

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Conversion of buildings in the open countryside and rural villages



November 2009

www.gwynedd.gov.uk

Policy and Performance Unit, Environmental
Service, Regulatory Department
(Planning, Transportation and Public Protection),
Gwynedd Council



CONTENT

	<i>Paragraph</i>
Statement regarding consultation	1 – 2
The Purpose of Supplementary Planning Guidance	3 – 4
Introduction	5 – 11
Relevant National Policies and Planning Guidelines	12 – 17
Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan Policies	18 – 23
Structural Requirements	24 – 47
Sustainability Considerations	48
Conservation Area and Listed Buildings	49 – 50
Protected Wildlife	51 – 54
Permitted Development	55
Converting a building for which there is no longer a use	56 – 57
Previous planning permission	58
Proven local community need	59 – 60
Amenities of nearby buildings / Location	61
Summary and conclusions	62
Advice before submitting the application	63 - 66
APPENDIX 1 Points to be borne in mind	
APPENDIX 2 Relevant extracts from Planning Policy Wales	
APPENDIX 3 Relevant policies from the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan	
APPENDIX 4 Contact details	

STATEMENT REGARDING CONSULTATION

1. The draft version of this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was subject to public consultation between 19 March 2009 and 24 April 2009. A public notice was published in the Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald and the Cambrian News on 19 March 2009 in order to raise awareness about the public consultation. Copies of the SPG were available to view in the main Council offices, in the public libraries and on the Council's website during the consultation period. Comments were invited from numerous individuals and organisations, which included community councils and local builders and their representatives. A summary of the representations that were received and the response to them can be seen in a document entitled "Consultation statement - December 2009".
2. The representations and the response to them were scrutinised by the Environment Committee on 11 June 2009. The SPG was adopted in the Council Board meeting on 24 November 2009.

THE PURPOSE OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

3. This SPG is one of a series of guidance notes which support the policies of the adopted Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The UDP was adopted on 16 July 2009. Although decisions on planning applications will be based on the UDP's policies (as indicated in part 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), the content of the SPG is a material planning consideration.
4. The main purpose of this Supplementary Planning Guidance is to be of assistance and to provide detailed guidance to members of the public, planning officers and planning committees dealing with planning applications for conversion of buildings in the countryside and in rural villages.

INTRODUCTION

5. The Gwynedd Planning Authority area is rural in nature and thus the protection of buildings in the countryside is important in order to safeguard the landscape and heritage of the area. As a result of the importance of these buildings and the need to control development in the countryside, further developments in the open countryside is carefully controlled.
6. The Council acknowledges that buildings in the countryside could be converted for several uses, such as economic as well as residential use, which would be a sustainable means of providing for a specific need. The opportunities to do so will depend on the condition of the building, i.e. that it is not too much of a ruin, as well as the accessibility of the site in terms of location. It must also be ensured that conversion of a building would not introduce obtrusive features to the countryside or affect any special conservation designation. Restoring these kinds of buildings in a sensitive and sustainable way ensures that the traditional values of the landscape will be appreciated in years to come.

Buildings that are suitable for conversion

7. There are some kinds of buildings that play an important role in the landscape of the Gwynedd planning area. Proposals to convert such buildings in a

sensitive and well-designed manner could have a positive effect on the environment and ensure that these historic/traditional buildings are restored for generations to come. As a result of their importance, conversion is recommended. Nevertheless converting a building should not lead to a loss of a facility or community service (i.e. public house, village shop etc), unless firm proof is received by the Council proving that the property has been marketed on sale and for rent at a reasonable price for a period of 12 months, which conforms with the principles of policy CH12 in the Unitary Development Plan. Relevant buildings of importance to the Gwynedd Landscape which could be converted for a residential, tourism and economic purposes following it's unsuccessful marketing for sale and for rent for it's current use, include for example:-

- agricultural buildings
- chapels/churches
- mills
- public houses
- old schools
- post offices/shops
- vestries
- schoolhouses

Buildings that are not so suitable for conversion

8. However, there are some buildings/structures that are not suitable for conversion, such as the ones which are:-

- Fragile in structure
- Ruins, i.e. with substantial sections of the walls missing or that it is in such a ruined state that only the remains of the original building can be seen.
- Temporary buildings
- In an area at risk of flooding.
- Too small in size
- In such remote and isolated locations which would result in an unsustainable development pattern.

