

East Staffordshire Borough Council

Local Development Framework



Re-use of Rural Buildings

Supplementary Planning Document

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 2010



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1.0 Purpose of the Guidance

- 1.1. This guidance brings together the various planning issues that arise in the consideration of proposals for the re-use of rural buildings. It deals with the conversion and re-use of rural buildings for alternative uses and sets out general design guidance on how to approach conversion work, without destroying the rural character of the building.
- 1.2. Importantly, the guidance also sets out the criteria for determining whether a building is appropriate for conversion and what information the Borough Council will require before a residential use will be considered.
- 1.3. It is intended that this document will be used as a material consideration in determining planning applications and applications for listed building consent relating to the re-use of and alteration to any rural building.
- 1.4. This draft supplementary planning document (SPD) supports several saved policies in the East Staffordshire Local Plan (adopted July 2006), a full list is included at Appendix A. Saved Policy BE15, Conversion of Rural Buildings, is the main policy which this SPD supports, however it is important to remember that all saved policies of the Local Plan could have an impact on any decision to grant or refuse planning permission. Planning Policy Statements 4 and 7 are also material planning considerations when determining applications to re-use existing buildings in the countryside.

(See Appendix A for further Policy Context)

BE15 Proposals to convert an existing building or group of buildings in the countryside to commercial, industrial, residential or recreational uses will be viewed favourably. In assessing such proposals the following factors will be taken into account.

- (a) the visual impact and relevant history of existing buildings;***
- (b) the physical condition of existing buildings and their suitability for conversion without extensive alteration, extension or reconstruction. A structural survey will be required with the application;***
- (c) the visual impact of the form, bulk and design of the conversion, its curtilage and any associated new development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;***
- (d) the contribution of the development to improvement of the external appearance, retention of existing character and the preservation of any architectural, historic or traditional features of buildings or the surrounding area;***
- (e) the impact of proposed uses on, and their relationship to, surrounding land uses, nearby settlements, the highway network and public transport facilities;***
- (f) proposal to convert rural buildings to dwellings will only be permitted where the criteria set out above are met and where:***
 - (i) every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable economic use for the building, or***
 - (ii) residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for a business use.”***

2.0 General Principles for Conversion Schemes

- 2.1 One of the aims of this document is to inform future change to historic rural buildings that aims to sustain and, where appropriate, enhance their contribution to local distinctiveness and landscape character. Historic farmsteads and their buildings are assets which make a significant and highly varied contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of East Staffordshire. As a result of changes in agricultural practices, particularly from the 1950s, the future of historic farm buildings is increasingly dependent on finding a use for which they were not originally intended. Structural changes in the farming industry have required farmers to construct new buildings that economise on labour and conform to animal welfare regulations. These changes have combined with the increased size of farms to hasten the redundancy of traditional farm buildings and remove entire farmsteads from agricultural production. The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project, led by English Heritage with its county-based partners, has revealed the patterns of use and historic character of historic farmsteads (see Annex: East Staffordshire Farmstead Character Statement *Oct 2010*). 31% of historic farmsteads in the West Midlands, identified from late 19th century maps, remain in agricultural use with minimal diversification, and residential use, including sites where some or all of the working buildings have been converted into housing, accounts for 56%. The remainder provide industrial, commercial or retail facilities, sometimes in combination with agriculture. The extent of business activity associated with farmsteads in residential use, as indicated by their role as bases of limited companies and substantial directorships, is higher in historic farmsteads than in other dwellings *regardless of location*.
- 2.2 The options for change, and their potential impacts, are considered in further detail in Appendix B, together with a summary of recent work by English Heritage and its partners. Also provided in Appendix D is a *Site Assessment Framework*, which when used with the *Annexe: East Staffordshire Farmstead Character Statement* will help identify the character and significance of any site under consideration, and key issues at the earliest possible stage when adaptive reuse or new build are being considered in the context of a historic farmstead. This help all parties determine the acceptability of any proposed scheme, including enabling development where new build will help reveal and strengthen the historic character of the group, and inform approaches to design.
- 2.3 There are many existing buildings in the countryside which may be suitable for conversion to alternative uses when they are no longer required for agricultural purposes. These buildings include both modern and traditional structures, although the uses appropriate for these different types of building will inevitably vary because of their size and character. It should also be noted that in the case of more modern structures it will be necessary to demonstrate that the building has been properly used for agricultural purposes for a substantial period of time prior to any application being submitted for an alternative use. This is to prevent buildings being constructed under false pretences merely to secure a non-agricultural use in a rural location.

2.4 There is a wide variety of alternative uses for rural buildings which may be considered appropriate depending on the character and location of the existing building, including the following:

- **Commercial and industrial use:** Alternative uses such as storage, workshops and offices are examples that may be acceptable. Storage is particularly appropriate for larger, more modern former agricultural buildings provided there are no issues with regard to access along country lanes that are not capable of accommodating the necessary vehicle movements.. These types of uses can strengthen the number and variety of local jobs within the countryside.
- **Leisure and recreation:** Many outdoor rural activities require some limited facilities; redundant rural buildings provide the ideal opportunity to provide these without having to introduce new buildings into the countryside. These types of use not only provide for more sustainable forms of development but also widen the variety of employment opportunities in the countryside.
- **Tourism/Community Uses:** Tourism and community facilities can sometimes easily be achieved without the need for extensive alterations to the original fabric of the building, for example holiday lets. These types of activity are important to the regeneration of rural areas, with tourism playing an increasing role within the local and regional economy.
- **Residential Use** Where there is no alternative use appropriate for an existing building residential use will be considered. Such use is generally only appropriate for traditional agricultural buildings which are structurally sound, make a positive contribution to their surroundings, are capable of conversion without substantial alteration or extension, where there is an existing vehicular access to the building, and where any domestic curtilage can be accommodated without creating a visual intrusion into the surrounding countryside. Where such use is proposed consideration must always be given to the creation of live/work units to encourage a more sustainable form of development. Further guidance on these issues is provided later in this document.

2.5 Sustainability

2.5.1 Sustainability in respect of buildings in the countryside can be assessed in a number of different ways. Clearly, as most of the buildings relevant to this guidance will occupy a location away from defined settlements, sustainability cannot be judged purely on proximity to existing infrastructure and facilities. A more pragmatic approach to this consideration must therefore be adopted.

2.5.2 In the first instance, the fact that there is a building standing unused in the countryside needs to be considered. In its unused state it may be regarded as a wasted resource. Bringing the building back into an active use that is appropriate for its particular location may be regarded as sustainable.

- 2.5.3 In respect of commercial re-use of existing buildings, as stated above, storage is often a suitable new use not least because it is likely to result in a limited number of vehicle movements to and from the premises, particularly where long-term storage is proposed. This type of use is therefore likely to be assessed favorably against this criterion.
- 2.5.4 Commercial uses which do not generate many vehicle movements to and from the premises are more likely to be acceptable and may include IT based activities where there is no need for customers or suppliers to regularly visit the premises, a base for agricultural contractors who regularly carry out work in the locality, and uses, such as farriers, where the customers needing to visit the premises may already be close by.
- 2.5.5 There are circumstances where the size and type of building, and its remote location will make it wholly unsuitable for the types of commercial use described above. Such buildings are likely to be traditional brick and tile structures and may be suitable for conversion to holiday let accommodation provided they meet other relevant criteria defined in Saved Policy BE15 and elsewhere in this SPD. Whilst it is preferable for such accommodation to be provided within or close to existing settlements, in reality converted traditional agricultural buildings in more remote locations are acknowledged resources for the purpose of providing holiday accommodation.
- 2.5.6 Where there is no possibility of commercial re-use being acceptable, consideration will be given to residential conversion, but in order to be favorably considered in terms of their sustainability, schemes should seek to provide accommodation to facilitate working from home. This should be more than a token gesture of providing an office within the general living space. Ideally, within any group of buildings office, workshop or studio facilities should be provided in a building separate to the main living accommodation.

2.6 Economic Tests

- 2.6.1 Within a formal planning application for the conversion of a rural building to a dwelling, it will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate **either** that every reasonable attempt has first been made to secure a suitable employment, tourism, community or recreational use, **or**, that a conversion for holiday use is not viable. It may also not be necessary to submit marketing information if clear evidence is produced that any commercial use of a building is wholly inappropriate in a particular location, for example because it is likely to have overriding adverse effects on a neighbouring residential property.

(Further information concerning Economic testing can be found in Appendix E)

3.0 Visual Impact and Relevant History of Buildings

- 3.1 Farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of the rural landscape and how it has changed over centuries. Their character has been shaped by their development as centres for the production of food from the surrounding farmland. The result is an immense range in their type, scale, form and use of materials, and their relationship to the landscape of which they form part. Most traditional farmstead buildings date from the 19th century, survivals of earlier periods being increasingly rare. The large multi-purpose sheds that are vital to the modern agricultural industry have no local characteristics, in contrast to traditional farmsteads. Use of the *Annexe: East Staffordshire Farmstead Character Statement (Oct 2010)* in combination with the *Site Assessment Framework (found in appendix C)* will help the user determine the significance of the group and any buildings within it.
- 3.2 Modern and traditional agricultural buildings are accepted features of the rural landscape. Some are more aesthetically pleasing than others and consideration will be given to the appearance and visual impact of existing buildings when determining their suitability for alternative uses. Consideration will also be given to the visual impact of any curtilage required in association with the new use as this can be more damaging than re-using the building itself. .
- 3.3 In respect of both modern and traditional agricultural buildings, the objective in any conversion scheme should be to retain as much of the agricultural character of the buildings as possible.
- 3.4 In the case of a modern building, this will entail maintaining traditional cladding materials where appropriate, such as Yorkshire boarding. If the building needs to be made more weather-proof or secure, this should be achieved by works to the interior of the building where possible so that the exterior of the building remains unchanged. Where re-cladding is required materials should be chosen which retain the agricultural character of the building. Similarly, where possible, industrial type roller shutter doors should be avoided as these can contribute to a change in the character and appearance of the building from agricultural to industrial to the detriment of the surrounding countryside. A non-traditional agricultural building which is dilapidated and beyond reasonable repair is unlikely to be considered suitable for conversion to an alternative use.
- 3.5 The curtilage to any modern agricultural building proposed for commercial use will be carefully controlled and restricted to the minimum required for any parking, turning and servicing space for visiting vehicles. Proposals should indicate appropriate landscaping to screen such spaces. Any planning permission granted would be likely to impose conditions to secure the implementation of appropriate landscaping. Conditions would also be likely to prevent outside storage and long-term parking of vehicles. A modern building in a prominent location within a field with no existing hard-surfaced access to it, or hardstanding around it is unlikely to be considered appropriate for an alternative use because of the damaging visual impact of creating these additional urbanising features.

