

L2 Conversion of traditional buildings – acceptable uses

With the exception of former dwellings, proposals for the change of use of traditional buildings to high intensity¹ residential, visitor accommodation and employment uses will only be permitted within existing settlements and building groups, or other suitable roadside locations².

Proposals for the change of use of isolated traditional buildings to low-intensity³ uses will be permitted provided they do not result in material alteration to the exterior of the building or its surrounds.

Proposals for change of use to a dwelling house for continuous occupation will be subject to a local occupancy restriction (Appendix 5).

All proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings to group visitor accommodation will be required to be capable of effective supervision and management.

All proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings to a dwelling house for holiday occupation will be restricted to short stay letting only.

All proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings to live/work units will be required to meet criteria (a) & (b) of Policy BE4 (New build live/work units).

Aim

5.8 To allow traditional buildings to be put to alternative uses where the building and its location is able to accommodate the intensity of the new use and associated impacts.

Justification

5.9 Traditional buildings form an important part of the architectural and historic fabric of the National Park, and reveal much about its social, cultural and economic history. Changing circumstances mean many traditional buildings have outlived their original purpose. It is important that the planning system facilitates change of use where this helps to conserve the interest of these buildings. Care is however needed to ensure new uses and their impacts do not undermine what makes these buildings valuable, and that they are permitted in locations that have capacity for the new use.

5.10 This is a conservation-orientated policy aimed at securing the long term future of traditional buildings in a manner that conserves their intrinsic value. Introducing a new use into a traditional building – one for which it wasn't originally designed – will result in a permanent change to its character and appearance. In architectural, historical and landscape terms, this change will almost always result in some degree of harm to character and appearance. The degree of harm will vary according to the building's significance, its location, and the intensity of the new use. However, this harm needs to be weighed against the benefits offered by the new use, and the policy provides a framework for these judgements to be made.

¹ For the purposes of this policy, higher intensity uses will be permanent residential dwellings, ancillary living accommodation, live work units, group visitor accommodation (bunkhouse barns and holiday lets) and intensive employment uses (such as retail, offices, restaurants/cafes).

² For the purposes of this policy 'existing settlements and building groups' are not restricted to those forming part of the settlement hierarchy set out in Table 1. For a building to be considered roadside it, or its immediate definable curtilage, must physically adjoin the boundary of either a sealed metalled road maintainable by the Highway Authority, or a sealed metalled private road that connects to a road maintainable by the Highway Authority. Roads must have had a sealed metalled surface prior to 1st July 2014. Buildings that do not physically adjoin, but are in close proximity to such routes, or that are served by an established (since at least 1st July 2014) unsealed road or track, will be considered subject to the impact on the landscape.

³ For the purposes of this policy, lower intensity uses are low key employment/business uses (such as light industrial, commercial storage and workshops without outside storage or significant vehicular journey generation), barn pods, camping barns, equestrian and agricultural uses.

5.11 Proposals need to be fully informed and this begins with an assessment of the building's significance and other attributes. The Authority has produced a Traditional Farm Buildings Toolkit⁴ alongside the Local Plan. Although aimed at traditional farm buildings, the principle of understanding a building and its capacity for change applies equally to all re-uses of traditional buildings, and applicants should refer to this guidance.

5.12 The policy provides scope for a range of different uses of traditional buildings to be considered, and establishes a clear distinction between higher and lower intensity uses. It seeks to direct the more intensive uses into locations that are most accessible and that already benefit from some degree of infrastructure and services. Table 4 overleaf broadly illustrates the range of different uses and their varying intensities in relation to this policy.

5.13 Intensive uses will not be appropriate in buildings that are isolated in the landscape. These locations will be incapable of absorbing the visual impacts associated with the development, in terms of physical alterations to the building, the provision of new infrastructure, and the higher level of disturbance associated with these uses. These locations will normally only be capable of low-intensity uses. The Traditional Farm Buildings Toolkit provides further guidance on a range of other solutions for these more remote buildings.

5.14 Proposals for re-using traditional buildings as dwellings will be required to be tied to the occupancy criteria set out in Appendix 5 to ensure they contribute towards local housing needs. As an exception to this requirement, however, unrestricted occupancy will be permitted in the following circumstance:

Former dwellings – in the National Park there are many examples of houses where residential use has ceased or been abandoned. A number of these are listed buildings, or are otherwise worthy of conservation because of their archaeological, historic, architectural or landscape interest. Reoccupying these houses will sometimes represent the most beneficial and viable use of the building. Great care is however needed to ensure that the re-use retains the building's significance, to ensure that the policy objective is met. The policy on former dwellings represents an exception to the normal presumption against introducing intensive uses into isolated locations. A number of these buildings are remote from roads or even private tracks, but by virtue of the fact they were originally designed as dwellings, and are often particularly worthy of conservation – including a number that appear on the Authority's 'Buildings at Risk' register – it is considered necessary to introduce an additional degree of flexibility. This represents a continuation of the strategy from the last Local Plan.

⁴ Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (2015) Traditional Farm Buildings Toolkit

Table 4 - General guide to use, intensity and likely acceptable locations for adaptation of traditional buildings

| Proposed use | Intensity of use | | Location |
|---|------------------|--|---|
| Dwelling house (residential dwelling for continuous occupation) Ancillary living accommodation in conjunction with a dwelling house Live/work units | HIGH INTENSITY | Most intensive  | Within settlements, farmsteads and other building groups; |
| | | | Roadsides locations that are capable of being served by a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • curtilage with visual impact minimised; • vehicular access not requiring significant improvements or new access tracks. |
| Dwelling house (self contained short stay holiday let) Group visitor accommodation e.g. bunkhouse barn More intensive employment uses – retail, offices, restaurants/cafes | | | As above, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capable of supervision and management; • adequate separation from existing dwellings to protect amenity; • ability to contain/control outside storage, noise and other forms of pollution, and ancillary development. |
| Low key business use e.g. light industrial and workshops, commercial storage facilities Pods ⁵ – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short stay holiday letting accommodation; • very minimal impact on the building's external appearance; • very minimal impact on the building's fabric; • as self sufficient in energy and other infrastructure needs as possible. | LOW INTENSITY | | As above, plus more isolated buildings where there is no dedicated on-site vehicular access or parking areas. |
| Camping barn (basic bothy accommodation/'stone tent') Equestrian & stabling Agricultural or Estates use – livestock, storage etc. | | Least intensive | As above, plus more isolated locations, no road access. No parking or services available, no material alterations to the exterior of the building or its surrounds. |

⁵ A pod, in this sense, is a reversible, detachable self-contained unit inserted within an existing building. Pods can be a means of inserting a variety of different uses into traditional buildings. The classification here as a low intensity use reflects a low key model of use that results in no material alterations to the building and its surrounds. The barn pod can be adapted to more intensive uses, which could still be acceptable, but only in more accessible locations.

