

The following text is proposed as additional section at 3.6 of the adopted Enabling Appropriate Development in the Countryside Supplementary Planning Guidance.

It is being published for the purposes of gaining stakeholder and community views on the proposed edition.

The addendum addresses detailed matters of Design that will be taken into consideration in the determination of planning applications that relate to the conversion or extension of traditional rural buildings.

Please refer to the adopted document in relation to the principle of conversion of such buildings.
<https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Countryside-SPG-English1.pdf>

3.6 Development Management Issues in relation to Reuse of Traditional Rural Buildings

3.6.1 *Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development* (Welsh Government February 2014) provides National Policy Context for the re-use and adaptation of existing rural-buildings. The following section sets out how the NPA will apply this guidance in the determination of planning applications as relates to the design of future conversions. The proposal should satisfy the following appropriate development control considerations:

- i. The building should be structurally sound and of substantial traditional construction and materials, and capable of re-use without substantial reconstruction. In most cases, a structural survey carried out by a suitably qualified professional will be required to accompany an application for conversion.
- ii. Extensions or modifications, including link extensions will not normally be acceptable but may be considered in exceptional circumstances where they are of a scale and nature which do not detract from the character and appearance of the original building;
- iii. Any external features of architectural or historic interest should be retained, particularly those that signal the building's former use. For listed buildings; the treatment of the interior and retention of features of historic interest will also be a key consideration;
- iv. Any commercial re-use would not be harmful to the amenity of nearby residents or other sensitive land uses through noise, light, etc, emissions or additional traffic generation; (move to be last criteria)
- v. The access to the building and the local highway network are adequate to cater for the nature and volume of traffic likely to be generated;
- vi. Sufficient parking and manoeuvring space is available within the site;
- vii. The existence of all necessary services or the capability of their ready and economic provision. The proposal should not overload or disrupt existing services and the impact of any new overhead services on the landscape will be considered. Alternative forms of provision could be considered;
- viii. The site should provide adequate private amenity space to meet the needs of the intended use;
- ix. Boundary treatments should be appropriate for the context of the area and should ensure that the area remains open in character where this was traditionally the case. Where boundary treatments such as gates, walls or native hedges already form part of the traditional character of the countryside location, these should be incorporated into any scheme. Opportunities for the repair of boundary structures where necessary will be favoured over their replacement;

3.6.2 Any planning permission granted for a conversion scheme will usually have conditions attached to ensure that the development is carried out during the construction phase and in operation,

in a way that satisfies planning policies. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, typically conversions of rural buildings will have conditions relating to the following matters:

- Removal of permitted development rights for future alteration, extension, outbuildings and enclosures;
- Samples of materials for any new walling, roofing, windows and doors, to be used in construction to be submitted and approved;
- Method statements and sample panels for restoration of existing stone walls
- Method statements for the protection of protected species (where appropriate); and
- Landscaping scheme and implementation timescale.
- A program of building recording
- Archaeology recording as necessary.
- Restrictions on the uses of the buildings

3.6.3 It is essential that these conditions are complied with before, during and after the works to convert the rural building. If they are not, the Authority has enforcement powers to rectify the breach of planning control. Failure to comply with pre- commencement conditions, for example, could render the whole development unauthorised, necessitating the submission of a further planning application which may not be acceptable, depending on the nature of the breach.

3.6.4 Many buildings in the countryside provide a suitable habitat for a number of protected species including bats, barn owls and nesting birds. The LDP has policies specifically relating to developments which affect protected species and further advice is available in the Biodiversity and Development SPG.

Building Regulations

3.6.5 Building regulations are separate issue to planning permission and listed building consent. The requirements of building regulation for insulation, natural lighting and ventilation might not be achieved without the loss of the building's essential features, if so alternative uses should be considered. Early consultation with the Building Control department of the relevant local authority is encouraged. Fire safety requirements which form part of the building regulations will be particularly important. There is flexibility in applying Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) where listed buildings are concerned and the requirements of the regulations would harm the historic or architectural interest of the building.

