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Foreword

Message from **Councillor John Raine**
Chairman of Planning Committee
Malvern Hills District Council



I am very pleased to commend for publication this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) concerning the Re-Use of Rural Buildings.

In the rural areas of our district, there are many fine buildings which contribute to the unique quality of the landscape and reflect our agricultural and social history. While they may no longer be functional for their original purposes, these buildings can often be put to other uses which may help to create new employment opportunities in a sustainable way. Alternatively, in the right locations and in certain circumstances, they can provide new homes.

This SPD is designed to give helpful advice to the public and to others involved in the planning process by amplifying the District Council's policies on the re-use of rural buildings and by giving practical guidance to those who may wish to make planning applications.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Raine', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Consultation Details

This SPD was subject to a public consultation exercise (undertaken in accordance with the Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement) for a period of six weeks between 13th January 2006 and 24th February 2006. All representations were reported to and considered by Planning Committee on 15th June 2006. The details of the consultation exercise, including a summary of the representations together with an officer response and any changes are set out in the 'Consultation Statement', - a separate document produced in conjunction with this SPD and available to view on the Council's website www.malvern hills.gov.uk alongside the Sustainability Appraisal.

This SPD aims to address the main issues likely to arise in respect of proposals for the re-use of rural buildings. The document needs to be read as a whole and in conjunction with relevant planning policy. This guidance cannot possibly cover every aspect or issue that may arise during the consideration of such proposals and should not therefore be viewed as an exhaustive source of information. [Back to Contents](#)/on to [Introduction](#)

INTRODUCTION

What are Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)?

1 SPDs support and add detail to policies in the Development Plan. They provide guidance on how best to plan your application.

Purpose of this guidance

2 This guidance brings together in one document the various planning issues that arise in the consideration of proposals for the re-use of rural buildings.

3 The first part of this document sets out the parameters for determining whether a building is fit for conversion. Pages 5-8 provide information on commercial uses and set out the steps required for commercial marketing of the building which should usually take place before a residential use will be considered. Pages 9-14 set out the material considerations likely to arise in consideration of proposals. Pages 15-24 provide detailed guidance on the conversion of traditional buildings and treatment of their setting. The final section sets out the information required for making an application and where further advice can be obtained.

Policy Background

4 Upon adoption of the emerging Malvern Hills District Local Plan (MHDLP) on 12th July 2006, the Development Plan for Malvern Hills District will comprise the MHDLP, the Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) [saved until 2007] the Worcestershire Minerals Plan (WMP) and the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

5 This SPD is specifically linked to Policy EP6 (Re-Use of Rural Buildings) in the MHDLP and provides greater guidance and interpretation on the use of this Policy for Malvern Hills District. The text of this Policy is reproduced at *Appendix 1* of this document.

6 This guidance is also linked to Policy D.16 (Re-use and Conversion of Buildings) of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan and Policy PA15 (Agriculture and Farm

Diversification) of the RSS. It is also closely related to guidance set out in the recently published Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development In Rural Areas.

Characteristics of Rural Buildings

7 Malvern Hills District contains a considerable range of rural buildings which contribute to the District's architectural and cultural heritage. These buildings were predominantly erected for agricultural purposes. Their age, character, form and quality varies, but the changing structure of the rural economy and the demands of agriculture means that many of these buildings are no longer required for their original use or suited to modern farming practices. These rural buildings can be divided into two broad categories: Traditional buildings, which are usually over 100 years old, and modern buildings erected in the last 100 years.

8 Traditional agricultural buildings are important features within the rural landscape and therefore conversion to a commercial, mixed or residential use may be the best option to ensure their retention and preservation. Modern agricultural buildings of substantial construction may still have a productive life-span, and in the right circumstances, can be adapted to serve new uses. Both traditional and modern rural buildings are an important resource that can help breathe new life into the countryside in a 'sustainable' way.

9 Rural buildings throughout the District vary in scale, design and construction depending on their original use and when they were constructed. Such buildings take a variety of forms including threshing and storage barns, granaries, hop kilns, stables, byres, dairies, cart sheds, implement stores, dovecotes, mills and livestock units. Each building type is distinct from another; its form designed to follow the function it was built to accommodate. The challenge is to identify a use which is compatible with the building or conversely find a building which is compatible with the proposed use.

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CONTEXT

¹⁰ MHDLP Policy EP6 supports the re-use of rural buildings where the building “is of a permanent and substantial construction and capable of accommodating the proposed use without excessive alteration”. This section of the SPD seeks to provide further explanation of those terms. The full text of Policy EP6 is reproduced at Appendix 1.

What is meant by the term ‘Permanent and Substantial Construction’ ?

¹¹ Regardless of its means of construction, any building with temporary planning permission, permitted subject to a condition requiring its removal either following cessation of the use for which temporary permission was granted or before a specified date, does not qualify as ‘permanent’ for the purposes of MHDLP Policy EP6. Consequently such buildings will not be considered for re-use or conversion.

¹² To be considered for re-use, buildings should originally have been built with four walls which are substantially complete.

¹³ Generally, to be of substantial construction, a traditional rural building should either have masonry or brick walls or be of half timbered construction and have a slate, stone, tile or thatched roof.

¹⁴ Modern rural buildings should have their lower walls (at least) constructed of block or brickwork and have concrete floors appropriate for the new uses e.g capable of supporting industrial machinery.

¹⁵ Open sided pre-fabricated buildings without walls from ground to eaves do not fall within the definition of permanent and substantial construction, nor do buildings with slatted walls.

¹⁶ Smaller, ancillary buildings such as open fronted cart sheds, may be used for ancillary uses such as car parking or storage in association with the re-use of larger substantial buildings. Free standing buildings of this type are not usually considered suitable for re-use in their own right.

How do I demonstrate that the building is capable of accommodating the proposed use without excessive rebuilding, extension or alteration ?

¹⁷ The existing buildings (that is to say, the original building with any modern extension(s) removed) must be large enough to accommodate the proposed use without excessive rebuilding, extension or alteration.

Structural Survey

¹⁸ The District Council will require evidence to demonstrate that the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion or re-use without excessive rebuilding, extension or alteration. This will usually take the form of a full structural survey of the building and production of a report which can be independently verified by the District Council. Structural Surveys should be undertaken by a qualified structural engineer.

What are meant by the terms ‘Excessive rebuilding, extension or alteration’

¹⁹ For the avoidance of doubt, the term ‘excessive’ in Policy EP6 applies to rebuilding, extension and alteration. ‘Rebuilding’ means the substantial replacement of parts of the original structure while ‘extension’ and ‘alteration’ involve changes to the original structure.

²⁰ The extent to which rebuilding, extension or alteration is considered to be excessive will vary depending on the scale and type of building affected and the relative extent of works which are proposed. Proposals for extensions are usually made clear on the submitted drawings, however it is critically important that applications include detailed plans which clearly indicate the extent of any rebuilding and alterations. This could include annotated photographs.

Rebuilding

²¹ Limited rebuilding is acceptable to effect repairs, but where a significant part of the original building has been removed or fallen into disrepair, rebuilding will not usually be acceptable.

22

A greater degree of rebuilding may exceptionally be allowed where it is desirable in the interests of historic conservation. For example: to re-instate a roof at the original profile or reconstruct a range of out-buildings to restore the balance of a group, where symmetry was an important characteristic of the original plan. Where such reconstruction is proposed, there will need to be compelling evidence of what originally existed in physical, photographic or documentary form.

23

However, such cases will be the exception rather than the rule and applicants will need to ensure that such proposals are accompanied by a detailed statement setting out the reasoning behind them.

24

In the case of the conversion of traditional timber framed buildings, it will usually be necessary to support the frame with scaffolding during the conversion process to mitigate against the risk of collapse and this will be conditioned on any planning permission.

Extensions

25

Generally, extensions to a rural building as part of an overall conversion will be unacceptable. If a building merits retention, then it must be of a scale which is capable of conversion to a new use in its own right.

26

Minor extensions to accommodate ancillary activity may be permitted where: the District Council is satisfied that this need can not be provided for within the body of the main building and there are no other suitable existing buildings which can be utilised or adapted for this ancillary purpose in the immediate vicinity. Extensions which would detract from the essential character and appearance of the original building will be resisted.

27

In the case of residential conversions, extensions which are proposed to accommodate habitable rooms will usually be unacceptable. Exceptionally, there may be scope to consider a minor extension to a barn where this would avoid the undesirable subdivision or 'compartmentalisation' of a

large internal space, provided that this does not detract from the character and appearance of the building or have other adverse effects.

Alteration

28

Proposals should make clear the extent of changes proposed to the existing structure in order to accommodate the proposed use. This is best achieved through the clear annotation of plans accompanying the application, but can be supplemented with a schedule which lists the changes proposed.

29

If the proposed use cannot function satisfactorily without extensive alteration, it is unlikely to constitute a suitable re-use of the building.

30

The emphasis in any conversion should be on adaptation rather than alteration. That is to say, organising accommodation so that it makes best use of the original layout and openings rather than seeking to impose a pre-determined layout upon the building which then necessitates alterations.

Method Statement

31

A method statement should accompany the application and detail the nature and extent of any structural works necessary to facilitate the re-use of the building and how these works will be undertaken.

Redundancy of Agricultural Use

32

In making an application for the re-use of an agricultural building, it is not necessary to demonstrate that a building is redundant to agricultural use. However applicants should not the advice in the following two paragraphs:

33

Where a building is in active agricultural use, applicants should not assume that permission will be granted for a new building to accommodate the use which has been displaced. Accordingly, it is advisable that permission be sought for replacement buildings in advance of the conversion of existing structures.

34

However, where it appears to the District Council that permitted development rights for agricultural buildings have been abused to provide a host for non agricultural uses, in accordance with MHDLP para 3.3.10, proposals seeking to re-use such buildings will be resisted. Where such buildings have been used for agricultural purposes but that use ceases within 10 years of their erection, applications for conversion should be made within three years of the agricultural use ceasing.

