrounding area. One of those barns is now subject to the current application, but the justification for

residential use is based on a 2002 appeal decision for use as a holiday let alone. Consequently, whilst the extant holiday let approval has to be accepted as an exception to current restraint policies, the same does not apply to use as a permanent dwelling.

13. The other (smaller) barn subject to the current planning application already has planning permission for residential use, also gained at appeal, through the Prior Approval process. This is relevant, as the Prior Approval process imposes a limit a total limit of 450 square metres of residential floorspace to be created per agricultural unit, and a further restriction that only three such dwellings be created per unit.
14. The prior approval gained at appeal included a total of some 230 square metres spread across the three new dwellings. It did not include the barn with an extant approval for use as a holiday let that is now subject to the current application. However, if this barn had been in agricultural use and included in the prior approval notification for three dwellings, the total floorspace would have increased to only 290 square metres, still below the limit of 450 square metres per farm holding. Given that the principle of residential use has been established on appeal via the prior approval of thee residential units totalling 230 square metres floorspace, it is reasonable to assume that three units totalling 290 square metres (still some 160 square metres below the limit) would also have been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate.
15. Given this, it serves little purpose to resist the current proposal which arrives at the same outcome via alternative means. In sustainability terms there is no worse impact. For this reason, the development is acceptable. There are no other material considerations (eg: access and parking) that would warrant a refusal of the current application.



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