CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/08969
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Site Inspection:	07 December 2023
Consultation ends:	28 November 2023
Case officer:	Helena Carney

Site Address:	Holiday Lets, Conygre Farm, Burbage Road, Easton Royal, Pewsey, SN9 5LU
Proposal:	Change of use of 3 holiday accommodation units to Class C3 residential.
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015):
Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 18: Spatial Strategy for the Pewsey Community Area
Core Policy 40: Hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and conference facilities
Core Policy 45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs
Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life
Core Policy 51: Landscape
Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design & Place Shaping
Core Policy 61: Transport and New Development
Core Policy 64: Demand Management

The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2016-2026: Car Parking Strategy (March 2015)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

ISSUES

• Principle of development
• Impact upon residential amenity
• Impact upon visual amenity
• Impact upon highway safety and parking provision
• Impact upon the North Wessex Downs National Landscape [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)]

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

• K/46324 - The conversion of redundant farm buildings into two holiday units with attached pool room, alterations to redundant tin storage shed and alterations to existing access road, approved 03/11/2003
• K/51774/F - Change of use of farm building to form additional holiday unit within existing complex, approved 13/04/2005

REPRESENTATIONS

Easton Royal Parish Council: no objection

Wiltshire Council Highways Officer: no objection

Wiltshire Council Waste Technical Officer: no objection

Third Party representations: one letter of representation was received from a member of the public, commenting as follows:

"Whilst it is disappointing to lose local tourist accommodation, if they are no longer financially viable then the proposed change of use would make good sense and also adds 3 family housing units to the area.
My only concern would be the residents access to the school, church, village hall, recreation ground, bus stop and other village amenities from this site for those occupiers unable (e.g. children), or unwilling, to use motorised transport. Holiday residents are unlikely to have faced this danger due to their transient nature and also it is unlikely they would have needed to utilise any of the village's amenities. However full-time residents would need access these to enable them to fully integrate with the village. The Easton/Burbage road is fast, and dangerous to pedestrians. I would recommend that the plans should include the creation of a footway along the B3087 from the farm's access drive to the village".

ASSESSMENT

The application site relates to 3no. holiday lets within the Conygre Farm complex. The application site is located on the outskirts of Easton Royal, outside of the limits of development.

The existing complex comprises existing farm buildings and residential properties. The buildings are set back from the main highway, accessed via a private driveway.

The application site is located within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

The Proposals:
This application is seeking planning permission for the change of use of the existing holiday let accommodation to C3 residential (providing 3no. dwellings). No external alterations or extensions of the buildings are proposed.

Principle of development:

This application is seeking planning permission for the change of use of 3no. existing holiday lets to C3 residential use and therefore Core Policies 40 (Hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and conference facilities), 45 (Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs) and 48 (Supporting Rural Life) are relevant to this assessment.

Core Policy 40 states ‘Proposals for the change of use of existing bed spaces provided in hotels or public houses or conference facilities to alternative uses will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated there is no longer a need for such a facility in either its current use or in any other form of tourism, leisure, arts, entertainment or cultural use’.

Core Policy 48 explains the approach that will be taken to support rural communities, outside the limits of development of Principal Settlements. The policy is based on the following key objectives:

• Protecting the countryside and maintaining its local distinctiveness.
• Supporting the sensitive reuse of built assets to help meet local needs.
• Supporting improved access between places and to services; and
• Supporting the community in taking ownership of local services.

This policy supports proposals to convert and re-use rural buildings for employment, tourism, cultural and community uses will be supported where they satisfy the following criteria:

i. The building(s) is/are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding, and with only necessary extension or modification which preserves the character of the original building.
ii. The use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas.
iii. The building can be served by adequate access and infrastructure.
iv. The site has reasonable access to local services.
v. The conversion or re-use of a heritage asset would lead to its viable long term safeguarding.

Where there is clear evidence that the above uses are not practical propositions, residential development may be appropriate where it meets the above criteria’.

In this instance the existing holiday lets are located within a complex comprising agricultural barns and residential dwellings. It is noted that two such barns have previously been converted into residential accommodation (achieved using permitted development rights) which implies that there is no alternative use for the existing buildings.

The proposals involve a change of use and no external alterations or extensions to the existing buildings are proposed and consequently the proposals will preserve the character of the original building and would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape settlement or be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas. The site has reasonable access to local services as they are located approximately 310m from the main built up part of the settlement.

