



monmouthshire
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**Monmouthshire Local Development Plan:
Conversion of Agricultural Buildings Design Guide**

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

April 2015

**Monmouthshire County Council
Local Development Plan**

**Conversion of Agricultural Buildings
Design Guide**

**Supplementary Planning
Guidance**

April 2015

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1.0 Introduction

The Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted at an extraordinary Full Council meeting on 27 February 2014. This note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes that has been prepared to provide supporting information and advice on the LDP policies. The Notes are intended to offer clear guidance on the main considerations that will be taken into account by the Council when reaching decisions on planning applications. This SPG was formally adopted in April 2015.

The primary purpose of these notes is to provide advice and guidance for owners, agents, and potential purchasers of agricultural buildings to help ensure that high standards of design and conversion are achieved throughout the County.

A farm building that has sat almost unnoticed in the landscape for hundreds of years and performed the same function demands a light hand in conversion, or it will suddenly stand out within, rather than blend into, its environment. If we can find new uses for farm buildings that retain a clear visual reminder of its industry, historical links can still be made with the towns and the connections will be protected for future generations. With scarcity comes a desire to cherish and to protect so that future generations are able to appreciate tangible links with previous centuries and past ways of life. The danger is that barns, once converted, become overtly residential in character due to external changes or changes to the setting. A converted barn may not have the convenience of the standard modern house but it will have a special individuality that can make them particularly attractive.

Listed Buildings

As well as planning control some agricultural buildings are also important historical assets and as such are listed buildings which are afforded a higher level of protection that seek to preserve this special character. The legal requirement to preserve listed farm buildings often leads people to consider conversion as a viable means of retention.

Whilst all conversions of agricultural buildings should be carefully considered, it is the special character of listed buildings which demands a higher level of control and consideration when converting such special buildings. As with all listed buildings, the listed building consent process also extends to protecting the internal character of the building as well as the external appearance and the wider setting.

2.0 Planning Policy

All planning applications for the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings will be assessed against the policies identified in the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan 2014. It is important to understand these policies before preparing and submitting applications for conversion. All policies are detailed within Appendix A.

There are two main policies within the Local Development Plan which are particularly relevant to barn conversions, namely **Policy H4** which relates to conversions to residential uses and **Policy RE2** which relates to conversion for employment uses. Both of these policies set out detailed criteria which have to be satisfied if planning permission is to be granted. In addition, **Policy T2** relates to visitor accommodation outside settlements. Outside town and village development boundaries permanent serviced or self-catering visitor accommodation will only be permitted if it consists of the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings and the conversion for such uses complies with the criteria set out in Policy H4, although there are some exceptions

as set out in criteria a) to c) of Policy T2.

It should be noted that buildings constructed of modern and/or utilitarian construction and materials, most commonly concrete block work, portal framed buildings clad in metal sheeting, or buildings of substandard quality and/or incongruous appearance, will not be considered favourably for conversion.

If the building is within a Conservation Area special considerations will be made with regards to protecting and enhancing the special character of the Conservation Area, under **Policy HE1**.

Once converted, listed and non-listed buildings may be subject to successive applications for further alterations. Any subsequent application will endeavour to retain the original character of the buildings and will be assessed against the guidance set out within this document, in the same manner as the original application.

Listed Buildings

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 if the building is listed or in the curtilage of a listed building the work will also require Listed Building Consent. National planning policy set out in Planning Policy Wales should be referred to accordingly.

3.0 Other Relevant Legislation

Building Regulations

Conversions of agricultural buildings are subject to very careful consideration at the planning stage to ensure that their original appearance and setting are protected. Care should be taken to ensure that Building Regulation requirements are taken into account in designing the scheme. Alterations to the design following the grant of planning permission may not be permitted by the Planning Authority if they would detract from its quality, even if they are required by other legislation.

When designing proposals for conversion it should be noted that the Building Regulation Approved Documents demonstrate only some methods of achieving compliance with the Regulations. It may be the case, for instance, that over performance in one area may allow for a relaxation in other areas where there is a perceived underperformance. For example, a particularly well-insulated roof might compensate for the heat loss resulting from glazing the huge barn door openings. Similarly, there are heating and ventilation systems that might be accepted as a means of achieving the required number of air changes without having windows of the required size in each room.