- 3.6 Future change in historic farmsteads is inevitable if they are to be retained as a distinctive part of the rural landscape. Environmental and economic benefits can be delivered through a diversity of uses for historic farm buildings. Where change is fully informed new uses can make a positive contribution to landscape character, inspire appropriate high-quality new development and reveal the distinctive quality and character of historic farmsteads. It is important, therefore, to understand the character and significance of farmsteads across East Staffordshire, and their potential for and sensitivity to change. In particular, approaches to the future change of historic farmsteads should be based on appraisal of the historic character and significance of the whole site, and its sensitivity to the type of change being considered. This includes identification of opportunities as well as constraints, from the most adaptable to those significant but least adaptable buildings where low-key and ancillary uses are most appropriate.
- 3.7 In the case of a traditional agricultural building, the existing form, condition, character and location of the building will be fundamental to the acceptability of any proposed conversion scheme. Outside development boundaries it will be necessary to demonstrate that a building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial demolition and re-construction. Similarly, the size, form and detail of the building should be sufficient to facilitate the conversion without the need for extensive alteration or extension.
- 3.8 Traditional buildings most suitable for conversion are those associated with an existing farm house and forming part of a group. In these circumstances buildings are usually large enough to accommodate all necessary facilities to serve the new use, and the visual impact of the conversion is also limited by the presence of existing activities associated with the farmhouse, including access and parking. Individual traditional buildings which occupy isolated locations in fields with no physical access to them across the field, and no existing curtilage are unlikely to be considered acceptable for conversion for alternative uses because of the damaging visual impact of creating these additional urbanising features.
- 3.9 Where residential conversion of a group of traditional farm buildings is proposed all required accommodation, including garage/storage space and home-working space should be provided within the fabric of the existing buildings. Schemes which seek to maximise the number of dwellings and do not make provision for these facilities are unlikely to be acceptable. An exception to this may be where a feature such as a slurry pit is located in a position relative to the buildings to be converted where it would be most successfully treated as part of the overall scheme by erecting another building in its place to enclose a courtyard of existing buildings. The new building could form a garage block and might also serve the purpose of screening domestic activities within the courtyard.
- 3.10 Any curtilage around a converted traditional agricultural building will be carefully limited and controlled. Any commercially related curtilage should be treated as specified above in respect of conversion of a modern agricultural building. In relation to a residential conversion, the domestic curtilages should be kept to a minimum in terms of size and should ideally be located where they are not directly

visible from adjoining or nearby highways. Where this is not possible, boundary treatment to screen the domestic paraphernalia associated with gardens should be carefully selected. In most cases this will include a combination of brick walls and post and rail fences with hawthorn hedge planting alongside. In most cases any planning permission granted would be subject to conditions restricting permitted development rights to prevent the erection of any alternative boundary treatment, or buildings, including sheds, within the domestic curtilages. The effect of a variety of garden sheds can be visually harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside. It is for this reason that it is essential to provide adequate storage space within the fabric of the existing buildings.

- 3.11 Some traditional farm buildings will be statutorily listed and/or be of archaeological significance. In these cases regard must also be given to Planning Policy Statement 5, which deals with heritage assets. Additional information will also be required to be submitted with any application (cross reference to validation document and PPS5). In the case of such buildings it will be even more important to ensure the detail of the conversion scheme is historically accurate and authentic. Further advice on this aspect of converting traditional buildings is provided later in this document.
- 3.12 Any works to a farm buildings, deemed to have archaeological interest and deposits, for example the excavation works adjacent to the building; excavation works for new footings and service trenching and proposed works for the repair/replacement of historic timbers etc will need careful assessment.
- 3.13 A measured survey of the building(s) and their archaeological interpretation and significance may be required by the Local Planning Authority. In other cases the archaeological recording and drawing of certain elements (architectural details, historic timbers etc) may also be required by the Local Planning Authority. All such recording and assessment work should be undertaken in line with a specification prepared by the Local Planning Authority and in accordance with the English Heritage volume entitled 'Understanding historic buildings, A guide to good recording practice' (2006) and the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) appropriate standards and guidance.
- 3.14 An assessment of any potential archaeological interest to the immediate building and adjacent landscape should be undertaken and this information submitted with any proposal for landscaping works. Archaeological works shall be undertaken in conjunction with the advice as set out in Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment (2010). For further information Staffordshire County Council created a historic farmstead survey '*Living buildings in a living landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings*' (2006). .

4.0 Protected species

- 4.1 Traditional, non-residential, rural buildings such as farm buildings often provide a habitat for a variety of species, some of which may be protected by law. Several species of bats, as well as barn owls, swallows, swifts, and other birds regularly make use of such buildings as breeding sites. The cumulative effect of the loss of these buildings and structures is to place further stress on already threatened and declining species.



Fig 1: Various protected species

- 4.2 The presence of a protected species will be regarded as a material consideration in the determinations of any planning application.
- 4.3 Maintaining the favourable conservation status of protected species will be a priority but it should not be inferred that the presence of a protected species would always prohibit conversion to a new use. Design solutions should be able to make provision for protected species. Within farm groups, there is sometimes the opportunity to retain certain buildings unaltered and these may be able to provide the habitat for the species in question.
- 4.4 Each case will be taken on its merits and the scope for relocation, mitigation, or compensatory measures at the developer's expense will always be considered.
- 4.5 It is important that time is taken, in advance of seeking planning permission, to ensure that species are identified and measures taken for their protection. It will often be necessary to secure a licence from Natural England to carry out investigations. To ensure that the existence of protected species is not overlooked it is important that surveys are carried out at the correct time of year.
- 4.6 Further advice may be sought from the Local Planning Department and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

5.0 Alterations and Extensions

5.1 To retain the character and architectural integrity of traditional rural buildings, alterations to the existing fabric must be kept to the minimum and be necessary to facilitate the new use. Alterations should not obliterate or remove existing architectural detail, such as walls patterned with ventilation holes. Every effort should be made to ensure that new windows are only inserted into existing openings. However, a limited number of new openings may be acceptable to facilitate an otherwise sensitive conversion.

5.2 Windows and Doors

5.2.1 Existing doors and windows should be utilised wherever possible, and redundant doors should be retained, or kept as shutters to simple, recessed glazing, in order to retain the original external appearance. Any necessary infilling should be undertaken sensitively by recessing the infilling brickwork to retain the impression of the previous opening.



Fig 2: Retained redundant door with the window recessed in the opening. Top-hung opening lights as shown in this picture will generally not be acceptable as they are not a traditional detail.

5.2.2 New windows should be sensitively positioned so that the overall character of the building is not compromised. Care must be taken to ensure that the detailing of them is compatible with the character of any other joinery work on the building and they should not visually dominate the elevations to which they are being introduced. 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. Where a large existing opening is being infilled by glazing, robust timber frames should be used; flimsy modern joinery detail is inappropriate for such large openings.

5.2.3 Features of importance, architecturally or historically, such as lintels and cills which form an intrinsic part of the building's original fabric should be retained in-situ and integrated into the proposed conversion.



Fig 3: Retained timber lintel and chamfered blue brick cill. This size of window opening should normally be filled with an inward opening hopper-style window

5.2.4 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. 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.



Fig 4: Window infilled incorrectly



Fig 5: New window inserted in existing opening

5.2.5 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. A sympathetic material should be used and recessed to emphasise the original opening.



Fig 6: Example of sympathetic materials being used and existing openings being glazed. (NB. For this type of opening an inward opening hopper style window should be used instead of top-hung opening lights)

5.2.6 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. Proposals should allow the original opening to be fully exposed and visible without conflicting details. Full height glazing with a strong vertical emphasis is the most appropriate method of treatment for these large openings.



Fig 7: Large barn doorways with full height glazing

5.2.7 Doors and windows of the neo-Georgian variety and other pseudo-historical details have no place in the humble farm building. A functional and simple design for windows and doors would be more in keeping with the character of a rural building. Ledged and braced plank doors should invariably be selected.

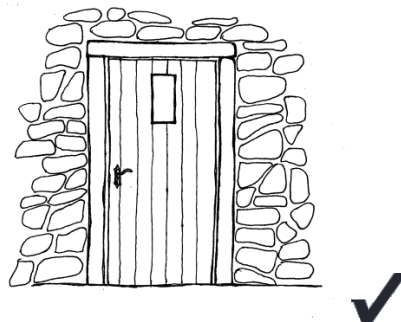


Fig 8: Example of a functional and simple door design

5.2.8 The choice of window style for converted agricultural buildings is very important if the rural character and appearance of the building is to be retained. Typically, side-hung casement windows are the most appropriate for the majority of window openings in traditional farm buildings. Where the size and shape of the opening dictates, however, inward opening hopper style windows should be used; this type of window is typical of many farm buildings and can often be found in-situ within the original building. Modern windows with top-hung opening lights and/or integral timber cills are generally inappropriate and unlikely to be acceptable.

5.2.9 The choice of material for windows and doors is also important for retaining the traditional, rural character of the building. Timber, with a painted or stained

finish depending on the location and character of the existing building, will be the most appropriate material. The use of uPVC will invariably be unacceptable in traditional buildings.

- 5.2.10 Dormer windows are not typical features of a traditional farm building and therefore will not be acceptable as part of any proposed conversion scheme. Where light and means of escape through the roof are required, rooflights should be used. Roof lights should be used sparingly and in locations that would not introduce a conspicuous feature on the building when viewed in the wider landscape setting.
- 5.2.11 Proposed roof lights must have a black finish and be fitted with outer faces flush with the plane of the roof. Prior to installation the Borough Council will require details of all rooflights to be submitted at the planning application stage. Rooflights of an inappropriate size or design will be rejected.

