

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

2 February 2024

Applications to be Determined by the Committee

Report of the Head of Development Management

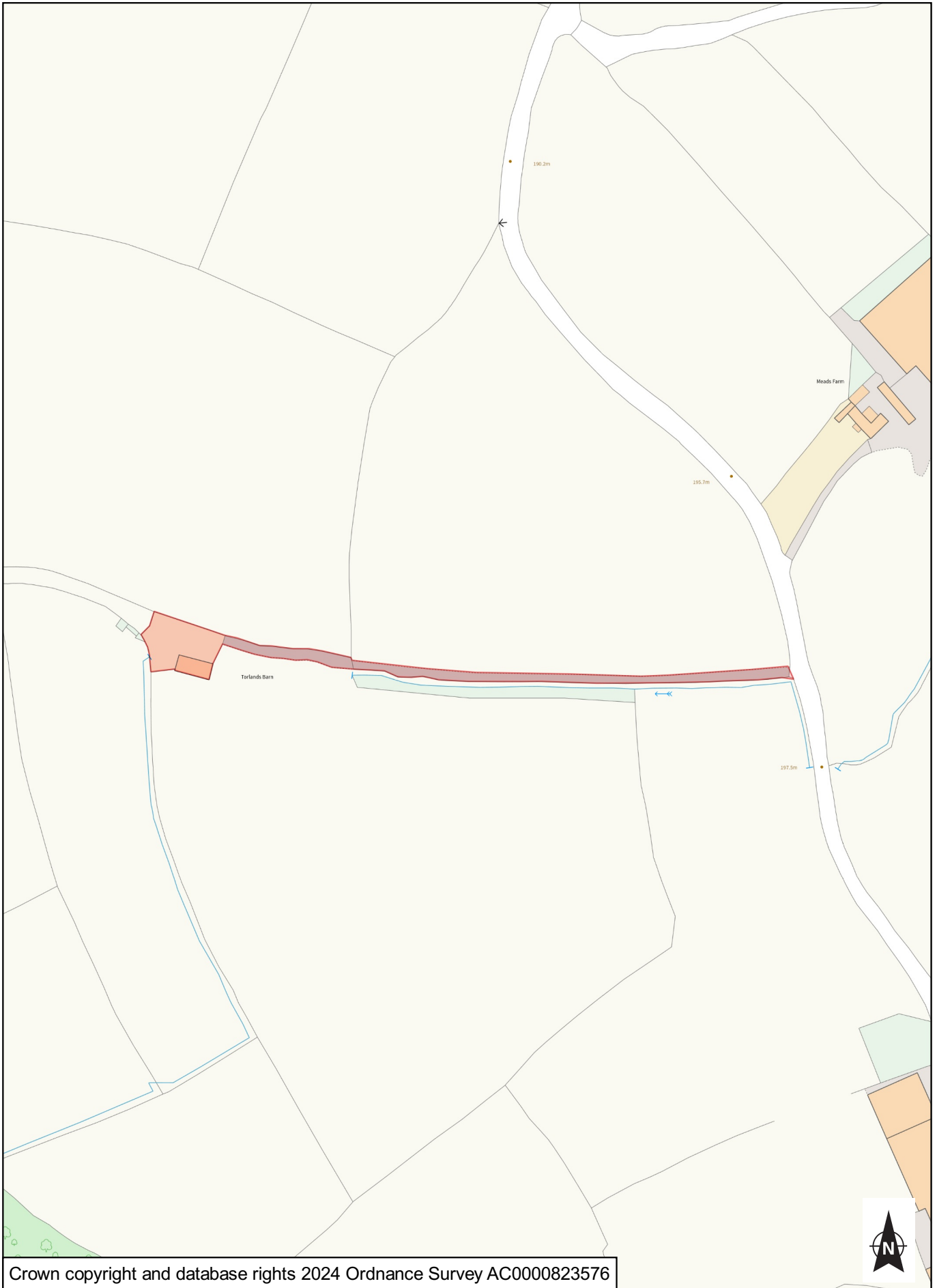
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Broomhill Farm Harford PL20 0JG



Scale 1:1,800



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Item 1

Application No: **0487/23** District/Borough: **South Hams**

Application Type: **Full Planning Permission** Parish: **Harford**

Officer: **Sassie Williams**

Proposal: **Conversion of barn and shippon into a live-work unit**

Location: **Broomhill Farm, Harford, Ivybridge, Devon, PL21 0JG**

Applicant: **Mr & Mrs J Cole**

Recommendation: **That permission by REFUSED**

Reasons for refusal:

1. The proposed change of use, by reason of the introduction of a domestic use to the building and the surrounding land, would have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance, setting, and local distinctiveness of this part of the Dartmoor National Park and in particular the medieval field system, and on the tranquillity of the immediate area, contrary to policies SP1.1, SP1.2, SP1.5, SP2.1, SP2.6, SP2.7 and P6.6 of the Dartmoor Local Plan, and to the advice contained in the English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, in particular paragraph 176.
2. The proposed conversion works to the barn and the rebuilding of the ruined shippon, in particular the introduction of domestic elements and detailing, would have a harmful impact on its fabric, character, setting and appearance, contrary to policies SP1.1, SP1.2, SP1.5, SP2.7, SP2.8, P5.9 and P6.6 of the Dartmoor Local Plan, the advice contained in the Dartmoor Design Guide, and to the advice contained in the English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, in particular paragraph 176.
3. The proposed development would introduce a new residential use in an isolated and unsustainable location in the open countryside of the National Park which is not considered to be located with reasonable access to necessary infrastructure, services and facilities, contrary to policies SP1.2, SP2.8 and P5.9 of the Dartmoor Local Plan.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks permission for the conversion of a barn and shippon to a local-needs dwelling on land which forms part of the agricultural holding of Broomhill Farm, Harford. It is presented as a farm diversification scheme.
- 1.2 The site lies in the open countryside of the National Park, approximately 430m north west of the farmstead associated with Broomhill Farm, 200m east of the River Erme, and 200m west of Harford Road, and is accessed via an existing farm track.

2 Planning History

- 2.1 **0040/23** – Full planning permission for conversion of traditional barn to dwelling – refused 17 March 2023

3 Consultations

3.1 Devon County Council - Ecology

- 3.1.1 No ecological concerns previous comments (ref 0040/23) remain valid for this application as set out below;
- 3.1.2 Further information required as follows. It can be seen on the Carport Drawing that there will be the inclusion of a minimum of 5 Biodiversity Enhancement Features to comply with Dartmoor Local Plan Strategic Policy 2.3. However, this is not explicitly mentioned in the Planning, Design & Access Statement. While the conversion of the barn to dwelling does not need provision of Biodiversity Net Gain under the Dartmoor Local Plan, the addition of a covered carport goes beyond changes of use and would be considered the same as an outbuilding. For this reason, clarification is required on the area of the carport to be provided, to ensure that the 5 enhancement measures proposed are compliant with Dartmoor Local Plan Policy 2.3.

3.2 Dartmoor National Park - Archaeology

- 3.2.1 The proposed development site consists of a disused barn and yard which, according to the mid-19th century tithe map, was one of three buildings on the site, all of which had an agricultural function. Based on their historical and evidential values, these buildings are considered to possess a degree of archaeological significance at a local level sufficient for them to be considered non-designated heritage assets. Also running through the site is a leat which takes water from the Butterbrook and supplies several properties including Broomhill Farm. It dates to at least the 16th century and, based on its historical value, also possesses a local level of archaeological significance and is thus also a non-designated heritage asset although no works are proposed to this feature in the application. Of greater significance is the wider historic landscape within which the proposed development is set. Between the River Erme to the west, the moorland to the east, Harford to the north and Lukesland to the south is a fieldscape characterised by relatively small, elongated enclosures often with slightly curved or sinuous boundaries. These are typical of late medieval enclosure of strip fields and indicate that this area is an unusually complete medieval landscape which has changed little since perhaps the 13th or 14th century.
- 3.2.2 The landscape within which the proposed development is set is a fine and unusually complete example of a late medieval Dartmoor agricultural landscape and is thus considered to possess a local to regional degree of archaeological significance based on its evidential and historical value. The imposition of an isolated domestic and office structure with its associated infrastructure into a landscape characterised by scattered farmsteads would have a negative impact on this significance and does not either conserve or enhance Dartmoor's cultural heritage.