Rural Renaissance

35

The District Council is aware of the need to encourage rural renaissance and that regeneration should be directed to appropriate rural areas.

36

Therefore, employment opportunities in accordance with MHDLP Policy DS13 (Employment Development within or immediately adjacent to Rural Settlements) within the Rural Regeneration Zone (RRZ) and Objective 2 Area (see *Appendix 2*) will be encouraged and where appropriate supported. These areas, in particular, will remain a focus for such development during the Plan period, subject to any future review of regeneration areas at the Regional level. Grant assistance is currently available in these areas through the Redundant Building Grant Scheme (see *page 27*).

Farm Diversification

37

Farm Diversification can entail various types of enterprise, such as food processing, farm shops, tourist accommodation, creating workspaces for letting to local firms and exploiting recreation opportunities (such as horse riding). Farm Diversification schemes should make an ongoing contribution to the longer term prospects of the farm business as a whole and the District Council may therefore impose conditions on any permission to ensure that this occurs. MHDLP Policy EP7 (Farm Diversification Schemes), WCSP Policy D.30 (Farm Diversification) and RSS Policy PA15 (Agriculture and Farm Diversification) deal specifically with this issue.

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COMMERCIAL USES

Employment

38
The District Council seeks to encourage employment development in appropriate rural locations in preference to residential use. When considering the re-use of a rural building for employment purposes, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the proposed development will contribute to meeting local employment needs associated with the rural location. Information submitted in support of the application should include local unemployment rates, the location of other employers or businesses in the local area and details of the likely number and type of jobs created by the proposed development, which will be available locally.

39
Employment development that is scattered throughout the countryside and poorly located in relation to where people live, will not serve the District Council's objective of seeking to minimise unsustainable patterns of development. However, new employment opportunities of an appropriate scale and location can help in moving towards a better balance between jobs and housing and make a positive contribution towards sustainable rural diversification and the local economy.

40
The conversion of a rural building to a commercial use is more likely to retain the original character and appearance of the building than a residential conversion by minimising sub-division and the need to create new windows and door openings. It can also conserve the setting of the building (through the adjacent yard continuing to act as a service area).

41
There may be some buildings that are not suitable for employment use because of their character, their location and impact (especially in relation to residential properties), access difficulties and constraints on the surrounding road network.

Offices

42
The location of significant Class B.1(a) development within the rural areas is likely to undermine sustainable transport objectives and those policies which seek to focus office development in Town Centres and manage the need to travel by car and therefore will not be permitted.

43
Offices forming a subordinate, ancillary but related and integral part of a proposal for light industrial or storage and distribution may be acceptable. Further guidance on this is provided through MHDLP Policy EP3 (Office Development)

Tourist / Holiday accommodation

44
MHDLP Policy EP14 (Visitor Accommodation) supports the conversion of rural buildings for the provision of new, (or extensions or alterations to) permanent serviced and self catering accommodation. Where the proposed re-use is for holiday accommodation, any grant of planning permission will usually be subject to a condition which limits its use for that purpose, to prevent its occupation as a dwelling.

45
Where holiday lets form part of a farm diversification scheme, applicants will usually be expected to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that the accommodation is not sold separately to prevent someone occupying it as a holiday home which makes no on-going contribution to the farm business.

46
In the open countryside, where permission has been previously granted for the re-use of a rural building for holiday accommodation, applications for relaxation of conditions to enable their occupancy as private dwellings will usually be resisted.

47
Similarly, the use of rural buildings previously converted to holiday lets as private rented accommodation is tantamount to the creation of a new dwelling in the open countryside and does not constitute a sustainable re-use of a rural building. The District Council will monitor holiday lets to ensure that such abuses are not taking place.

48
The Owner / Operators of holiday accommodation will usually be required by the District Council to keep a written register of their guests which should include the name, permanent address and the duration of their stay.

49
The District Council recognise that often part of the attraction of small scale holiday lets can be their relative remoteness. Consequently they need not necessarily be situated in locations where they are accessible by public transport. However, the visual impact of such development will still be a material consideration.

Home working

50
Planning permission for working at home is not usually needed where the use of a small part of a dwelling house for business purposes does not change the overall character of its use as a residence. A fact and degree approach is taken in determining when the carrying on of business activities in a dwelling house requires planning permission.

51
The *Step-By-Step Guide to Planning Permission for Small Business* contains more detailed advice about the planning issues to consider in relation to working from home. This document can be obtained from the Customer Service Centre based in Malvern library or on-line at www.odpm.gov.uk.

52
The conversion of an existing outbuilding to provide business premises may require planning permission and you are advised to contact Planning Services for advice before undertaking any works or commencing such activity.

Live-Work Units

53
Live-Work units are one of the stated exceptions set out in MHDLP Policy EP6, to the general presumption against new residential development in the open countryside.

54
'Live-Work' units are distinct from 'home working' in that they are usually created with the express intention of fulfilling a dual use.

They are either purpose built, or created through conversion of an existing building. ODPM Circular 03/2005 – (*Changes of Use of Buildings and Land*) states that Live-Work units are clearly a mix of residential and business uses which cannot be classified under a single class within the Use Classes Order and would therefore be *sui generis*. This term refers to a use on its own. Any planning use not falling within a specific use class with the Order falls within this category.

55
Live-Work developments have the benefit of creating a single unit for both living and working. They remove the necessity to travel to work.

56
Live-Work units can create communities of economically active residents in areas requiring regeneration and re-investment. This type of development also provides an alternative form of employment which may have less environmental impact and be more sustainable than other more intensive forms of employment land use.

57
Applications for the re-use and conversion of agricultural buildings to provide Live-Work units do not need to go through a marketing exercise for business re-use. However, careful consideration needs to be given to the type of businesses which are catered for through such units as even small businesses have the potential to raise traffic issues and other problems such as noise or pollution.

58
To comply with MHDLP Policy EP6, the proportion of the building allocated for workspace/employment use must exceed that allocated for the residential use.

59
Where residential conversion of a building forms a subordinate part of a scheme for Live-Work use, a condition will usually be imposed requiring that the work necessary to establish the business enterprise is completed before the dwelling is occupied (in order to ensure that the business re-use materialises)

60
In addition, a further condition and legal agreement tying the occupancy of the dwelling to the operation of the business enterprise will usually be imposed in order to prevent it from being occupied or sold separately.

RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

Market Testing for Sustainable Uses

61

When the District Council consider a formal planning application for the conversion of a rural building to a residential dwelling, it will usually be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate (in accordance with MHDL Policy EP6) that every reasonable attempt has first been made to secure a suitable employment, tourism or recreation use.

62

Consequently there are two requirements to fulfil, **firstly**: to make every reasonable attempt to secure a suitable employment, tourism or recreation use and **secondly**: to demonstrate that such efforts have been made.

What does making every reasonable attempt to secure a suitable employment, tourism or recreation use require ?

63

The District Council considers that the property should be marketed for a consecutive period not less than 12 months expiring no more than 3 months prior to the submission of an application.

64

Whilst the results of previous marketing may be taken into account, these are not an acceptable substitute for up-to-date results which reflect current demand.

65

Generally a, property should be advertised in the local press, trade publications, on the internet and by an agent's board at the premises.

66

Clearly, it is important that the building is marketed for an appropriate employment, tourism or recreation use. Applicants are encouraged to seek the advice of Planning Services at an early stage who will consult the Council's Economic Development Manager.

67

It is generally desirable to market the premises with a valid planning permission for the intended use, but it is not essential. The District Council will not refuse permission for a residential conversion solely because the owner has not sought and obtained permission for a sustainable use.

68

Whilst marketing the premises is likely to generate more interest if planning permission has been sought and granted for the intended use, it will rarely be acceptable to submit applications in outline form to establish the principle of such development. (see page 26)

How do I demonstrate every reasonable attempt to secure a suitable employment, tourism or recreation use has been made ?

69

Proposals for the re-use or conversion of rural buildings to residential use must be accompanied by a written statement of the efforts which the applicant has made to secure an employment, recreation or tourism re-use.

70

The statement should include details and evidence of steps taken to market the building for those uses. The results of the marketing exercise must form part of the marketing statement. Therefore applicants are requested to ensure that their estate agents keep verifiable records of all enquiries and market the property to reflect an employment, tourism or recreational use at a realistic price or open to offers.

71

A copy of the sales particulars and adverts will be required as evidence of marketing accompanied by at least two commercial valuations undertaken by professionally qualified commercial valuers to demonstrate that the property has been marketed at a realistic price.

72

There may be circumstances where the District Council has refused planning permission for a particular commercial proposal prior to the applicant undertaking a marketing campaign. The fact that an application has been refused, is not necessarily indicative that a particular use is unacceptable.

73

What is important are the reasons for that refusal. It will be important to differentiate between those decisions which relate to the principle of the proposed use and those relating to other issues, which a revised proposal may be able to address.

74 Clearly, there may be factors which impose constraints on the scale or nature of activity which is appropriate and the building should be marketed accordingly. However, the District Council will want to be provided with evidence that the property has not been marketed on the basis of a too narrowly defined list of potential end uses, where a wider range may be acceptable.

75 Applicants should not assume that demonstrating a lack of interest in the property for commercial use through a marketing campaign will result in favourable consideration of a subsequent application for residential re-use of the premises.

76 In some cases, the re-use of rural buildings for employment, tourism or recreation uses may be inappropriate. However, applications for residential conversion which are submitted without evidence of marketing or a detailed written explanation of why no marketing has been undertaken will usually be refused.