Protected Species

Barn Owl and bat species across Britain and Europe are declining and vulnerable. Any works of conversion must abide by the legislation that protects these species and their habitats. Reference should be made to the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010* (as amended 2011), and the *Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000*. The legislation ensures that individual bats and Barn Owls and their breeding sites and resting places are legally protected. This has important implications for those who manage sites where these species occur. Barn Owls and many species of bat make use of buildings, particularly redundant farm buildings, and this is why we request that a survey is undertaken before an application is submitted to develop these

buildings. Please refer to the Biodiversity Checklist: identifying need for ecological information/assessment and *BATS IN BUILDINGS Part A: applicant's building information record 2014* at an early stage for information on the types of work that will require a survey to be submitted and to inform any proposals. The aim is to prevent any further losses of these species and where possible enhance buildings and habitats for their continued survival in Monmouthshire. The presence of Barn Owls or bats does not necessarily preclude a building from development although planning and licensing controls may limit the extent of disturbance, the timing of activities, and may well stipulate compensatory measures. All nesting birds, with limited exceptions are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Nesting birds such as swallows, swifts and sparrows rely on agricultural buildings to nest and have also undergone large declines. The Local Planning Authority will seek to prevent works that destroy active nests and require compensation for loss of nesting sites under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

A sensitive conversion will therefore abide by the terms of all relevant biodiversity legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended 2011) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Listed Buildings

With regard to buildings that are afforded listed building protection some of the Building Regulation Approved Documents note that where strict compliance results in an unacceptable impact upon the character of the building in question then full compliance may not be achievable. In all cases attempts should however be made to adhere to the requirements set out within the Building Regulations. A full dialogue with the Conservation Officer and the Building Control Officer or Approved Inspector at an early stage is recommended.

4.0 Making a Planning or Listed Building Consent Application for the Conversion of Agricultural Buildings.

Application forms are available from the County Council or via the website www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning. Full guidance notes and a checklist of requirements for an application are also available.

Both planning and Listed Building Consent (LBC) applications can be aided by pre-application discussions with the planning officer and or conservation officer, when design issues can be worked through at an early stage. There is a formal pre-application service which is available at a cost, the cost of which is dependent on the level of service required. Certain exemptions apply. Any enquiries made where LBC is required relating to maintenance and repair are exempt from such a charge. However, a conversion relates to a change of use and as a consequence would incur the appropriate charge. With regard to listed barns, a pre-application site inspection will be made. Both planning and LBCs approved with conditions will be monitored. Listed building consent applications will be monitored through to completion both internally and externally. Where failure to comply with the approved plans has a detrimental effect on the character of the building the Authority will take formal enforcement action.

5.0 Agricultural buildings in context

- **Historic/traditional farm buildings, what are they and why do they matter?**

Monmouthshire is a predominantly rural County and therefore farm buildings are a significant part of the landscape and built environment. A farm building may be anything from a pigsty to a vast corn barn, and is usually associated with a farmhouse or the estate of a major house. This diversity should be respected by retaining the individual features, materials, architectural style and setting of the building and its group. Their size and purpose illustrate the present or past farming activities of the County. The size and form of a building will reflect the type of farming ranging from the simple animal sheds to high quality barns with threshing floors. Although they are rural buildings, historically some are closely associated with market towns. The livestock reared and the produce stored in them would be taken to market in towns such as Abergavenny, Monmouth and Raglan.

- **Regional materials**

Historic farm buildings are generally made of stone, brick or timber-framing and normally have a slate, stone tile or pantile roof. Quite often there is a mixture of some or all of these but as most predate the railway age the materials used usually reflect the local traditions. Barns are therefore different in different places. Farm buildings were not generally subject to the same level of architectural attention as houses and more formal buildings. In parts of Monmouthshire timber-framed buildings of both box frame and cruck construction are found. Sadly very few stone slate roofs survive within the county though once they were more common, particularly towards the north of the county. In all areas a failed roof is frequently covered in corrugated iron, an utterly vernacular material that looks even more appropriate once it has started to rust.