5.3 Alterations to the Roof.

- 5.3.1 The roof structure of a traditional rural building is an intrinsic part of its structure and also a means by which it can be dated. Traditional farm buildings generally feature long, unbroken roof profiles and it is essential that their appearance and integrity are retained in any conversion scheme. 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 reinstate the roof profile at its original pitch. Applicants must demonstrate that any change is informed by compelling physical, documentary, or photographic evidence of the historic profile.
- 5.3.2 Additional new features such as chimneys, dovecotes, weather vanes, clock towers, and 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.
- 5.3.3 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 discreetly located on the building.

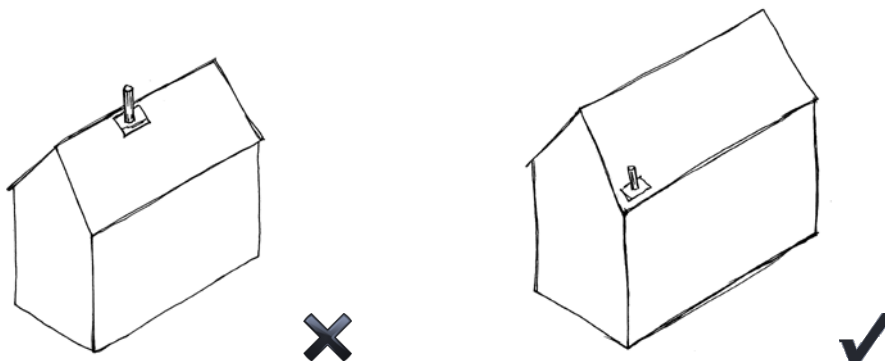


Fig 9: Examples of chimney locations

- 5.3.4 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.

5.4 Pointing and Re-pointing

- 5.4.1 Re-pointing of all the elevations should not be carried out simply to give a unified appearance. Such work should be limited to where it is absolutely necessary. Re-pointing should be confined to localised areas requiring repair, using traditional lime based mortars and methods. Advice from the Borough Council's Planning department should be sought.
- 5.4.2 Pointing and re-pointing should be carried out in such a way that the joints are kept narrow and are slightly recessed with a brushed finish. Pointing which is flush with the brickwork, or spread partially over the face of the bricks can damage the character and appearance of the building as a whole. This detail will normally be controlled by a condition on any grant of planning permission, particularly in the case of listed buildings.

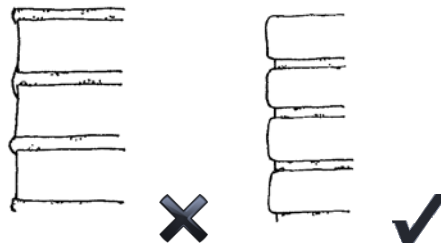


Fig 10: Examples of re-pointing.

5.5 Extensions

- 5.5.1 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. Proposals to convert traditional rural buildings should be contained within the confines of the existing building shell. Proposals, which rely on substantial new-build elements in order to make them work, will not be permitted.
- 5.5.2 Exceptions may be made within a defined settlement boundary where an extension is designed with sensitivity for the host building and does not conflict with any other planning requirements. Extensions should enhance the character and appearance of their immediate surroundings and, where possible, should make a positive contribution to the wider townscape. There may be other circumstances where an extension may be justified, but these are generally rare and site specific. It is therefore critical that advice from the Local Planning Authority is sought prior to submitting a proposal involving any extension to the existing building.

- 5.5.3 Consideration may be given to proposals for extensions where reconstruction of a previously demolished element would reinstate the completeness of a group of buildings. In such cases it will be important to establish beyond doubt the nature and particularly the size of any demolished element, therefore photographic, cartographic or other evidence would be required.
- 5.5.4 Where an extension is acceptable it should be strictly subordinate in scale to the existing building and respectful in its design detailing to the parent building.

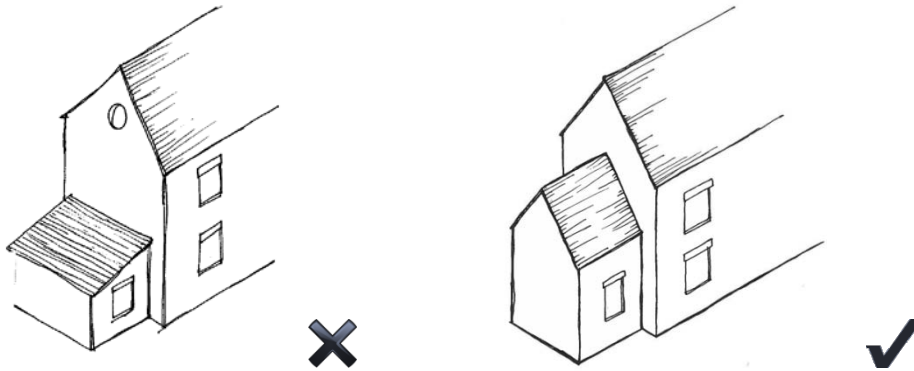


Fig 11: Examples of extensions

- 5.5.5 In order to protect sensitively converted traditional rural buildings from damaging changes, both to the building and within its curtilage, such as the introduction of inappropriate domestic features including patio doors, conservatories, porches, greenhouses, sheds, and fences, the Local Planning Authority will, as a matter of course, remove *permitted development rights* at the time of granting planning permission. The presumption is that these changes will not be acceptable unless they can be shown to have no adverse impact on the rural character of the building.

5.6 Garaging

- 5.6.1 Proposals for car parking will need to be given serious consideration at the outset of any conversion scheme as the location of parked cars and garaging can be detrimental to the character of the buildings and the surrounding area. Wherever possible, car parking spaces should be located within the complex of existing buildings, or away from adjoining highways where it will be less visible from public vantage points.
- 5.6.2 Garaging of cars should be accommodated within the existing buildings where possible for example where large openings serving former cart sheds survive or form part of the farm building group. Utilisation of such structures for the garaging of cars, rather than the construction of new buildings will be expected.
- 5.6.3 Proposals to construct a new, *attached* or *detached*, garage (single or double) will be resisted unless its design, form, detailing and location does not impede or affect the character and setting of the farm buildings and surrounding area.

5.7 The Setting of the Building and its Immediate Curtilage

- 5.7.1 The curtilage of a converted rural building should be kept to a minimum and remain open and uncluttered. Any application should include a plan clearly defining the extent of the proposed curtilage. This should generally demonstrate minimum encroachment into land adjoining the buildings. Large domestic or commercial curtilages which would be visually intrusive in the surrounding countryside will not be acceptable. Wherever possible curtilages should be located within the complex of existing buildings or away from adjoining highways.
- 5.7.2 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 agriculture use, will usually be resisted, particularly where the existing building has a pre-defined curtilage.
- 5.7.3 A simple, functional setting is often an essential part of the character of traditional rural buildings. Where this is the case, proposals for conversion should consider sensitively the character of all external spaces, both in the vicinity of the building and in any wider landscape or village context. These matters should be considered as an integral part of the overall design process, in order that the building's character, appearance and setting are not adversely affected.
- 5.7.5 The enclosing of newly created residential curtilages with high, close-boarded fencing and other suburban solutions to define newly created land ownerships will not be allowed. Simple and well integrated hard and soft landscape proposals will be more appropriate. Schemes should be based upon appropriately scaled brick boundary walls close to buildings, with native hedgerows and field type fencing where it is more important to consider the wider landscape or village context of the proposals.

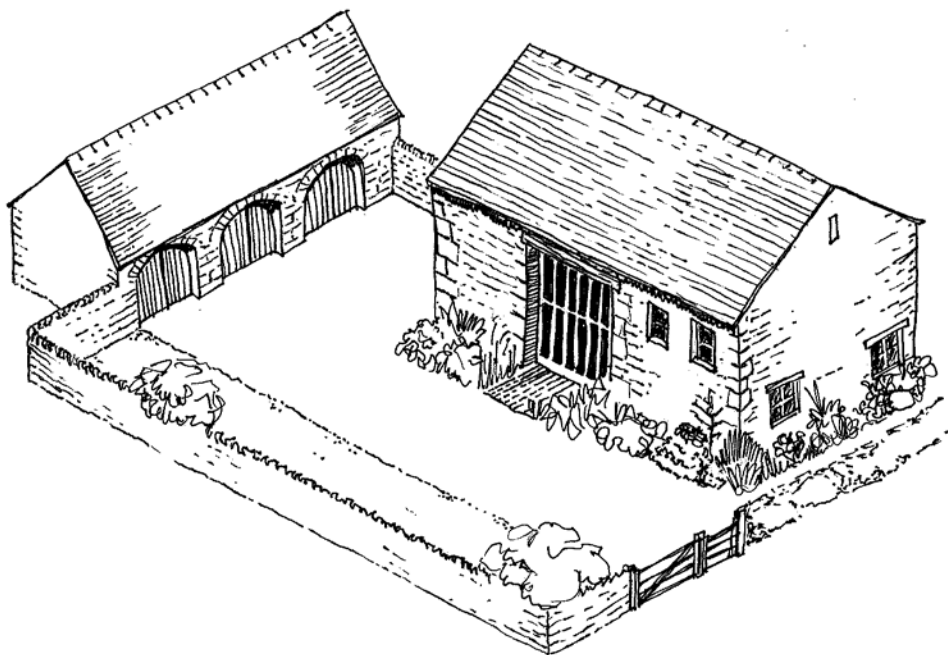


Fig 12: Farm barn and outbuilding sensitively converted. Showing a traditional farm/rural curtilage and boundary treatment, and garaging within existing outbuildings.



5.7.6 Trees can soften the hard edges of conversion schemes and link the new development into the wider farmed landscape. Tree planting, using locally native species, should be encouraged in these areas. The intention should not be to hide the buildings, but rather to integrate the buildings into the landscape. Ornamental species planted as quick growing screening, such as Leylandil, must be avoided.



Fig 13: Rural fencing

5.8 Materials

5.8.1 To ensure that during the course of conversion the subtle character and patina of age is not lost from traditional buildings, works such as re-roofing, masonry repairs, and re-pointing will be required to be carried out using natural and traditional materials and techniques.

