

Supporting Document for Proposed Changes to Grade II Listed Barn Conversion

Background and Context

The property in question is a Grade II listed barn located in the Ribble Valley, UK. The barn is being developed into three residential houses, House 1 (Ivy Cottage), House 2 (The Coach House), and House 3 (Meadow View Cottage), as per approved plans.

The barn was originally an empty structure with no internal historical features apart from the external appearance and the roof trusses. The original trusses were deemed beyond repair due to rot and structural instability and are being replaced with non-structural replicas, approved in a previous planning application.

The external appearance of the barn is being preserved to maintain its historical value within the village surroundings, while the internal structure is being adapted to create practical and energy-efficient living spaces. All proposed changes are designed to be sympathetic to the building's heritage while addressing the needs of modern living.

Proposed Changes

House 1 (Ivy Cottage):

Currently, House 1 includes two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. The ceilings extend to the ridge beam, resulting in extremely high spaces and no loft area.

Proposed Alterations:

A new staircase will be installed directly above the existing staircase leading from the ground floor to the first floor. This new staircase will provide access to a newly created second floor.

The second floor will feature an office/playroom with a ceiling height of 1.95 meters, while the first-floor ceiling height will remain at 2.35 meters.

The proposed changes will not alter the external appearance of the building. Internally, the replica trusses will be fully visible from the stairwell up to the second floor and within the newly created office / playroom, offering an uninterrupted view and enhancing the aesthetic appreciation of the barn's historical character. Unlike the original plan, where the trusses were fragmented across stairways, hallways, and bedrooms, this design provides a unified and improved view of these features.

The additional office/playroom space is particularly valuable given the increasing demand for home offices, offering residents a private and functional area separate from the open-plan ground floor.

House 2 (The Coach House):

Currently, House 2 includes three bedrooms, a main bathroom, and an ensuite on the first floor.

Proposed Alterations:

The ensuite will be removed to create space for an entrance to the stairwell for a new staircase, which will be installed directly above the existing staircase leading from the ground floor to the first floor. This new staircase will provide access to a newly created second floor.

The second floor will include an office/playroom and a bathroom with a bath, toilet, and sink.

The removal of the ensuite allows for larger bedrooms and an expanded first-floor bathroom, improving the overall functionality of the living space.

While part of the loft space will be sectioned off for the bathroom, the trusses will remain visible within the playroom and bathroom areas, allowing their historical character to be appreciated. As in House 1, the new layout ensures a unified and enhanced view of the replica trusses, avoiding the fragmented appearance of the original plan.

The new office/playroom provides a valuable addition, addressing the need for dedicated home-working spaces and complementing the open-plan design of the ground floor.

House 3 (Meadow View Cottage):

No changes are proposed to House 3. Its layout and design remain as approved in previous plans.

Key Considerations

Preservation of Historical Features:

The revised layout enhances the visibility of the trusses, allowing for a more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing appreciation of these historical features compared to the previously approved plan.

Energy Efficiency and Practicality:

The barn has been fitted with the highest standard of insulation at significant expense, ensuring energy efficiency for its inhabitants.

The proposed alterations will create more manageable living spaces, reducing heating costs associated with the original high-ceiling designs. This is particularly important in a village without a gas supply, where heating is reliant on electricity or oil heaters. Since oil heaters rely on fossil fuels, these changes also future-proof the properties by reducing dependence on such systems.

Sympathetic Design:

The changes do not affect the external appearance of the building, preserving its contribution to the village's historical landscape.

The new internal layout maximizes functionality without compromising the building's heritage. The additional floor space will meet modern living requirements while respecting the building's character.

Structural Integrity:

The building has been underpinned, and all walls have been fully restored, ensuring its stability and long-term preservation.

A structural engineer has confirmed that the building is strong enough to support the additional floor, giving confidence in the feasibility and safety of the proposed alterations.

Alignment with Heritage Principles:

Both neighbouring buildings, the Talbot Hotel and Number 3 Talbot Street, have always had second floors, providing a strong precedent for the proposed changes.

The proposed changes align with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by preserving the barn's significance while supporting appropriate development.

Benefits of the Proposal

Enhanced Heritage Experience: The full visibility of the replica trusses will provide a more immersive appreciation of the barn's historical character.

Increased Usability: The additional floor space provides practical living areas, addressing modern requirements while maintaining the building's historical integrity.

Improved Energy Efficiency: Lower heating costs and improved insulation align with sustainability goals.

Future-Proofing: Reducing dependence on fossil fuels, such as oil heaters, aligns with modern energy goals and ensures long-term sustainability for the properties.

Dedicated Home Offices: The inclusion of office/playroom spaces meets the modern need for remote working facilities, offering a private and functional area distinct from the open-plan ground floors.

Respect for Heritage Principles: The proposals are sympathetic to the barn's historical and aesthetic value, ensuring its preservation for future generations.

Context of Surrounding Properties

Both neighbouring buildings, the Talbot Hotel and Number 3 Talbot Street, have always had second floors. This provides a strong precedent for the proposed alterations to the barn, ensuring it remains harmonious within the local architectural landscape.

Supporting Documentation

Detailed floor plans illustrating the proposed changes.

Archaeological survey results confirming the absence of significant internal historical features prior to development. (Copy already provided during previous application)

Conclusion

The proposed changes represent a careful balance between preserving the barn's historical character and creating practical, energy-efficient living spaces. The alterations do not impact the external appearance, maintain the visibility of the replica trusses, and enhance the usability of the building. These changes are sympathetic to the heritage of the property and the village and offer significant benefits to future inhabitants.

We respectfully request that the planning office considers these proposals favourably, recognizing the careful thought and attention to heritage principles underpinning this project.