

BEAVERS CROFT | HOWDEN DAM | BAMFORD | DERBYSHIRE

PROPOSED CHANGE-OF-USE OF DETACHED EXISTING ANCILLARY BARN
CONVERSION TO PROVIDE SELF-CATERING HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION



DESIGN & ACCESS and PLANNING STATEMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Introduction:

Beavers Croft is a remote former farmstead located high up in the Derwent Valley alongside the man-made Upper Derwent Reservoir, and sitting immediately below the impressive Howden Dam. It was purchased by the present owner Mr Eddie Lesley and his family as a family home approx. 5 years ago.

There are two residential properties at 'Beavers Croft' in the same ownership; the original 17th century farmhouse, and a former barn which was converted to provide additional living accommodation ancillary to the farmhouse in 1988. Both buildings are shown on the 1880 Ordnance Survey First Edition map prior to the construction of Howden Reservoir and Dam in 1901 when the farm was known as *Marebottom Farm*¹ (fig.1). By 1926 both Howden and Derwent Reservoirs had been constructed and the plantation established (fig.2). The change in the name of the farm to 'Beavers Croft' was the decision of the previous owner of some 23 years, Mr Willoughby.

The buildings were constructed using locally quarried Carboniferous Gritstone, such as Stanton Moor and Stoke Hall that are still quarried at Grindleford from where the stone that built the impressive dam structure was sourced in 1901-12.

Historically 'Beavers Croft' has always been an isolated farmstead sitting below Howden and Derwent Moors to the east, and Alport and Ronksley Moors to the west (fig.3). Today it is accessible by road some 5 miles from the A57 Snake Pass, but remains isolated and 'off-grid' in terms of mains utilities services. As part of the current owners conscious attempt to help the properties become more self-sufficient and sustainable, they have embarked on a shift to more efficient and sustainable forms of energy generation including a packaged wood pellet Bio-Mass installation and a proposed ground-mounted PV system for electricity generation. A separate planning application for the proposed PV array has recently been submitted.

Whilst addressing the heating and power to the dwellings, the owners are proposing to thermally up-grade the fabric of the farmhouse and at the same time would like to improve its comfort and functioning as a family residence, and also so that it can become more of a focus for other members of the family to visit and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of its remote rural setting. Similarly a separate planning application has recently been made to extend the rear of the farmhouse for this purpose.

Finally, they would like to offer the current detached ancillary accommodation provided by the previously converted adjacent barn as a self-catering 'holiday cottage' which will generate a small income and help towards sustaining the buildings up-keep and maintenance.

¹ *Marebottom* is referred to in *William Seniors Survey of the Estates of the 1st & 2nd Earls of Derbyshire 1600-1628* as being contained within woodland in the ownership of William Cavendish Earle of Devonshire and in the tenure of Gervais Barbers