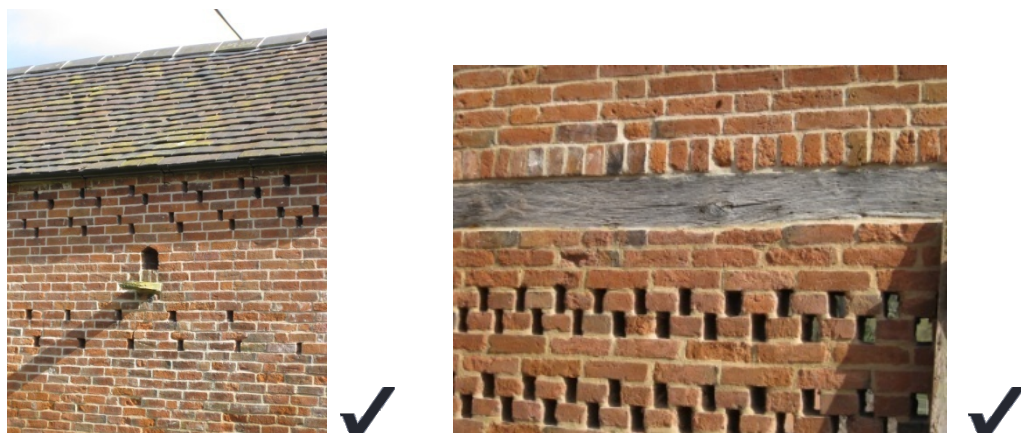


Fig 14: Materials and pattern retained.

5.8.2 Preference will be given to the re-use of second-hand, sound materials for localised, small scale works. Larger scale operations, such as re-covering of a substantial roof should generally utilise new, natural slates or plain clay tiles that accurately replicate the originals.

- 5.8.3 The use of modern substitute materials such as concrete roof-tiles, uPVC windows and gutters, or reconstituted stone for cills will almost always degrade the character and appearance of the original building and will not be permitted.
- 5.8.4 New materials will need to match the 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 use of conflicting styles of brickwork, one against another, should be strictly avoided.

5.9 Removal of Modern Additions

- 5.9.1 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 Borough Council will expect to see such previous additions removed rather than incorporated into any application proposals for conversion.
- 5.9.2 The Local Planning Authority will not usually support applications which propose the replacement of such structures with new extensions solely to fulfil the demands of future occupiers for additional space.

5.10 Extent of Rebuilding

- 5.10.1 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 the works proposed. Applications must include detailed plans which indicate the extent of any rebuilding and alterations, and the extent of demolition which would determine whether a proposal constituted conversion or re-building.
- 5.10.2 Limited rebuilding is acceptable to effect repairs, but where a significant part of the original building has been removed or falls into disrepair, rebuilding will not usually be acceptable.
- 5.10.3 A greater degree of rebuilding may exceptionally be allowed in the interests of historic conservation. Where such reconstruction is proposed, there will need to be compelling evidence of what originally existed in physical, photographic or documentary form.
- 5.10.4 The extent of any remedial building work required to stabilise the structure must be identified at an early stage through consultation with the Council's Building Consultancy section.

5.11 Interiors

- 5.11.1 Internal alterations do not, in themselves, require planning permission but the material change of use of a building does. Securing appropriate uses for redundant historic buildings is a fundamental principle of good building conservation. *Appropriateness* is dependent on the overall impact of the new

use on the host building. Whilst it is inevitable that many new uses will result in significant internal alteration, the design of conversions should aim to retain the internal character and spatial qualities of the buildings concerned.

- 5.11.2 Roof structures can be the most impressive feature of rural building. Sensitively designed schemes will seek to repair and retain traditional roof structures and leave them open to view. Where a building is listed, submitted plans must show how insulation, and any associated ventilation, is to be accommodated.



Fig 15: Original roof structure retained

- 5.11.3 On unlisted farm buildings it is desirable to respect and retain the internal character of the farm building. The Council would welcome early discussions about the internal proposals for such buildings in order to ensure a sensitive and appropriate scheme is put forward.

5.12 Services

- 5.12.1 Particular care needs to be given to the siting of services which can have a potentially damaging visual impact on the building and the character of the area. Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) tanks and septic tanks should be sensitively sited and well screened so as to be unobtrusive, whilst electricity and gas meter boxes should be located internally or positioned on less prominent elevations and be well-concealed.
- 5.12.2 Satellite dishes are inappropriate additions rural buildings and are usually detrimental to their character and appearance. A condition removing permitted development rights for such features will normally be part of a grant of planning permission for the conversion of a traditional farm building. It may be possible to site a satellite dish on, or within the curtilage of, a converted farm building where it is discreetly located away from the public domain. Advice from the Local Planning Authority should be sought in advance of installing a dish or submitting a planning application.

5.12.3 Implications of current Building Regulations with regard to Conservation of Fuel and Power, Sound Insulation and Sustainable drainage requirements are likely to considerably influence the overall design of any conversion scheme, Applicants are encouraged to seek the advice and assistance of East Staffordshire Borough Council Building Consultancy section as early in the design stages as possible in order that all aspects of technical design requirements can be incorporated at that early design stage.

5.13 Renewable Energy

5.13.1 The Borough 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, wind and water power. Micro generation heat and power projects integrated within existing buildings, including solar thermal, solar PV (photovoltaic), ground source and air source heat pumps and small scale biomass boilers may be acceptable. However, their acceptability will depend on the degree of prominence in the surrounding countryside and their impact on the simple rural character of the existing building. Facilities located within the curtilage of the building are more likely to be acceptable than those attached to the building itself. Large expanses of solar panels on prominent elevations of buildings are unlikely to be acceptable.

5.13.2 The Borough Council will encourage 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 amenity of neighbouring properties.

5.13.3 The implications of current Building Regulations particularly with regard to Conservation of Fuel and Power, Sound Insulation and Sustainable drainage requirements are likely to considerably influence the overall design of any conversion. Applicants are encouraged to seek the advice and assistance of ESBC Building consultancy section as early in the design stages as possible in order that all aspects of technical design requirements can be incorporated.

5.14 Public Footpaths

5.14.1 Historically public footpaths are very often found to cross farmyards close to traditional buildings and, where this occurs, conversion schemes should address issues such as way making, obstruction of the route and/or possible reasonable diversions.



Fig 16: Footpath

- 5.14.2 The Council has powers to make a public path diversion order under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Council uses this power if it is satisfied that it is necessary for the footpath or bridleway to be diverted in order to enable development to be carried out in accordance with planning permission granted by the Council. The disadvantages or loss likely to arise to users of the route as a result of the change also have to be considered by the Council. It should not be assumed that an order will be made simply because planning permission has been granted. This Council also has power to make a public path diversion order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980.

5.15 Redundancy of Agricultural Use

- 5.15.1 It is not necessary to demonstrate that a building is redundant to agricultural use whilst making an application for the re-use of an agricultural building.
- 5.15.2 If the re-use of a building, still in active use, would be likely to result in the need for a replacement new modern building, then a proposal is unlikely to be acceptable. Only if a building is proven unfit or unworkable for modern farm methods should this be negated, for example access by or for traffic or modern machinery is largely prohibitive.

Summary of Guidance

The main messages from this Chapter:

- To retain the character and architectural integrity of traditional rural buildings, alterations to existing fabric must be kept to the minimum and necessary to facilitate the new use.
- Modest alterations will be acceptable only if they are used with restraint and placed in discreet positions.
- Existing doors and windows should be utilised wherever possible.
- Re-pointing of all the elevations should not be carried out simply to give a unified appearance.
- Features of importance should be retained in-situ and integrated into the proposed conversion.
- The Borough Council will expect to see previous additions removed rather than incorporated into proposals for conversion.

Roof Structure

- Traditional farm buildings generally feature long, unbroken roof profiles and it is essential that their appearance and integrity are retained in any conversion scheme. Roof slopes should not be interrupted.
- Sensitively designed schemes will seek to repair and retain traditional roof structures and leave them open to view.

Chimneys and Flues

- Chimneys are not a feature of most traditional agricultural buildings.
- Any flue should be of minimal height, preferably matt black and discretely located.

Windows and doors

- Proposals must make the best use of all existing openings.
- A sympathetic material should be used and recessed to emphasise the original opening. The use of uPVC will invariably be unacceptable in traditional buildings.
- Large barn doorways are often the main feature of agricultural barns and should be incorporated.

Extensions

- Proposals to convert traditional rural buildings should be contained within the confines of the existing building shell.
- New build element(s) should be strictly subordinate in scale to the existing building and respectful in its design detailing to the parent building.
- In order to protect sensitively converted traditional rural buildings from damaging changes, both to the building and within its curtilage, the Local Planning Authority will, as a matter of course, remove *permitted development rights* at the time of granting planning permission.

Garaging

- Proposals for car parking will need to be given serious consideration at the outset of any conversion scheme.
- Garaging of cars may be able to be accommodated within the existing buildings.

Extent of rebuilding

- 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 the works proposed.
- The emphasis in any conversion should be an adaptation rather than alteration.
- Re-pointing on a large scale should also be avoided as this will fundamentally affect the character of the building.

Materials

- The use of modern substitute materials such as concrete roof-tiles, uPVC windows and gutters, or reconstituted stone for cills will almost always degrade the character and appearance of the original building and will not be permitted.
- New materials will need to match the manufacture, colour size and texture of the originals.

Immediate curtilage

- The curtilage of a rural building should generally remain open and uncluttered.
- The enclosing of newly created residential curtilages with high, close-boarded fencing and other suburban solutions will not be allowed.
- Tree planting, using locally native species, are encouraged in these areas.

Appendix A – Policy background

Policy Context

1. This guidance supports the following policies of the East Staffordshire Borough Council Local Plan:

CSP4 Urban and Rural Regeneration

NE1 Development Outside Development Boundaries

BE1 Design

BE15 Conversion of Rural Buildings

The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is specifically linked to Policy BE15 of the Local Plan and provides greater detail. The Policy states:

BE15 Proposals to convert an existing building or group of buildings in the countryside to commercial, industrial, residential or recreational uses will be viewed favourably. In assessing such proposals the following factors will be taken into account.