Residential Use

77 Where conversion for commercial uses is not feasible, residential conversions may be an alternative option. However, this can be difficult to achieve successfully and will require a sympathetic approach combined with considerable design skills, and may necessitate engaging the services of a qualified architect with experience in this field. Furthermore, due to the design, construction methods and materials used in such buildings, it will often be necessary to engage the services of specialist craftsmen. Further advice on this matter can be obtained from The District Council's Conservation Officer.

78 The conversion of traditional rural buildings to residential use has the potential to fundamentally alter the character of the rural buildings (through the insertion of domestic features such as doors, chimneys, porches and windows) and their appearance in the landscape (through the creation of domestic gardens and erection of outbuildings such as garages). Guidance on how to achieve a successful conversion with minimum alterations to the appearance of the building,

its fenestration and other openings is provided on pages 19 – 21 inclusive.

79 Proposals for residential use should satisfy criteria a - f of part (1) and at least one of the three criteria a - b of part (2) of MHDLP Policy EP6. (see *appendix 1*)

Agricultural Workers Dwelling

80 The provision of dwellings for agricultural workers can be an exception to the general presumption against the creation of new dwellings in the open countryside.

81 Through conversion, existing traditional farm buildings have the potential to cater for agricultural workers in cases of proven need, without having to erect a new building for this purpose and thereby contributing to the ethos of sustainable development.

82 Where the re-use of a rural building to provide accommodation for an agricultural worker is permitted, on the basis of a proven need in accordance with MHDLP Policy CN4, a condition limiting the occupancy of the new dwelling to a person solely or mainly working in the locality in agriculture will usually be imposed.

83 In cases where an applicant is, or has been unable to demonstrate a proven "need" for an agricultural workers dwelling in accordance with Policy CN4 of the MHDLP, permission will only usually be granted for the conversion of a suitable rural building to residential use where proposals comply with one of the other stated criteria under part 2) of that policy.

Affordable Housing

84 The provision of affordable housing to meet an identified need is another of the limited exceptions to the general presumption against new residential development in the open countryside. Applications for affordable housing as a conversion scheme should comply with MHDLP Policy CN3 (Rural Exception Sites) and the guidance set out in the document entitled "Affordable Housing in Malvern Hills District Supplementary Planning Guidance" adopted in June 2004 or future updated versions. (See also para 140 on p14)

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MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

⁸⁵ All applicants must have regard to the following considerations when formulating their proposals for the re-use of rural buildings.

Opportunity to address visual harm

⁸⁶ Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings often provide an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of those buildings and their immediate setting, but it does not automatically follow that a new use will result in that outcome.

⁸⁷ Applications which are contrary to Policy and rely solely on the basis that they provide an opportunity to enhance the appearance of an untidy site in order to justify why permission should be granted will usually be refused.

⁸⁸ Landowners and applicants should be aware that the District Council has powers under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to serve a notice requiring the untidy site to be cleared up. Consequently, the District Council does not need to grant planning permission for unsustainable uses in order to 'tidy up' a site.

⁸⁹ Agricultural paraphernalia is part and parcel of a working countryside and is not in itself considered harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

Setting in the Landscape

⁹⁰ MHDLP Policy EP6 requires that proposals for the re-use of rural buildings do not cause harm to the character, appearance and landscape quality of the area or the setting of the building.

⁹¹ The re-use of rural buildings in remote locations can require the provision of new access tracks across open fields and the creation of new curtilages to the buildings. Not only are such locations likely to be unsustainable but such features can also adversely affect the setting of the building and lead to an urbanisation of open countryside with consequent loss of local distinctiveness.

⁹² Whilst being clearly necessary for the purpose of agriculture, pre-fabricated buildings can appear incongruous in their surroundings and detract from the high visual quality of the countryside by reason of their siting, bulk, scale and utilitarian appearance. Allowing the re-use of buildings which have an adverse impact on their surroundings would be inconsistent with the Development Plan's objective to ensure the integration of development within the landscape or protect the countryside from inappropriate development.

Re-use of Rural Buildings in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

⁹³ Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings in the AONB should aim to actively conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area. In accordance with MHDLP Policy QL23, development necessary for the social or economic well-being of the AONB will be permitted only where it can be shown that it will not harm the environment and natural beauty of the landscape.

Open Storage

⁹⁴ All uses usually require storage space. The District Council generally discourages outdoor storage and will resist proposals where this would detract from the setting of the building or wider landscape. Applicants proposing the re-use of buildings will need to ensure that the building is of sufficient capacity to accommodate the storage needs of that use without reliance on the curtilage.

Advertisements / Commercial Signage

⁹⁵ Applications for advertisements and signage in association with commercial uses arising from the re-use of rural buildings should reflect and be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area and the setting of traditional buildings. For further guidance on signage please refer to MHDLP Policy QL4 (Advertisement Signs).

Light Pollution

96

In rural locations poorly sited, excessive and inappropriately designed lighting can have a detrimental impact. The District Council will seek to ensure that external lighting is kept to an absolute minimum commensurate with need and that only low level, unobtrusive lighting is used. Where external lighting is proposed applicants will need to demonstrate that it has been designed to minimise light pollution.

Accessibility

97

The District Council acknowledge that it will not always be possible to apply the same transport and accessibility test to proposals in the open countryside as in the main urban area and other larger settlements. However, all proposals will need to demonstrate that consideration has been given to reducing the need to travel and securing access to the development by public transport or by other alternatives to the car.

98

Small scale, low key uses such as single holiday lets need not necessarily be situated in locations where they are accessible by public transport. However larger scale proposals should be accessible by some means of transport other than the private car.

Suitability of Existing Highway Network

99

Rural buildings which are only accessible by minor roads, particularly those of single vehicle width, are unlikely to be suitable candidates for conversion to large scale commercial uses. WCSP Policy D.29 (Change of Use of Buildings in Rural Areas for Employment Purposes) states that their re-use will be permitted provided that the proposal will not generate trips by heavy goods vehicles on unsuitable roads.

Traffic Generation

100

Uses which would be likely to attract a significant number of trips will only be permitted where they would be accessible by public transport or by other alternatives to the car.

101

Applicants will usually be expected to undertake a comparative analysis of existing and proposed traffic flows. The level of detail required will be dependant upon the scale and nature of the particular proposal.

Highway Safety

102

Proposals which would result in the intensification of use of an access onto a de-restricted section of road, where the national speed limit applies, may require improvements to visibility.

103

In considering development proposals, the District Council will have due regard to the impact of consequent highway modifications on the general character and appearance of the area and in particular, existing features of the neutral and built environment. Proposals which would result in the loss of significant trees and sections of hedgerows which make a positive contribution to the rural scene in order to satisfy visibility requirements will usually be resisted. Similarly, new tracks over open ground to reach isolated buildings may also cause unacceptable harm.

104

In all cases, the building subject to re-use must have a safe access, approached off an acceptable metalled road surface of sufficient size and standard to cater for any increase in traffic generation from the proposed use.

105

You are advised to contact the District Council's Highways Partnership Unit to discuss the implications of any access, traffic and parking issues of proposals before making an application on 01684 892722.

Access for Disabled People

106

An inclusive design approach is recommended to incorporate facilities for disabled people in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, in particular Part III – adjustments in relations to physical features. Access and use should be in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations in conjunction with BSI 8300:2001.

Habitat Conservation and Creation

107

Many traditional rural buildings provide a home/habitat for birds, bats and other wildlife. Much of our wildlife and their habitats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(As amended), Conservation Regulations 1994 and also protected under European legislation due to the decline in species and some are now threatened or endangered.

108

It is a criminal offence to disturb or destroy all birds nests whilst being built or in use. All bats and their roosts whether they are present or not, are also protected. Great Crested Newts, which can sometimes occupy parts of the curtilage of old buildings, have similar levels of legal protection.

109

Applicants will need to commission a detailed ecological assessment of buildings and their surroundings to assess any likely impact on biodiversity. This information must be submitted with the application. (see page 26)

110

When planning a development it is essential to check for the presence of bats and other protected species as early as possible so that any planning and licensing issues can be addressed before resources are committed. As this may affect the principle of the proposal it is not a matter which can be dealt with by imposing a planning condition on any consent and must be addressed at the outset.

111

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposals will mitigate disturbance and enhance a habitat of a protected species.

112

Steps should be taken at the outset of the design process to ensure that suitable habitat features are retained or added for bats and birds or other protected species.

113

Survey results with appropriate mitigation will need to be submitted at the time of the application and building work will need to be planned to avoid the breeding, nesting and roosting seasons. Applicants, Agents and Developers should refer to the document "Bat Mitigation Guidelines" produced by English Nature: www.english-nature.org.uk and the

range of other relevant documents concerning specific protected species.

114

Floodlighting disrupts the normal pattern of light and dark and can disturb some bats and birds, so should be avoided.

115

Piles of rubble and logs, streams, ditches and ponds may also provide suitable habitat for Great Crested Newts. Advice notes on Great Crested Newts and other protected species are available from English Nature: www.english-nature.org.uk.

116

The District Council is required to take account of the presence of protected species, and other wildlife including bats, when considering applications for the re-use of rural buildings and may refuse applications if it considers that development would have an adverse effect on these species or if an assessment of the impact of the development on protected species is inadequate.

117

In some circumstances, licenses are available from the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to permit actions affecting bats, their roosts and other European protected species that would normally be prohibited by law. Licenses are only available for actions that are to preserve public health or safety or for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. The applicant must demonstrate that there is no satisfactory alternative and that the action will not adversely affect the favourable conservation status of the bats. Mitigation to reduce or compensate for any impact of development will be a condition of any license and must be proportionate to the impact. Mitigation may require particular timing of operations, protection of existing roosts or the creation of new roosts to replace ones being lost. Enhancement of features with the potential to support protected species may also be asked for.

118

The District Council strongly advises developers to seek the services of a professional environmental consultant with appropriate experience when contemplating a development proposal that would affect bats or their roosts and other protected species.