Necessary Structural Elements

9. With regard to the structure and size of the building, the application will need to comply with the following criteria before it can be granted planning permission:-

- The structure of the walls needs to be visible and strong up to the level of the eaves.
- There must be obvious openings for doors or windows which can be used.
- The appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that the condition of the walls of the building and the roof (where it exists) are safeguarded.
- The present building must be of an adequate floor area, i.e. at least 40m².
- Should the conversion work mean carrying out work to restore the roof, then it should not be necessary to re-build more than 10% of the total wall area. Should it be unnecessary to carry out work to restore the roof, then it would be acceptable for it to be necessary to re-build 20% of the total wall area.

10. It is emphasised that it will be a requirement for any application to convert a building in the countryside or a rural village to be a full application and not an outline one.

What is the countryside?

11. The countryside in this case is defined as land which lies outside the development boundary of villages and centres or which is not identified as being a part of the built cluster of a rural village in the 'Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan'. It is noted in the Plan that it is important to protect the landscape of the countryside from developments except for the ones that are truly necessary.

RELEVANT NATIONAL POLICIES AND PLANNING GUIDELINES

National Policies

12. Planning Policy Wales (March 2002) as amended by a series of Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements includes the Assembly's directive in respect of planning for the conversion of buildings in the countryside. This national planning policy is supported by a series of 'Technical Advice Notes' (TAN). Combined with a number of circulars, these are the documents which form the national policies with which Local Planning Authorities in Wales must comply. These therefore are the core documents for Unitary Development Plans. (See Appendix 1 for complete copies of the Planning Policy Wales paragraphs referred to below).

Paragraph 7.6.9 (Planning Policy Wales, 2002)

13. Paragraph 7.6.9 refers to the fact that conversion of buildings in the countryside plays an important part in fulfilling the needs of rural areas for commercial, industrial, tourism, sports and leisure uses.

14. However, any development of this kind must comply with a series of criteria, including:-

- that it would not cause an unacceptable dispersion that could have a detrimental effect on the vitality and activities of towns/villages.
- the design must be compatible with the design in general.
- That it is possible to convert the building without having to substantially or fully rebuild it and that the development would not have a detrimental effect on the natural environment.

Paragraph 7.6.10 (Planning Policy Wales, 2002)

15. Also, paragraph 7.6.10 notes that if there is a building in the countryside that has been approved for a particular use such as commercial or agricultural use which is no longer needed, then it must be ensured that satisfactory measures are taken by the applicant to re-use the building for the original use; residential use should be considered as a second option to economic use and dwellings of this kind which are approved for residential use would have to satisfy some of the local need for affordable dwellings.

Paragraph 9.2.18 (Interim Ministerial Planning Policy Statement 01/2006 – Housing)

16. It is noted in paragraph 9.2.18 that it is important for any development in the countryside to incorporate the principles of sustainability; reference is also made to the need for strict controls over new dwellings in the countryside.

Technical Advice Note 6 – Agricultural and Rural Development

17. Planning Policy Wales is supported by a series of Technical Advice Notes; Technical Advice Note 6 (2001) is relevant to 'Agricultural and Rural Development'. Here are some of the main points highlighted:-
- It is necessary for planning applications to re-use or convert rural buildings to consider the nature and scale of the proposed new use.
 - It must be ensured that thorough research work is carried out in order to see what previous use there was to the building.
 - Applications to convert a building for residential use must consider the visual amenity of the environment, with sensitive design being favoured.
 - Any application to convert or rebuild a building for residential use should suit the environment.
 - Before approving conversion of a building in the countryside for dwellings, detailed consideration must be given to the social, economic and environmental needs of the area.
 - Applications to convert buildings in the countryside for economic purposes, such as tourism, will be favoured.

GWYNEDD UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

18. The Plan that includes the adopted land use policies for the area of the Gwynedd Planning Authority is the Unitary Development Plan (See copies of the UDP policies referred to below in Appendix 2).

Policy C4 – Conversion of buildings for re-use

19. The principle of converting buildings in the countryside for re-use rather than demolition will be approved as long as they comply with the following criteria:-
- That the structure is permanent and robust, and that it can be converted without completely rebuilding.
 - The suitability of the building for the proposed use.
 - The design of the proposed building must respect the structure, with regards to the form and character of the original building and the surrounding area. Also, any indigenous, traditional, historic or archaeological features should be retained.
 - No stores or external work should have an unacceptable effect on the visual quality or the character of the surrounding area.
 - The development does not lead to dispersal of activities on a scale that will damage the vitality of towns and villages.