- (a) the visual impact and relevant history of existing buildings;***
- (b) the physical condition of existing buildings and their suitability for conversion without extensive alteration, extension or reconstruction. A structural survey will be required with the application in appropriate cases;***
- (c) the visual impact of the form, bulk and design of the conversion, its curtilage and any associated new development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;***
- (d) the contribution of the development to improvement of the external appearance, retention of existing character and the preservation of any architectural, historic or traditional features of buildings or the surrounding area;***
- (e) the impact of proposed uses on, and their relationship to, surrounding land uses, nearby settlements, the highway network and public transport facilities;***
- (f) proposal to convert rural buildings to dwellings will only be permitted where the criteria set out above are met and where:***
 - (iii) every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable economic use for the building, or***
 - (iv) residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for a business use.”***

2. These policies set out the primary considerations to be taken into account with regard to proposals for new uses for traditional non-residential, rural buildings.
3. Planning Policy Statement No. 4 is supportive and encourages new uses for vacant or derelict buildings, including historic buildings and buildings in rural areas, as this can contribute

positively to an area's regeneration, provide wider economic benefits, help to preserve historic assets and also reduce the need for Greenfield development; The statement also states that Local Councils should take account of the changing spatial working patterns that advances in information and communication technologies allowing uses, such as live-work units.

4. Planning Policy Statement No. 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas is supportive of the re-use of appropriately located and suitable constructed existing rural buildings where this would achieve sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic related development is usually preferable, but there may be certain instances where residential use may be more appropriate. Particular support is advocated for the re-use of buildings adjacent to or closely related to existing settlements for economic or community uses. Re-use can reduce the demand for new building within the countryside and avoid leaving existing buildings vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction.
5. Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 13 "Transport" advises local authorities to integrate transport and land-use policies and to only allow new development in locations where it is sustainable, thus reducing the need to travel and helping to achieve viable rural communities.
6. Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations. To achieve this, the Government's objectives for planning for the historic environment are:
 - To deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions concerning the historic environment:
 - Recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource
 - Take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation; and
 - Recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.
 - To conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance by ensuring that:
 - Decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of that significance, investigated to a degree proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset
 - Wherever possible, heritage assets are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation
 - The positive contribution of such heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued; and
 - Consideration of the historic environment is integrated into planning policies, promoting place-shaping.
 - to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past by ensuring that opportunities are taken to capture evidence from the historic environment and to make this publicly available particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.
7. Within the County of Staffordshire, policies for the protection of the countryside are contained within the adopted Structure Plan. These policies provide the framework within which alternative uses may be considered and states that employment is the preferred use for such buildings, with residential only being considered when all other uses such as employment, recreation and community use, are not practicable or viable.

Location and sustainability are important considerations and this guidance stresses the need to restrict new development within the open countryside and to allow only new development where it is sustainable and helps reduce the need to travel by private car.

8. The Borough Council's own adopted Rural Strategy offers strong support for making the best use of appropriate buildings and Brownfield sites where they are in sustainable locations. Local Plan Policy CSP4 reflects this approach.

9. The East Staffordshire Design Guide (Supplementary Planning Document) adopted February 2008, states and promotes high quality design across East Staffordshire. This Guide explains the Council's approach to design in line with national government planning policy. The guidance sets out the correct approach to design, establishing important ground rules and encouraging better practice.

The Design Document provides an overview of the character of the Borough. It is relevant to all development and should be used as a guide when considering the character and context for specific sites.

The Design Supplementary Planning Document provides design guidance for more sustainable and environmentally friendly developments, and, briefly explains the importance of designing development which will be adaptable to change over time.

10. In 2006 English Heritage and the Countryside Agency published a policy framework for traditional farm buildings, *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Traditional Farm Buildings*, which stated that the starting point for future policy must be an understanding of the character, condition and sensitivity to change of farm buildings and the relationship of farm steadings to the wider landscape.

Appendix B – Farmsteads and change

Over the course of the 20th and into the present century, and especially since the 1950's, historic farmsteads and their buildings have at a UK and European level changed in response to two key developments:

The modern agricultural industry. - The future maintenance of the great majority of traditional farm buildings is now dependent on a new role outside agriculture. The enlargement of farms, the need to maximise production whilst saving on labour costs, allow access for new machinery, or to comply with animal welfare regulations has resulted in both the redundancy of traditional working buildings and the demand for industrial-style sheds and large concreted working areas, often with new points of access. Traditional buildings on working farms are most commonly used for storage. Many traditional buildings have not been maintained for several decades, and repair and adaptation for modern farming use can be very costly.

The strong demand for the adaptive re-use of traditional buildings. - The continued reduction of holdings, which is expected to accelerate in many areas, has also resulted in whole farms and steadings being brought onto the property market. Despite policies designed to encourage economic use, the *Constructing the Evidence Base* report and *The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project* has shown that the overwhelming demand is residential use for historic farmstead sites and redundant buildings. As a consequence of the demand for 'country living', and restraints on development in the wider countryside, property prices in rural areas are high, and are expected to remain relatively high for properties that have a distinctive and valued architectural character.

The owners and tenants of farms are also seeking to capitalise on the potential of the existing building stock for rural diversification and regeneration, or to inject new capital into their businesses. A considerable body of evidence at a national level suggests that farmers will increasingly seek to put more buildings forward for inclusion in diversification schemes. Some projects can work in conjunction with existing agricultural activities and provide additional income, but require planning permission. The availability of financial resources for investment in alternative uses of redundant buildings by the farming community, however, is likely to be limited by the continual demand for investment in new build and modern equipment, as well as factors such as market demand, and the broader social and economic context.

Future change - These drivers for change are resulting in the demand for new buildings on working farms conforming to international models of construction and economy on the one hand, and the conversion of traditional working buildings that contribute to local landscape character and local distinctiveness on the other. This is likely to accelerate further over the next few years, whether in response to the growth of larger farming units or the (often complementary) demand for smaller units sometimes associated with dual income (including hobby farm) households. Furthermore, the increased importance placed in national planning policy on 'local distinctiveness', 'sense of place' and 'sustainable

communities' means that the issues confronting traditional farm buildings cannot be considered in isolation from the patterns of settlement and land use that have been inherited from the past or the changing demography and structure of rural communities and economies.

Summary of recent work by English Heritage and its partners

English Heritage's recent work on farm buildings, undertaken in collaboration with the former Countryside Agency and other partners, includes:

- An audit of the effectiveness of policy at national and local level, the drivers for change and the proportion of listed buildings that have been subjected to development pressure and change of use.
- *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Traditional Farm Buildings* – a joint English Heritage and Countryside Agency publication (November 2006), which recommends that future strategies and approaches towards re-use should avoid blanket 'off-the-peg' solutions and instead be informed by an understanding of regional and local differences in the drivers for change, patterns of landscape and farmstead character, and their sensitivity to and potential for change.
- Summary regional statements within the policy document, supported by *Preliminary Character Statements*, which represent an initial attempt to understand the farmsteads of each region in their national and landscape context.
- Guidance on the adaptive reuse of farm buildings – *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: a Guide to Good Practice* – which seeks to promote high standards in design and implementation where conversion is considered as a viable and appropriate option.
- A 2009 report – *Extending the Evidence Base* – summarises recent progress in the mapping of farmstead character and change in its landscape context.
- The development of assessment frameworks and guidance, for example on the Bolton Abbey estate in North Yorkshire and the High Weald AONB ([JAC's farmstead research and toolkit](#))
- Development with its county-based partners of the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project (see below).

THE WEST MIDLANDS FARMSTEADS AND LANDSCAPES PROJECT

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project is a collaborative project, led by English Heritage in partnership with the Region's county and metropolitan councils and with the support of Advantage West Midlands. For the first time at a regional level the Project has:

1. Mapped and described the locations and characteristics of all farmsteads, their change over time, and how they relate to the landscape.
2. Described the present day role of historic farmsteads in the West Midland's economy.
3. Developed a set of planning tools to inform spatial planning and land management.

The Project has established that:

Historic farmsteads are assets which make a significant and highly varied contribution to the

rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of the West Midlands

- Approximately 17,000 (82%) of historic farmsteads, as recorded from late 19th century maps, have retained some or all of their traditional working buildings. 65% of these have fallen out of agricultural use. The survival and densities of historic farmsteads are lowest in the south east of the region and some arable areas, and highest in upland or pastoral farming landscapes.
- Nearly 88% of historic farmsteads are sited away from villages and large settlements, and developed within small hamlets or as isolated individual sites or clusters. They are an integral part of an historic pattern of dispersed (as opposed to village-based) settlement across most of the region.
- Local and regional variations in the form and scale of historic farmsteads reflect centuries of landscape change.
- Along the Welsh borders and in the uplands of the north east there are large numbers of surviving, small-scale farmsteads in agricultural use associated with land of high amenity and landscape value.

Historic farmsteads are assets which, through agricultural and other new uses, have significant potential to make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities away from market towns and other rural centres

- 31% of historic farmsteads remain in agricultural use with minimal diversification. This use is most strongly associated with the largest farmstead types. There are also high numbers of medium to small-scale farmsteads in agricultural use across the uplands of the Welsh Borders and in north-east Staffordshire (including the Peak District). Other research outlined in this report has indicated that on working farms there are high numbers of traditional buildings without a use which are in significant decline.
- Historic farmsteads that combine significant diversification (requiring planning permission) with continued agricultural use (3%) are concentrated towards the west of the region, particularly in Herefordshire where large-scale farmsteads developed.
- The incidence of farmsteads providing industrial, commercial or retail facilities is very small (5%) and most strongly associated with the largest farmstead types. An additional 5% combine residential use with industrial, commercial or retail facilities.
- Residential use, including sites where some or all of the working buildings have been converted into housing, accounts for the remainder (56%). industrial, commercial or retail facilities The extent of business activity associated with farmsteads in residential use, as indicated by their role as bases of limited companies and substantial directorships, is higher in historic farmsteads than in other dwellings *regardless of location*.