Comprehensive Approach

119

Schemes which adopt a piecemeal approach either toward the conversion of individual buildings or groups of buildings (e.g. surrounding a common yard) will usually be resisted. Applicants should adopt a comprehensive approach to the conversion of buildings. A piecemeal approach is likely to increase subdivision and result in conflicting uses which may compromise amenity.

Archaeology

120

Farms, farmsteads, and the agricultural buildings that form them are an integral and significant part of the District's historic environment. Their vernacular qualities add greatly to local distinctiveness and provide tangible reference to the county's past agricultural heritage. Within these buildings we not only see the changes in farming practice, but the development of the individual farm. Where farms have been in existence for some time, they provide key information on changing technologies, farming methods and building techniques. Worcestershire County Council's Historic Environment and Archaeology Service are usually consulted on applications affecting historic buildings (listed and non-listed) and will provide recommendations as to what level of recording or assessment will be required. (see p30 for contact details)

121

A condition requiring an appropriate level of historic building recording and assessment will usually be imposed on any planning or listed building consent, to ensure investigation and recording occur.

122

Where the historic and architectural significance of the building is considered of high importance, then this recording shall be undertaken prior to determination of the application, in order that any key historic features are taken into account by the proposed scheme. Some schemes may also affect below ground archaeological remains and appropriate conditions may be required to record these either prior to, or during development works.

Building Regulations

123

The requirements of Building Regulations can potentially conflict with the objectives of preserving or restoring the original character of the building to be converted. Early consultation with Building Control is strongly advised.

124

Current Building Regulations require that all habitable rooms above ground floor should be fitted with a means of escape window. This window should have an unobstructed clear openable area of no less than 0.33m² which is at least 450mm tall or wide and no more than 1100mm from the floor. It is vitally important to have regard to the requirements of Building Regulations governing the means of escape when planning the internal layout. This is because the District Council is unlikely to agree a subsequent amendment to facilitate a larger opening where this would detract from the character and appearance of the building, or result in the loss of historic fabric. (see page 27 *Minor Amendments*)

Proximity to Agricultural activity

125

Proposals to convert rural buildings to residential or community use within 400 metres of a livestock unit will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that this would not be likely to result in either the loss of amenity for the new use, by reason of smell, noise or other adverse effects or conversely create a scenario where complaints concerning such issues prejudice the continued operation of the pre-existing agricultural activity.

126

Where the building (subject to a proposal for conversion) is located on a working farm, particularly if it is located close to other buildings housing livestock, regard will need to be given to the amenities of future occupiers and whether the proposed use is compatible with the existing agricultural operation. Adherence to the following guidelines will assist in mitigating any adverse impact.

127

Minimum separation distances from existing buildings to residential dwellings:

- Stables 40 metres
- Sheep and Cattle buildings 50 metres
- Intensively reared pigs and poultry 400 metres

128

A more relaxed approach can be taken in respect of proposals to convert buildings to agricultural workers dwellings where an appropriate condition can control future occupancy and where closer proximity to livestock may be desirable.

129

On working farms, an appropriate condition may be imposed to ensure that existing buildings are not used to house livestock in order to ensure that the amenities of occupiers of the new dwellinghouse and operation of the farm are protected.

Renewable Energy

130

The District Council recognises that many former agricultural buildings may not be served by mains utilities. This provides an opportunity to use renewable sources of energy, including solar power, wind and water. The District Council will encourage the use of such renewable energy sources provided that they are in harmony with the character and appearance of the building, its setting and wider landscape, and do not cause harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties. (See MHDLP Policy QL30 (Renewable Energy) and DS3 (General Development Requirements) criterion k and o.

Listed Buildings

131

Some rural buildings may be listed as being of special architectural or historic interest or may fall within the historic curtilage of a listed building and benefit from the same protection. Others may be situated within designated Conservation Areas. In both cases, conversions will require very careful consideration to ensure that the character, appearance and features of the buildings are retained. A separate application for listed building consent will be required where works are proposed to a listed building or building within the curtilage of a listed building - (Irrespective of whether the building is in the same ownership or not.) Applications for listed building consent should accompany applications for full planning permission.

132

Proposals for the re-use or conversion of a listed building should also have regard to MHDLP Policies QL10 (Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings) QL11 (Demolition of a Listed Building) QL12 (Alternative Uses for a Listed building) and QL13 (New Development Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings).

Rights of Way

133

In the countryside it is common for Public Rights of Way to pass close to rural buildings and it is therefore possible that these routes may be affected by proposals to change the use of such buildings and erect or alter boundary treatment. It is an offence to obstruct any public right of way, however applicants may apply to divert them if necessary.

134

A comprehensive document covering this issue entitled “**A guide to definitive maps and changes to public rights of way**” is produced by The Countryside Agency – www.countryside.gov.uk

Drainage & Water Pollution Prevention

135

It is important that the quality and ecology of watercourses are maintained. New development should not proceed unless foul sewers and sewage treatment works of adequate capacity and design are available.

136

The use of septic tanks should only be considered if connection to the mains sewage is not feasible and then only if the ground conditions are satisfactory and the application site is of sufficient size to provide an adequate sub soil drainage system. Where a septic tank is proposed, applicants will be expected to commission a porosity test to ascertain whether a soakaway will be effective. The results of the test should accompany the application and your application may not be registered without such information.

137

Proposals will be assessed against MHDLP Policies QL26 (Pollution Control) and QL27 (Foul Drainage).

138

Rural buildings generally have no facility for foul drainage. It is advisable to discuss proposals for sewage disposal with the Environment Agency at an early stage in the design process. Foul and surface water drainage must be managed in such a way to protect existing watercourses from pollution and excessive run off. The availability and quality of water supply should also be investigated.

139

In accordance with MHDLP Policy QL28, where favourable site conditions exist, all development proposals will be required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) which provide for the use of or disposal of surface water. Where the incorporation of SUDS is not feasible, or in the case of highway drainage where it may not be adopted by the Highway Authority an alternative means of surface water disposal will need to be agreed with the Council. In all instances proposals should aim to avoid increasing the rate of surface water run-off from the development. The re-use and recycling of water within the development will be encouraged.

Requirement to provide affordable housing

140

Under MHDLP Policy CN2 any application for residential re-use or conversion, outside the settlement boundary of Malvern will be required to make provision for affordable housing where the site is 0.2 ha and over or where five dwellings or more are proposed.

Development in the Floodplain

141

The re-use of a rural building in the floodplain may be unacceptable. Where the building to be converted or the principal access route to that building is known to be located within the floodplain, applicants should consult the Environment Agency about their proposals prior to the submission of an application. (see page 30)

142

Proposals which are not supported by the Environment Agency are likely to be refused. Development proposals in the 1% floodplain will be assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, in particular MHDLP Policy DS16 (Development and Flood Risk).

Making Efficient use of land

143

Whilst national advice on housing and the MHDLP encourages the efficient use of land, the subdivision of large barns to create several units can cause harm to the character and appearance of those buildings through the compartmentalisation of the internal space. In the case of traditional barn conversions the preservation of the character and appearance of those buildings and their setting will usually be an overriding concern.

Designing Out Crime

144

The District Council encourages developers to build to *Secured by Design* standards: www.securedbydesign.com. *Secured by Design* is an initiative supported by the police to encourage the building industry to adopt crime prevention measures in the design of developments to assist in reducing the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, creating a safer and more secure environment. Applicants should also refer to the document "Safer Places – The Planning System and Crime Prevention."

145

A balance needs to be struck between crime prevention and the visual impact of measures used to prevent crime. Buildings surrounding a courtyard should retain an outlook over this common space so as to facilitate natural surveillance.

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DESIGN GUIDANCE

Preserving the Character & Appearance of the Building and its Setting

146

The following guidance deals ostensibly with the conversion of former agricultural buildings, although many of the principles set out in this SPD can be applied to the re-use or conversion of any traditional building in the countryside.

147

The emphasis in the design of any scheme for the re-use or conversion of a traditional rural building should be the retention of its architectural integrity and its setting. In the case of traditional buildings, a little innovation and creative design can go a long way to achieving a successful conversion which respects and interprets the history of the building in a sympathetic way.

EXTERNAL CHANGES

Removal of Modern Additions

148

Many rural buildings have been subject to additions in the past which do not respect their original character and appearance. The conversion of such buildings provides an opportunity to secure the removal of such additions and thereby achieve an enhancement. The District Council will expect to see such previous additions removed rather than incorporated into any application proposals for conversion. Furthermore, the LPA will not usually support applications which propose the replacement of such structures with new extensions merely to fulfil the demands of future occupiers for additional space.

149

Developers will be expected to restore traditional buildings to their original appearance and form when putting them to new uses.

Retention of Existing Features

150

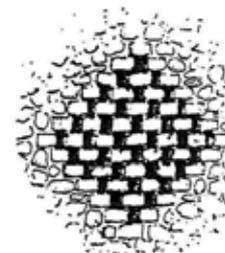
Features of importance, architecturally or historically, such as arches, lintels, ventilation slits and any fixed machinery related to or forming an intrinsic part of the building's

original use should be retained in-situ and integrated into the proposed conversion.

Fig.1a



cider mill



honeycomb ventilation

Fig.1b

Roofscape

Roof Profile

151

Traditional farm buildings generally feature long, unbroken roof profiles and it is essential that their appearance and integrity are retained in any conversion scheme.

152

The roof-line should not be altered or raised. In some cases however, the original roof may have been lost and replaced by a modern roof at a shallower angle of pitch. In such circumstances it may be acceptable to re-instate the roof profile at its original pitch. Applicants must demonstrate that any such change is informed by compelling physical, documentary, or photographic evidence of the historic profile.

153

Roof slopes should not be interrupted by introducing dormer windows or chimney stacks.

