

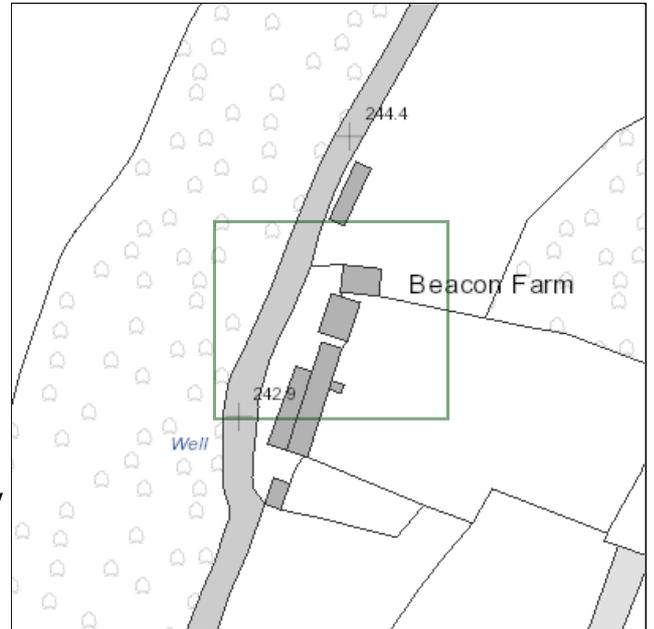
Ward Dunkeswell And Otterhead

Reference 20/2819/COU

Applicant Mr & Mrs Tomkinson

Location Beacon Farm Beacon Yarcombe Honiton EX14 9LU

Proposal Change of use of outbuilding from ancillary accommodation to the main house to an independent residential unit for use as a holiday let.



RECOMMENDATION: Refusal

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Beacon Farm

A detailed aerial map of Beacon Farm. A red hatched area highlights the outbuilding. The text 'Beacon Farm' is overlaid in large black font across the center of the map.

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| | | Committee Date: 1st September 2021 |
| Dunkeswell And Otterhead (Yarcombe) | 20/2819/COU | Target Date: 13.04.2021 |
| Applicant: | Mr & Mrs Tomkinson | |
| Location: | Beacon Farm Beacon | |
| Proposal: | Change of use of outbuilding from ancillary accommodation to the main house to an independent residential unit for use as a holiday let. | |

RECOMMENDATION: Refusal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application is before committee as the officer recommendation is contrary to the view of a Ward Member.

Permission is sought for the change of use of an ancillary building to the main dwelling, known as Beacon Farm, to form a unit of holiday accommodation, together with associated parking and patio. No objections have been raised by the ward members, parish council or other parties.

The proposal would constitute a small scale tourism related business run by the applicant and it would in turn would support the wider tourism related economy and local services within the area. It would not have a significant impact on the character of the area or pose a risk to highway safety. However, some of the services and facilities which holiday makers may require (e.g. a pub and shop) are not within a safe/lit walking distance with walking and cycling not attractive and not well served by public transport or sustainably located with regard to a wider range of local facilities and services. It is therefore likely that occupants of the accommodation would rely on a private motor vehicle, which conflicts with one of the criteria of Policy E16 (Proposals for Holiday or Overnight Accommodation and Associated Facilities) of the East Devon Local Plan and a similar criteria to Policy D8.

Whilst there are some limited tourism benefits associated with the proposal, these are not considered to outweigh the lack of planning policy support and unsustainable location of the site.

CONSULTATIONS

Local Consultations

Parish/Town Council

28/2/01

On the proviso that the home office unit, previously a garage, is kept tied in deed and ownership to the main Beacon Farm dwelling and no further extensions are made to it, with this being reflected in the conditions, Yarcombe Parish Council would support this application.

(The Parish Council were contacted to explain that the tying the ownership of the proposed holiday accommodation to the ownership of the Beacon dwelling via a deed is not permissible through the planning process, although a condition could be applied restricting it to a holiday accommodation use. The response below was then received from the Parish Council.)

As a parish council, we note your comments. We are always trying to do the best for our community: We still support this application and request that “a condition is imposed which would tie the occupation of the site to holiday occupation only”, as you have suggested.

Further comments:

(Following reconsultation on additional information)

Yarcombe Parish Council acknowledge this amendment and look to East Devon District Council to regulate this level of policy.

Dunkeswell And Otterhead - Cllr David Key

01/03/21 - I have no objection to the holiday conversion but with the limited holiday occupation placed on the change and deed tied to the existing house.

(The Ward Member was contacted to explain that planning cannot encumber owners with regard to the deeds for the property e.g. tying it to the existing dwelling, although it is possible to impose a condition to tie the occupation of the site to holiday occupation only. The response below was then received from the Ward Member.)

Further comments:

23/4/21 - I am agreeable to the acceptance as described by you.

Technical Consultations

No responses received.

Other Representations

None received.