Respecting the association of farm buildings to each other, as well as their individual features, allows each building to continue to be seen as part of a group

6.0 Considerations for conversion

- **Setting**

Farm buildings often have a functional setting with simple surfaces and an absence of 'accessories'. Working farmyards are not very tidy places and the 'tidying-up' process of conversion demands great care. A good conversion can easily be let down by an overly domesticated setting and landscaping conditions on planning consents will be used to control this. A sensitive conversion avoids formal drives and tarmac surfacing and standard highway-type visibility splays and turning circles. Anything that divides the farmyard or a series of yards into lots of small, near-identical units with their own amenity spaces will be resisted as this destroys the integrity and historic interest of the group. This particularly includes car parking, gardens and other amenity spaces and their associated fences. Where possible, these should be on the outside of the farm group, though consideration should then be given to the effect on the landscape.



External lighting can have a significant impact on the immediate and wider setting of the building, external fittings are discussed further later on in this chapter.

If rubbish is collected directly from the converted farm building, the local authority will require turning areas for refuse carts; so attention should be paid to collection arrangements.

Avoid undermining the quality of the conversion by neglecting the setting. An unmanicured former farmyard creates the right kind of character.

- **Structure**

The building to be converted should be of permanent and substantial construction, including its roof, and sufficiently suitable for its intended reuse so that substantial rebuilding or alteration is not necessary. The building's original form, function and patina of age should still be obvious after conversion. Substantial dismantling and reconstruction of elements of the building as work on site progresses that is not detailed within the application may make



the consent invalid. A structural report will be necessary to assess the condition of the buildings ensuring they are suitable for conversion before consent is granted.



• **Access**

The change of use of an agricultural building might necessitate a new access or improvement of the existing one. In all cases, this should be in scale and sympathy with the surrounding landscape. In particular, new driveways across open fields will be strongly resisted. The use of appropriate informal material to establish wheel tracks only, retaining grass to the driveway centre, will help to minimise visual intrusion.

Access onto the public highway must meet the standards of the Highway Authority. Sometimes the extent of works necessary to achieve this cannot be reconciled with the need to retain the rural character of the area. In such cases the landscape interest is paramount, and planning permission will be refused. Any additional traffic created by the development must be incorporated into the existing road network without detriment to the area or highway safety.

Alterations to boundary walls, gates or any other structures within the curtilage of listed buildings will be subject to Listed Building Consent. Advice should be sought from the Conservation team during the application process.

• **Roofs**

Wherever possible, the existing roof cladding should be retained or reinstated. If it is unsuitable, the use of second-hand materials that are pleasantly weathered is preferable to new. In certain instances it may not be feasible to install reclaimed materials, for example in the case of new clay tiles, although they may initially display a brash appearance, they will mellow and weather over time.

Existing roof pitches, ridge heights and eaves levels must always be retained. Obviously, domestic features like dormers and masonry chimneys will not be acceptable.

Verge treatment is important and the original treatment should be followed. Often agricultural buildings had the end



rafter visible at the gable, whilst in other instances a wet verge is the treatment traditionally used in the County. Wide bargeboards will rarely be appropriate and there should be no boxing in of eaves.

As originally built, farm buildings never had opening roof lights and so these should be avoided. It is not considered acceptable to install rows of escape roof lights, and alternative means of escape should be considered. Roof lights should still be a feature of last resort, kept to the absolute minimum and only used where strictly necessary.



Where they are considered acceptable, roof lights should be small and be of a conservation type with a flush-fitting design and should be located in the most unobtrusive positions. Non-reflective glazing is recommended.

As roofs on agricultural buildings were rarely served by rainwater goods their installation should be as unobtrusive as possible, with the minimum down pipes necessary. The securing of gutters to the base of open rafters by a bracket is preferable to securing them to a fascia. Rain water gutters, downpipes and brackets should be of a cast metal type and not extruded metal or plastic.



