

CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT FARM BUILDINGS

Three basic criteria for policy development:

1. Location

Is the building close to a town, with services, boundary; distant from any settlement with services; remote and isolated from all services?

2. Proposed use

Is it a use that aids local development, for example workshops, or holiday use as a business concern; a community asset, eg a meeting place, shop; conversion to a residential dwelling, either permanent or second/holiday home?

3. Historic value and character

Is the building listed; not listed but is of some interest, and/or represents a pleasing feature in the landscape; is of little historic or architectural or aesthetic value; a blot on the landscape; or in ruins?

Design for conversion

For buildings of some value and character, how well does a proposal retain these features. For any building, is the design sympathetic to the setting and the wider position in the landscape?

HIERARCHY OF USE FOR CONVERSION LOCATION

1. Close to settlement with services (<1km)

Presumption in favour of the local economy and jobs. If the building is of merit, then additionally a community use might be considered; then residential as the lowest in the hierarchy for re-use.

2. Distant from settlement with services

Local economy use only such as light industrial (hi-tech), workshops, offices; and business holiday accommodation. This applies for buildings of some merit, particularly for holiday accommodation, and in a viable state.

3. Remote

Only a business holiday conversion will be permitted; and then only for buildings of good quality and character. Or through the conversion might be brought to this standard.

Non-conversion

Main options are that the building is allowed to decay, or is demolished and building materials recycled. However, if the building is or could be of nature conservation value (bats, breeding birds such as barn owl, swallow and swift) then encourage the owner to keep a sound roof. Defra: recognition as a valuable habitat, counts for ES?

PERMANENT VERSUS SECOND/HOLIDAY HOME

Residential development will only be considered for defined settlements with services. Applications for permanent use as well as second/holiday home should be considered, as:

- Travel and sustainable development principles apply to both types of residential use. A business holiday use is different from both. In addition:
- Abuse of holiday home permissions; forward planning considerations; impact on house prices.
- Some communities suffer from an excess of second homes; on social (and economic) grounds permanent is to be preferred where granting residential.

PERMANENT VERSUS SECOND/HOLIDAY HOME

BUT:

What are the implications for District housing provision figures, amount of new build, level of affordable housing?

Future permissions:

Residential conversion is restricted to close to settlements with services, and as a lesser priority.

Past permissions:

All second/holiday home owners can apply for a change of use to a business holiday let.

Under the new policies, only properties close to settlements with services would be considered for a change from second or holiday home use to permanent residential status.