3.3 Dartmoor National Park – Building Conservation Officer

- 3.3.1 Broomhill Leat dates to at least the 16th century and lies in close proximity to the site Historic Environment Record (HER) MDV12133. The Barn and former shippon of Torlands Barn HER MDV13121 dates the building/structure to somewhere between 1600 and 1750.
- 3.3.2 The shippon, although on the HER, lost its roof sometime between 2006 and 2010 based on arial photographic evidence. The south elevation has collapsed, together with part of the western gable and the “central wall”, structural repairs are needed to the remaining walls to enable them to remain standing. With only three partial walls and no roof the shippon is no longer a building. Strategic Policy 2.8 refers to the conservation of buildings, rather than structures. Furthermore, 2.8(2)(a) (iii) requires that the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without “reconstruction, excavation or alteration”, it is not structurally sound and requires reconstruction and alteration in order to achieve conversion of part of the structure to habitable space (thermal envelope, tanking and insulation noted on drawing). The conversion of the structure is not complicit with the requirements of the policy. It may be the case, that it is too late to save the structure, and that it is recorded as it stands and then left to continue in its ruinous state.
- 3.3.3 The Barn, as a building would be considered as a non-designated heritage asset, which may be eligible for conversion under SP2.8, being a building, with architectural interest and historic interest of traditional building form and materials. However, two large modern openings have been introduced into the structure, changing its character, significant structural repair is required together with significant alteration. The alteration includes providing a new mezzanine level without evidence that such existed historically, providing a fully new interior to the building involving tanking and internal walls and a full structural ground floor (a box within the barn) meaning that the stone walls are no longer visible and the character entirely changed, vertical and horizontal subdivision of the space together with the domestication would further change the buildings character, additional openings are created in the west end which has no current openings, the provision of a subdivision for the two bedrooms which backs on to the window will likely lead to visible partitions (the lights are quartered and the partition off centre), the projection of the bathroom beyond the plane of the mezzanine railing is clunky. The proposed conversion cannot meet SP2.8(2)(a)(iii) and(iv), SP2.8(2)(c)(i) to (iv). In relation to the optimum viable use under SP2.3(3) the proposal is over development and therefore not the optimum viable use.
- 3.3.4 Turning to Strategic Policy 2.7. All development is required to conserve and enhance heritage assets, and all proposals should avoid harming an asset’s significance. Harm where justified should be minimised. Part (3) states that the change of use or alteration of heritage assets, including development in their settings will be permitted only where (b) any harm has been balanced against the significance of the asset and found to be reasonable and justified. The proposals cause harm to the non-designated heritage assets, as set out above, the harm is not justified by the proposal, and the harm has not been minimised, and when balanced against the significance of the asset is not reasonable.
- 3.3.5 There is no proposed site plan setting out gardens, parking and the like, the impact on the significance of the setting of the non-designated heritage asset of this cannot

be assessed, however, a degree of domestication can be expected, further, causing harm to the significance of the setting of the non-designated heritage asset.

- 3.3.6 I object to the proposal to substantially reconstruct and then convert the shippon and the substantial conversion of the barn under policies SP2.7 and SP2.8 due to the harm caused to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset and its setting.

4 Parish Council Comments

- 4.1 The Parishioners of Harford reiterate their support for the application to convert the barn and shippon to a live-work unit.
- 4.2 The development is a mere 35 minutes on foot from the Ivybridge railway station with access to London. The development is 25 minutes on foot to the local primary and secondary schools and bus service. By car or bike, this journey time is significantly reduced. The development will have access to high-speed fibre to the property providing high speed internet access.
- 4.3 The linear nature of the Parish along the sides of the Erme Valley and the aspect do mean that the visibility of the barn is negligible. The barn is not visible within the wider landscape, other than aerial views. The trees around the barn and the mature hedgerows around the site provide protection and reduce visibility. The development would not be visible from within the Dartmoor National Park.
- 4.4 The historic leat that originates from the Butterbrook provides water to various properties in the Parish. The leat splits at Meads Farm and takes two routes. The flow to Torlands Barn serves only the fields of Broomhill Farm before entering the River Erme. Whereas the leat from Meads Farm, serves Broomhill farm, Broomhill Cottage and Broomhill House. This part of the leat is not affected by the proposed development.
- 4.5 The PC recognises the National Policy to increase housing across the country, this development will be one more house that would enable a local family to provide accommodation to their younger generation. This would help to address some of the problems recognised in the Dartmoor Local Plan of unaffordable houses and help address the issue of enabling multi-generational accommodation available in the Harford Parish for local families and working people to live on Dartmoor.
- 4.6 The exciting part about the project is the off-grid proposals of the development in line with 3.1.6 and 3.1.7 conversion of suitable redundant historic buildings within the Dartmoor Local Plan.
- 4.7 Harford is a small Parish extending to around 3,000 acres with approximately 31 houses and about 66 occupants with an average age of 50 years old. The average house price is probably close to £750,000 well out of the reach of any young parishioner wishing to stay in the Parish.
- 4.8 The PC recognises the value of policy and guidelines, but we as a small Parish recognise that our Parish needs to seize an opportunity to allow a small-scale development to enable younger generations to stay in our Parish. The last new build house in the Parish was completed in 1974, and since then our parish policy