• Walls

It is important that traditional stone buildings are maintained using appropriate materials and finishes. Re-pointing should never attract more attention than the stone that it surrounds. Pointing should be marginally recessed from the face of the stonework, or buttered in areas of roughly cut stone and rubbed over with sacking to give a traditional finish. Pointing should never stand proud of the wall, nor be smeared across the face of the stonework.

It is essential that the mortar mix used is aesthetically as well as technically compatible. The existing original pointing mix shall provide the best guide as to what mix and colour is the most appropriate.



Listed Buildings

Traditional masonry walls were always laid on a lime mortar bed. The benefits of this include a soft, porous material, which allows any damp within the wall to evaporate through the joints between the stones. It is slow to set with a low mechanical strength, which allows a degree of flexibility necessary in traditional construction. Therefore traditional stone masonry should be pointed with lime-based mortar using local sand. The mortar should always be softer than the material it is binding.

- **Limewash and Render**

Limewash is a traditional wall finish for vernacular and rural buildings. Layers of limewash create an authentic external finish for many traditional farm buildings and it is especially appropriate where there is surviving evidence of its previous use. Limewash provided the building with a breathable sealant to protect it from the elements, also used internally for its hygienic properties, promoting animal welfare.



Where buildings are rendered externally the lime-render should be complete, neither stopping short of the base nor artificially cut back to reveal stonework beneath. Under no circumstances should silicon-based waterproofers be used, which will merely accelerate the rate of deterioration. Metal angle beads should not be used.

The Council will make every effort to encourage owners to reinstate the traditional limewash coating of historic buildings, which is such a characteristic feature of Monmouthshire. Whatever external finish is used the end result should maintain the character of the farm building rather than treat it as an extension of the farmhouse.



- **Openings**

The biggest challenge with a conversion is the provision of light which was not necessary for the storage of hay or perceived to be important for animals. Because of its original function, a farm building often has few or no windows or other similar openings, and solid rather than glazed doors. Together, this creates an appearance that is strongly solid with few openings. When boarded doors become glazed doors, or when new openings are punched into otherwise blank walls, the character of a farm building changes.

The re-opening of former doors or windows that have been blocked up would be preferable to the creation of new ones. If existing openings are to be blocked up (wholly or partially), the fill should be timber faced or rebated masonry so that the original feature can still be interpreted. A sensitive conversion will aim to borrow as much light as possible from

existing sources and new sources made from existing openings. It is important to avoid making new openings and over-glazing the elevations.

In a barn there are usually two large openings that can be glazed behind timber doors (which should be retained) and the light flooding in from these can, through skilful design, be allowed to filter into most parts of the building. For example, setting back the large glazed doors onto the threshing floor allows for light to be borrowed sideways as well as forwards into the central part of the building. Upstairs bedrooms can be given a band of glazing high in their partition walls so that their light comes not from a large window in the elevation but mainly through from the centre of the building. This approach may however raise issues to do with compliance with Building Regulations.

- **Woodwork**

Woodwork would traditionally have been painted. In some instances woodwork would have been left to weather naturally. The paint colour often showed to which rural estate a farm belonged; for example, a grey-blue was used by the Llanover Estate. Paint was used simply for the preservation of woodwork rather than to make the building look appealing. Dark paint colours, such as black, of a matt or semi-gloss type best reflect this utilitarian tradition and allow woodwork to blend into the elevation.



The use of stain, on the other hand, is not traditional and creates an artificial and often orangey finish. Certain new timbers, for example, oak and European larch, can be left to weather naturally. Whilst they have a bright appearance when new, within about a year they will weather to a silvery grey colour and will remain like this almost indefinitely. Whatever external finish is used the end result should maintain the character of the farm building rather than treat it as an extension of the farmhouse.

Where timber boarding or cladding is used, it should follow traditional patterns. Modern idioms, including diagonal boarding, are unlikely to be appropriate. Full details of timberwork and its finish should be provided with the planning application. The use of upvc is not acceptable in any circumstances.