This evidence base can be used to inform positive approaches to shaping the character and economy of places, which are tailored to the future conservation and use of historic farmsteads

- Policy and delivery programmes should recognise the continuing need of farmers to introduce new infrastructure, and the declining condition of historic farm buildings. Planning policies should address all end uses and facilitate the sustainable re-use of the resource, including in those areas where farmsteads are located outside villages. Environmental and economic benefits can be delivered through a diversity of uses for historic farm buildings. Where change is fully informed new uses can make a positive contribution to landscape character, inspire appropriate high-quality new development and reveal the distinctive quality and character of historic farmsteads.
- Approaches to the future change of historic farmsteads should be based on appraisal of the historic character and significance of the whole site, and its sensitivity to the type of change being considered. This includes identification of opportunities as well as constraints, from the most adaptable to those significant but least adaptable buildings where low-key and ancillary uses are most appropriate.
- Agri-environment schemes and other grant programmes can best be targeted towards

supporting the maintenance of traditional farm buildings in areas of high amenity and landscape value with high densities of surviving historic farmsteads in continuing agricultural use, and towards the most significant but least adaptable buildings.

THE OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

The key options for traditional farm buildings are:

Maintain – for buildings in continued agricultural use or with long-term potential for alternative uses. Grants for maintenance are promoted by the Entry Level Environmental Stewardship scheme. Although this is the best option for retaining the overall historic and landscape integrity of traditional farming landscapes, a combination of factors, as outlined in section 2 above, has undermined the incentive to invest in repair and maintenance, particularly for expensive remedial works..

Adapt – for farm diversification, economic or residential use, where the proposed change is considered to be the best way of conserving and securing a future for the building. The options for conversion to enable continued agricultural use are increasingly limited. Redundant post-1950 sheds are thus best suited for industrial units requiring flexible working space, and traditional buildings for more ‘bespoke’ commercial uses as well as being subject to high demand for residential conversion.

Restore – to retain as features in the landscape or as significant historic buildings, with minimal or no alteration. Grants are available through English Heritage for grade I and II* listed buildings considered to be at risk, and through Natural England under the Higher Level Environmental Stewardship scheme. These are focused on small numbers of those most significant buildings that are particularly sensitive to change.

Collapse – either gradual, or through intervention involving demolition and salvage of materials. Dereliction and loss has for centuries followed functional redundancy. Buildings most prone to loss are those of low historic or architectural value, low significance or in poor condition. Location, capacity for adaptive reuse and scale are additional factors. Isolated buildings, without access, in deteriorating condition or lacking the capacity to accept alternative uses, are most prone to loss as a consequence of their redundancy.

These options are conditioned by a number of factors, ranging from access to services to the adaptability of the whole group and its buildings in its landscape context. Another key factor is resources of the owner and any grant aid available. The context for considering change and for framing planning policy and delivery also differs sharply from one area to another, depending on a range of factors such as farm income, the broader social and economic character of the surrounding area and the rates of conversion and dereliction.

The economics of farming have limited the viability of expensive repair for continued agricultural use. Moreover, agri-environment scheme funds are limited for targeting those buildings that can be fully repaired and conserved for their intrinsic or landscape value. For the overwhelming majority of buildings that have the capacity for alternative uses, adaptation provides the most effective means of long-term management

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

Each of these options, and in particular adaptation and new build, will have different impacts upon the site and its surrounding landscape in terms of:

- any growth in traffic and its impact on tranquillity and the neighbourhood;
- the views into, over and out of the site;
- setting, boundaries and curtilage, through improvement of access, provision of car parking, development of prominent viewpoints and elevations;
- the use of historic open areas such as yards and gardens;
- impact of change on the existing buildings, through loss of fabric, new openings, sub-division or amalgamation of spaces;
- habitats for wildlife.

Different degrees of *change, enhancement or loss* can cumulatively transform the physical character of places and how they are used, valued and perceived. The character of a site and its landscape setting are critical, key factors being:

- The density, distribution and visual prominence of farmsteads in the landscape, and whether they are mostly isolated or located in settlements.
- The layout and scale of the farmstead and its associated buildings. Small farmsteads may have less potential for change than a large complex or a listed building. Some farmstead plan types may have greater potential to accept change than others. For example, an enclosed, inward-looking courtyard will have less potential for change than a large steading with multiple yards.
- Scale, lighting and layout of individual buildings. Some buildings were multi-functional or needed good internal light (such as stables) and others (for example, dovecotes, pigsties, and threshing barns) were highly specialised in their function. Some buildings will thus be characterised by their generally robust construction, large scale, good levels of natural light and durable building materials. Others will be much more sensitive to adaptive reuse, because they are built of more fragile materials (such as earth walling and timber frame) or because of their small scale and poor natural light. Buildings with more natural light provided by openings, such as cartsheds, hay barns, stables and multi-functional ranges, will be less sensitive to change than small-scale specialist structures such as pigsties, field barns and dovecotes. Some buildings, or parts of buildings, will retain significant interior fabric or fittings which will also limit the capacity for change.
- The robustness of building materials and structural condition.

The varied historic character of farmsteads and their landscapes will therefore present different sensitivities to the different options for change, depending on the nature of the change proposed and the scale at which it is being applied (Table 2).

Options and the Impacts to Consider	
Option	Impacts to Consider at Area and Site Scales
Maintain Through investment using traditional or non-traditional	The impact at a landscape scale will be neutral. The key issues to consider at a site scale are:

<p>materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the cost of continued maintenance and repair, sometimes linked to the need for minor adaptation; • the type of repair and its impact on the durability and integrity of historic fabric; • the sources and supply of traditional building materials onto the market.
<p>Adapt</p> <p>Through continued agricultural use or new non-agricultural uses that will affect the working and historic character of traditional farmstead buildings.</p> <p>New Build</p> <p>To enable continued on-farm operations or for a dwelling/non-agricultural business.</p>	<p>The impact of adaptive reuse or new build upon an area will differ, depending on the visual prominence of farmsteads in the landscape, the degree of access to them providing by the road network and their layout and scale..</p> <p>At a site scale adaptive reuse for non-agricultural use (including diversification projects that require planning permission) and new build will have an impact on the whole site, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the views into the site; • the impact of any gardens, access and parking on the landscape setting; • the use of existing and creation of new access and open areas; • demand for more natural light (new openings) and the sub-division or amalgamation of spaces; • the loss or creation of fabric.
<p>Collapse/Loss</p> <p>Through continued dereliction or demolition and salvage.</p>	<p>The impact at both area and site scale will not necessarily be <i>absolute loss</i>, but the scale of loss will have a cumulative impact on landscape character. Key issues to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the contribution that farmsteads and traditional working buildings make to landscape character and significance; • the impact of any loss on the strength of landscape character; • the historic and architectural significance of the site/building.

The Site Assessment Framework is a checklist designed to assist in developing an understanding of the character, significance and potential for change of a farmstead in order to inform an understanding of the key issues at the earliest possible stage when adaptive reuse or new build are being considered in the context of a historic farmstead. It is a structured framework which when used with the *Annexe: East Staffordshire Farmstead Character Statement* will help identify the character and significance of any site under consideration, and help the user:

- understand how the character and significance of the site and its setting results from past change, and how this can inform opportunities for the reinforcement and enhancement of character;
- how the impact of the various options for change will differ (see Appendix B), depending on key factors such as whether the farmstead is isolated or located within a settlement, its prominence in views across the landscape and the scale, layout and form of the buildings, including their condition.

The Site Assessment Framework applies equally if:

- the farmstead is in single ownership;
- ownership of the farmstead has already been divided;
- the options for change for one or more buildings are being considered.

It will help the user identify the impact of the options for change, and the issues to inform pre-application discussion if planning permission or listed building consent is required. In particular:

- major issues that may influence the potential uses of the farmstead;
- how the farmstead contributes to the character and local distinctiveness of the area;
- the significance, sensitivity to, and potential for change of, the farmstead in its landscape setting;
- the architectural patterning – the building styles, materials and details – that are relevant and important to maintaining or enhancing the character of the farmstead as a group in its landscape setting.

By using the Assessment Framework the user will then be able to demonstrate:

- how the character and significance of the farmstead in its landscape setting has been understood;
- how the form and scale of any proposed development has been informed by an understanding of the context of the site and its surroundings;
- the justification for proposals for retention, reinstatement, redevelopment and enhancement which reveal or enhance the historic character of the farmstead;
- how approaches to new design, including the scale, height, alignment and materials of proposed buildings, are informed by an understanding of the character of the farmstead.

Discussions with the relevant local authority may indicate that planning permission or listed building consent is required. The understanding gained from the Assessment Framework can therefore inform approaches to an effective scheme, that will suggest where there may be opportunities for further managed change, what is significant and needs conservation, and what can be enhanced or reinstated. It can also provide the architectural advice that responds to the landscape context, such as the materials, building styles and details that are relevant to maintaining or enhancing the character of the farmstead as a group.

TABLE 5 THE SITE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Stage 1 Site and Management Issues

Ownership, use, access to highways and services, designation (landscape, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, nature conservation etc.).

Stage 2 Character & Condition

Using historic Ordnance Survey maps and site survey identify the inherited (historic) character of the farmstead group and its buildings within its landscape setting and assess how the farmstead has changed over time.

Stage 3 Significance

Assess the significance of the farmstead in relation to:

- The farmstead in its landscape setting;
- Farmstead form and completeness;
- The individual buildings.

Stage 4 Potential for Change

Using the understanding of character and significance, identify constraints and opportunities, before entering into pre-application discussions with the planning authority (where Planning or Listed Building Consent is required). Also consider additional issues such as personal objectives and resources, planning policy and the need for further research or recording.

Preparing a Scheme

Use this understanding to inform approaches to conversion, new build and modification, materials and architectural features. Proposals should indicate where buildings can be retained, features reinstated or areas remodelled and enhanced, or where opportunities for redevelopment or reorganisation of the farmstead will contribute to its character based on the information collected up to this stage in the Assessment Framework. The understanding gained from the Assessment Framework can help to develop a scheme for the site, and options for conversion and new build, materials and architectural features.

STAGE 1 ESTABLISH SITE AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

1. Identify the Site – Boundary and Ownership

Identifying the boundary of the whole site is a key requirement for the later stages of the assessment. The buildings may face or have direct access to small enclosed areas which served as gardens and yards for farm animals or stacking harvested crops. Small paddocks, orchards or blocks of woodland would generally be considered to form part of the surrounding farmland, and not the farmstead. The use of historic maps in Stage 2 will show how the boundary has changed.

A site may be in a single ownership or tenancy, or split into different parts. This and the type of ownership – freehold, tenanted, corporate, utility etc – can be a major factor in determining the approach taken towards determining the options for sustainable management. Large estates, for example, can trade an important asset against an adaptable one, whereas such an option may not be available to an individual owner.