General Design Principles

3.6.6 The following principles generally applies to the conversion of traditional stone built buildings where traditional materials and building techniques will need to be utilised. The principles are intended as a general guide to the renovation and conversion of rural buildings and should not be regarded as an exhaustive design checklist as each building will have its own unique character and will present different design opportunities and constraints.

3.6.7 The character of a rural building is derived from its original function and every effort should be made to retain the original simplicity of scale and form, and to alter as little as possible both internally and externally.

A) Setting

- 3.6.8 Minimising the impact on the setting should be the most important aspect of a project. It is therefore important that rural developments do not result in the domestication or urbanisation of their countryside setting.

- 3.6.9 Redundant rural buildings are often found within in a functional setting related to their former use, with simple surfaces and an absence of 'accessories' such as gardens, fences, car parking areas, lighting, waste bins etc. This can easily lead to a domesticated setting which the Authority will aim to mitigate through landscaping conditions on planning consents.



- 3.6.10 Rural chapels usually have a church yard associated with them and this can be particularly sensitive if there are burials, some of which may be in unmarked graves. You are always advised to consult with an archaeologist in relation to development of Rural chapels.
- 3.6.11 Hard landscaping should be sympathetic to the rural setting, avoiding tarmac surfaces, formal drives and modern kerbs. Gravel or bonded aggregate surfaces create a 'softer' appearance and can be successful in the rural context. If possible, highway standards requiring large visibility splays, turning circles and street lighting should be avoided. Where possible, anything that divides the farmyard in terms of car parking, gardens, amenity spaces and associated fences should be resisted.
- 3.6.12 Boundary treatments should be appropriate for the context of the area and should ensure that the area remains open in character where this was traditionally the case. In particular landscape settings, a ha-ha may be the most discreet form of definition. Opportunities to repair boundary structures or provide natural screening measures where necessary will be favoured. Existing trees, hedgerows and walls should be retained and protected, wherever possible. All planning applications should be accompanied by a fully detailed landscaping scheme. Where there is a conflict between the need to retain hedgerow features and the provision of safe highway vision splays then an appropriate balance will be sought
- 3.6.13 The addition of ancillary structures and outbuildings can cause the domestication or urbanisation of the setting of rural buildings and will therefore be strictly controlled. Such structures include garden buildings and garages. The siting of these structures needs to be carefully considered to retain the character of the area and may be resisted. Necessary permitted development rights for such development will be removed to protect the rural character of the site. With any conversion, and particularly domestic conversions, care also is needed to be given to the siting of refuse bins, and structures such as oil or gas tanks. If it can be achieved without significant alteration, existing outbuildings may be able to provide storage or garaging, avoiding the need for new structures.

B) Roof

- 3.6.14 The roof profile, form and traditional materials should be retained. Raising the roof, altering the pitch or installing dormer windows in the roof is unlikely to be acceptable. Traditional farm buildings have long unbroken roof profiles and it is essential that these remain undisturbed, although a small number of roof lights may be acceptable. Dormers will almost always be inappropriate, particularly where the existing building traditionally has no dormers, unless there is a clear precedent for their use on buildings in the locality. Natural stone or Welsh slate roof coverings should be retained and any new tiles matched with the existing where re-roofing or repairs are required. Traditional corrugated iron can be a useful alternative to replace modern and inappropriate roofing materials.



- 3.6.15 On buildings where roof lights are considered to be appropriate, they should be kept to a minimum and should be flush with the roof surface and not overly large in proportion in relation to the roof. Roof lights ~~and~~ should be made of steel and of the conservation type.

Vent pipes and flues protruding from the roof should ~~also~~ be avoided. However, a single flue pipe may be acceptable if carefully positioned and with a matt black or dark grey finish. Ventilation should be as discrete as possible and a ridge vent or tile vent may be an appropriate solution in certain situations. New brick or stone chimneys are generally unacceptable.



C) Architectural and Historic Features

- 3.6.16 Where possible, features of particular architectural interest should always be preserved and not removed or concealed and should be integrated into the proposed conversion. Such features can include dressed stones, flagged flooring, coping or string courses, arches, decorative brickwork, slating pattern, ventilation slits, owl holes, date stones, fixed machinery etc. The subdivision of internal space where it forms an integral part of the building's character, will not be appropriate.