- **External fittings**

Sensitive conversions can be easily spoiled by external domestic paraphernalia. To avoid this, additions such as services, should be discrete avoiding unnecessary overflow pipes and soil pipes on the outside of the building. Energy efficient conversions are encouraged;

however solar panels are out of character and obtrusive on former farm buildings. An appropriately sited, externally mounted letterbox is preferable to one inserted in the door. Satellite dishes and television aerials should be kept to a minimum and should be discreetly



positioned. They can be sited on a pole or a tree or even at ground level. If there is a group of units in the conversion one satellite dish should be cabled into all the units rather than installing a separate dish on each. Burglar alarms and meter boxes should be sited sensitively, and weathervanes and other out-of-character ornamental features should be avoided.

External lighting should be kept to an absolute minimum and ideally should be on a passive infrared system so that lights are activated only when needed. If an external light is necessary at all, it should be kept simple; a curved bracket and a cowl over the bulb are sufficient, and it should be possible to turn it off when not needed.

A sensitive conversion minimises the impact of domestic features on the exterior by positioning those that are necessary as discreetly as possible, and utilizing those of a suitably simple style.

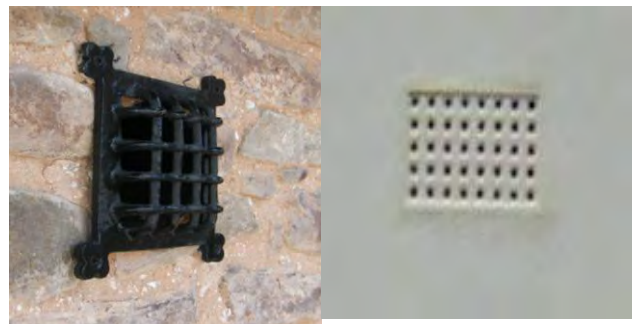
• Heating

In general, historically farm buildings did not need to be heated and so the introduction of heat and insulation for human occupation has to be carefully considered. Where roof insulation is required, breathable felt should be used. Breathable Roof Membranes (BRM) are unsuitable in buildings where bat roosts are present, a licence would unlikely be granted by NRW for BRMs. Bitumastic felt to BS747 should be used as an alternative in such locations. Under floor heating can be effective, although care should be taken to re-instate stone flagged floors.



• Ventilation

There are modern ventilation systems that have minimal impact on historic character which can avoid the need for trickle vents and other prominent ventilators. When installing a boiler it is best to opt for a system that can vent through the wall and then place the boiler so that a discreet wall can be used. It is best to avoid those that



require venting through the roof but where this has to be done, shiny stainless steel flues should be kept as short as possible and painted black to make them less noticeable. Fireplaces and associated chimneys are alien features to farm buildings and so should never be introduced; wood burning stoves would be more appropriate. Extractor vents and ventilation for the roof can often be successfully achieved with slate vents. Where vents are incorporated in external walls they should be terracotta rather than plastic.

Introduce a system that provides the required level of heat and ventilation without unnecessary alteration to the building, avoiding chimneys, shiny metal flues and prominent extractors.

Combined with the above issues, conversions to listed buildings will also be carefully considered in respect of protecting the internal character and historic fabric. preserve and retain in place any feature significant to the former use of the farm building, and interior divisions should be kept to a minimum.

Listed Buildings

- **Internal features**

Large barns derive some of their majestic quality from the long and high internal space lit solely by slit vents and punctuated only by a series of roof beams. Leaving the key internal space open is important and over division of the interior can damage that special character. Many farm buildings, though simpler, have interesting internal features or historic character. For example, a cider house may have the mill and press still in place; and such features are sufficiently rare that they should not be moved even for convenience.



False ceilings should not be inserted in buildings obscuring the roof frame. If adequate headroom cannot be achieved on a first floor, the design of the conversion should be revised instead of cutting the roof trusses. If the timbers need cleaning this should be done without abrasive sandblasting, and they should be left unstained (or otherwise 'improved') to retain as much of the agricultural character as possible.