Policy CH12 – Conversion of buildings within rural villages and in open countryside for residential use

20. In compliance with policy CH12, conversion of buildings in the countryside or in rural villages should not be approved unless, in the first instance, it can be ensured that economic use would not be appropriate for the building. Any application to convert a building for residential use must be subject to a number of criteria:-
- That a local community need for an affordable dwelling has been proven for the development.
 - That the development would not lead to the creation of a substantial number of residential units and therefore that it would not be likely to have a

detrimental effect on the structure or the character of the village or the community.

- Satisfactory arrangements would have to be made in order to restrict the occupation of the dwelling forever to persons who prove local community need.
- No community service or resource should be lost; evidence must be submitted to the Council to prove that the property has been unsuccessfully marketed as a unit for the relevant use for a reasonable and fair price, for sale or rent, for a continuous period of 12 months.

Policy D14

21. In accordance with Policy D14 – ‘Serviced Holiday Accommodation’ applications to convert existing buildings into serviced holiday accommodation will be approved. However, any such application should have a design, layout and appearance of the highest standard. Also, any application would need to comply with the following criteria:-

- That the scale of the development is appropriate considering the site and location
- Other than in exceptional circumstances, the site must be truly accessible to different modes of travel, and customers and staff can reach the site without having to use a private car.

22. It is acknowledged that conversion of buildings in the countryside for economic purposes is beneficial to the local economy.

Policy D15

23. Policy D15 – ‘Self Serviced Holiday Accommodation’ includes principles similar to Policy D14 but in respect of self-serviced holiday accommodation. The relevant criteria which need to be complied with, include the following:-

- The scale of the development must be appropriate considering the site, location and settlements in question.
- The development would not lead to the loss of a stock of permanent dwellings.
- The development should not be located in a residential area and it would not have an unacceptable effect on the residential character of the area.
- The development would not lead to overprovision of accommodation of the kind in the area.

STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

24. It is a requirement that any building is structurally sound (i.e. that the walls of the building are sound up to the level of the eaves). A building in the countryside that is in such a ruined state that substantial sections would need to be re-constructed or fully re-built would not be suitable. This ensures that the special character and appearance of the building is not damaged. As a guideline, an application should not be considered if there is a need to re-build more than 10% of the total wall area when restoration work needs to be done to the roof or 20% of the total wall area if there is no need to carry out restoration work to the roof.

25. Any application to convert a building in the countryside will have to be supported by an independent structural survey, carried out by an expert (e.g. a structural engineer). The survey will be a means of discovering how much

restoration work needs to be carried out on the building. Together with the structural survey, it is a requirement that the planning application includes the details and plans of the application in order to ensure that it is the applicant's intention to try to restore the building in question, ensuring that the building does not collapse during the conversion work. Should that happen, it is possible that the planning permission would not then be valid. It will be necessary to demonstrate through photographs what parts need to be replaced, strengthened or renovated.

26. Should the structural survey discover that it would not be possible to restore the building in question without having to demolish parts of the original building or rebuild substantial sections of it then the Council will have to reject the application.
27. When the applicant is considering what materials to use during the building work, ideally, efforts should be made to incorporate sustainable methods.

Walls, Window and Door Openings

28. The structure of the walls must be visibly robust and reach up to the level of the eaves. To repair sections of the walls, efforts should be made to use materials that are similar in colour and weathering.
29. Unsympathetic use of modern materials is likely to have a detrimental effect on the building and the environment. If re-pointing work needs to be done on bricks/stone, efforts must be made to ensure that the material used is compatible with the original. Applications to re-point the brickwork will be approved, rather than covering with materials such as pebbledash or rendering. Minor details such as this are necessary to ensure that the design of the building is safeguarded.
30. It must be ensured that original openings are used wherever practical to do so, and where it is necessary to include new openings then they should consider the size of the original building. If it is necessary to close an original opening, then ideally a recessed panel should be used which shows the location of the original opening.
31. Every effort should be made to use the original doors and windows. Any new windows or doors must be of a material that is compatible with the original and reflects the character of the building. When wooden windows are used, modern staining should not be used. Usually, the use of uPVC windows will not be acceptable.

Roof

32. The roof is one of the main features of any building as it is prominently visible. Because of this, the roof level should not be raised above the original level. This will ensure that the character of the area's skyline is not damaged.
33. Efforts should be made to restore the original material together with any repair work that needs to be carried out. Any new material must also accord with the original. Usually, the roofs of old buildings in the countryside are made of Welsh slate and in accordance with Policy B25 of the Plan, any use of slate on the roof would have to be Welsh slate or a slate that is similar in colour and weathering characteristics. There are exceptions when slate would not be the

only acceptable material. Examples of this kind include cases in which sustainability advantages mean that another material is appropriate.