Fig.2a

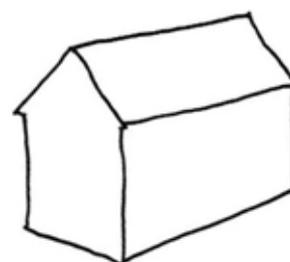
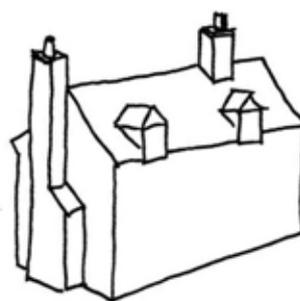


Fig.2b

154

Additional new “features” such as dovecotes, weather vanes, clock towers, cupolas etc, which are not usually found on agricultural buildings should be avoided. Applicants proposing to add such features will need to demonstrate that there is a historic precedent for them on the subject building.

Fig.3a

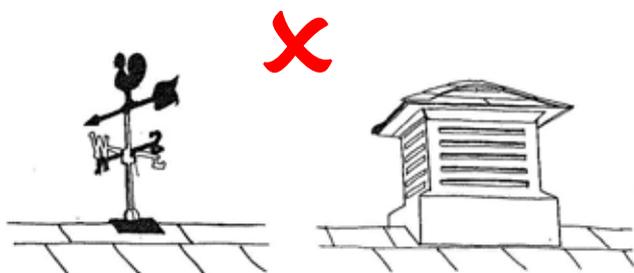


Fig.3b

Roof Structure

155

The roof construction of a traditional rural building is an intrinsic part of its structure and also a means by which it can be dated. Replacement of original trusses by modern versions will not be acceptable unless there is evidence of their substantial deterioration. Original purlins and trusses should be carefully conserved. Roof trusses and other structural elements should not usually be cut through and proposed openings from one bay to another through previously intact framed walls will usually be resisted.

Roof Covering

156

In some cases, whilst the roof structure may be intact, traditional roof materials may have been replaced. This should not prevent the restoration of the building to its original form.

157

Where none of the original roof covering survives and there is no point of reference on adjacent contemporary buildings forming part of the group, the advice of The District Council’s Conservation Officer should be sought.

158

Where it is necessary to remove an original roof covering to repair the supporting roof structure or add insulation, the original tiles or slates should be carefully removed and stored on site. Those which can be salvaged should be re-used.

159

In instances where it is necessary to utilise new or preferably reclaimed materials, these should match the existing in terms of size, colour and texture as closely as possible.

160

Where larger areas of repair are required on prominent roof profiles, it may be practical and acceptable to utilise matching tiles from profiles which are less visible. The covering on these less visible profiles can then be treated with new matching materials.

Chimneys and Flues

161

Chimneys are not a feature of most traditional agricultural buildings and the use of ridge vents or a flue may therefore be required. Any flue should be of minimal height, in an unobtrusive colour (preferably matt black) and must be discretely located on the building.

162

Having regard to the requirements of Building Regulations, care should be taken to position flues so that wherever possible, they do not exceed the ridge of the building and are seen against the backdrop of the roof slope.

163

Flues should be placed as low as possible to the eaves, and to the corners of the building, so that they do not interrupt or detract from the main roof profile.

Fig.4a

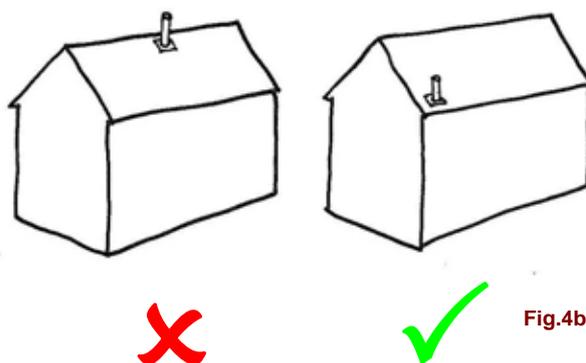


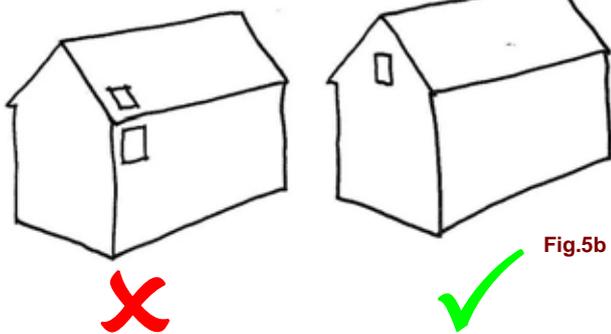
Fig.4b

Rooflights

164

Rooflights are a useful device for lighting internal spaces where an excess of additional windows would otherwise detract from the character and appearance of a building, but they should not be used where there are suitable existing openings in the walls.

Fig.5a



165

Where there is potential to do so, internal spaces should be lit and ventilated by glazing in the gable end rather than through the insertion of rooflights.

166

Rooflights should be used sparingly and in locations that would not introduce a conspicuous feature on the building when viewed in the context of the wider landscape setting.

167

In instances where the District Council considers rooflights acceptable, flush fitting 'conservation' style rooflights must be used regardless of whether the building is listed or not. There is a wide range of such rooflights on the market and some are better than others in achieving an unobtrusive effect. The District Council will require details of all rooflights to be submitted to it for approval prior to their installation. Rooflights of an inappropriate size or design will be rejected.

Repair of External Walls

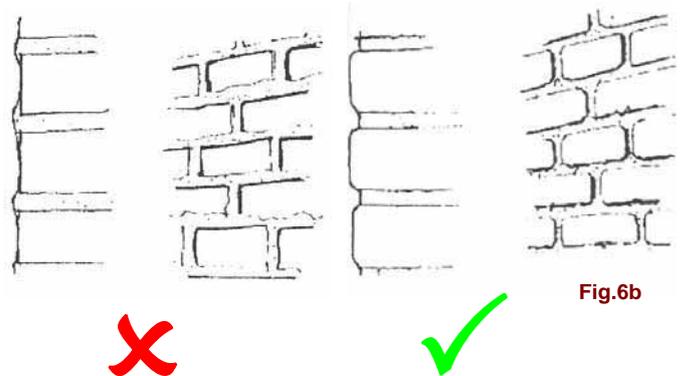
168

Where brickwork needs cleaning, the advice of the District Council's Conservation Officer should be sought. Sandblasting, for example, is a very abrasive technique and can cause irreversible damage to brickwork.

169

Re-pointing on a large scale should also be avoided as this will fundamentally affect the character of the building. Re-pointing should be confined to localised areas requiring repair. Any re-pointing should be done manually without the use of mechanical tools. Existing stone or brickwork should be re-pointed using traditional lime based mortars and methods. Achieving the correct mortar mix is as important as the bricks themselves. Advice on the technique and mortar mix to be used for re-pointing works should be sought from the District Council's Conservation Officer before such work is undertaken.

Fig.6a



170

New materials will need to match the manufacture, colour size and texture of the originals as closely as possible. Some buildings will contain brickwork laid in a consistent pattern or 'bond'. Such patterns should be replicated using bricks of matching colour, size and texture. The abutment of conflicting styles of brickwork, one against another, should be strictly avoided.

171

Proposals for demolishing walls or minor buildings within a group in order to supply materials for the conversion work elsewhere, will generally be resisted as these structures often form an intrinsic and consequently important part of the character of a group.

Windows and Doors

172

Proposals must make the best use of all existing openings. Existing openings should be retained, particularly where these are original and new openings kept to an absolute minimum.

173

Those openings that do exist are very often asymmetrically located on an elevation and in positions which will require some careful thought when planning the internal configuration of internal spaces.

174

A regular or symmetrical pattern of openings is a characteristic of domestic dwellings, which would be inappropriate in the context of a modest rural building such as a barn.

175

Doors and windows of the neo-Georgian variety and other pseudo-historical details, have no place in the humble farm building. Ledged and braced plank doors should invariably be selected.

Fig.7a

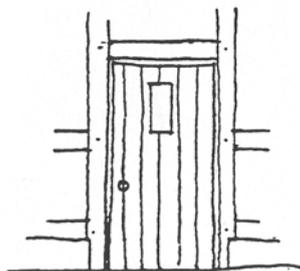


Fig.7b



176

Rather than being blocked in, surplus door openings could form useful stores, accessed from the outside of the building, or unobtrusive locations for utility meters.

177

Where openings need to be blocked up, a sympathetic material should be used and recessed to emphasise the original opening.

178

Where existing openings are to be closed or glazed, they should be treated in such a manner that the full extent of the original opening retains its identity.

Fig.8a

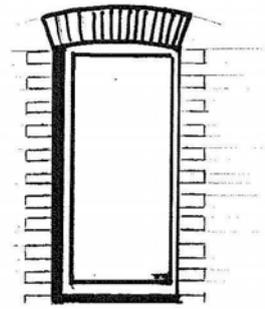
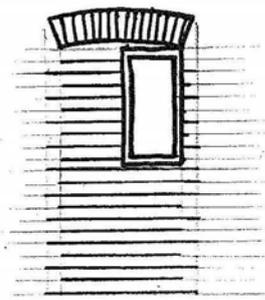


Fig.8b



179

Where new glazing is introduced, the existing door or shutters can either be retained and tied back to the wall or retained in working order to provide additional security when the building is empty.

Fig.9a

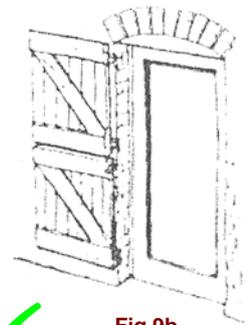
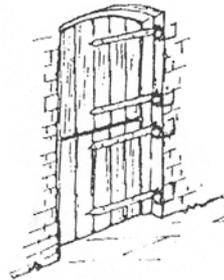


Fig.9b

180

Where existing doors are damaged, these should be restored or replaced depending upon their condition. The defects and repairs schedule (accompanying the application) should detail the condition of such features along with the nature and extent of any work required to them.