The treatment of the walls and inserted partitions should be carefully considered. Dry-lining a building to incorporate insulation is not generally necessary and is not considered acceptable. There are a number of appropriate finishes internally including limewash, lime plaster or exposed stone. Paint finishes contribute to the character of the interior and brilliant modern whites and gloss paints should be avoided in favour of flatter finishes and muted, earthy colours. Whatever the colour, breathable paints should be used rather than emulsions.

- **Floors**

Traditionally floors had a variety of different treatments, most commonly they were left bare being compacted earth or clay. However many barns still retain the threshing floor which is often demarked with stone flags. Other buildings such as stables were often cobbled or laid with setts or bricks. Where historic floor finishes still exist these should be retained in situ and not removed to incorporate modern standards and insulation. Where it is appropriate to add new floor surfaces a limecrete is most appropriate.



7.0 Alterations and extensions

Planning and listed building consent will only be granted for conversions where the agricultural character of the building is preserved and protected. Careful consideration at the initial stages should avoid subsequent applications which would not be favourably considered.



The Local Development Plan policy does not exclude extensions. Any proposed extension will however need to be carefully assessed against strict criteria controlling the effect on the character and setting of the existing building and/or their group value. This effect will clearly be more pronounced on smaller buildings, which is why they may not be favoured for conversion if substantial enlargement is needed to provide tolerable living or working conditions.



The necessary requirements of garaging and storage (including fuel tanks) should not be excluded in order to provide a larger and therefore more desirable dwelling (or in the case of a group of buildings, to provide additional dwellings). Subsequent applications post the original conversion can have a significant detrimental cumulative effect.

Successive applications, especially to listed buildings, where they are cumulatively very destructive of a buildings special interest will be opposed. Existing ranges of outbuildings should be used wherever possible. Failing this, consideration may be given in certain circumstances to the reinstatement of secondary buildings, where there is clear evidence of their location and form, in preference to new ancillary buildings.

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.

Listed Buildings

In line with above advice, alterations and extensions to listed buildings need to be fully justified and will be subject to tighter controls and restrictions in order to preserve the special character of the building. Extensions to listed agricultural buildings should not dominate the existing building in either scale, material or situation. There will always be some historic buildings where extensions would be damaging and will not be permitted. Successful extensions require the application of an intimate knowledge of the building type which is being extended together with a sensitive handling of scale and detail.

8.0 Good and Bad Practice

The conversion of farm buildings to new uses should always seek to retain the simple agricultural character, and domestic conversions often involve the most significant degree of physical alteration to the fabric of the building. It is therefore necessary to carefully consider the essential elements of a barn's character:

- **Simple building form;**
- **Minimal and functional openings;**
- **Usually one and a half storeys in height;**
- **Open plan;**
- **Frequently set in close proximity to other barns and or Farmhouse;**
- **Often set in exposed and remote locations.**

Bad Practice

- Incongruous bargeboards and fascias.
- Dormers and intrusive rooflights.
- Dominant chimney stack.
- Extension.
- Loss of "barn door" element.
- Inappropriate and oversized openings.
- New garage.
- Prominently sited satellite dishes.
- Soil pipes and downpipes located on external elevations.

Good Practice

- Always retain dominance of solid to voids.
- Retention of clipped verge or barge boards dependent on existing.
- Original building form to remain recognisable.
- Ventilation preferable at ridge level. Avoid vents in roof slates.
- Rooflights to be within roof pitch on secondary elevations, preferably preformed "conservation rooflight" which should fit within the rafters so that main existing roof timbers need not be cut.
- Garaging preferably in open fronted byres.
- Large openings retained and treated as "barn doors" with domestic scale pass door. If extensively glazed, screens must be recessed from facade face.
- Retention of ventilation slit openings with glazing set well back from face of wall.
- Identify existing features and retain where possible.