34. Most often, dormer windows are not approved as they do not accord with the traditional structure of older dwellings, and similarly, roof windows are not approved. In cases where it is considered that a skylight would be the only option in order to ensure more daylight in the building, then appropriate steps should be taken to alleviate any possible negative effects. Extensions or alterations including a flat roof are not acceptable.
35. In principle, plans which include solar panels will be approved. Special consideration should be given to the location and type of solar panels to be used.

Drainage and waste

36. It should be ensured that the original guttering and rainwater pipes are restored where possible. If new ones are needed, efforts should be made to use the same kind of material as the original, for example cast iron. In some cases, a more modern material which matches will be acceptable. Any new gutters or rainwater pipes should be in the least obvious locations, especially on the older buildings, where previously no gutters or rainwater pipes existed.
37. During the work of restoring the building, it is a requirement that the applicant must incorporate sustainable methods of disposing of waste water as well as other waste. In some circumstances, inclusion of septic tanks or a cesspool will not be acceptable, so it will be necessary to propose other, more sustainable methods.

Chimneys

38. A chimney should not be installed in the building that is being converted unless it accords with the original design of the building. Locating a chimney is likely to damage the traditional character of the building especially in respect of buildings where the previous use was as an agricultural building. It is believed that installation of a chimney creates an impression characteristic of a building that is for residential use, and appropriate steps should be taken to try to avoid doing so. Ideally, the applicant should try to incorporate more sustainable methods of heating the building, meaning that the installation of a chimney would be unnecessary. Therefore, in some specific circumstances, perhaps a small black, metal chimney would be acceptable especially for a fire that burns wood as fuel.

Boundaries of the Curtilage

39. Ideally, the boundary of the curtilage should follow the original boundary line. The material used for the boundary should not be a prominent/modern material. Some types of materials that would be suitable include hedges, wooden posts with a hedge behind, slates, 'clawdd' (hedgerow) or dry stone wall. This would reflect the rural character of the building.
40. For the floor of the curtilage, ideally a modern material should not be used. Possibly the most compatible material would be the material that was there originally, such as gravel.

Internal Features

41. Where the original building is an open one, the subdivisions should be kept to the minimum. This will be a means of assisting the dissemination of natural light through the building as well as ensuring that the original design of the building is safeguarded.

Parking Spaces and Access

42. It will be necessary to ensure that parking spaces and garages have been concealed from any location visible to the public. There may be some cases in which it will be possible to convert outbuildings into a garage. If there is no garage, it will be necessary to take appropriate steps to ensure that cars are screened effectively. The most effective way of doing so would be by using a dry stone wall or hedge, if that is the kind of boundary that is characteristic of the locality.
43. It is vitally important that any parking space complies with the guidelines of the Highways Authority.
44. Any development should try to maintain or consolidate the original access, unless there are good reasons for not doing so. Most often, the access follows the natural boundary, namely the hedge or the wall. These boundaries accord with the environment and the natural landscape and therefore efforts should be made to restore them by all means. If it is necessary to provide a new access, then it should be ensured that it follows the original natural boundary.

Heat and ventilation

45. In a situation where necessary to install a flue for a heating system or extractors, they should not be prominently visible. The use of vent tiles compatible with the walls and roofs is recommended.

Extensions

46. If there is a need to expand the original building through an extension it should be ensured that there is no other means of extending the living area beforehand. This could be done by using present outbuildings or extending into the loft space for example. It should also be ensured that the extension will not have a negative impact on the amenities of the buildings residents as well as the adjoining neighbours.
47. There is a need to ensure that all the materials used for the extension are compatible with the original building. It will also be necessary for the extension to blend into the original building, i.e. similar in proportion, roof and pitch height, therefore in terms of size the extension should not dominate the original building.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

48. Whilst assessing planning applications for a new development along with the adaptation and extension of a current building it is important that appropriate consideration is given to the sustainability principles of the development. Further details on this matter is given in Policy C7 of the Unitary Development Plan. Some of the sustainability issues which will require consideration when assessing an application for converting a current building include the need to ensure that where possible and practicable that appropriate consideration has been given to the materials being used, by trying to ensure that they are local

and that measures are taken to try and better the developments effectiveness in terms of energy consumption.