181

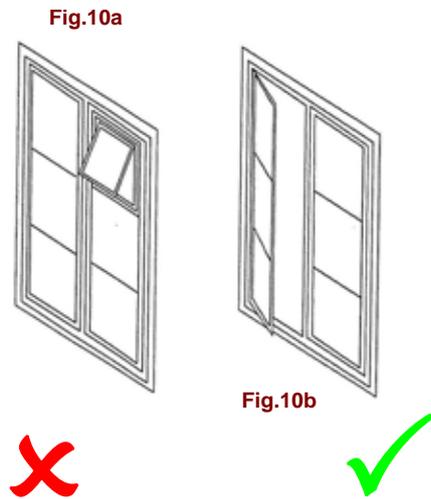
Where existing windows survive, replacements should replicate their form and manner of opening as closely as possible.

182

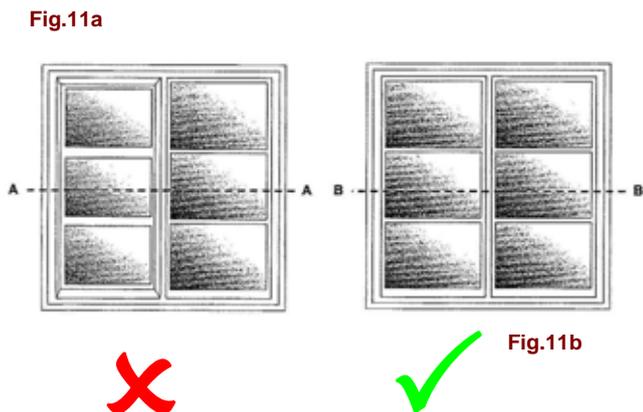
New windows inserted into existing openings should be purpose made to fit within the full extent of the opening. Standard 'off-the-peg' units which often have prefixed sills will not be appropriate and should be strictly avoided. The use of PVCu will invariably be unacceptable in traditional buildings.

183

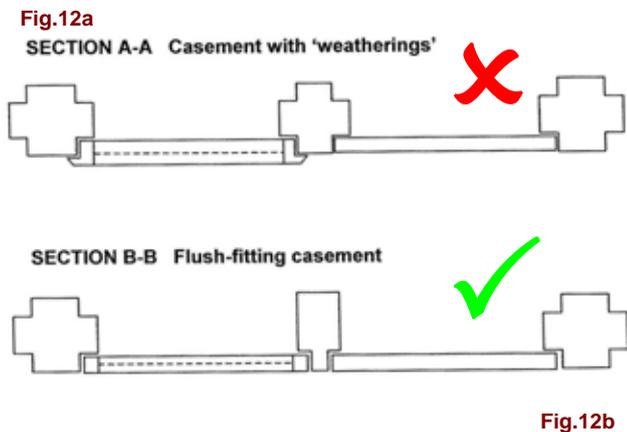
Units combining both casement windows and top hung lights as shown in Fig 10a should be avoided.



184
Where side hung casements are to be used, these should be balanced so that the visible area of glazing on one half of the window is the same as that on the other half, irrespective of whether the window has a single opening casement and fixed light or two opening casements.



185
'Weatherings' which close over the outside of the frame are a characteristic of modern casement windows and should be avoided. Traditional windows should be selected with casements which close flush into the frame.



186
Original openings that have been closed up in the past should be re-utilised in preference to creating new openings, especially where such openings have been blocked in an unsympathetic manner or using an inappropriate material, but only where this would not compromise the structural integrity of the building.

187
Any new openings should reflect the scale and proportions of existing openings, or where none exist, from design cues taken from another contemporary building within the group.

188
The insertion of new openings in otherwise blank elevations or where no physical evidence of former openings remains should be avoided, particularly where these elevations are visible from a public vantage point (including public footpaths).

189
New openings must not interrupt existing architectural features such as 'honeycomb' ventilation holes. Ventilation holes, often in cruciform, diamond or slit pattern, can be used to provide extra light to internal spaces. The contrast between their dark interiors and the light face of the building can be enhanced by blocking such apertures from the rear, or using dark glass recessed within the aperture. Glass blocks can provide interesting patterns of illumination within the building.

Privacy / Overlooking

190
The utilisation of openings in elevations which would compromise the privacy of adjacent (residential) development will be resisted.

191
The utilisation of openings in walls which themselves form an existing boundary with adjacent residential properties should be avoided.

192
Obscure glazing may be used in existing or reinstated openings to safeguard both the privacy of occupiers of neighbouring properties and the converted building. However, this will not be appropriate in residential conversions where this would involve fitting obscure glazing to the sole or principal window lighting a habitable room.

193

Fitting obscure glazing to windows in habitable rooms is not considered to provide a satisfactory living environment for future occupiers and revisions to the layout should be considered to avoid such scenarios.

194

Where ventilation is required, the window should be top-hung so that it can be opened without compromising privacy.

195

The fitting of obscure glazing to secondary or subordinate windows in existing or re-instated openings lighting habitable rooms will be considered where this would assist in lighting the internal space, but only where it is impractical to obtain borrowed light from another opening and where the window is a purpose made non-opening light.

Treatment of External Timber

196

Where such treatment is necessary, all external window and door joinery details in elevations which are half timbered or timber clad should be stained rather than painted. Where there is evidence that original joinery has been painted, new joinery should usually be treated in the same manner. The advice of the District Council's Conservation Officer should always be sought on this issue. It will usually be a condition of any planning permission that details of the proposed treatment of external timber are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

Principal Openings

197

Large barn doorways are often the main feature of agricultural barns and should be incorporated in any conversion to ensure that the essential character and appearance of the building is retained. Developers should avoid filling in such openings with masonry or timber cladding and then inserting standard "off-the-peg" windows and / or doors.

Fig.13a

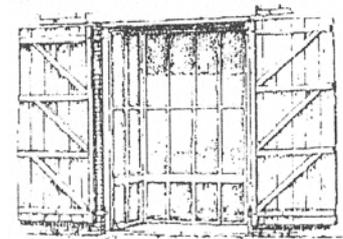
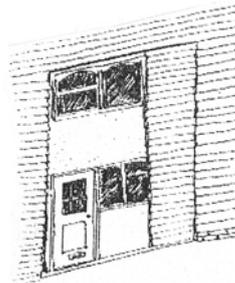


Fig.13b

198

Instead, proposals should allow the original opening to be fully exposed and visible without conflicting details within, particularly the intervention of a first floor which interrupts the vertical emphasis of the opening with a broad horizontal line. The area behind the main openings should be kept open from the floor to the rafters.

199

Full height glazing with a strong vertical emphasis is the most appropriate method of treatment for these large openings.

200

An important consideration in glazing these openings will be to avoid installing glazing flush with the outside face of the building. Glazing should be set back thereby ensuring that any reflection is minimised and light into the room is maximised.

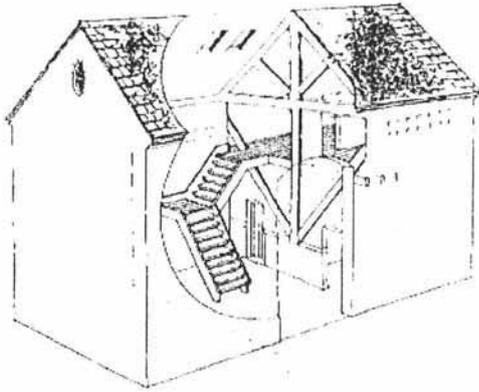
201

If full height glazing is proposed to the main opening, it will be important to avoid the use of solid doors within this area as they would appear as discordant, free standing features, floating in space.

202

The internal spaces behind these principal openings should be kept open and not subdivided. This will ensure that the maximum use can be made from "borrowed light" to light those spaces at both ground and first floor where there are no other existing openings, opportunities to reinstate former openings, or where the introduction of further openings would be undesirable.

Fig.14



203
First floor hoist doors require greater consideration if they are to be modified sympathetically. Generally the positioning of a window in the upper portion and a hit and miss ventilation arrangement below will achieve the best effect.

Porches

204
Storm porches and canopies are features typical of domestic dwellings and should be strictly avoided.

Fig.15a

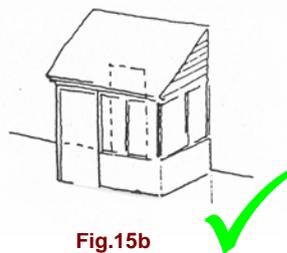


Fig.15b

Rainwater Goods

205
External rainwater goods should be kept to a minimum and be black finished cast iron or aluminium. Wherever possible downpipes should be placed in unobtrusive locations and avoid positions where this would prevent original doors and shutters being fastened back flat against the external face of the building.

206
Interception and collection of the rainwater discharged from the roofs of rural buildings saves water resources and can be used for toilets and irrigation.

207
Where buildings are located near to trees, appropriate measures should be specified and incorporated to ensure that leaves and other debris are intercepted so that guttering and downpipes do not become blocked and result in water damage to the fabric of the building.

208
Waste water pipes should run inside the building. Soil pipes should be treated in the same way and vented through the roof.

209
It will usually be necessary to seek approval of the details of all external rainwater goods from the District Council before development commences.

INTERNAL CHANGES

Internal Arrangement and Sub-Division

210
The successful conversion of a traditional building is not merely measured by the preservation and restoration of its outward character and appearance. Many rural buildings were designed with open plan interiors. Consequently, sub-division of these internal spaces with new walls and partitioning can fundamentally alter and adversely affect the character of these buildings. Such spaces do not lend themselves to the type of sub-division typical of purpose built dwellinghouses. Applicants should not expect to achieve standard domestic configurations and must be prepared to live with split levels and open plan layouts.