has been to do up derelict buildings such as stables and barns to make new dwellings; but many of these have been required by planning consent to remain short-stay holiday lets. These may provide diverse income streams, but they do not inject new life and a sense of community into a small parish.

- 4.9 The PC would welcome a condition that would ensure the developed barn remains with the farm and provides the opportunity for family members or local people to live there.
- 4.10 The PC appreciate the care taken in the planning application to ensure the development is discrete, and the off the grid nature of the building. The Parish appreciates the wildlife enhancements of this project.
- 4.11 Farm buildings would have been built for a purpose and adapted as the farm changed over the years. Milking byres were repurposed to calf houses and then many repurposed again to dog kennels for working dogs or calf houses, always adapting to change and this is what this barn is doing, adapting to change.

5 Relevant Local Plan Policies

- 5.1 Strategic Policy 1.1 Delivering National Park purposes and protecting Dartmoor's Special Qualities
Strategic Policy 1.2 Sustainable development in Dartmoor National Park
Strategic Policy 1.3 Spatial Strategy
Strategic Policy 1.5 Delivering good design
Strategic Policy 2.1 Protecting the character of Dartmoor's landscape
Strategic Policy 2.2 Conserving and enhancing Dartmoor's biodiversity and geodiversity
Strategic Policy 2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain
Strategic Policy 2.6 Protecting tranquillity and dark night skies.
Strategic Policy 2.7 Conserving and enhancing heritage assets.
Strategic Policy 2.8 Conservation of historic non-residential buildings in the open countryside.
Policy 4.4 Parking standards for new development
Policy 4.5 Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs)
Policy 5.9 Farm diversification
Policy 6.6 Renewable Energy Development

6 Representations

- 6.1 Three public comments received: two supporting the application and one objecting.
- 6.2 Summary of comments of support:
- This project is crucial for the local community, involving the restoration of a neglected barn to provide housing for our grandchild and family.
 - Urgent housing shortage in Harford
 - Allow young people to move back and contribute to the community they grew up in.
 - Proposed development aligns with local planning policies and enhances the area's character.

- 6.3 Summary of objections:
- Isolated and unsustainable location for residential use
 - Unclear how scheme will financially support farm business
 - There are other more suitable traditional buildings for conversion on the farmstead itself which will pose less harm to the historical importance of the local area.

7 Observations

SITE

- 7.1 The barn proposed for conversion to a dwelling is located in the open countryside of the National Park, approximately 430m north west of Broomhill Farm, 200m east of the River Erme, and 200m west of Harford Road. It is contained within a small stone-walled enclosure to the north and west, with the south and east walls of the barn immediately adjoining the fields beyond. The enclosure is traversed by the Broomhill Leat. The western end of the enclosure leads to a walled lane between fields which provides access to further agricultural fields some 60m to the west.
- 7.2 The enclosure also contains the remains of a shippon to the north west of the main barn, proposed to be converted to a home office. The shippon appears to have lost its roof sometime between 2006 and 2010 based on arial photos, the south elevation has collapsed, together with part of the western gable and the “central wall”. With only three partial walls and no roof the shippon is no longer considered to be a building in planning terms.
- 7.3 The plans show the barn as accessed via an existing track and the track is shown on the 1864 historic map. No track was apparent at the time of a site visit in February 2023 though it was clear that tractors had traversed the ground and there was some evidence of rolled stone having been laid in the past. More recent photos submitted with this application confirm that the track has since been resurfaced in crushed stone.
- 7.4 The barn is surrounded by agricultural fields on all sides, being some 200m distant from the road and 250m from the nearest building. The fields are small and enclosed by a mixture of hedges, banks and stone walls. Broomhill Woods, classed as a woodland of conservation importance, lies 175m to the west, and section 3 moorland at Hanger Down and Ugborough Moor lies 500m to the west and east respectively.
- 7.5 The barn and enclosure are on the Dartmoor Historic Environment Record, as is the leat crossing the site, with the following detail provided about the barn:

“About 200 yards west of the Harford Road, near the farmstead named 'Meads'. On the far side of a field named 'Barn Field' in the Tithe Apportionment 1838-1840, (field no.151). No track leads to the site, and access is gained by crossing the adjoining field from a gate on the Harford road. The site has a barn roughly 12 metres by 4 metres, and a shippon 15 metres by 3 metres, separated by a small court.