CONSERVATION AREA AND LISTED BUILDINGS

49. Any application to convert a building in the countryside where the building is a listed building, close to a listed building or in a conservation area, will be more strictly controlled. Also, in accordance with legislation, Listed Building consent would be needed when the proposal is to carry out restoration work on a listed building. It must also be borne in mind that the internal design of listed buildings is safeguarded.
50. If the building which is to be converted is a listed building, it is recommended that the applicant contacts the Council's Senior Building Conservation Officer for further guidance.

PROTECTED WILDLIFE

51. Some of the species that are protected by national or European legislation live and roost in buildings in the countryside. Before the applicant submits a planning application to convert a building in the countryside, it is a requirement that a survey be held (by a professional person) between the dates of 1st May and 15th September in order to assess whether the building is important to specific species and to assess any impact the development work could have on the protected species. The survey is also a means of suggesting methods that could be taken to alleviate any impact developments could have on protected species.
52. The species most likely to be present in these types of buildings are bats, barn owls and swallows. Bats, barn owls and swallows (nesting birds) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside legislation 1981; bats receive additional protection by the Habitats Regulations 1994.
53. In the event of a survey discovering that a protected species is present in the building, it will be necessary to incorporate methods such as an attic cavity (that is not used), bird boxes and owl boxes. It should be noted that bat roosts are protected whether the bats are present or not. Before any work can take place in a building where there are bat roosts present, a licence needs to be obtained from the National Assembly for Wales. If protected species are identified in the building after the building work has commenced, then the work must be stopped and contact made with the Countryside Council for Wales for more information and assistance in respect of the appropriate steps that should be taken.
54. It is possible to obtain further advice regarding the impact of converting buildings in the countryside on protected species from the Council's Biodiversity Officers.

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

55. When permission is given to convert a building in the countryside, it is a requirement that a planning condition be placed on the permission that will control work that could be carried out to the building without having to obtain

planning permission after the original consent has been granted. Examples of developments that would therefore require planning permission include extensions, alterations to the roof, installation of a satellite dish etc.

CONVERTING A BUILDING FOR WHICH THERE IS NO LONGER A USE

56. If the building in the countryside has been restricted through planning conditions to a specific use, such as for agricultural or holiday use, it will be necessary for any planning application to convert it, to prove that the building is no longer needed for the specific use. Also, it would have to be proven that it is not possible to use the building for any other economic purposes.
57. In the event of an application involving the conversion of a building which was originally built for a specific purpose such as agricultural, there will be a need to submit a statement along with the application explaining why the building is no longer appropriate for that specific use. It will also be necessary for the statement to explain why an alternative use other than residential such as economic use would not be appropriate for the building.

PREVIOUS PLANNING PERMISSION

58. Before an application to convert a building in the countryside for residential use can be refused/approved it will be necessary for the Planning Authority to carry out research into any previous planning permission that is attached to the building, especially in cases where it is not obvious what the original use was. This research work would be an opportunity to see whether the use that is the subject of the planning application would accord with the original use.

PROVEN LOCAL COMMUNITY NEED

59. Planning permission to convert a building in the countryside for residential use will depend on the evidence of there being a local community need for the development. More details of the local community criteria can be seen in the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan, Chapter CH, para 5.2.20 and also the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing can be inspected.
60. In brief, the 'local community need' means that an applicant who wishes to convert a building in the countryside for residential use needs to comply with the following criteria:-
 - has lived in the Community Council area for a permanent period of ten years immediately before making the application/taking possession of the property.
 - has lived in the Community Council area for a permanent period of ten years or more in the past.
 - People who have lived or worked for a permanent period of ten years or more within 4 miles 'as the crow flies' from the 'core' of the rural village (namely where the buildings coloured on the inserts map are located) where the specific application is located.

AMENITIES OF NEARBY BUILDINGS / LOCATION

61. It is expected that the building is suitable for conversion with regards to form and location. This should protect the vitality of towns and villages and thus applications to convert isolated buildings which have no functional or visible link with nearby villages will not be approved. This is consistent with the need to promote sustainable development, which includes the need to reduce car journeys, and the need to avoid putting excessive pressure on infrastructure providers. The use of a building should not conflict with its original character, or with any nearby building.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

62. The Council acknowledges that converting buildings in the countryside is a sustainable means of adding to opportunities for diversification in the rural community and a means of securing a supply of housing in the countryside that satisfies some of the local need. It is emphasised that good design that suits the original design of the building is necessary. It must be emphasised that detailed work and good craftsmanship is crucial on any restoration and conversion of buildings in the countryside, ensuring that the material is compatible with the original. It is essential to ensure that the structural construction of the building is suitable for conversion.