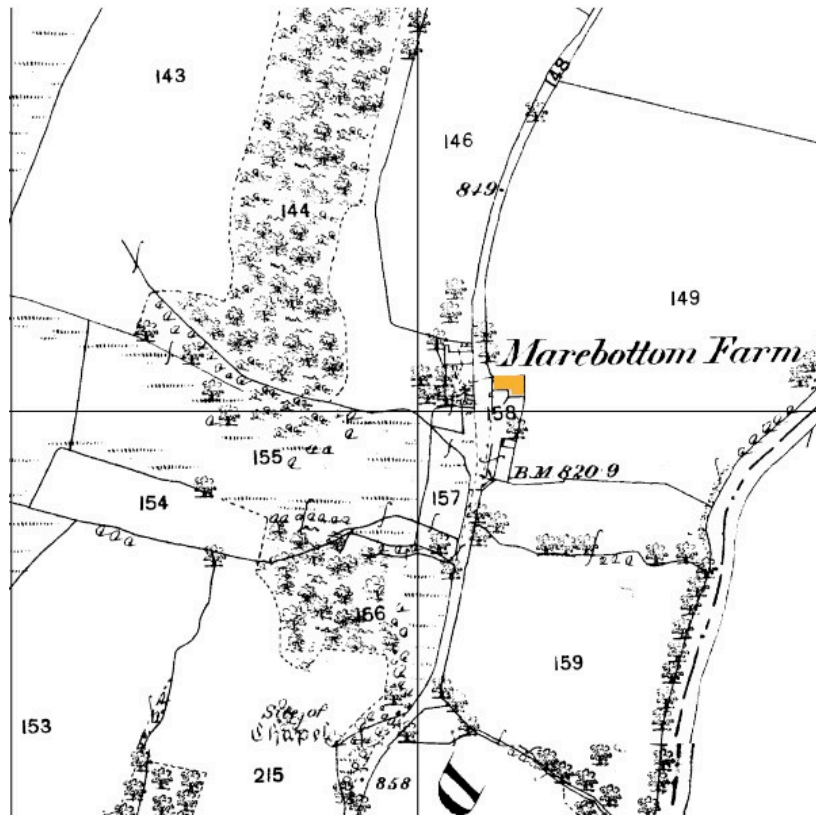


Fig.1 1880 First Edition OS map showing the barn at Marebottom (highlighted orange)

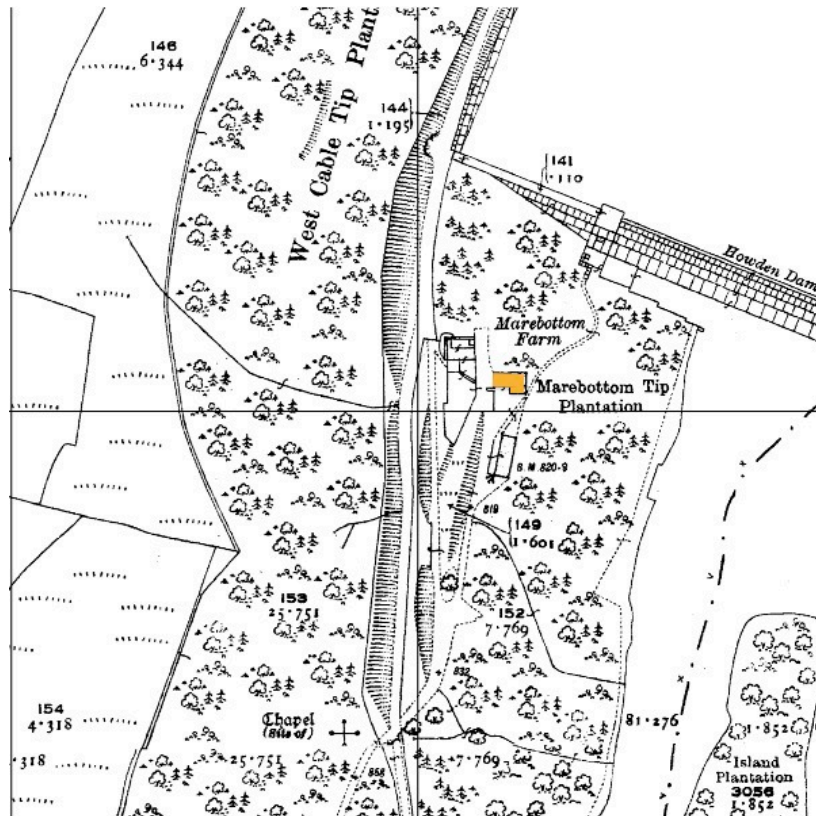


Fig.2 1926 OS map following the construction of Derwent & Howden Reservoirs. The original form of the barn still exists today (highlighted orange)



Fig.3 Elevated aerial view looking northwest showing isolated location of the barn, set below the farmhouse (painted white), and their setting and relationship to the reservoirs, Howden Dam and Ronsley & Howden Moor beyond (photo: Strutt & Parker LLP)



Fig.4 South (front) elevation of the original 17th century barn with its former tall & wide single-entry cart entrance and later forward lean-to (possible former *wheel or engine house or cornhole* ?). The former door and window opening to the far left hand side most probably served a stable

The proposal:

The derelict barn was renovated and converted to its current use as additional living accommodation in 1988 by the previous owner, Mr Willoughby. The planning permission was conditional that the accommodation provided by the conversion was *ancillary to the main farmhouse* and was not to be used as a separate dwelling.

