

Planning Statement for change of use of the North Arms, Wroxton to a single detached house



Mill's Ln, Wroxton, Banbury, OX15 6PY

1) Existing Property

The building is situated on Mills Lane, Wroxton, near Banbury. It is constructed of stone with a thatched roof over most of the building and a small single story extension which has a slate roof. The original main structure dates from the 18th century and there has been a series of single story extensions with flat roofs in the later half of the 20th century.

To front of the property is the road with housing directly opposite. Housing is also to be found immediately both sides of the site and to the rear is the domestic garden of a neighboring property.

2) Background

The North Arms last traded as a pub when it was operated under a tenant lease model and was owned by Greene King. By 2013 Greene King decided to sell the pub, most likely because it could not be operated profitably.

It was purchased with a view to turn it in to a residential property. There were significant objections by the local community who attempted to raise funds to purchase it. They were unable to raise sufficient funds but the University stepped in and purchased the property in 2017. Planning permission was submitted in 2019 for a significant refurbishment in order to get the pub re-opened. This was passed in January 2020. However, due to the significant costs involved and an assessment on the likely viability of the business the university decided in February 2021 to sell the property.

The current owners purchased the North Arms in August 2021 with a view to a change of use. It was immediately placed on the market with a national pub agents to ascertain if there were any willing parties to take the building on to operate again as a pub. At the time of this application it remains on the market and available but there have been no potential buyers interested to keep the building as a pub.

The North Arms was registered as an ACV in October 2016. The registration expired in October 2021 and it is no longer listed.

3) Proposed Development and Design Considerations

The conversion of the building to a single residential unit will not require any external construction changes and thus there are no design considerations with this application. However, since the building has been empty for a long period there is a need to repair the structure of the building with the thatched roof requiring urgent replacement. This is relevant to the planning application since without permission to convert to a residential dwelling it is difficult to envisage what possible alternative future there is for the building and how it will be repaired then maintained for generations to come.

4) Landscaping Details

There are no planned changes to the landscaping of the site.

5) Flood Risk Assessment

The site is not in an area at risk of flooding: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/confirm-location?eastings=441162&northings=241752&placeOrPostcode=wroxton>

Any current hard surfacing on the site slopes towards the grassed area of garden so there is no risk of surface water run off to other property.

6) Ecological appraisal

An ecological report was prepared for the 2019 planning application. The bat survey found the presence of bats using the barn as a day roost. This application was for a number of works to develop the barn and structural works to the pub building. This application is just for a change of use, not for any building works. As such a full survey would not be proportionate.

However, the recommendations from the previous survey would still be followed where relevant:

Mitigation Recommendations

- o An EPS licence is required for the buildings works.
- o The works to the former public house can be carried out at any time.
- o Bat box installation on trees.
- o A precautionary procedure is included in Appendix 3 to cover the risk of a bat being discovered during building works when the bat ecologist is not on site.
- o Exterior lighting for the development should be sympathetic to roosting, foraging and commuting bats.
- o If building work is to be carried out during the nesting bird season, which runs from March to September, a further nesting bird check will firstly be required.

Compensation Recommendations

- o Create gaps in mortar around the chimneys and under eaves on the former public house for common pipistrelle bat and soprano pipistrelle bats.
- o New roof liners in ALL buildings on the site to be bituminous membrane only.
- o Timber treatments to be bat friendly.
- o General bird boxes on trees on the site

These items would not be required since there are no works to the barn or destructive works:

- The works to the outbuildings should be timed outside the bat hibernation period, therefore from April to October, inclusive (unless bat hibernation checks are firstly carried out).
- Carry out a destructive search of the bat roosts and potential bat roosting features under the direct supervision of a bat ecologist. This will be carried out prior to all other building works
- Re-create gaps in the stonework of the converted barn/garage for common pipistrelle bats.
- New bat void to be created in the converted barn/garage for brown long-eared bats.

7) Renewable Energy Assessment

The application is for a straight change of use to residential and as such there will be no structural changes. However, the converted building insulation will comply with all current building regulations, where this can be done is consultation with the listed building officer.

8) Transport Statement and Parking

There is a bus stop is 100m away on the main road with buses direct to Banbury and Stratford upon Avon.

There is a train station in Banbury which is 3.8 miles away. This provides trains to Oxford in 17 minutes and from there trains to London Paddington a further 50 minutes away.

The property has a car park with existing access from Mills Lane. This access can be retained and the hard surfaced area would be more than sufficient for the eventual owners and visitors, and also sufficient spaces for any skips and traffic associated with any future building work.

9) Other facilities nearby

The closest pub is the white Horse which is circa 100m away, it is currently closed, though believed to be re-opening.

200m away is the Wroxton House Hotel which has a bar and serves food to hotel residents and villagers alike.

Within 2 miles are:

- The Roebuck,
- The Barley Mow
- The Blinking Owl
- The Butchers Arms.

Beyond this are all the many pubs, bars and restaurants of Banbury which is 3 miles from the North Arms.



Wroxton has a village hall which is available for hire from £6 per hour.

<https://wroxton.org.uk/village%20hall.htm>

"The hall offers excellent food handling facilities, a small stage and tables and chairs. Good parking outside."

10) Conclusion

It is unfortunate that there have been no willing parties to take over the North Arms and re-open it as a pub. However, it has now been closed for 8 years and despite the best intentions of the last owners they had to sell it as re-opening was not viable.

The development will not result in harm to the overall character of the area, as there will be no change to the appearance of the building or the layout and landscaping of the site.

The existing access will be utilised and a change to a single home would result in less potential traffic and thus improved highway safety.

The property is grade II listed and is falling in to disrepair. It is essential that works are undertaken soon to ensure the long term future of is beautiful building and the only realistic way to do this is via change of use to a home.