ADVICE BEFORE SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

63. If there is any uncertainty regarding conversion of a building in the countryside, then any applicant is advised to contact the Council before submitting the application. See the contact details in Appendix 4. Making contact beforehand in order to receive advice saves the applicant time and money especially with regards to the need to carry out a structural survey and produce plans. It is also suggested that the applicant should look at the document entitled "Gwynedd Design Guide" as it will give them more guidance regarding the design requirements of converting buildings in the countryside.
64. As well as following planning guidance it is also necessary for any application to convert a building in the countryside to comply with building regulations. Before undertaking any building work, it is suggested that the applicant contacts the relevant Building Control Officer in order to receive advice about any measures the applicant should take before commencing the building work.
65. In cases where the applicant wants to change the use of the building from its former use, then planning permission will be necessary. If the building is empty and the applicant wants to restore the building in order to use it for the same kind of use as the original, then it must be ensured that no 'abandonment of use' has taken place. A decision on whether abandonment of use has taken place will depend upon:-
- The physical condition of the property
 - The period that has elapsed since the building was last used
 - How the building was used in the meantime
 - What the owner's intention was regarding the building since it was last used.

66. However, unless it is obvious that abandonment of use has taken place and if the applicant does not wish to convert the building for another purpose, then the permitted development rights for the building are valid.

APPENDIX 1

Points to be borne in mind...

- ☑ Conversion means adapting a building, not demolishing and rebuilding it.
- ☑ Restoration of the buildings original character is crucial.
- ☑ In order to save time and money, early consultation and conversations with the relevant Planning Officer and other Officers within the Council is encouraged in order to discuss the viability of the proposed application.
- ☑ It should be possible to convert the building without having to carry out much restoration and rebuilding work.
- ☑ The building must be structurally sound; it is possible to receive proof of such through submission of a structural survey by a professional person such as a structural engineer.
- ☑ Should the conversion work mean carrying out work to restore the roof, then it should not be necessary to re-build more than 10% of the total of the walls. If it is not necessary to carry out work to restore the roof, then it would be acceptable for it to be necessary to re-build 20% of the total walls.
- ☑ It is necessary for any planning application to convert a building in the countryside to be supported by design plans that note the exact restoration work that needs to be carried out.
- ☑ Before receiving planning permission, a survey will need to be carried out to discover whether there are any particular protected species present in the building.
- ☑ Economic use of the building will be favoured rather than residential use, unless there is clear evidence that it would be impractical.
- ☑ There will be a need to ensure that the original openings (doors and windows) are restored. In the event of it being necessary to provide new openings, then they should accord with the size of the original openings.
- ☑ Any materials used during the restoration work must accord with the original.
- ☑ The roof level should not be raised above the original level.
- ☑ A chimney should not be installed unless it accords with the original design, unless it is essential in order to facilitate a more sustainable method of heating the building. In some circumstances a small black metal chimney would be acceptable.
- ☑ The boundaries of the curtilage should follow the original boundaries.
- ☑ It will be necessary to take the appropriate steps to ensure that parking spaces are concealed.
- ☑ In the event of the building having been approved for a specific use (such as agricultural) and that such use is no longer necessary, this should be proven in accordance with the guidelines of the Unitary Development Plan.

- ☑ It should be ensured that a 'local community' need has been proven for the residential development.
- ☑ The Planning Authority will have to carry out research work into the planning history of the building in order to discover what the original use was, and to ensure that no abandonment of use has taken place.

APPENDIX 2

Relevant extracts from Planning Policy Wales (2002)

Paragraph 7.6.9

“The re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. Local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use, especially those buildings located within or adjoining farm building complexes, provided that:

- *they are suitable for the specific re-use;*
- *conversion does not lead to dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town and village vitality;*
- *their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;*
- *imposing conditions on a planning permission overcomes any planning objections, for example on environmental or traffic grounds, which would otherwise outweigh the advantages of re-use;*
- *if the buildings are in the open countryside, they are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;*
- *conversion does not result in unacceptable impacts upon the structure, form, character or setting where the building is of historic and/or architectural interest.”*

Paragraph 7.6.10

“Residential conversion of rural buildings which have ceased to be used for industrial or commercial purposes, including agriculture, may have a minimal economic impact and may be detrimental to the fabric and character of historic buildings. Especially in areas where the creation of local employment is a priority, local planning authorities may include policies within the UDP which do not allow residential re-use unless:

- *the applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable business re-use and the application is supported by a statement of the efforts which have been made;*
or
- *residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use; or*
- *the resulting housing will contribute to an identified need for affordable housing for local need (see 9.2.14).”*

Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement – Housing (2006)

Paragraph 9.2.18

“Policies must indicate that an authority will seek to negotiate with developers where it is intended to include an element of affordable housing in proposed developments. Policies should also state what the authority would regard as affordable housing and what arrangements it would expect to ensure that such housing remains reserved for those who need it.”