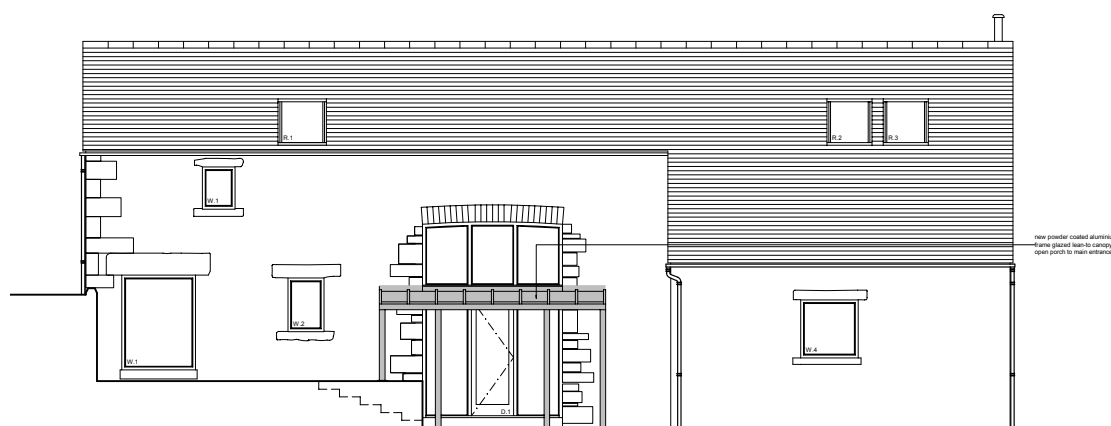
Having now owned the property for 5 years the current owner and applicant would like to change the use of the barn so that it can provide self-catering holiday accommodation for tourists and visitors to the Peak District, and generate a small income towards the buildings up-keep.

The barn currently provides a basic level of accommodation in the form of a large double bedroom, a very generous bathroom and sauna, and a large open-plan, double-height, kitchen-living-dining area, with an adjacent study/sitting room in the lean-to.

By rationalising and re-modelling the bedroom and bathroom it is possible to create a reasonably sized three-bedroomed holiday-let without altering the original historic structure of the barn inside or out, and still retaining the characteristic large open interior space. There is no impact on the external appearance of the barn from these internal alterations, although it is the intention to open-up and glaze the existing blocked former ventilation holes on the north elevation, to provide additional daylight to the open-plan living space, which has minimal impact.

Given the restrictions of the existing kitchen layout there is no opportunity to create an internal porch or lobby area adjacent to the existing glazed former cart entrance, therefore it is proposed to construct a very simple, open-sided, glazed lean-to canopy above the main entrance doorway, across the line of the existing horizontal timber floor beam/glazing member, to afford some weather protection. Whilst visually this is clearly an addition to the existing elevation, it arguably has a minor impact and does not significantly alter the overall character of the original barn or detract from its traditional form or scale (*fig.5*).

Overall, the increased sleeping accommodation and additional internal day-lighting, and lean-to canopy, and associated change-of-use to a self-catering holiday-let, will provide an improved amenity and allow a greater number of visitors to enjoy this unique, tranquil and isolated rural location, but without significant harm to the external historic character of the former barn, and with minimal visual impact on its setting.



The Barn | South Elevation

Fig.5 South (front) elevation showing existing converted barn and proposed open-sided, lean-to glass entrance canopy illustrating that the existing building both retains its historic character and dominant form

2.0 DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Pre-application consultation:

Pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) - the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) – advised that the original conversion of the barn to provide additional accommodation at Beavers Croft was granted on the basis that the conversion was *sympathetic to its vernacular character* and that the design approach today should also *retain this character and resist any significant alterations or extension*. The LPA also advised that the original granting of planning permission for the barn conversion was conditional that the accommodation provided was *ancillary to the main farmhouse* and was not to be used as a separate dwelling.

The initial pre-application sketch design scheme proposed a large glazed, lean-to sun room extension to the south front of the barn to provide additional living space to support the creation of the three-bedroomed accommodation, and an additional rooflight inserted to provide more daylight to the mezzanine living space. This proposal was considered to be visually harmful to the character of the barn by masking the original large cart opening so that it became an internal feature; and would result in 'domestic activity' being evident which is seen as being 'harmful on the character of the former barn'.