9.0 Summary

In preparing a proposal to convert an agricultural building, the applicant should ensure proper professional advice has been sought to ensure schemes have taken on board the advice given in this note. In considering an application for conversion of an agricultural building, the County Council will take into account the following points:

- The building is suitable for its intended use without major alteration or enlargement;
- The character of the building and its original use is respected;
- The scale and rural character of the surrounding environment is respected;
- No, or minimal, additional infrastructure (especially access routes) is required;
- Additional traffic created by the proposal will not prejudice the highway safety of the immediate surroundings;
- The building for conversion is structurally sound so that substantial rebuilding is not required;
- Full use is made of existing openings, thereby avoiding new openings;
- Materials and architectural details to be used are consistent with the original;
- The surroundings and details of the building are as important as the building itself; these should also be respected and incorporated into the design.

APPENDIX A: PLANNING POLICY

The Welsh Government provides national planning guidance on the conversion of agricultural buildings in “Planning Policy Wales, Edition 7 July 2014”.

Monmouthshire County Council adopted the Local Development Plan in February 2014. The following policies appear in the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.

Policy H4 – Conversion / Rehabilitation of Buildings in the Open Countryside for Residential Use

The conversion / rehabilitation of a building in the open countryside for residential use will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- a) the form, bulk and general design of the proposal, including any extensions, respect the rural character and design of the building;**
- b) the proposal, including curtilage and access, is in scale and sympathy with the surrounding landscape and does not require the provision of unsightly infrastructure and ancillary buildings;**
- c) rebuilding works, necessitated by poor structural conditions and/ or the need for new openings in walls, should not involve substantial reconstruction, with structural surveys being required for marginal cases;**
- d) the more isolated and prominent the building, the more stringent will be the design requirements with regard to new door and window openings, extensions, means of access, service provision and garden curtilage, especially if located within the Wye Valley AONB;**
- e) buildings of modern and /or utilitarian construction and materials such as concrete block work, portal framed buildings clad in metal sheeting or buildings of substandard quality and / or incongruous appearance will not be considered favourably for residential conversion. Other buildings will be expected to have been used for their intended purpose for a significant period of time and particularly close scrutiny will be given to proposals relating to those less than 10 years old, especially where there has been no change in activity on the unit;**
- f) the building is capable of providing adequate living space (and ancillary space such as garaging) within the structure. Only very modest extensions will be allowed and normal permitted development rights to extend further or to construct ancillary buildings will be withdrawn; and**
- g) the conversion of buildings that are well suited for business use will not be permitted unless the applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable business use and the application is supported by a statement of the efforts that have been made.**

The above criteria will be applied strictly; proposals that are deemed not to comply with them will be judged against national policies relating to the erection of new dwellings in the countryside or against Policy T2 relating to the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings to provide permanent serviced or self-catering visitor accommodation. The above criteria will also be applied to proposals to extend buildings that have already been converted.

Policy RE2 - The Conversion or Rehabilitation of Buildings in the Open Countryside for Employment Use

Proposals for the conversion or rehabilitation of existing buildings in the open countryside, to employment use will be permitted provided that all the following criteria are met:

- a) the form, bulk and general design of the proposal, including any extensions, respect the rural character and design of the building;**
- b) in respect of farm diversification proposals, any necessary re-building work should respect or be in sympathy with the location and traditional characteristics of the building; in all other cases the buildings should be capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;**
- c) the more isolated and prominent the building the more stringent will be the design requirements with regard to new door and window openings, extensions and means of access, service provision and curtilage, especially if located within the Wye Valley AONB;**
- d) the conversion of modern farm and forestry buildings will only be permitted if the building has been used for its intended purpose for a significant period of time. Particularly close scrutiny will be given to proposals relating to buildings that are less than 5 years old, or which are known to have been used for their intended purpose for less than 5 years, and where there has been no change in farming or forestry activities on the unit since the building was erected permission may be refused;**
- e) the proposal including curtilage and access, is in scale and sympathy with the surrounding landscape and does not require the provision of unsightly infrastructure and ancillary buildings; and**
- f) the building is capable of accommodating the proposed use without substantial extension.**

The above criteria will also be applied to proposals to extend buildings that have already been converted.

Policy T2 – Visitor Accommodation outside Settlements

New build serviced or self-catering visitor accommodation will be allowed outside town and village development boundaries as ancillary development to established medium or large hotels.