Both buildings are in a fair state of repair, and mostly granite rubble with some modern brick lintels. The roofing is corrugated iron: except one half of the barn

roof which is modern welsh slate. The ruins of a small building adjoins on to the west side (the narrower side) of the barn. Water comes from a leat which takes water from the Butter Brook near Tor Rocks on the open moor 1/2 mile distant, and which also supplied water to the now deserted site of 'Tor Cottage'. West of the barn and court a short track bounded by stone walls leads to other fields. The walls and roof of the barn were extensively repaired in 1979. First documentary reference is parish rate book 1695”.

7.6 The Historic Building Officer states the following in her formal response to the application:

“Broomhill Leat dates to at least the 16th century and lies in close proximity to the site Historic Environment Record (HER) MDV12133. The Barn and former shippon of Torlands Barn HER MDV13121 dates the building/structure to somewhere between 1600 and 1750”

PROPOSAL

7.7 This application follows a previous refusal (0040/23) for the same barn and a similar scheme comprising a 2-storey, 3-bedroom local needs conversion (farm diversification). It was refused on the grounds of the harmful impact on the barn and surrounding medieval field system, and the isolated and unsustainable nature of the site.

7.8 This revised application proposes the conversion of the main barn to a 2-storey, 2-bed, local-needs dwelling, together with a home office created from the ruins of the adjacent shippon. Together this would create what the applicants describe as a live-work unit with a habitable floorspace of 100 sqm.

7.9 Comparing to the previous application, the rebuilding of the shippon and creation of a home office is a new element not previously proposed, and changes to the proposed internal and external arrangements for the main barn have also been made. The proposal is again made as a farm diversification scheme, and would therefore be tied to the farming enterprise at Broomhill Farm. During the course of the application, revised plans were submitted to show minor internal layout changes and the removal of new external openings in the main barn from the scheme.

7.10 The final iteration of the scheme for consideration comprises:

- Main barn: proposed conversion now proposes no additional openings and proposes a roof of slate, oak lintels, and simple timber framed windows and doors. The larger openings on the north and east elevations would be split into tall thin panes with timber frames at ground floor and first floor level, with concrete lintels replaced for oak. A patio is proposed to the west of the building.
- Shippon: existing structure consists of only three walls and no roof. The proposed scheme proposes the rebuilding of the south elevation, reinforcing / rebuilding / making good of the other walls, and a new roof structure, to create a home office and domestic storage. The roof would be of natural slate with 11 solar panels, and openings would be entirely on the southern elevation.

7.11 Externally, a cobble stone yard area is proposed between the two buildings with a turning / parking area for two cars and an electric vehicle charge pump.

HOLDING

- 7.12 The farm diversification statement sets out the extent of the agricultural holding, including the following information about the farm business:
- Broomhill Farm comprises 376 acres owned and a further 154 acres rented land with grazing rights
 - commercial suckler herd with 100 cows, 4 bulls and 150 youngstock,
 - commercial flock of breeding ewes comprising 800 ewes, 15 rams and 150 ewe lambs.
- 7.13 On the basis of the information provided in this statement, the enterprise is considered to qualify for a farm diversification enterprise under Policy 5.9.
- 7.14 It is noted that application 09/24/0174/87 granted permission for the conversion of a barn at Broomhill Farm to holiday units in 1987, but it is not clear if this permission was implemented. However further information provided in the business plan states that total agricultural receipts exceed 94% of business income for business periods 2020 and 2021 which makes clear that significant diversification of the business has not occurred to date.

