



**24/00135/PPD – CONVERSION OF BARN TO DWELLING, ERECT SHED AT BARN,  
20 KNOCK, POINT, ISLE OF LEWIS**

Report by Depute Chief Executive

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The Scheme of Delegation states: An Appointed Officer shall not determine an application under this Scheme by, or on behalf of, an officer directly involved in the statutory planning process in the administrative area of the Comhairle. Accordingly, this Report is brought to the Board for decision.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This Report relates to a planning application to convert an existing outbuilding/barn to create a new dwellinghouse and to erect a garden shed. The application site is developed with an extensive area of hardstanding with tarmac surface but forms a part of Croft 20 Knock, Point, Isle of Lewis. Knock is defined a rural settlement by the spatial strategy of the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan. The landscape character of the area is classed as Gently Sloping Crofting and there are no environmental, historic or landscape designation on, or in, close proximity to the site.
- 2.2 The conversion would create a 2-bed single storey dwelling by utilising the existing structure and adding an extension onto the rear (west side) of the building. A small domestic shed is proposed to be erected to the front of the proposed dwelling, Bin storage provision is proposed to the north of the proposed dwelling adjacent to the proposed parking and turning area. Access to the site would be via an existing access off the village road. The dwelling is proposed to be connected to the main public water supply network. Drainage will be directed to the public drainage network. Surface water is to be dealt with onsite via sustainable drainage linking up to existing croft drainage arrangements.
- 2.3 The Comhairle is required to determine planning applications in accordance with the provisions of the statutory Development Plan, comprising the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan 2018 (OHLDP) and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations have been given due consideration.
- 2.4 The assessment against the Development Plan has concluded that the nature of the development is consistent with the nature of uses that are supported in a rural settlement. Subject to conditions to protect the access to the remainder of Croft 20 Knock, and that a physical barrier (fence or mature planting) is installed on the southern boundary to protect the amenity of both occupants of the new dwelling and occupants of the adjacent dwelling (20 Knock), the development would not be harmful to neighbour amenity, the sustainability of the croft, road safety or the environment and overall would accord with the provisions of the Development Plan. No material considerations are considered to exist which would justify a decision other than in accordance with the Development Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the planning application be **APPROVED** subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 to this Report.

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Appendix 1: Schedule of Proposed Conditions

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Appendix 2: Plans  
Background Papers: None

## IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	None
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

## BACKGROUND

### Application

- 5.1 The planning application was registered as valid on 28 March 2024. The planning application was advertised for public comment in the public notices section of the Stornoway Gazette on 11 April 2024. Neighbours were notified on 4 April 2024 and given 21 days to make representations by 25 April 2024. Consultation responses were issued to the Comhairle Roads Section, the Comhairle Building Standards Section and Scottish Water.
- 5.2 The applicant made some revisions to the plans including amending some of the window sizes and positions on the dwelling and adding a shed to the front of the property. The revised plans were re-neighbour notified on 27 May 2024 showing the revised plans and given 7 days to make any further representations by 3 June 2024.

## SITE CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

### Description of site and its context

- 6.1 The site is located within the rural settlement of Knock, Point, Isle of Lewis. The site is on the west side of the village road. The landscape character of the area is classed as Gently Sloping Crofting and there are no environmental, historic or landscape designation on or in close proximity to the site. The existing barn, subject to this planning application, is sited centrally within the plot with a large area of tarmacked hard standing to the front of the barn. Access to the site is via an existing access off the village road to the front of the barn.
- 6.2 An existing single storey dwelling (20 Knock) which has one window in the north gable lies to its south while 18 Knock, also a single storey bungalow, lies to the north west beyond an undeveloped croft (Croft 19).
- 6.3 The existing barn measures 4.9m deep x 12.2m wide. The height of the barn to eaves level is 2.7m and the overall height to ridge level is 4.8m. The existing barn is of block construction finished with a pebbledash in natural colour with a corrugated roof. On the front of the building is an existing sliding

barn door with two other windows, there are personnel doors on both the north and south elevations. There are no existing openings on the rear elevation.

#### **Description of development**

- 6.4 The application seeks permission to convert an existing outbuilding/barn to create a new dwelling and erect a garden shed.
- 6.5 The conversion of the existing barn and extension to the rear would create a 2-bed single storey dwelling by utilising the existing structure and adding a rear extension onto the building. The rear extension measures 5.4m x 7.8m with an eaves and ridge height to match the existing building.
- 6.6 The extension and parts of the original barn are to be clad in a vertical cedar composite cladding in an ocean blue colour, non-clad walls are to have a white rendered finish. Windows and doors are to be dark grey PVC. The roof of the original building and the proposed extension are to be roofed in a black shallow profile corrugated sheeting with matching verges and ridges. Fascias and rainwater goods are proposed to be black PVC. A flue is proposed on the extension.
- 6.7 Windows and doors on the barn are to be completely reconfigured with existing openings being closed up and new openings made that are suitable for the applicant's living arrangements.
- 6.8 On the front elevation the existing sliding garage door is to be blocked up. A small porch to provide shelter is proposed on the front elevation along with two new windows.
- 6.9 On the north side elevation, looking towards 18 Knock, there is to be one obscure glazed window to serve the bathroom on the gable of the existing building. A narrow letterbox style window is proposed on the side of the proposed extension to serve the kitchen area.
- 6.10 On the south side elevation, looking towards 20 Knock, there are to be two openings on the side of the proposed extension serving the living space; one window and one glazed door, the latter to provide access onto a proposed area of composite decking.
- 6.11 On the rear elevation more extensive glazing is proposed in the form of five larger windows to make the most of the views down over the crofts to the shore.
- 6.12 A small shed is proposed to the front (east) of the dwelling. The shed would be situated between the front building line of the house and the village road. The nearest corner of the shed to the front boundary would be 1.4 metres away from the boundary. The proposed shed measures 3.5m x 5m, with an overall height to ridge level of 3.6m.
- 6.13 The dwelling is proposed to be connected to the main public water supply network. Drainage will be directed to the public drainage network. Surface water is to be dealt with onsite via sustainable drainage linking up to existing croft drainage arrangements.
- 6.14 Access to the dwelling is via an existing access off the village road to the front of the barn, which is also the access to the remainder of the croft. There is a large, tarmacked area to the front of the barn which is to be utilised for parking and turning associated with the new dwelling.
- 6.15 The application was accompanied by a number of plans and drawings (attached as Appendix 2 to this Report).