PLANNING HISTORY

| Reference | Description | Decision | Date |
|------------------|---|-----------------|-------------|
| 18/0638/FUL | Construction of single and two storey rear extensions, 2 no. flues and alterations and extensions to existing detached garage to form ancillary home office | Approve | 7/6/2018 |

The above permission allowed physical changes to the garage including replacement of the garage door with a pedestrian door.

POLICIES

Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 Policies
Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside)

D8 (Re-use of Rural Buildings Outside of Settlements)

TC2 (Accessibility of New Development)

TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access)

TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development)

E16 (Proposals for Holiday or Overnight Accommodation and Associated Facilities)

Yarcombe and Marsh Neighbourhood Plan (Made)

Government Planning Documents

NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Other Documents

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2019- 2025

Site Location and Description

The site is outside of any Built-Up Area Boundary and thus is in the countryside. It also lies within the Blackdown Hills AONB. The immediately surrounding area has sparse settlement alongside the public highway with agricultural land and woods beyond.

The application site is an existing outbuilding immediately to the north of the applicants' dwelling (Beacon Farm), which had permission to be physically converted from a garage to an ancillary home office through permission 18/0638/FUL. The

application building lies to the east of an unclassified public highway and there is an area of hardstanding between it and the highway, where a parking/turning space for the proposed unit of holiday accommodation would be located. On the eastern side of the application building there is a patio which is proposed to be included within the planning holiday let planning unit.

Emmets Farm, a dwelling which is Grade II listed, lies approx. 70 m to the south west and is the closest neighbouring dwelling.

Proposal

The proposal is the change of use of the existing outbuilding to enable it to be used as a unit of holiday accommodation (supporting information indicates this would be a one bedroomed unit). During the course of the application the applicant submitted additional information relating to the nearby facilities, transport options from the site and local events which take place in the area.

ANALYSIS

The main issues for consideration include the principle of the proposed change of use, impact on the character of the area, travel and highway safety related impacts.

Principle

The site lies in a rural location outside of any designated built up area boundary and is therefore considered to fall within open countryside. Strategy 7 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 (EDLP), strictly controls development in such locations, unless explicitly permitted by another policy of the Local (or where relevant) Neighbourhood Plan.

In this case the site falls within the parish of Yarcombe the whole of which has been designated a neighbourhood area and for which a Neighbourhood Plan has been produced and is 'made'.

In terms of the EDLP, Policy D8 (Re-use of redundant rural buildings) potentially offers support for such development, subject to a number of criteria relating to the design and method of conversion; structural condition of the building; impact of traffic movements, parking and storage and on the viability of any existing agricultural enterprise. These details are considered in further detail in the subsequent section of the report.

In relation to proposals for tourism accommodation there is support in principle for sustainable tourism schemes to be found in Strategy 33 of the EDLP and for conversion of buildings into self-catering accommodation, where in close proximity to the main farm/country house and is accessible on foot, bike and public transport, under policy E16 of the Local Plan.

The Yarcombe and Marsh Neighbourhood plan 2014-2031 (YMNP) contains a policy (EE1) that explicitly supports the conversion of agricultural buildings for business or business related purposes and subject to a number of listed criteria being met. Those

listed criteria align to a large extent with those of policy D8, although notably there is no sustainability criteria to apply. In this case the buildings though are associated with the use of a residential property and as such are not agricultural buildings to which the policy would apply.

In relation to national policy paras. 78 - 80 of the NPPF cover rural housing. In this regard paragraph 78 indicates that support should be given to developments that reflect local needs, placing particular emphasis on affordable housing; paragraph 78 states that in rural areas housing should be located where it would enhance and maintain the vitality of rural communities; and paragraph 80 seeks to restrict isolated homes in the countryside, setting out the circumstances in which their provision is acceptable.

As the proposed development would not meet a specified local need, and would not provide affordable housing, it would not help to deliver either of the objectives set out in paragraph 78 of the Framework. In relation to paragraph 79 of the Framework, future occupants of the development could potentially support the existing limited services and facilities in Yarcombe but this is very limited. In terms of para. 80 some support could be found under criteria c) as the proposal would include the re-use of a redundant or disused building but Policies D8 and E16 of the Local Plan provide a more detailed framework against which to assess such proposals and the proposal is considered against the criteria of that policy below.

Impact on the character of the Area

The proposal seeks to reuse an existing building and no exterior works are proposed. The building already has a patio to its rear (i.e. its eastern side) and hardstanding used for parking to the front (i.e. its western side) which would provide dedicated parking/turning space for the holiday accommodation. The applicant indicates that an electric vehicle charging point would also be available for use by visitors. The proposal would not therefore increase the quantum of development within the rural area. The visible impact of an additional parked car would be limited given that parking may already take place on the existing hardstanding and that this would be viewed against the context of an existing domestic building group. It is not considered that the proposal would generate a significant increase in traffic within the area. The on-site facilities which would be available are appropriate to the proposed use and commensurate with the small scale of the proposed unit of holiday accommodation. Overall it is considered that the proposal would have a negligible impact on the character of the area and that it would meet the relevant requirements of LP Policy E16 in this regard.