ASSESSMENT

FARM DIVERSIFICATION

- 7.15 Policy 5.9 makes clear that farm diversification schemes such as this will only be supported where they are located on an established and active farm which contributes to the conservation and/or enhancement of the National Park's Special Qualities, would be ancillary and subordinate in scale to the farm business, and would make use of redundant buildings before proposing new buildings. It sets out that for local-needs dwellings, only one will be permitted per farm holding, that the dwelling should be limited to 93 sqm habitable floor area, that it must be provided through the conversion of a suitable redundant historic building, and that the conversion must accord with the requirements of Strategic Policy 2.8.
- 7.16 Also of relevance, paragraphs 5.6.5 and 5.6.7 of the Dartmoor Local Plan state:

“The conversion of historic buildings will be assessed against Strategic Policy 2.8. On farmsteads the building's location will be presumed sustainable for the purposes of part 2b of Strategic Policy 2.8. However, proposals for high impact uses, such as residential or holiday-lets, will still need to demonstrate less harmful uses are unviable through a business plan (not marketing evidence) and that works will be sympathetic. Isolated buildings are less likely to be appropriate for conversion because of their sensitive character, setting and surroundings, buildings on farmsteads are generally more suitable”.

“Any conversion or new build proposed must be of a high quality design and in the case of historic structures minimise its impact on a building's or other asset's significance. Residential and holiday let uses will often have a high impact and there will be occasions where a conversion or new build is not possible due to the adverse impact on the historic environment”.

- 7.17 This application is for the conversion of one isolated historic farm building in the open countryside to a dwelling, and the rebuilding of a ruined shippon for use as an associated home office and domestic storage, creating a total of 100sqm habitable floor area. It is felt that the proposal broadly complies with part 1 of policy 5.9, but fails to comply with part 2 of the policy which requires the conversion to be in accordance with Strategic Policy 2.8. As set out below, the proposal is not felt to conserve and enhance the simple historic character of the building and its setting, nor the character of the surrounding medieval field system and wider landscape.

CONVERSION OF HISTORIC BUILDING

Policy Context

- 7.18 The barn and shippon, together with the adjacent historic enclosure and leat, are considered to be non-designated heritage assets, all of which appear on the 1864 historic map and the Dartmoor HER.
- 7.19 Strategic Policy 1.5 makes clear that planning applications exhibiting anything less than good design will be refused. Part 3(c) of the policy sets out that the development's character and appearance, and its relationship with the landscape, will be scrutinised to assess the design quality of development.
- 7.20 Strategic Policy 2.7 makes clear that all development must conserve and / or enhance heritage assets. Where harm to a non-designated heritage asset is identified, any harm must be balanced against the significance of the asset and found to be reasonable and justified.
- 7.21 Strategic Policy 2.8 reiterates the requirement for development to conserve and / or enhance the heritage significance of non-residential buildings. Part (c) of the policy makes clear that the conversion of redundant historic non-residential buildings in the open countryside will only be permitted where the proposed conversion work:
- (i) conserves and/or enhances the character and appearance of the building and its setting;
 - (ii) proposes no significant new openings or extensions;
 - (iii) preserves significant historic or architectural elements; and
 - (iv) ensures any garden, fence or wall, parking, lighting, essential utilities (cables and pipes) or other paraphernalia do not harm the building's character, setting or any significant historic or architectural features.
- 7.22 P. 48 of the Dartmoor Design Guide is clear that successful conversions respect and reflect the building's original functions and maintain the agricultural character and historic elements on the outside and inside, and that domesticating the surroundings of the building with gardens etc should be avoided to retain its setting. It also states that making new window openings in walls is not usually acceptable, and that new windows in existing openings should have strong simple framing.

Design / Impact on Character and Appearance

- 7.23 This revised scheme to convert the main barn to a dwelling has removed all new openings from proposals, simplified window and door designs and arrangements,

and removed the solar panels, rooflights and flue which were previously proposed. It is noted that the proposed solar panels have instead been moved to the roof of the adjacent shippon. On the basis of the above amendments, the harm to the host building is reduced, however it is still felt that the proposal fails to respect the simple agricultural form and character of the main barn which does not lend itself to domestic conversion.