APPENDIX 3

Relevant policies from the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan

POLICY C4 – ADAPTING BUILDINGS FOR RE-USE

Proposals to adapt buildings for re-use as a first option over demolition will be approved provided that all the following criteria can be met:

1. in the case of a building in the countryside, that the building is of permanent construction, structurally sound and is capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
2. that the building is suitable for the proposed use;
3. that the design of the proposed conversion, including any necessary changes/alterations, respects the structure, form and character of the existing building and its surroundings and retains any inherent traditional, historic or architectural features of merit in the building;
4. that any associated external storage or operations do not cause a significant harm to the visual quality and character of its surroundings;
5. in the case of building in the countryside, that the development does not lead to a dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town or village activity.

4.2.8 Explanation - Whilst the principle of adapting buildings for re-use is supported, not all buildings will be suitable for this. It is expected that the building in question will be suitable for its new use in terms of its form and location. There are a considerable number of derelict buildings in some parts of the area, many of which are in very isolated places. In order to safeguard the vitality of towns and villages proposals that involve adapting isolated buildings which do not have a functional or visual link with towns or villages will not be supported. It is important to consider the structural condition of the building itself. A structure in the countryside that is so ruinous that it has to be substantially or entirely re-built will not be suitable. Assessment of a site should reveal at least the following features: a building with structural walls which are demonstrably sound up to the eaves level; door and window openings; and that steps have been taken to safeguard the condition of walls (e.g. roof, capped walls). A structural report on the building, prepared by a specialist, will be required as part of the planning application. A proposal involving substantially or entirely re-building a building will be considered against the requirements of other policies that deal with new buildings designed for specific uses.

4.2.9 It is expected that the building can absorb the new use without much change to its form, especially if the building is a traditional one. Further guidance on good

practice can be found in the Gwynedd Design Guide 2002. Other policies in chapters 5 and 6 of this Plan deal with re-using buildings for specific uses.

POLICY CH12 – CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS IN RURAL VILLAGES AND IN OPEN COUNTRYSIDE FOR RESIDENTIAL USE

In rural villages and the countryside conversions of buildings to residential use will not be permitted without first providing proof that a suitable economic use cannot be secured for the building. Planning permission to convert the building to a residential use will be subject to meeting all the criteria set out below:

1. local community need for an affordable house has been proven;
2. the proposal will not lead to the creation of a substantial number of new dwelling units that are/would be likely to have a detrimental affect on the structure and character of the village and/or community of which it is part;
3. the proposal will not lead to the loss of a community resource or service unless, where relevant, firm evidence has been submitted to the Council demonstrating that the property has been marketed unsuccessfully as its relevant use for sale or for rent for a continuous period of 12 months;
4. that suitable mechanisms are in place that will restrict the occupancy of the dwelling on first occupation and in perpetuity to those with a local community need.

In suitable cases when permission is granted for a development a planning condition will be used to control Permitted Development Rights in order to ensure full planning control over developments concerning the building in question and its curtilage.

- 5.2.60 Explanation - In accordance with Assembly advice and as economic development and increasing employment are Council priorities; proposals to convert vacant buildings for residential use will not be approved unless prior efforts have been made to find a suitable economic use or that the conversion of the building will lead to a concentration of similar uses, such as self-catering holiday lets, thus leading to, or having a negative effect on the local area. See Policy D10 on converting buildings for industrial/employment use and policies D14 and D15 on converting buildings for holiday accommodation. If there is evidence that such efforts have failed, the Local Planning Authority will be willing to approve conversion for residential use when the proposal fully conforms to the above policy and policy C4 that relates to the re-use of buildings. In some cases, where the building is in a prominent location, the

Local Planning Authority will abolish Permitted Development Rights in order to ensure full planning control over developments relating to the building in question and its surrounding curtilage.

POLICY D14 – SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Proposals for:

- a. the development of new permanent serviced holiday accommodation, or the conversion of existing buildings into such accommodation, or
- b. extending existing serviced holiday accommodation establishments

will be approved, provided they are of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance and that all the following criteria can be met:

1. in the case of new build, that the development is located within a development boundary, or makes use of a suitable previously developed site;
2. that the proposed development is of appropriate scale considering the site, location and/or settlement in question.