Walls

- 3.6.17 Local sandstone was frequently used for the construction of farm buildings and other rural buildings. Although less prevalent, there are examples of brick buildings and sometimes it was in combination with stone for detailing such as around windows and doors. Render over underlying masonry is also found. Should the walls of the proposed building require necessary repair, the existing stone and coursing pattern must be matched. The external walls often retain distinctive features that should be retained, the most common being ventilation holes or slits, and date stones.



3.6.18 The mortar used in the construction of solid walls was traditionally lime mixed with a local aggregate. Lime mortar is beneficial for traditional buildings for both technical and aesthetic reasons. Lime mortar should be used if sections of masonry need to be re-built and also for re-pointing. New pointing should match the original lime mortar and pointing style. The mortar should always be softer than the material it is binding. It is essential that the mortar mix used is aesthetically as well as technically compatible. The existing original lime mortar mix for pointing will provide the best guide as to what mix and colour is the most appropriate.

3.6.19 Limewash is a traditional wall finish for vernacular and rural buildings. Layers of limewash creates an authentic external finish and provides the building with a breathable layer ~~sealant~~ to protect it from the elements, and this is why it is often seen in the uplands. Lime render is also used to protect the underlying stone work.



3.6.20 On listed buildings existing limewash or lime render should never be stripped to reveal bare stone or brick. The lime render should be complete, neither stopping short of the base nor artificially cut back to reveal stonework beneath.

3.6.21 Fascia boards and bargeboards should be avoided on barn conversions since these are domestic features, detracting from the simple, agricultural appearance of the barn. Typically, roofs of farm buildings are characterised by a simple verge over the gable ends with a slight over-sail of the tiles / slates, and no bargeboards. Rafter ends are generally exposed rather than covered by fascia boards.

Openings – Windows and Doors

3.6.22 There is presumption in favour of maximising the use of existing openings, and limiting new ones. Internal layouts of the buildings should be designed around existing openings to enable sufficient natural light, to avoid inserting new openings which would seriously damage its existing character. New openings will only be permitted if there is a robust justification and they are designed to complement the character of the building. The re-opening of former doors or windows that have been blocked up is normally preferable to the creation of new ones. Farm buildings typically have a high ratio of solid wall to openings and this characteristic should be retained in the conversion scheme.



3.6.23 Farm buildings often have large cart doors that can provide an excellent source of light to interiors and should be utilised to the maximum. Additional light may be also achieved by the glazing of ventilation slits. New windows and doors should preserve the character of the

original openings and should be sympathetic in design, proportions and materials. Standard domestic style window and doors will not be appropriate. Door and window openings should retain their original proportions.

- 3.6.24 Timber is preferable for any new window frames; however, steel frames will be appropriate for some buildings. The choice of timber or steel will depend on the building and the original window materials. Where timber is used, oak in a natural finish is preferable. If softwood timber is used, it should normally be painted rather than stained. Upvc or composite windows or doors, or modern up and over garage doors will not be acceptable.
- 3.6.25 The glazing of every door opening and removal of timber doors should be avoided. Timber doors should be retained or replaced if in poor condition, or ~~there is use of~~ inappropriate modern replacements. Where additional natural light is justified, it is usually possible to glaze behind the timber doors. The door remains functional and can be held open or closed as required.

Rainwater Goods

- 3.6.26 Where rainwater goods are used they should either be cast iron or aluminium. A half-round profile is usually the most appropriate. Upvc will not be acceptable. Fascia boards are not appropriate for agricultural buildings and therefore gutters will need to be fixed to the rafter ends. On some buildings the roof has deep overhanging eaves and this may make gutters unnecessary.