- 7.24 The current state of the shippon, with only three walls remaining some of which are visibly unstable, no south elevation and no roof, lead it to be considered as a ruin rather than a building fit for conversion, and therefore falls outside the remit of policy 2.8. The works necessary to create a home office and domestic store from the remaining ruins would be considerable, and with this in mind the proposed scheme is not considered to equate to the conversion of an existing historic building but rather a rebuild / new build.
- 7.25 Strategic Policy 2.8 part 2 (a) (iii) requires a structural engineer's survey to confirm that the building(s) are structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for reconstruction, excavation or alteration. It is noted that the structural report for both the main barn and the shippon was written by the son of the applicant who is also understood to be the future occupant of the barn as a local-needs dwelling. There is therefore concern that the report may not provide an impartial assessment of the true structural integrity of the barn or the shippon. Also within the enclosure would be a patio, driveway, parking for two cars, an electric vehicle charge point and solar panels. All these aspects of the conversion will create a clear domestic character within the enclosure which would fail to conserve and / or enhance the simple agricultural and historical character and appearance of the building and its setting, contrary to Strategic Policies 1.5, 2.7, 2.8 and 6.6, and advice contained in the Design Guide.

Sustainability

- 7.26 Paragraph 5.6.5 in the pre-amble to the farm diversification policy also states that diversification schemes located on farmsteads will be presumed sustainable for the purposes of policy 2.8 part 2(b). However since this scheme is not located on a farmstead, rather in an isolated rural location, it must meet the requirements of policy 2.8 part 2(b) which are that it must be located within reasonable access to necessary infrastructure, services and facilities in order to gain support. The barn lies around 2.5 miles from Ivybridge and is accessed via a narrow single track country lane. It lies 200m from the public highway. It is clear that future occupants of the barn would be reliant on a car to access facilities in Ivybridge. Paragraph 2.7.17 part 2 is clear that uses which significantly impact on character, such as residential uses, will not generally be acceptable in isolated locations away from basic facilities and services.
- 7.27 The location is therefore not considered to be sustainable, and would be contrary to policies 1.2, 2.7 and 5.9.

Optimum Viable Use

- 7.28 Strategic Policy 2.8 part 2(b) states that the proposal must be shown to be the optimum viable use of the building consistent with the building's conservation and must be located within reasonable access to necessary infrastructure, services and

facilities. Part 3 sets out the requirement for applications for high impact uses such as residential conversions to be supported by evidence which demonstrates the proposal is the optimum viable use and less harmful uses are unviable.

- 7.29 Farm diversification policy 5.9 allows qualifying schemes to evidence the optimum viable use through a business plan to show that other lower impact uses of the building as part of the farm business have been considered and found not to be viable. This information has been provided as part of this submission and shows that due to various factors including the barn's isolated rural location, its location within private land and on a working farm, the poor access arrangements including 200m track from public highway, and the presence of other established holiday / community facilities such as tea rooms and camping barns, the only viable alternative use would be a holiday let which would also be a high impact use. This assessment is accepted and it is agreed that alternative less impactful uses would be equally inappropriate in this location for the reasons listed above.

IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE

Policy Context

- 7.30 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and natural beauty, cultural heritage and wildlife of National Parks, which have the highest status of protection. The importance of delivering National Park purposes is reiterated in the objectives of Strategic Policy 1.1, which stipulates that National Park purposes will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of planning applications. It goes on to say that where conflict occurs, greater weight will be attached to the first purpose of "conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area" in line with the Sandford Principle. This makes clear that the conservation of the Park's natural beauty and cultural heritage must be prioritised over the duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the communities within the National Park.
- 7.31 Strategic Policy 2.1 sets out how Dartmoor's internationally renowned landscape should be protected. It is recognised that landscapes change, but the emphasis is on protecting the character and special qualities of Dartmoor's landscape. The policy is clear that development should conserve and/or enhance the special qualities and character of Dartmoor's landscape.
- 7.32 Strategic Policy 2.6 states that development proposals outside classified settlements will only be permitted where they conserve and/or enhance tranquillity and avoid external lighting in order to avoid adverse impacts on tranquillity, dark night skies, biodiversity, visual amenity, landscape character and heritage significance.
- 7.33 Strategic Policy 2.7 makes clear that all development must conserve and / or enhance heritage assets. Where harm to a non-designated heritage asset is identified, any harm must be balanced against the significance of the asset and found to be reasonable and justified.
- 7.34 Paragraph 2.7.1 of the Dartmoor Local Plan explains that "the quality of Dartmoor's historic and cultural environment is a key reason for the area's designation as a

National Park and is fundamental to its Special Qualities. Dartmoor's cultural heritage, including its archaeological features, settlements, buildings, and landscapes, is one of the richest of any area in the UK". The same paragraph goes on to include historic field systems among Dartmoor's various types of heritage asset and stresses the importance of Dartmoor's landscapes in terms of not only their aesthetic value, but also their historical value.