Having considered this advice, the earlier proposed lean-to sun room extension and additional rooflight has been omitted altogether. Instead the addition of a much simpler, modest, open-sided, lean-to glazed entrance canopy is proposed as part of this planning application for a change-of-use to holiday-let accommodation.

It is considered that the new canopy, whilst not being fully enclosed, will afford some beneficial weather protection to the main entrance whilst not dominating the original large cart-way opening nor adding any floor area of domestic activity that might harm the character and appearance of this traditional vernacular building.

Visual impact:

Overall the existing original external form and appearance of the former barn remains dominant. The external historic character is virtually unaltered by the proposal and there is minimal visual impact on its setting. The traditional barn is respected.

3.0 PLANNING STATEMENT

Planning context : The barn at Beavers Croft is a former 17th century agricultural building associated with the former Marebottom farmstead as shown on early OS maps (*figs.1 & 2*). It is located high up in the Derwent Valley below the impressive Howden Dam and lies within the nationally protected and designated Peak District National Park.

This planning application seeks to change the use of the barn from being accommodation ancillary to the adjacent dwelling Beavers Croft - Use Class C3 'Dwelling houses' to Use Class C1 'Hotel' (single unit of tourist accommodation).

The relevant planning policies affecting the proposed change-of-use for the building are contained in both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which came into effect in March 2012 and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Development Plan Document which was adopted in October 2011.

Planning history : Previous planning applications for the property have included;

Erection of timber fence : App. No. : NP/HPK/0589/084 – Refused

Renovation of derelict farm building to form additional living accommodation : App. No. : NP/HPK/0187/009 – Application Approved with Conditions

Planning policy : The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (Amended 2015) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. Other than *permitted* changes of use, planning permission is to be sought for a material change of use to a building.

In National Planning Policy terms we are guided by the NPPF which sets out a framework based on a *presumption in favour of sustainable development*. The NPPF superseded numerous previous separate policies and of relevance to this application the previous Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5), Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (PPG2) and Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable development in Rural Areas (PPS7).

In particular NPPF policies para. 17, 28, 128 & 131 are cited in support of the change-of-use development proposals as set out in this application.

NPPF para.17 establishes 12 core principles including importantly in this case that planning should '*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations*' and '*take account and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs*';

NPPF para.28 in support of a prosperous rural economy seeks to '*support sustainable rural tourism...which respect the character of the countryside.*'

NPPF para.128 requires the applicant to '*describe the significance of any heritage assets affected...proportionate to the assets' importance... to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance*';

NPPF para.131 expects proposals to '*sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets*' and to make a '*positive contribution to maintaining sustainable communities*'

and their economic viability and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation' by looking for proposals that 'positively contribute to the character and local distinctiveness' of the historic environment, when determining applications;

The NPPF is supported by a commentary from English Heritage also issued in March 2012 to offer a high-level overview of the NPPF policies as they apply to the historic environment, as highlighted above. Relevant to this planning application in particular is the endorsed policy of the *'desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'*.

We believe that this change-of-use application has properly assessed the nature, extent and importance of the significance of the barn at Beavers Croft, and has taken into account *the desirability of putting heritage assets to a viable use consistent with their conservation*.

Furthermore, the information submitted alongside this application is proportionate to the heritage assets' importance and *no more sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance* [NPPF para.128]. Appropriate expertise has been used to assess the heritage asset.

The Local Plan :

The relevant Development Plan for this application is the PDNPA LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document (October 2011). The policies relating to the barn at Beavers Croft are Policy L3 'Cultural heritage assets of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance' and Policy RT2 'Hotels, bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation' relating to both the conservation of historic assets and their settings including heritage assets of local interest; and the change-of-use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit to self-catering accommodation.

Para.'s 9.40, 9.44 & 9.45 of the Core Strategy deals with the conservation of all cultural heritage assets of significance and encourages investment in, and enhancement of historic places through heritage-led tourism proving the asset and its significance is sustained or enhanced. Policy L3 states that *'development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal the significance of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic assets and their settings, including statutory designations and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest'*.

