

JUSTIFICATION FOR CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT FARM BUILDING AT LOWER FARM, BOWLING BANK, ISYCOED LL13 9RY

Lower Farm has been in the same family ownership for three generations. Originally purchased in 1926 by the current owners' grandfather, it was a significant dairy farm. Running well in the 1970's, 80's and early 90's.

With pressure on dairy farming, the farm was converted to beef cattle in late 90's. The existing 'L' shaped building has been altered over the years and evidence of this can be seen on site. Steel reinforcement cross beams were introduced to support the upper floors following the removal of internal walls to create the larger spaces. These were attempts to make the buildings work. Ground floors have additional concreted raised areas to assist with milking. The single building to the east of the courtyard was not used by animals because of restricted ceiling height so this was used as a garage/store building.

Simple lean-to extensions were added to house the animals and the main traditional range abandoned except for storage of hay.

The current owners are the grand children of the original purchaser (the applicants). They were brought up and lived on the farm until they married and went their own ways. One of the grand-child remains living on site in the farmhouse but the farm can no longer function as a business. The traditional buildings are inappropriate for modern day farming and the upkeep of the whole farmstead is beyond the financial and physical capabilities of the owners. Even the timbers supporting the silage clamp are rotten so only the concrete base remains in-tact.

The buildings are unused and the land is rented out to adjacent farmers who have their own farm buildings to be able to function without the need for the erection of any new farm buildings.

TAN 6 states that it should not be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes (although, in this instance, the buildings subject to conversion are redundant, inappropriate for modern agriculture and require significant expenditure to secure their retention). The current application is a sincere submission by a family who wish to retain their family base and see it thrive. The scheme, as submitted, has used all the existing buildings without the need for any extension. The form and scale of the original buildings are re-used in the project. The original fabric of the buildings will be retained. This has been done, not only as appropriate design for a conversion, but to keep the original farmstead still identifiable as part of the applicants' history.

It is the intention of the family to sell the barn conversions and the farmhouse/cottage and continue to rent out the land to neighbouring farmers. The existing farmstead is extremely attractive and the traditional buildings carry a presence and history with them that cannot be recreated today. The re-use of this site requires a significant financial injection of capital that farming cannot provide. The buildings are inappropriate for modern day farming methods and by giving them a valid use they can be restored and retained into the future.