Landscape Character Assessment

- 7.35 The site is located within Landscape Character Type 2D Moorland Edge Slopes, a landscape characterised by a strong historic sense of place, with an intricate pattern of medieval fields, post-medieval hedge banks nucleated hamlets, winding rural lanes and numerous streams crossed by granite bridges.
- 7.36 The Landscape Character Assessment for Dartmoor National Park identifies the strong pattern of medieval fields with prominent Devon hedge banks and drystone walls as one of valued attributes for this landscape type. On p.66, the Landscape Character Assessment cites an increase in barn conversions as having localised impacts on the landscape character of moorland edge slopes, and on p.69 protection of the landscape's small-scale medieval field patterns and sparsely settled character are listed among the planning priorities for moorland edge slopes.

Impact on the Medieval Field System and Landscape

- 7.37 The barn is located in a tranquil area within a medieval field system, and close to areas of ancient woodland and section 3 moorland. The site is remote from other buildings, with the nearest being approximately 250m away. The absence of nearby buildings and the position of the site within an historic field system are significant features contributing to the character of this part of the National Park. Comments from the DNPA archaeologist confirm that the barn is set within a fine and unusually complete example of a late medieval Dartmoor agricultural landscape which has likely remained unchanged since the 13th or 14th century and has a local to regional degree of archaeological significance.
- 7.38 In the context of this application, Strategic Policy 2.7 therefore requires the proposal to conserve and / or enhance the medieval field system, which is a heritage asset. The change of use and conversion of the barn and enclosure will introduce a domestic use into an isolated site located in an important historical landscape. The DNP archaeologist has objected to the scheme on this basis. The introduction of this domestic use will not conserve or enhance the character of this landscape, and a permanent residential use will increase noise and introduce light spill which will impact on the tranquillity of the area.
- 7.39 The development would have a detrimental impact on the medieval field system immediately surrounding the site. It would also fail to conserve and / or enhance the character and special qualities of the local Dartmoor landscape, specifically the strong pattern of medieval fields and features associated with historic land uses. This would be contrary to Dartmoor Local Plan policies SP1.1, SP1.2 parts (a), (j) and (k), SP2.1, SP2.6, SP2.7, P5.9 and P6.6.

PLANNING BALANCE

- 7.40 It is recognised that this proposal offers some public benefit, in terms of providing an ongoing viable use for the building, the creation of a dwelling for a local person, and providing an additional income stream for an existing agricultural business.
- 7.41 However, this report identifies that the scheme would introduce a new residential use in an isolated, unsustainable and inappropriate location which is not supported by Local Plan policies, and furthermore poses harm to the barn, its setting, the medieval field system and the Dartmoor landscape.
- 7.42 The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and natural beauty, cultural heritage and wildlife of National Parks, which have the highest status of protection. The importance of delivering National Park purposes is reiterated in the objectives of Strategic Policy 1.1, which stipulates that National Park purposes will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of planning applications. It goes on to say that where conflict occurs, greater weight will be attached to the first purpose of “conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area” in line with the Sandford Principle. This makes clear that the conservation of the Park’s natural beauty and cultural heritage must be prioritised over the duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the communities within the National Park, and again makes clear that the need to conserve this historic setting and landscape should be prioritised over other the limited planning gains previously mentioned.
- 7.43 Therefore on balance it is not felt that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the level of harm posed.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 It is considered that the works proposed to the historic barn would have a harmful impact on its fabric, character, setting and appearance, contrary to Dartmoor Local Plan policies SP1.1, SP1.2, SP1.5, SP2.7, SP2.8, P5.9 and P6.6.
- 8.2 It is also considered that the introduction of a residential land use on this site would be harmful to the character of the local landscape, the surrounding medieval field system, and also to the tranquillity of the area by introducing potential noise and other disturbance such as light pollution associated with permanent residential accommodation. The level of this harm, coupled with the absence of any significant public benefit to outweigh it, mean that the proposal conflicts with Dartmoor Local Plan policies SP1.1, SP1.2, SP1.5, SP2.1, SP2.6, SP2.7 and P6.6.
- 8.3 The location of the barn is not considered to be located within reasonable access to necessary infrastructure, services and facilities, and is therefore considered to be an unsustainable location for the creation of a new dwelling, contrary to Dartmoor Local Plan policies SP1.2, SP2.8 and P5.9.
- 8.4 The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

DEAN KINSELLA