Para.'s 10.20 - 10.23 set out the scope for the provision of visitor accommodation within the National Park and encourage the conversion and change-of-use of existing traditional vernacular buildings as opportunities to provide self-catering accommodation. Policy RT2 says that proposals must conform to the following principles: *'The change-of-use of a traditional building of historic or vernacular merit to serviced or self-catering holiday accommodation will be permitted, except where it would create unacceptable landscape impact in open countryside. The change-of-use of entire farmsteads to holiday accommodation will not be permitted'*.

The change-of-use proposed by this application will involve no significant alterations to the existing converted building. The proposed modest lean-to, open-sided glazed entrance canopy, we believe, will have a minimal impact on the existing historic character of the building and its setting. There will be no landscape impact created by the proposed change-of-use and the original farmhouse is being retained as a family dwelling. Therefore and is considered that this proposal is in line with the PDNPA Core Strategy policies and the core principles of the NPPF.

Summary :

For the reasons discussed within this report, we believe that the proposed change-of-use to the previously converted barn at Beavers Croft is sensitive and appropriate, and compatible with the building and its historic character and setting.

Furthermore the proposed change-of-use will further help conserve and protect this heritage asset for future generations by its increased use and up-keep. It will ensure that the architectural and historic interest of this building is both sustainable and preserved.

4.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS PROPOSALS

- Use:** The proposed barn was previously converted to provide accommodation ancillary to the adjacent dwelling, Beavers Croft in 1988 (Use Class C3 'Dwelling houses'). It is now proposed to change its use to provide self-catering holiday accommodation (Use Class C1 'Hotel' - single unit of tourist accommodation) for visitors to the Peak District National Park.
- Amount:** The proposed change-of-use will involve the complete footprint of the existing barn (122 sq.m), but no additional floor area will be created. The proposals do not involve any new or detached buildings, other than a proposed small lean-to, open-sided glazed entrance canopy. The traditional appearance and character of the former barn is retained.
- Layout:** The existing barn is orientated north-south with the front of the property facing south and the rear elevation, north. There are no extensions or external alterations proposed other than a small lean-to, open-sided glazed entrance canopy which will by its nature stand proud of the front elevation, but it is considered not to impact negatively on the traditional appearance and character of the former barn.
- Internally the spatial quality and amenity of the accommodation will be improved by the re-modelled layout and additional bedrooms.
- Scale:** The proposed change-of-use will not affect the scale or mass of the existing building. There is no impact on the setting of the building nor the landscape.
- Landscaping:** The proposed change-of-use will not affect the landscaping to the barn or the site.
- Appearance:** The proposed change-of-use of the barn will not affect the appearance of the converted barn, although the proposed small lean-to, open-sided glazed entrance canopy will have a modest impact on the appearance of the front elevation. The proposed opening-up of the blocked former vent holes to the north (rear) elevation will improve the amount of natural day-light entering the large open-plan interior living space, and enhance the legibility of this historic vernacular former agricultural building.
- Access Proposals:** The proposed change-of-use of the barn will not affect the existing vehicular or pedestrian access to the property. There is ample existing off-road surfaced parking provision adjacent to the barn for up to 6no. vehicles, so there is more than adequate provision for visitors using the self-catering accommodation. The current external stepped-approach to the front of the property will remain as existing.

4.0 SUMMARY

The existing barn conversion, and its unique and stunning setting, is ideal for its proposed new use as self-catering holiday accommodation. By rationalising and re-modelling the interior arrangements it is possible to create a reasonably sized holiday-let without altering the original historic structure or character of the barn. There is minimal impact on the external appearance of the barn. We believe that the scheme as submitted with this planning application represents an appropriate and sensitive change-of-use, that also respects the historic and architectural *significance*² of the original 17th century former barn.

Following the preparation of earlier design ideas, and in response to pre-application consultation feedback from the PDNPA, the proposed sun room extension has been omitted altogether and a much smaller open-sided, lean-to canopy proposed, which mitigates any detrimental 'harm' to the traditional vernacular appearance of the former barn.

Due to the considered design approach, coupled-with the overall sustainable credentials of this proposed change-of-use, we believe that the provision of self-catering holiday accommodation at Beavers Croft will make a positive contribution to helping sustain and conserve the *heritage asset*³, whilst also improving opportunities for visitors to access and enjoy the Peak District National Park. Therefore we respectfully request that the LPA looks positively on this application and grants planning permission accordingly.

² National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012, p.56

³ Ibid, p.52