Travel and Highway Safety

The site is in close proximity to the applicants' dwelling, which reduces the travel need arising in connection with servicing the accommodation. Criteria 4 of LP Policy E16 requires that proposals for holiday accommodation be accessible on foot, by bicycle and public transport. Similarly, LP Policy TC2 requires that new development be located so as to be accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and well related to compatible land uses so as to minimise the need to travel by car. The preamble to Policy E16 indicates that the Council is keen to ensure that new tourist

accommodation is directed towards the most sustainable locations and it identifies settlements with Built Up Area Boundaries as best fulfilling this requirement, however it goes on to state “The only exception to this will apply in respect of the use of existing buildings in the open countryside and particularly as related to small-scale farm and rural diversification.” Whilst the site is not part of a working farm the preamble to Policy E16 suggests that an exception can apply more generally where the re-use of an existing building is concerned.

The site is not well served by public transport, there being a bus service between the nearby settlement of Yarcombe and Honiton on only one day a week and the nearest railway station being 13.7 km away at Honiton. A café/restaurant and a shop lie within reasonable walking distance of the site (approximately 1 km away), largely via a public footpath, although it would also be possible to walk or cycle a longer route via minor roads and a trunk road. In either case, where the routes are on the highway they lack a pedestrian pavement and street lighting. There is also a pub in Yarcombe approximately 1.2 km away via public footpaths/minor roads and again, it would also be possible to walk or cycle a longer route to reach it using minor and main roads, but where the routes are on a highway, they largely lack a pedestrian pavement and street lighting. Given the above, it is not considered that using sustainable transport modes to travel to the accommodation, or to access local facilities from it, is likely to be practicable or to appeal to all visitors, particularly when the weather is inclement or when there is a need to travel after dark.

The applicant has pointed out that supermarkets and local meat and fish suppliers can deliver to the site and that some other food items are available to buy locally, however it is not considered that the availability of these goods and services would effectively negate the need for holiday makers to travel. The applicant has also pointed out that one of the attractions for people on holiday in the area is engagement in outdoor activities in the countryside, particularly the AONB surrounding the site. It is acknowledged that local outdoor recreation may not necessarily generate a high travel demand however, on the whole, it is considered that most holiday-makers using the site would tend to have some reliance on private motor vehicle to explore the area and to access services and facilities.

In terms of impact on the local highway network it is considered unlikely that the holiday letting use would cause a significant increase in local traffic. Sufficient off road parking and turning space would be available for the holiday accommodation without impacting on that available for use in connection with the main dwelling. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable with regard to highway safety.

Overall, whilst the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to highway safety it is not considered to be sustainably located and therefore it does not meet criteria 4 of LP Policy E16 or the requirements of LP TC2.

Other issues

No physical changes to the building are proposed and the Grade II listed Emmetts lies some distance away, therefore it is not considered that the setting of that building would be affected by the development.

The outbuilding has a lawful use as an ancillary home office and is closely related to the main dwelling. As such it is not considered that it functions as an employment site independent of the dwelling and therefore its loss through the proposed change of use is not considered to trigger the need for consideration of the proposal against Strategy 32.

CONCLUSION

The proposal would involve the conversion of ancillary accommodation to a holiday let and in this regard finds some support under policies E16 and D8 of the Local Plan.

In sustainability terms the site is considered to be very poorly related to services and facilities needed to serve visitors/guests staying at the site and who are likely to be heavily reliant on private transport for most journeys and this weighs heavily against the proposal and makes the proposal contrary to Policies D8 and E16 of the Local Plan.

Despite some limited benefits from the proposal, its location and reliance upon the use of the car weigh heavily against the proposal resulting in a development that is contrary to Policy D8 and E16 of the Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reason:

1. The application site lies in open countryside outside of any designated Built up Area Boundary or Strategic allocation within the East Devon Local Plan and where there are no Local or Neighbourhood Plan policies that would explicitly support the development. As such the proposal would represent residential development in a location which is unsustainable for such purposes due to the distance to essential services and facilities required for daily living and to public transport access to further afield settlements and where, as a result, future occupiers would be heavily reliant on the use of private transport for the majority of journeys. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the provisions of Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside) and Policies TC2 (Accessibility of New Development) and D8 (re-use of Rural Buildings Outside Settlement Boundaries) and E16 (Proposals for Holiday or Overnight Accommodation and Associated Facilities) of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative:

In accordance with the aims of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 East Devon District Council works proactively with applicants to resolve all relevant planning concerns; however, in this case the application was deemed unacceptable as submitted.

Plans relating to this application:

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Location Plan | 26.07.21 |
| Block Plan | 26.07.21 |

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.