

Application: Full planning application for the change of use of a holiday let to residential in relation to Hollins Wood Bothy, Hermit Hill Lane, Wortley, S35 7DF.

Applicant: Wharnccliffe Estate

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1. Introduction

Strutt and Parker has been instructed by the Wharncliffe Estate to prepare a full planning application for the change of use of a holiday cottage known as Hollins Wood Bothy to residential use, to be submitted to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, planning department.

This statement has been prepared by Yasmin Peach MRICS FAAV of Strutt & Parker, who are the acting agent for and behalf of the applicant.

The application relates to the property known as Hollins Wood Bothy, which is a one-bedroom holiday cottage, located along Hermit Hill Lane, approximately 1 mile northeast of the village of Wortley in the county of Sheffield, within the Peak District and Derbyshire Dales.

The following documents accompany this application:

- Planning Application Form
- Plan 01 - Location Plan
- Plan 02 - Site Plan

2. The Property

Hollins Wood Bothy is a one bedroom converted barn of stone construction. The property comprises an open plan kitchen living area, a double bedroom with an ensuite, off-road parking for two cars and a lawn and garden to the front, rear, and side.

3. Background

The Applicant achieved planning consent for the conversion of the barn in May 2010 to a holiday cottage. **Application Reference 2010/0398.**

The barn was converted in 2013, and since the completion of the conversion, the Applicants have run the property as a holiday cottage.

The holiday cottage has worked well for the Applicants however, there have been various factors over the last four years which has made the existing use no longer viable and there is no longer a sufficient business need.

4. Justification

The viability of running Hollins Wood Bothy as a holiday cottage has become economically unfeasible due a number of factors which have been detailed below:

Rise in Operational Costs

- Insurance premiums have soared in the last few years, driven by a higher frequency of claims by property owners particularly weather-related insurance claims.
- The cost of professional cleaning services has escalated, largely due to higher wages and increased costs of sanitation products.
- A regular guest turnover leads to more regular maintenance and repairs and as such more on-going work required to the property by contractors who have all increased their costs.
- The booking platforms have raised their fees, eating into profits and further straining the business model.

Together, these rising expenses have made it increasingly difficult for the Applicant to maintain a profitable holiday let.

Single Holiday Cottage

Hollins Wood Bothy is the only holiday cottage ran by the Applicant and this has made it particularly challenging. With only one property, there is no opportunity to spread the fixed costs and economies of scale are lost when handling cleaning, maintenance, and repairs. Bulk services or long-term contracts often come at a discount when multiple properties are involved.

This lack of cost efficiency further impacts the profitability of operating Hollins Wood Bothy as a single holiday cottage, making it even harder to remain economically viable with rising expenses.

Time Commitment

Managing Hollins Wood Bothy involves a significant time commitment, making it a challenging endeavour.

Ensuring that the cottage is consistently cleaned and well-maintained between guest stays requires meticulous coordination and attention to detail. This includes scheduling and supervising cleaners, arranging for necessary repairs, and addressing any issues that arise promptly to maintain high standards.

Additionally, managing bookings, communicating with guests, and handling inquiries can be time-consuming, especially during peak seasons. The administrative tasks, such as updating availability calendars, processing payments, and managing cancellations, add another layer of complexity. Together, these responsibilities demand a considerable amount of time and effort, which can be overwhelming for the Applicant without the support of a larger operation.

Booking Fees

Hollins Wood Bothy is small only catering for two guests, and this limits the Applicants ability to command a higher booking fee. Unlike larger properties that can accommodate more guests and justify higher rental rates, the Bothy is capped at a modest price point due to its limited capacity.

Despite its smaller size, the cottage still incurs similar expenses to larger holiday lets, including insurance, cleaning, maintenance, and booking platform fees. The time and effort required to manage these tasks do not decrease proportionally with the size of the property, making it difficult to achieve good margins. This creates a challenging scenario where the costs remain substantial, but the potential for revenue is inherently limited by the property's size.

Demand

The Bothy has experienced strong demand, with a consistently good occupancy rate, particularly as more people have opted for staycations following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this shift in travel preferences has also led to a surge in the number of new holiday businesses, increasing competition within the area.

Many property owners have seen the appeal of the trend and have entered the market, creating an increasingly crowded field. While demand remains healthy, the Applicant recognizes the growing need to stay competitive in this expanding market. The new competition creates pressure for existing businesses to continuously invest in maintaining high standards and offering attractive pricing.

Security

One of the reasons for converting the holiday let into a residential property is due to concerns raised by the neighbouring elderly tenant farmer. He has expressed frustration with the frequent turnover of guests, as it creates a sense of unpredictability and unease, particularly in regard to security. The constant change of occupants makes it difficult for him to keep track of who is coming and going, which is especially troubling given the property's secluded location.

Transitioning to a single long-term tenant would provide a more stable and secure environment, alleviating his concerns and fostering a sense of familiarity and trust.

5. Proposed Use

The Applicant intends to change the use of Hollins Wood Bothy from a holiday cottage to residential.

The change of use will allow the cottage to be integrated into their existing portfolio of let residential properties and will be let to tenants on a standard Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) basis.

This will provide a more stable and predictable income stream and is expected to reduce the time and expenses associated with the short-term holiday let, offering a more secure and long-term rental arrangement.

6. Planning Policy

When the barn was originally granted consent for conversion into a holiday let in 2010 it is likely to have been subject to restrictions on creating dwellings within the open countryside, reflecting the planning policies in place at that time.

Since the initial planning approval, there have been significant changes in the planning system, including the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, which provides more flexibility for developments in rural areas. Key permitted development rights have been introduced, namely Class Q permitted development, allowing the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings. The Barnsley Local Plan has also been updated to reflect these broader changes.

These developments in policy suggest a more favourable environment for converting a barn directly to a residential dwelling, without the requirement for alternative uses within the open countryside.

7. Conclusion

The combination of rising operational costs, the challenges of managing a single small holiday let, and the growing competition in the area has made running Hollins Wood Bothy as a holiday cottage economically unviable.

These factors have promoted the Applicant to seek a change of use for the property. By converting Hollins Wood Bothy to a residential dwelling, it can be integrated into the Applicant's existing portfolio of let residential properties, ensuring a more stable and manageable income stream.

This change will allow the property to be utilised more effectively, providing long-term residential accommodation in the area rather than struggling to compete in an increasingly saturated holiday rental market.

End.