2. Site Access and Services

This is a critical initial consideration, as so much is determined by the capacity of the existing road network and access routes to the site. Access to roads must be safe with clear sightlines. Some forms of commercial and community use will require suitable access via a two-lane highway.

Consider:

- Distance from public highway
- What access is there to the site?
- Width of access road(s)
- Vehicular access in/out of site
- Are there accessible public transport services?
- Are there Public Rights of Way which pass through or adjacent to the farmstead?
- What services (water, sewage, electricity, telecommunications) are provided to the site? What potential is there?

3. Designations

It is important to identify whether there are any statutory or local designations relating to the landscape, heritage or biodiversity. Designated landscapes, areas or features may require specific applications in addition to a planning application and involve consultation with other bodies.

TABLE 6: DESIGNATIONS CHECKLIST

Heritage:

Conservation Areas

Historic areas may be designated as conservation areas. Conservation areas are usually focused on historic settlements although some may include larger areas of landscape, for example, taking in an historic park.

Listed and historic buildings

Some historic buildings are listed because of their architectural or historic interest. The majority of listed agricultural buildings are farmhouses (55%) or barns (24%). Where the farmhouse is listed any pre-1948 working building or structure in the curtilage (legal property boundary at the

time of listing) of a listed building can be considered to be listed and therefore covered by listed building legislation and consents.

Undesignated Heritage Assets

Some Local Authorities have their own lists of locally significant buildings. Such lists will normally be supported by a local planning policy for the retention of locally listed buildings.

Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites

Archaeological sites of national importance may be scheduled. Scheduled Monument Consent must be sought from English Heritage for any works affecting the site or setting of a Scheduled Monument. There may be other known archaeological sites on or adjacent to the site.

Establish whether:

- There are any listed or locally listed buildings within or adjacent to the farmstead;
- The farmstead is within or adjacent to a conservation area;
- There are there any scheduled monuments within or adjacent to the farmstead.

Wildlife and Habitats

- Farmstead buildings and their landscape settings provide, or can provide, important habitats for local fauna and flora. Local authorities now have a duty (through the NERC Act 2006) to take nature conservation into account.
- *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)* are areas of land notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of special nature conservation interest.
- *Protected species* – certain species – bats, for example – are protected as European Protected Species. Expert advice will be required to ascertain whether a protected species is present within or adjacent to a farmstead site.
- Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC) are sites of non-statutory designation, usually assessed by the local authority or wildlife trust, which is recognised by local planning policies.

STAGE 2 IDENTIFY THE CHARACTER AND CONDITION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Identifying the inherited character of the site will help the user:

- understand how the farmstead and its surrounding landscape results from change over time – new types of farmsteads and buildings have been developed, often in close relationship to the changes in the farmland around them;
- identify its sensitivity to the changes being considered, due to key factors such as whether the farmstead is isolated or located within a settlement, its prominence in views across the landscape and the scale, layout and form of the buildings, including their condition;
- inform (at Stages 4-6, after discussion with the local authority) approaches to the future use of both traditional buildings and industrial-scale sheds, and the extent to which future approaches to design should capitalise on the traditional character or diverge from it.

This stage requires looking at:

- the landscape;
- the farmstead;
- the buildings.

This can be achieved through:

1 Desk-based survey

Use historic Ordnance Survey maps of around 1900, and then modern maps and aerial images to identify how the present character of the site and its surrounding area results from past change.

Consider:

- The location of the site, by considering whether it forms part of a settlement (village or hamlet) or whether it is isolated, and, if so, to what extent?;
- The scale of the fields and the form of the boundaries around the site (e.g. small, irregular fields, medium fields with wavy boundaries, regular fields with straight boundaries);
- The historic plan form of the farmstead – how the buildings are arranged around and provide access to yards and other areas within and around the farmstead, gardens, the relationship of the farmhouse to the farmstead, the presence of other dwellings.

The loss of a larger historic building will usually have a greater impact on character than the loss of a small building. It may, therefore, be useful to assign the level of change between the historic maps and the present to one of the following four categories, because:

- Substantially intact – less than 25% change;
- Partial change – 25% -50% change or loss of the traditional buildings;
- Significant change – more than 50% change or loss of the traditional buildings;
- Major change: More than 75% change or loss of the traditional buildings.

HISTORIC MAPS

Ordnance Survey maps date from the 1850s. Local libraries hold copies of the 2nd and 3rd edition map of the 1890s-1920, which clearly show the buildings and which were compiled at the end of the last major period of development of the traditional farmstead. Aerial images from Google Earth or Local Live, as well as modern maps, will help identify the changes to the site and its surrounding area. This understanding can be deepened through looking at other Ordnance Survey editions. County record offices and websites can hold historic mapping and earlier maps such as tithe maps which date from the 1830s-40s or estate surveys which may assist in dating some of the buildings.

Site survey

- Working from the form of the landscape around the site, identify key views into the farmstead, particularly from publicly accessible areas;
- Identify and record key features in the landscape around the farmstead that help frame views towards the steading such as houses, woodland, orchards, ponds, earthworks, quarries etc.;
- Consider the scale and impact of the farmstead in the landscape, and what are the most visible features – buildings will differ in their form and scale, and also in the dominance of their walls or roofs;
- Record the construction and form of the boundaries to the farmstead and adjacent fields, e.g. walls, hedges, fences;
- Identify, where possible, and briefly describe individual buildings:

- the building types in terms of their historic and present uses, and whether they are industrial or traditional in their style;
- the form and scale of the buildings;
- the principal elevations of the buildings, including their main points of access and how they relate to enclosed spaces and routeways within and around the farmstead;
- the number and size of openings (including blocked openings);
- construction and materials – mass-produced iron and steel-framed buildings, temporary or permanent, timber-frame, mass-walled, or iron framed.

Much of the information collected in this stage can be recorded on sketch plans and in photographs.

Condition

Determining condition is a critical initial stage, as it will inform consideration of the cost relating to each option and may influence planning decisions regarding the potential for re-use.

Assess whether the condition of each of the buildings is:

- Very bad – ongoing structural cracks/failure and damage to roof, the latter leading to deterioration of interior structure and fabric; need for major structural repairs.
- Poor – most elements of the fabric and external joinery and internal fittings and carpentry have deteriorated, due to spalling/deterioration of walls, leaking roof, defective rainwater goods; need for minor structural repairs.
- Fair – structurally sound, but needs general repair and maintenance. May include stable structural cracks.
- Good – structurally sound and well-maintained, minimal intervention required.

If the building is listed and in very bad or poor condition has it been identified as a 'Building at Risk' by the local planning authority?

As part of a national programme supported by English Heritage Staffordshire County Council is undertaking a countywide Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project. The project, which began in April 2003, was completed in February 2006. Please find below a link to this study:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/HistoricEnvironment/HistoricLandscapeCharacterisation/>

STAGE 3 IDENTIFY SIGNIFICANCE

The information gathered on the character and sensitivity to change of the group at Stage 2 can now be used to inform determination of the significance of the farmstead, and in particular:

- the farmstead in its landscape setting;
- the form and completeness of the farmstead group;
- the importance and character of the individual buildings;
- the position and function of spaces within and around the farmstead.

Significant traditional farmsteads will have one or more of the following:

- legible historic groups that have experienced little or no change since the late 19th century (2nd Ed OS map);
- historic groups that have a clear visual relationship to the landscape that they developed within;
- locally characteristic building types with minimal change to their traditional form;
- locally characteristic building materials;
- include listed buildings, listed working buildings being of particular significance to the farmstead.

There is also a very small number of rare or significant late 19th/early 20th century industrial buildings with minimal changes to their original form. Use of the *Annexe: East Staffordshire Farmstead Character Statement* will further help identify the character and significance of any site under consideration.

STAGE 4 POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

The aim of this stage is, using the understanding gained from using Stages 1-3 of the Site Assessment Framework, to bring together and identify the key issues that must be considered before the potential for change is discussed with planners, in particular:

- how the inherited historic character of the site and its setting can inform opportunities for the reinforcement and enhancement of character;
- whether the farmstead is isolated or located within a settlement, its prominence in views across the landscape and the scale, layout and form of the buildings, including their condition.

Checklist

Landscape: Issues and opportunities consider:

- The importance of key views into the site – are there views to the site that have little or no potential for change or parts of the farmstead that are not visible from the landscape and may have potential for change?
- How would the removal of buildings impact on the landscape setting of the farmstead and the character and significance of the farmstead? What opportunities are there for the enhancement of the character of the landscape and farmstead?
- Are there prominent roofs or walls where the insertion of new openings would be detrimental to the landscape character of the farmstead?
- The potential impact of new access routes or alterations to existing access routes – this is a critical initial consideration, as so much is determined by the capacity of the existing road network and access routes.
- The potential impact of the creation of new curtilages and parking on the landscape setting – using buildings to provide space for cars and other elements which may intrude on the rural landscape.
- The impact of any gardens, access and parking on the landscape setting.
- Demand for more natural light (new openings) and the sub-division or amalgamation of spaces.
- Are there opportunities to enhance the landscape setting of the farmstead, the wider landscape or biodiversity through restoration or introduction of features such as hedges, ponds or tree planting?
- Farmsteads were vibrant places connecting people to the landscape around them. This functional relationship with the land, and the role of spaces and routeways, is key to the enhancement/conservation of character.
- Degrees of enclosure:
 - *Working spaces* are open areas within and around the farmstead which functioned for stacking crops and moving livestock and vehicles and can be very sensitive to change. They offer obvious opportunities for the reinforcement and enhancement of character as they provide the overall space and setting for buildings and contained areas (yards and gardens) within farmsteads, enabling an appreciation of their relationship to each other. Working spaces on the perimeter of a farmstead, including those for stacking corn and other small enclosures, serve to link the outer edges of the farmstead to its surrounding landscape.
 - *Yards* are areas for containing livestock, particularly cattle, onto which buildings face. Single or multiple yards are of fundamental importance to the development of many farmsteads and can range from fully enclosed, private spaces surrounded by buildings to more open yards served by one or two buildings. Some farmsteads, especially those that are dispersed in their form, are not focused on any single yard area but may have several yards relating to individual buildings or groups of buildings.
 - *Gardens* can stand within or to one side of the farmstead, and historically developed as private areas with a distinct and separate character. They may be screened from the working areas of the farm by hedges or walls.