211
It will rarely be acceptable to insert a first floor in a barn which is open from the ground to the roof, along the entire length of the building. The threshing bay (wagon entrance) should be kept open to the roof and treated as a full height circulation space. Inserted floors should be kept to a minimum.

212
An open bay is an ideal position for an inserted gallery / landing and staircase, but in a traditional timber framed building such features should be supported independently of the frame.

213

Subdivision of internal spaces should respect bay divisions, whether these bays are defined by cross walls, framed partitions or masonry nibs.

Retention of Floor Material

214

An existing stone flag or timber boarded threshing floor material should be retained in-situ and incorporated into any new proposals.

New internal fittings

215

In the case of former agricultural buildings, internal fittings should complement the character of the building. Over-elaborate detailing should be avoided.

SETTING

Curtilage

216

The curtilage of a rural building should generally remain open and uncluttered. The application should include a plan clearly defining the extent of the proposed curtilage. This should generally respect the position of established boundaries irrespective of whether those are defined by walls or hedges.

217

Where planning permission is granted for the conversion of rural buildings to a dwelling, the residential use and any associated use rights will only extend over the land within the approved curtilage. This is usually denoted by the red line on the approved site plan.

218

Whilst the District Council can not control the amount or extent of land conveyed from one person to another, it can control its use. Proposals which seek to annex areas of adjacent agricultural land within the curtilage for use as a garden, irrespective of whether it is in productive agricultural use, will usually be resisted, particularly where the existing building has a predefined curtilage.

219

Applicants will be asked to modify the proposed curtilage and amend the red line on the application site plan accordingly, in situations where the extent of the proposed garden would harm the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Boundary Treatment

220

The treatment of boundaries should reflect the building's rural character. The use of fence panels should be avoided. Low walls and post and rail fences are usually appropriate.

Existing Trees & Hedgerows

221

Existing landscape features such as mature trees should be retained and appropriately safeguarded in situations where they are in close proximity to building works undertaken to facilitate re-use of the building. The storage of building materials beneath the canopies of mature trees should be strictly avoided. Developers should follow the advice set out in British Standard 5837 (2005) - Trees and Construction.

New planting

222

Landscape proposals should respect the character of the existing countryside and aim to enhance rather than alter it. The use of native species will be favoured and proposals should be considered alongside MHDLP Policy QL21 (Landscaping).

Hard Surfaces

223

Modern materials such as tarmac and concrete are often out of keeping with the character of rural buildings. Stone sets, cobbles or other sympathetic materials should be retained or re-used and supplemented, where necessary, with matching materials. The use of porous or semi-porous surfaces will be encouraged. This is because impermeable surfaces such as paved areas increase the quantity and rate of rainfall run-off to watercourses with cumulatively greater risk of flood and contamination. All proposals for the re-use of rural buildings need to consider the impact of those developments on surface water run-off and demonstrate that they are not creating or exacerbating flooding problems.

Parking

224

Provision for vehicle parking should be in accordance with the County Council's guidelines. Careful consideration must be given to the sensitive siting and design of car parking, in both commercial and residential schemes. Wherever possible, garaging should form an integral part of any conversion scheme to avoid the need for new buildings to fulfil that purpose.

Existing Outbuildings

225

Habitable accommodation should usually be confined to the principal building leaving subordinate out-buildings available to serve as garaging, storage or workshops. Cart sheds are often ideal for use as garaging. The introduction of doors of any form to enclose such openings will usually be unacceptable. It is important to preserve the character of these buildings, and the District Council will expect them to be retained and re-used as an integral part of the proposals.

Services

226

Particular care needs to be given to the siting of services which can have a potentially damaging visual impact. Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) Tanks and septic tanks should be sensitively sited and well screened so as to be unobtrusive, whilst electricity control boxes should be positioned on less prominent elevations. Consideration should be given to the use of renewable energy sources (see para 130)

Characteristics Typical of a Successful Residential Conversion

- Modern additions removed and no new extensions or outbuildings erected
- Use of open fronted cartshed for parking and storage
- Sturdy ledged and braced plank doors
- Retention of ventilation slots fitted with recessed glass blocks to provide additional light to internal spaces
- Simple discrete matt black metal flues
- Unbroken ridgelines
- Use of existing wall for containment of curtilage
- Low key lighting
- Use of native trees and hedgerow species
- Provision for bins, tools, fuel etc within existing original buildings
- Innovative use of existing openings to light internal spaces
- Original farm gate retained with post & rail fencing to match existing
- Retention of farmyard as one open space
- Purpose made timber joinery to fit openings
- Side hung balanced casements with few glazing bars
- Full height glazing to main opening, with original threshing doors retained, restored and fixed back against wall
- Retention and augmentation of cobbled surface
- Retention in-situ of fixed machinery related to the original agricultural / industrial use
- Minimum number of discretely positioned flush fitting 'conservation style' rooflights
- Simple treatment to internal walls and galleries
- Central bay or wagon entrance kept open to the roof
- Space left for protected species within the roof void with appropriate access points

Characteristics Typical of an Unsuccessful Residential Conversion

- Modern additions retained, unsympathetic extensions and conservatory added
- Ancillary buildings converted to accommodation, new garage with metal up-and-over doors
- Moulded doors, storm porches, and canopies
- Interruption of ventilation slots with new openings
- External chimney breast added
- Eaves broken by dormers
- Large garden extending into adjacent countryside
- Ornate lighting, reproduction lamp standards
- Ornamental planting and coniferous hedges
- Domestic clutter on view or stored in unsightly shed
- Imposition of uniform window arrangement
- Use of larch lap fencing, Ornate iron gate, wall and piers to vehicular entrance
- Subdivision of farmyard
- Off-the-peg joinery manufactured to standard sizes
- Unbalanced casements with top hung lights, multiple glazing bars or leaded lights.
- Partial in-filling of principal openings with masonry or horizontal cladding
- Large areas of tarmac
- Fixed machinery removed, scrapped or sold
- Large raised rooflights on several roof slopes
- False Neo-Georgian detailing, dado rails and panelling
- Insertion of first floor along whole length of barn and across the central bay
- Protected species - an afterthought

MAKING AN APPLICATION

Pre-Application Meetings / Site Visits

229

The District Council encourages applicants to seek pre-application advice. When considering conversion proposals for traditional rural buildings it is always advisable to consult the District Council for advice at an early stage. This should highlight any potential design opportunities and potential pitfalls before potentially abortive work is undertaken.

230

A Duty Planning Officer is on-hand to provide free pre-application advice from 10:00am until 4:00pm at the Customer Service Centre based in Malvern Library. You can arrange an appointment by calling 01684 862151.

231

If you intend to make use of this service, please ensure that you bring photographs of the building with you. To make the most of such meetings it is important that you have a clear idea of what it is you want to achieve.

232

In the case of traditional rural buildings, you are encouraged to engage a competent conservation architect/designer with proven experience in this field. Ask them to show you previous examples of their schemes, both in plan form and on the ground.

233

The Council has produced a guidance note entitled "Pre-Application Planning Advice" for applicants and their agents. The leaflet contains advice on the type and scope of pre-application advice offered by Planning Services. Copies are available from the Customer Service Centre and on-line at www.malvern hills.gov.uk.

Further Advice & Information

Further advice and information on the re-use of rural buildings can be obtained -

- On The District Council's website: www.malvern hills.gov.uk
- By speaking to one of our Customer Service Advisors on **01684 862151**
- By visiting the **Customer Service Centre** based in Malvern Library, Graham Road, Great Malvern - between 10:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday.
- By writing to us with your queries.

All correspondence should be sent to:

Malvern Hills District Council
Planning Services
Development Control
The Council House
Avenue Road
Malvern
Worcestershire
WR14 3AF

VALIDATION CHECKLIST

In order for your application to be accepted as valid, it is essential that we have the necessary information

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS for traditional rural buildings

ESSENTIAL

- **Detailed Ecological Assessment** (of the buildings and their surroundings to assess any likely impact on biodiversity.)
- **Detailed Structural Survey Report** (carried out by a qualified surveyor)
- **Detailed Method Statement** (detailing the nature and extent of any structural works necessary to facilitate the re-use of the building and how these works will be undertaken.)
- **Comprehensive Defects and Repairs Schedule**, cross-referenced to large scale drawings of the existing building including plans, elevations and cross sections.
- **Elevational drawings and floor plans** at 1:50
- **Cross sections** at 1:50
- **Block plan** at 1:500 or 1:200 (This should show existing and proposed boundaries)
- For residential conversions, a detailed **Marketing Report** or other specific information detailing why commercial re-use is considered unacceptable. (see page 7)
- Where it is not possible to connect to a foul sewer, **Details of the Proposed Drainage System**.
- **Traffic Impact Assessment** (dependant upon scale of development)
- Annotated plan of vehicular access showing **Visibility Splays**

DESIRABLE

- Technical Specification and drawings of any rooflights
- Detailed drawings including vertical and horizontal cross sections of any new window and door joinery at 1:2
- Specification for rainwater goods with location of downpipes shown on elevational drawings
- Landscaping scheme detailing trees and hedgerows to be retained and those to be removed at 1:200
- Details of external lighting

NOTE

Details under the heading 'Desirable' which are not submitted with the application will usually be dealt with by conditions imposed on any planning consent. It will usually be necessary to submit and obtain the written approval of those details before development commences. (see page 27)

Level of Detail

Any development not involving the erection of a building cannot be applied for in outline form. Consequently proposals relating to the re-use of rural buildings must be made in the form of full applications.

Grants

234

The Redundant Building Grant (RBG) Scheme is part of a programme of rural regeneration. The scheme covers part of Malvern Hills District, but is administered by Herefordshire Council. (see *plan at Appendix 2*) The Redundant Building Grant programme Manager can be contacted on 01432 260662 or 01432 383616 or by e-mail: rbgscheme@herefordshire.gov.uk.