Internal Features

- 3.6.27 If the building is listed, internal features such as exposed beams, roof timbers, original fittings and tiled, wooden or stone floors, should be retained and incorporated in the conversion. Applicants for conversions of unlisted buildings are encouraged to follow the same principle.
- 3.6.28 Interior heights of rural buildings may be too restricted to allow for two floors. If adequate headroom cannot be achieved on the first floor, the design of the conversion should be revisited instead of cutting the roof trusses.



External Services and Equipment Features

- 3.6.29 A sensitive conversion minimises the impact of domestic features on the exterior by positioning those that are necessary as discreetly as possible, and utilising those of a suitably simple style. Inappropriate detailing to the exterior of the building should be avoided. External features such as satellite dishes and television aerials, alarm boxes and inappropriate wall mounting lighting, should be avoided where possible and if necessary, should be kept to a minimum and positioned discreetly. Attention should also be given to the sensitive siting of meter boxes.
- 3.6.30 External lighting should be kept to an absolute minimum and ideally should be motion censored and should be kept simple.

Installation of renewable energy generating technologies must be undertaken in a sympathetic manner with an aim to mitigate any impact on the character of the building.

External pipework such as soil and vent pipes should be located as unobtrusively as possible. It may be possible to run them internally where this does not harm internal character.

Heating and Ventilation

- 3.6.31 The introduction of heat and insulation for human occupation has to be carefully considered. Where roof insulation is required, breathable roof membrane ~~felt~~ should normally be used. However, breathable Roof Membranes (BRM) are unsuitable in buildings where bat roosts are present. In situations where bats will continue to have access to the roof space, a licence is unlikely to be granted by Natural Resources Wales. Bitumastic felt to BS747 can be used as an alternative in such locations or a breathable membrane can be covered with sarking board.
- 3.6.32 Modern ventilation systems are available that have minimal impact on historic character which can avoid the need for trickle vents and other prominent ventilators. Extractor vents and ventilation for the roof can often be successfully achieved with slate or ridge vents. When installing a boiler it is best to opt for a system that can vent through the wall that is not a primary or prominent elevation. It is best to avoid those that require venting through the roof but where this has to be done stainless steel flues should be kept as short as possible and painted black to make them less obtrusive.
- 3.6.33 It is usually not appropriate to introduce a chimney to buildings that were not designed to have one. Wood burning or multi-fuel stoves may be acceptable following the advice above. Under floor heating can be effective, although care should be taken to re-instate stone flagged floors. Consideration should be given to sustainable sources of heat such as a ground / air source heat pumps, provided that the necessary equipment and machinery can be incorporated sensitively within the scheme of conversion. Where mains gas is not available, storage tanks such as oil or gas tanks will need to be carefully sited and screened.

Utilities

- 3.6.34 The provision of service such as electricity, water and gas for many rural buildings may not be convenient however they must have a minimal visual intrusion on the surrounding countryside. Underground cables are encouraged to minimise their visual impact.
- 3.6.35 Disposal of waste water and sewerage may also pose a challenge in rural areas, therefore environmentally acceptable and sustainable methods should be utilised wherever possible. If installations such as septic tanks or cesspits are necessary, these should be located where they have minimal visual impact through undergrounding or appropriate screening.

Alterations / Extensions

- 3.6.36 The emphasis in any conversion scheme is that the building in its present form is suitable for the intended use. At the time of considering a conversion scheme, minor extensions will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where they are genuinely required to facilitate a conversion, rather than just for the purpose of adding additional rooms. The scheme for conversion should be adapted to the building rather than changing or extending the building to suit the new use. A key principle is that the building should retain the appearance of its former use following conversion. Where an extension is fully justified, it will be required to ancillary in scale and in keeping with the character and appearance of the building and setting. In general, large or two-storey extensions will not be acceptable.

- 3.6.37 Where new buildings or extensions are permitted, they should reflect their surroundings and traditional agricultural design such as open fronted byres, rather than standard garage types. Extensions should follow the existing traditional agricultural character of the building and be subservient to the existing building in every respect.
- 3.6.38 Conservatories, porches, dormers, sheds, pools and other extensions that are inherently domestic in design will be resisted. To avoid later extensions which are out of character, the National Park Authority is likely to remove permitted development rights for alterations to the building.