The submitted covering letter states that the applicants “have operated the accommodation successfully for many years, however since the COVID pandemic there has been a significant drop

in bookings which is making the enterprise financially unviable". The council has no evidence to contradict this assessment.

As the existing holiday let business appears to be unviable, there appears to be no other alternative use for the buildings and the proposals meets criteria i – iv set out in CP48 above (v is not applicable) the change of use of the buildings to residential is considered acceptable.

It is also acknowledged that council does not currently have a 5 year Housing Land Supply (HLS). The change of use of the holiday lets will provide 3 additional residential dwellings and whilst it is acknowledged that this will help to a modest extent, it will nonetheless contribute to the council's housing stock.

Given the above, it is concluded that the proposed development complies with Core Polices 40, 45 and 48 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and consequently the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Impact upon residential amenity:

New dwellings are expected to meet the minimum Nationally Described Space Standards, and private outdoor amenity space should, as a minimum, be equal to the footprint of the dwelling. The submitted site plan indicates that the private outdoor amenity space afforded to each dwelling will meet the minimum space standards.

Consideration is also given to the potential impact of the proposed development on neighbouring amenities. However, as the proposals involve the change of use of the existing buildings to residential use and no external alterations or extensions are proposed, it is considered that the proposed development will have a neutral impact upon the occupiers of neighbouring properties within the same complex.

Impact upon visual amenity:

The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) Core Policy 57 requires a high standard of design in any new developments including alterations or extensions to a dwelling. Development is to create a strong sense of place through drawing on local context and being complementary to the locality. The policy seeks for any new development to positively respond to the existing townscape and landscape and effectively integrate into its settings.

The proposals involve the change of use of existing holiday let buildings within an existing farm/residential complex. The proposals do not involve any external alterations or extensions to the existing buildings and as such it is considered that the proposed development will have a neutral impact upon visual amenity.

Impact upon highway safety and parking provision:

The council's Highways Officer was consulted on the proposals and commented as follows "The location is one which could be considered as contrary to policy in regards to promoting sustainable development . If that is set aside I am happy that the site offers adequate space for the required parking and a suitable access for the use proposed.

I am minded that Waste should be consulted in regards to access to collection and the applicant may need to be prepared to take the waste to roadside, though there may be a procedure in place given the holiday residential use .

As such , based on the information provided I am happy to offer no highway objection".

The above comment was brought to the attention of the agent and they confirmed "In terms of waste collections, the Council refuse bins are currently walked to the boundary with the road for kerbside collection. The same would happen with the new residential properties".

In consideration of the proposed waste collection arrangements, the council's Waste Technical Officer commented as follows "we would have some concerns regarding the distance that the residents will need to wheel/carry their waste to the main road (we usually suggest 25m to 30m max as carry distance for residents). However as there is a historical decision to present the bins on the main road already in place for the existing properties within the complex, then we would expect the same arrangement for the 3 x new dwellings". As the Waste Technical Officer has no objection, the proposed arrangements are considered acceptable in this instance.

Given the above, the proposed development does not give rise to any highway safety concerns and is considered acceptable in terms of parking provision.

Impact upon the North Wessex Downs National Landscape [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)]:

The proposals involve the change of use of existing buildings within an existing farm/residential complex. As the proposals do not involve any external alterations or extensions and there will be no encroachment into the open countryside, no harm will be caused to the special qualities of the National Landscape.

Other issues:

The comment received from a member of the public raising concerns about accessibility to local services and the suggestion that the application should include a footpath along the highway to improve pedestrian safety have been duly noted. However, as there are existing residential properties in this location and the buildings subject of this application were previously used by visitors, this is an existing situation. Whilst it is acknowledged that a footpath would be beneficial to existing and future occupiers of the dwellings, it is considered too onerous for a development of this scale to include this within the current planning application.

Conclusion:

In conclusion the proposals seem fitting with regards to scale, design and materials. The proposal is considered acceptable in the context of its surroundings and is in accordance with the general criteria set out in the aforementioned policies of the local development plan.

Conditions: (3)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Application Form
Covering Letter dated 10th October 2023
Drawing Number 2300-SK04 Location Plan
Drawing Number 2210-SK06 Proposed Site Plan
Drawing Number 2210-SK07 Proposed Site Plan

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No.3) (England) Order 2020 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting or amending that Order with or without modification), there shall be no additions/extensions or external alterations to any building forming part of the development hereby permitted.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity of the area and to enable the Local Planning Authority to consider individually whether planning permission should be granted for additions/extensions or external alterations.