235

Redundant Building Grants are provided for the conversion or refurbishment of redundant buildings (i.e. unused or unusable in their current state) to bring them back into productive business use, or to enhance their current business use. One of the key aims of the scheme is the creation of jobs, so the key criterion is that the building will be used for business purposes once the works are completed. These grants are not available for conversion to, or refurbishment of, residential property, nor for buildings which will be used for agricultural or horticultural purposes. Grants under this scheme are available in the Designated Rural Priority Areas of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire, and also in the Rural Regeneration Zone.

236

Eligible projects would include conversion or refurbishment, including upgrading of mains services, to provide facilities for:

- Manufacturing
- Crafts or service businesses
- Office premises
- Retail outlets

237

Further information is contained in the leaflet entitled "Redundant Building Grant Scheme" which is available from the Customer Service Centre.

Buildings at Risk Register

238

The District Council maintains a Buildings at Risk Register. Please contact the Council's Conservation Officer for further details.

Conditions

239

The conditions are listed on the decision notice issued to the applicant or their agent when permission is granted. Some developers forget about planning conditions. We don't. Developers who proceed with works before discharging conditions may invalidate the planning permission and place the landowner at risk of enforcement action. In the case of unauthorised works to Listed Buildings, the person undertaking the work can also be prosecuted. Consequently, it is vitally important that you read the decision notice and ensure that any condition requiring action before development commences is discharged in writing by the District Council before work begins on site.

240

If you have purchased a property with planning permission, the onus is on you to ensure that any outstanding details have been submitted or requirements have been met in accordance with the terms of the permission.

241

If you do not have a copy of the approved plans and permissions relating to a property which you intend to purchase or have recently acquired, copies can be viewed and/or purchased by appointment at the Customer Service Centre or at Brunel House.

242

Copies of the decision notice (detailing any conditions imposed on the permission) can also be forwarded by post, but only following receipt of payment.

Minor Amendments

243

Once permission has been granted the District Council will only consider amendments of a minor nature to the approved scheme. Significant changes will require a fresh application. New elements, not forming part of the approved scheme cannot be dealt with as minor amendments and will require the submission of a fresh planning application.

244

For example, the addition of extra openings and rooflights will not be acceptable as a minor amendment, but the repositioning of a new opening or rooflight may be acceptable.

245

Proposals seeking to enlarge an approved element of the scheme will not be acceptable as a minor amendment, but the deletion or reduction in size of a particular element may be allowed.

246

Proposals seeking to change elements which were the subject of representations from neighbours, the Parish Council, statutory consultees or any other interested party during the consideration of the application, cannot be dealt with as minor amendments and will require a fresh planning application.

Permitted Development Rights

247

Unless removed by a condition imposed on the original planning permission or by specific Direction, all dwellinghouses benefit from the rights conveyed under the Part 1 to Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, which subject to particular criteria, may allow extensions and alterations to be undertaken without the need to apply for planning permission.

248

The District Council generally removes these rights to ensure that any extensions, alterations, and outbuildings beyond that agreed when permission was granted for the conversion, will require a planning application. This enables the District Council to exercise appropriate control over changes which might otherwise harm the character and appearance of the building, its setting and the wider countryside.

Alterations / Extensions & Outbuildings following completion

249

Any permission granted for the conversion of a rural building will have been the result of careful consideration by the District Council and there will be a strong presumption against subsequent alterations, extensions and outbuildings. The addition of conservatories in particular, can seriously detract from the character and appearance of former agricultural buildings.

250

In view of the sensitivity of such buildings to change, it is the practice of the District Council to remove permitted development rights in order to bring such development under the scope of control of the District Council.

251

MHDLP Policy EP6 (para 4) states "*proposed extensions to converted rural buildings will be assessed against the impact of the scheme on the character of the building as it existed immediately prior to conversion, rather than the use to which it has been converted*"

252

If any subsequent extension was to be related only to the new use, without due regard to the original form and function of the building, a process of attrition would be set in motion which over time would diminish the building's original character and integrity. Over the years the cumulative effect of additions and alterations, carried out in a piecemeal fashion, would result in a considerable loss of character, out of keeping with the building's rural origins and harmful to its setting. It is therefore important to retain the character of buildings that have a traditional form and distinctive appearance.

253

It will rarely be acceptable to extend a traditional building previously converted to residential use to facilitate the demands of the occupier for additional accommodation where this would result in harm to the character and appearance of the building or its setting. Such proposals will require detailed justification, (usually in the form of a written statement accompanying the application) and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

254

Proposals which seek to re-introduce elements which were omitted from the plans at the request of the District Council during consideration of the application will be resisted.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

For advice concerning protected species-

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Lower Smite Farm
Smite Hill
Hindlip
Worcester
WR3 8SZ
Tel: 01905 754919
Fax: 01905 755868
Website: www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/

For general information and publications on rural tourism/recreation and countryside conservation-

The Countryside Agency

West Midlands Region
1st Floor
Vincent House
Quay Place
92-93 Edward Street
Birmingham
B1 2RA
Tel: 0121 233 9399
Fax: 0121 233 9286
Email: info.westmids@countryside.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/>
General Enquiries
Tel: 01242 533222
Email: info@countryside.gov.uk

For advice to members on planning and farm diversification issues-

National Farmers Union

Agriculture House
Southwater Way
Telford
Shropshire TF3 4NR
Tel: 01952 400 500
Fax: 01952 409 380
Email: West.Midlands@nfonline.com
Website: www.nfu.org.uk

For advice on works involving listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments-

English Heritage
West Midlands Region
112 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 3AG
Tel: 0121 625 6820
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk
Customer Services
Tel: 0870 333 1181
Fax: 01793 414926
Email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk

For help finding a chartered surveyor in your area-

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

RICS Contact Centre
Surveyor Court
Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JE
Tel: 0870 333 1600
Fax: 0207 334 3811
Website: <http://www.ricsfirms.co.uk/>

For advice and information on funding from Rural Enterprise Grants and free planning advice-

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - DEFRA

Website: www.defra.gov.uk
Defra helpline: 08459 335 577

For advice and information on European Protected Species and License applications -

DEFRA
European Wildlife Division
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol, BS1 6EV

General Enquiries
Tel: 0117 372 8903
Fax: 0117 3728182
Email: species@defra.gsi.gov.uk

For advice to members on farm diversification-

County Land and Business Association

West Midlands Regional Office

Knightly

Woodseaves

Staffordshire

ST20 0JW

Tel: 01785 284722

Fax: 01785 284733

For advice concerning-ecology and biodiversity

English Nature

Bronsil House

Eastnor

Nr Ledbury

Herefordshire

HR8 1EP

Tel: 01531 638500

Email: herefordshire.worcestershire@english-nature.org.uk

For advice concerning archaeological implications of development-

**Worcestershire County Council
Archaeological Service**

Woodbury Hall

University of Worcester

Henwick Grove

Worcester

WR2 6AJ

Tel: 01905 855454

Email: mglyde@worcestershire.gov.uk

For advice concerning flood risk

Environment Agency

Severn Area Planning Team

Hafren House

Welshpool Road

Shelton

Shrewsbury

SY3 8BB

Tel: 08708 506506

Fax: 01743 272138

Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

See also:

www.pipernetworking.com/floodrisk

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Extract from the adopted Malvern Hills District Local Plan (July 2006)

Policy EP6 - The Re-Use of Rural Buildings

- (1) The re-use or conversion of rural buildings in the countryside will only be permitted where:**
 - a) the scale and type(s) of use proposed is suitable for the building and its location;**
 - b) the building is of a permanent and substantial construction and capable of accommodating the proposed use without excessive rebuilding, extension or alteration;**
 - c) the form, bulk and general design of the building is in keeping with its surroundings;**
 - d) the re-use is achieved with minimum alterations to the appearance of the building, its fenestration and other openings;**
 - e) proposals do not harm the character, appearance and landscape quality of the area or the setting of the building; and**
 - f) the scale and type of development does not generate traffic levels unacceptable to the location and the site is reasonably accessible to a range of transport modes other than the car.**

- (2) However proposals for the conversion, alteration or extension of rural buildings to residential use will only be permitted if:**
 - a) it can be demonstrated that every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable employment, tourism or recreation use of the building; or**
 - b) residential conversion is subordinate to a scheme for employment, tourism or recreation use or represents a live-work unit where the proportion of the building allocated for workspace/employment use should exceed the residential use; or**
 - c) residential conversion is required to meet a proven need for a dwelling for an agricultural or forestry worker or an identified affordable housing need in accordance with Policies CN4 and CN3; and**

- (3) Where alterations, extensions, outbuildings or storage might have a future detrimental effect on the building or the character of an area, certain permitted development rights may be withdrawn by the imposition of conditions.**

- (4) Proposed extensions to converted rural buildings will be assessed against the impact of the scheme on the character of the building as it existed immediately prior to conversion, rather than the use to which it has been converted.**

OBJECTIVE 2 WARDS AND RURAL REGENERATION ZONES

Extract from the adopted Malvern Hills District Local Plan (July 2006)



Further Advice & Information

Further advice and information on the re-use of rural buildings can be obtained -

- On The District Council's website:
www.malvern hills.gov.uk
- By speaking to one of our Customer Service Advisors on **01684 862151**
- By visiting the **Customer Service Centre** based in Malvern Library, Graham Road, Great Malvern - between 10:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday.
- By writing to us with your queries.

All correspondence should be sent to:

Malvern Hills District Council
Planning Services
Development Control
The Council House
Avenue Road
Malvern
Worcestershire
WR14 3AF

If you require this in an alternative format i.e. by e-mail, on disk, in large print or Braille please contact a Customer Service Advisor on 01684 862151 or Minicom 01684 862186.

Calls are welcome via Typetalk,
Please prefix our telephone number with 18001.

Need help with this ? Tel: 01905 25121

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