Landscape: Guidance

- Ensure that views to and from the site work with the surrounding topography and the cover provided by existing trees.
- Consider enhancement with tree cover to mitigate against the effects of cold winds.
- Ensure that the choice of planting and landscaping (trees, hedges, shrubs etc), and that the scale and form of any proposed enclosure boundaries on the edge of the site, is informed by and responds to local character and enhances habitat for wildlife.
- Work with historical points of access to and patterns of movement around the steading.
- Retain and enhance the visibility and character of spaces around and within the steading.
- Work with the form, orientation and hierarchy of buildings within the group and their relationship to spaces around and within the steading.
- Minimise hardstandings.
- Maintain the sense of space between buildings, and between working buildings and the farmhouse.
- Maintain the relationship between open spaces and the facing and orientation of buildings
- Avoid increase in boundaries or boundaries of inappropriate character which undermine their integrity as individual farmsteads.

The farmstead group: Issues and opportunities consider:

- The opportunities or constraints offered by the plan form and the level of change.
- Access – some farmsteads may only have a single, private point of access, which constrains the volume of movement to and from the site, while others may stand alongside or sit astride a road or public path or be at a junction of routeways giving public access to the centre of the farmstead. Understanding and maintaining the relationship between routeways and buildings is vital to conserving the character of historic farmsteads.
- The form and scale of the buildings – note the scale of the whole group and the differing scale of individual buildings. Buildings of different scales – from post-1950 sheds to smaller-scale traditional buildings – will clearly present different capacities for change, and reflect their historical function and importance. The different scales and forms of buildings offer different opportunities for change.
- The number and size of the openings and the need for new openings and the existing sub-division of the internal spaces. Consider evidence for lost floors and partitions, historic features such as stalls, machinery, grain bins and floor surfaces, exposed carpentry including roof trusses and floors, historical graffiti and marks of lost features.
- The presence of internal features, such as machinery.
- The durability and vulnerability of the building materials.

The farmstead group: Guidance

- Retain the clear separation, in terms of character, between domestic and working buildings.
- Retain solid-to-void proportions (i.e. the relationship of existing doors and windows to wall and roof).
- Minimise alterations to prominent and significant external elevations, through careful attention to internal planning and how and where to introduce or borrow light.
- Conserve open interiors with impressive proportions and long sight lines.
- Retain historic features including door and window treatment, exposed roof trusses, floor structure, machinery, floor surfaces.

Additional Issues

There are additional issues that need to be considered at this stage:

Personal Objectives and Perceptions

- What are the personal objectives and perceptions of the applicant?
- Do the resources available match the objectives?

Planning Policies - The constraints and opportunities for development in rural areas are set out in national and local planning policy. Local planning policies for re-use often require employment uses to be considered before residential for adaptive re-use schemes.

- Review national and local planning policies and guidance.
- If there are existing uses on the site will they be displaced? Will they require new build on the site or elsewhere?
- Refer to detailed planning considerations include issues such as:
 - over-looking
 - loss of light
 - noise

Economic and Community Issues

National planning policy encourages local authorities to support diverse and sustainable farming enterprises and for the local authority criteria for re-use to take account of settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, markets and housing. Consider:

- opportunities for community and economic use, including social housing;
- local employment pressures (trends, nearby markets/employment centres, types of employment);
- market and rental values for various uses;
- communications, including access to and bandwidth of broadband.

Sustainability

Sustainability is an essential consideration for all planning applications. Sustainability should not just consider car journeys but should examine all aspects of the sustainability of the proposed development. Consider:

- the pattern and density of settlement in the surrounding area;
- the potential for home-working;
- transport, including distance to services and public transport;
- thermal efficiency;
- the potential for micro-generation through ground-source heating, solar and wind power;
- the use of grey water recycling and reed bed sewage disposal;
- the cost and availability of traditional building materials including locally sourced materials and the salvage of materials;

Materials

The use of materials of appropriate quality is essential in ensuring a successful scheme. Consider:

- the cost and availability of traditional building materials;
- the potential for salvage of materials.

Need for further survey, recording and analysis

The initial assessment of character and significance may have identified buildings that require further, more detailed examination to fully understand their origins and development to inform development proposals. Conditions for recording a building or farmstead may be attached to a planning or listed building consent for recording before the commencement of building works to create a record of the site in its agricultural form. Some farmstead sites may be considered to have archaeological potential and may require further assessment. Surveys for wildlife that may be impacted by the proposed

development may also be required. Such recording is likely to be undertaken by consultants and will incur a cost to be borne by the owner.

Seek advice from:

- the local authority Planning or Conservation Officer regarding the need for more detailed building recording to inform the proposed scheme or to be carried out before changes are made;
- the County Archaeologist regarding the potential for the requirement of archaeological investigation;
- the local authority Ecologist regarding the need for an ecological survey to establish nature conservation interest of the site and its setting.

PREPARING A SCHEME

The understanding from the *Site Assessment Framework* and pre-application discussion can then inform approaches to conversion, new build and modification, materials and architectural features. Proposals should indicate where buildings can be retained, features reinstated or areas remodelled and enhanced, or where opportunities for redevelopment or reorganisation of the farmstead will contribute to its character based on the information collected up to this stage in the *Site Assessment Framework*. The understanding gained can then help to develop a scheme for the site, and options for conversion and new build, materials and architectural features. Use *Appendix D (Application Check List)* for this stage.

Also of use at this stage will be:

- East Staffordshire Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document, June 2008, which aims to raise design standards in all new development
- English Heritage guidance on the adaptive reuse of farm buildings – *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: a Guide to Good Practice* – which seeks to promote high standards in design and implementation where conversion is considered as a viable and appropriate option.

Appendix D – Application check list

In order that proposals for the conversion of traditional rural buildings can be properly assessed, all applications must be accompanied by accurate and detailed measured survey drawings of the existing fabric at a scale of either 1:50 or 1:100. In addition to elevation drawings and floor plans, the survey must include cross and longitudinal sections showing floor and roof structures which are drawn to indicate critical dimensions such as headroom under beams. Unusual construction details may need to be drawn at a larger scale.

Application Checklist

SURVEY INFORMATION

Measured survey drawings (either 1:50 or 1:100):

- Elevations and floor plans
- Cross and longitudinal sections showing floor and roof structures
- Any unusual details

Building condition survey (structural survey) conducted by a suitably experienced and qualified person:

- Identify the full extent of defects in the structure in a report
- Identify locations and extent of defects or rebuilding with hatching, shading, and annotations on the survey plans.
- Desirable to support with photographs

A Design and Access Statement setting out the architectural, historic, townscape, or scenic qualities of the building(s). Also details setting out design principles that have been adopted.

Ecological survey conducted by a suitably experienced and qualified person or group:

- Indicate the species targeted and methodology used.
- Time spent carrying out the survey.
- The date, start and finish times of survey.
- Other sources of information.
- The presence of any protected or Biodiversity Action Plan (national or local) species.
- State any limitations to the survey and further areas of study if necessary.
- Give details of proposed mitigation work and whether work needs to be licensed.

PROPOSALS

Proposals drawings (either 1:50 or 1:100)

- Elevation drawings and floor plans
- Cross and longitudinal sections
- Identify all new fabric and any rebuilding, including; new walls, lining of existing walls, structural supports, floors, staircases, doors, windows, and flues.
- The extent of any re-pointing or rebuilding must be accurately marked on elevation drawings, and the extent of all works should be contrasted on all drawings by means of colour, shading or hatching.
- Identify alterations necessary to comply with other legislation (Building Regulations, Environmental Health legislation, etc.)
- Evidence of economic testing.

- Large scale joinery details at a scale of 1:20
- Landscape and boundary treatment for the external areas, including any garden areas, parking and service areas, hard-surfacing, means of enclosure, and planting
- Three-dimensional illustrations are always helpful in assessing proposals fully.
- Full protected species surveys must be provided including any relocation and mitigation measures.

Applications for the conversion of a listed building or a building with Local Historical importance a schedule of works must be included.

Applications for Listed Building Consent also require a heritage statement within which a clear understanding of the significance of the building, as recommended by Planning Policy Statement 5 and the associated Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide.

Satisfactory provision for the conservation of any protected species identified

- This may include mitigation or compensatory measures
- Include any habitat creation initiatives

Appendix E - Economic Tests

Economic testing

Within a formal planning application for the conversion of a rural building to a residential dwelling, it will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate **either** that every reasonable attempt has first been made to secure a suitable employment, tourism or recreational use, **or**, in the case of isolated buildings, that a conversion for holiday use is not viable. "Isolated buildings" are those buildings in open countryside or associated only with an isolated farmhouse or dwelling, and in small hamlets with no community facilities or public transport.

It may also not be necessary to submit marketing information if clear evidence is produced that any commercial use of a building is likely to have overriding adverse effects on a neighbouring residential property.

Subject to the above provisos, there are two broad requirements to fulfil:

- to make every reasonable attempt to secure a suitable employment, tourism or recreation use;
- to demonstrate that such efforts have been made

(i) What is a 'reasonable' attempt?

- (i) property should be marketed for a period not less than 12 months, expiring no more than 3 months prior to the submission of an application
- (ii) be advertised in the local press, trade publications, on the internet, and by an agent's board at the premises
- (iii) be marketed for an appropriate employment, recreational or tourism use by two separate agents. The price should be realistic and reflect the marketed use.
- (iv) it is generally desirable to market the premises with a valid planning permission for the intended use, but it is not essential. Whilst marketing the premises is likely to generate more interest of planning permission has been sought and granted, it will not be acceptable to submit applications in outline form to establish the principle of development

(ii) How do I demonstrate this?

Produce a written statement setting out the efforts made to secure an employment, tourism or recreational use. To include:

- (i) details and evidence of steps to market the buildings, including verifiable records of all enquiries;

- (ii) copy of sales particulars and adverts plus two commercial valuations by professionally qualified commercial valuers to demonstrate that the property has been marketed at a realistic price;
- (iii) evidence that the property has not been marketed on the basis of a too narrowly defined list of potential end users;

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

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;