- 6.3.9 Explanation - This policy applies to a variety of different types of serviced accommodation, from large high quality hotels to small bed and breakfast accommodation on farms. Quality hotels and other serviced accommodation can the potentially bring significant economic benefits to the Plan area and broaden the range of holiday accommodation available to visitors. In general the Plan area lacks an adequate range of such accommodation. The aim of this Policy is to support the principle of expanding the range and improving the quantity and quality of serviced accommodation.

POLICY D15 – SELF-SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Proposals for:

- a. new development, or the conversion of existing buildings into permanent self-serviced holiday accommodation, or
- b. extending existing self-serviced holiday accommodation establishments

will be approved providing the development is of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance and that all the following criteria can be met:

1. in the case of new build, that the development is located within a development boundary, or makes use of a suitable previously developed site;
 2. that the proposed development is appropriate in scale considering the site, location and/or settlement in question;
 3. that the proposal will not result in a loss of permanent housing stock;
 4. that the development is not sited within a primarily residential area or does not significantly harm the residential character of an area;
 5. that the development does not lead to an over-concentration of such accommodation within the area.
- 6.3.10 Explanation - A wide range of high quality self-serviced accommodation is essential in providing visitors with choice. The aim of this policy is to support the principle of providing high quality self-serviced holiday accommodation which presents such a choice.
- 6.3.11 Where planning permission is given for self-catering holiday units, a condition will be attached to ensure that the building will only be used as holiday accommodation and that it cannot be used for permanent occupation.
- 6.3.12 Existing national guidance and the priority given to the conversion of existing buildings for economic use, means that within some areas, there is an abundance of buildings that have been converted to self-serviced accommodation. Clearly it is not the intention of national guidance or the Council for this policy to lead an over-concentration of this type of holiday accommodation within a particular. In assessing proposals under this policy, the Council will consider the locality's capacity to reasonably accommodate such developments in terms of its impact on the environment, social and cultural character, road network, amenities etc.
- 6.3.13 This policy is not relevant to proposals to establish new static holiday and touring caravans and holiday chalets sites. Such proposals will be considered under policies D15 and D16 of this Plan.

APPENDIX 4

Contact Details

To receive further information, please contact the following:-

Planning Policy (Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionydd)

Policy and Performance Unit
Environmental Service
Regulatory Department
Shirehall Street
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH
Phone Number: (01286) 679883
Fax Number: (01286) 673324
Email: PlanningPolicy@gwynedd.gov.uk

Development Control (Planning)

Arfon Area

Planning Service
Regulatory Department
Arfon Area Offices
Penrallt
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1BN
Phone Number: (01286) 682765
Fax Number: (01286) 682771
Email: Planning@gwynedd.gov.uk

Dwyfor Area

Planning Service
Regulatory Department
Dwyfor Area Offices
Ffordd y Cob
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 5AA
Phone Number: (01758) 704118
Fax Number: (01758) 704053
Email: Planning@gwynedd.gov.uk

Meirionnydd Area

Planning Service
Regulatory Department
Meirionnydd Area Offices
Cae Penarlâg
Dolgellau
Gwynedd
LL40 2YB
Phone Number: (01341) 424414

Fax Number: (01341) 424440
Email: Planning@gwynedd.gov.uk

Building Conservation

Senior Building Conservation Officer
Planning Service
Regulatory Department
Arfon Area Officers
Penrallt
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1BN
Phone Number: (01286) 685614
Fax Number: (01286) 682771
Email: ConservationAreasandListedBuildings@gwynedd.gov.uk

Biodiversity

Biodiversity Team
Environmental Service
Regulatory Department
Council Offices
Shirehall Street
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH
Phone Number: (01286) 679381
Fax Number: (01286) 673324
Email: bioamrywiaeth@gwynedd.gov.uk

Building Control

Arfon Area

Building Control Arfon Area Office
Penrallt
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1BN
Phone Number: (01286) 682764
Fax Number: (01286) 682771
Email: rheolaethadeiladu@gwynedd.gov.uk

Dwyfor Area

Building Control Dwyfor Area Office
Ffordd y Cob
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 5AB
Phone Number: (01758) 704040
Fax Number: (01758) 704053
Email: rheolaethadeiladu@gwynedd.gov.uk

Meirionydd Area

Building Control Meirionydd Area Office
Cae Penarlâg

Dolgellau

Gwynedd

LL40 2YB

Phone Number: (01341) 424365

Fax Number: (01341) 424440

Email: rheolaethadeiladu@gwynedd.gov.uk