Otherwise, outside town and village development boundaries, the provision of permanent serviced or self-catering visitor accommodation will only be permitted if it consists of the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings and the conversion of buildings for such uses complies with the criteria set out in Policy H4.

As an exception to the above proposals to provide visitor accommodation may be permitted where they involve:

- a) the substantial rebuild of a building within the curtilage of an existing and occupied farm property where it assists in an agricultural diversification scheme in accordance with Policy RE3.**
- b) the conversion of buildings of modern construction and materials provided the buildings are appropriate for residential use (e.g. not modern agricultural or factory buildings); not of substandard quality and /or incongruous appearance; and have been used for their intended purpose for a significant period of time. Particularly close scrutiny will be given to proposals relating to those buildings less than 10 years old, especially where there has been no change in activity on the unit.**
- c) the conversion of buildings that are too small or are inappropriately located to provide appropriate standards of space and amenity for conversions to permanent residential accommodation but are suitable for tourist accommodation.**

Where conversions to tourism accommodation are allowed in the exceptional circumstances set out in criteria a) to c) above then the occupancy of the building will be restricted in perpetuity to short stay tourist accommodation.

All proposals will be considered against other plan policies and should integrate with their surroundings, in terms of design and layout and how the proposal will function.

Policy HE1 – Development in Conservation Areas

Within Conservation Areas, development proposals should, where appropriate, have regard to the Conservation Area Appraisal for that area and will be permitted if they:

- a) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and its landscape setting;**
- b) have no serious adverse effect on significant views into and out of the Conservation Area;**
- c) have no serious adverse effect on significant vistas within the area and the general character and appearance of the street scene and roofscape;**
- d) use materials appropriate to their setting and context and which protect or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area; and**
- e) pay special attention to the setting of the building and its open areas.**

Where development is acceptable in principle it should complement or reflect the architectural qualities of adjoining and other nearby buildings (unless these are harmful to the character and appearance of the area) in terms of its profile, silhouette, detailing and materials. However, good modern design may be acceptable, particularly where new compositions and points of interest are created.

Policy HE2 – Alterations to Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas

Proposals for the alteration, extension or conversion of existing buildings in Conservation Areas must take into account:

- a) the desirability of retaining, restoring or replacing historic features and details of buildings, including garden or forecourt features, boundary walls, paving etc;**
- b) whether the details of the proposed works properly respect the proportions, materials and construction of the existing building;**
- c) the effect on the setting of the building and its surroundings;**
- d) the effect of introducing new uses into a Conservation Area in terms of parking and servicing arrangements and the detailed design of such arrangements.**

Permission will be refused where proposals are unsympathetic to an existing building and /or detract from the overall character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Specialist recording, archiving and publishing may be required prior to the demolition of any historic building within a Conservation Area and may be required in other cases of alteration.

APPENDIX B: CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like further advice on Conservation, the pre-application service or for planning application forms, please write to or telephone the Council's Development Control Section.

Contact details:

Development Control
Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tel: 01633 644880

Email: planning@monmouthshire.gov.uk

OFFICE HOURS 8.45 am - 5.00 p.m. (Monday to Thursday)

8.45 am - 4.30 p.m. (Friday)

WEBSITE:

www.monmouthshire.gov.uk

If you would like further guidance on the policies contained in the Local Development Plan please contact the Council's Development Plans Section.

Contact details:

Development Plans
Monmouthshire County Council
PO Box 106
Caldicot
NP26 9AN

Tel: 01633 644429

Email: developmentplans@monmouthshire.gov.uk

CADW

Cadw are responsible for listing buildings and with certain applications for listed building consent are consulted as part of the process. The following contact details may be useful.

Telephone: 01443 336000

Fax: 01443 336001

Website www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

Part of the Council's administrative area lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park. The National Park Authority is responsible for planning matters in the area, which includes the settlements within the Communities of Abergavenny, Crucorney, Llantilio Pertholey, Llanfoist, Llanover and Goytre Fawr. This SPG does not cover the Brecon Beacons National Park area.