#### **LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

- 7.1 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the Act) is the principal legislation. Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Act require that planning decisions be made in accordance with the Development Plan

unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The weight to be attached to any relevant material consideration is for the judgment of the decision-maker. Two main tests are used when deciding whether a consideration is material and relevant:

- It should serve or be related to the purpose of planning. This means it should relate to the development and use of land.
- It should fairly and reasonably relate to the particular application being determined.

7.2 This Report sets out an assessment against the policies and provisions of the Development Plan and has regard to all relevant material planning considerations, to inform a conclusion and recommendation as to the determination.

7.3 In terms of the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009, the class and scale of development is such that it falls within the classification of a 'Local Development'.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

8.1 There have been no recent planning applications on the site.

## **CONSULTATION ADVICE**

9.1 Statutory consultation was undertaken as required by Regulations. The detailed responses of statutory and other consultation bodies are summarised as follows.

- **Scottish Water**  
No objection. Advice provided on water and waste water availability and capacity and surface water drainage.
- **Building Standards Section**  
No comments to make at planning stage.
- **Comhairle Roads Section**  
No objection.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

10.1 The planning application was advertised for public comment in the public notices section of the Stornoway Gazette on 11 April 2024. Neighbours were notified on 4 April 2024 and given 21 days to make representations by 25 April 2024. Consultation responses were issued to the Comhairle Road's Section, Comhairle Building Standards Section and Scottish Water.

10.2 The applicant made some revisions to the plans including amending some of the window sizes and positions on the dwelling and adding a shed to the front of the property. The revised plans were re-neighbour notified on the 27 May 2024 showing the revised plans and given seven days to make any further representations by 3 June 2024.

10.3 No formal representations were received in relation to this planning application.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **The 'Development Plan'**

11.1 In Scotland, the planning system is 'plan-led' and sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the Act) require that planning decisions be made in accordance with the 'Development Plan' unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 11.2 Following the enactment of a provision of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 on 13 February 2023, the statutory 'Development Plan' for the administrative area of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is comprised of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023) and the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018 and its Supplementary Guidance.
- 11.3 NPF4 comprises the 'National Spatial Strategy for Scotland' up to 2045 and also provides the Scottish Government's updated statement of National Planning Policy. The OHLDP sets out the strategic land use policy and provides the local framework to develop and sustain the communities of the Outer Hebrides. Section 24(3) of the Act provides that in the event of any incompatibility between a provision of NPF4 and a provision of the LDP that whichever of them is the later in date, is to prevail.
- 11.4 The Development Plan policies with particular relevance to the application are:

**NPF4:**

- 1 - Tackling the climate and nature crises
- 2 - Climate mitigation and adaptation
- 3 - Biodiversity
- 14 - Design, quality and place
- 16 - Quality homes
- 17 - Rural homes
- 29 - Rural development

**OHLDP:**

- DS1 - Development Strategy – Rural Settlement
- NBH1 - Landscape
- PD1 - Placemaking and Design
- PD2 - Car Parking and Roads Layout
- EI2 - Water and Waste Water
- EI4 - Waste Management

**PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

**Main issues**

Spatial strategy and principle of development

- 12.1 Policy 16 of the NPF4 deals with quality homes and requires that development proposals for new homes on land not allocated for housing in the LDP will only be supported where the proposal is consistent with the local development plan spatial strategy and other relevant policies.
- 12.2 Policy PD3 of the OHLDP covers housing and the requirement for the Comhairle to deliver a housing supply target of an average of 92 homes per year for at least a five-year period. This application would contribute a modest one dwelling to this target.
- 12.3 The site is located within the rural settlement of Knock, Point, Isle of Lewis. The OHLDP development strategy policy (policy DS1) states that the principal policy objective is to accommodate development to meet sustainable growth for local needs, particularly for residential development. Development proposals within Rural Settlements will be assessed against all of the following:
- a) a siting and design appropriate to the established rural character and settlement pattern of the local area;
  - b) residential proposals should be of a lower level of density and respect the character of the individual settlement;
  - c) developments on 'croft land' should not adversely affect the operational use and sustainability of the croft, unless the development is required for reasons of over-riding public interest. Proposal sites should be sited to use the least amount of productive croft land where practical and should

not fragment the croft in such a way that affects its potential to be used for cultivation or other 'purposeful use'. An access corridor to the croft should be maintained.

12.4 A summary assessment of the application scheme against these criteria is set out below:

- a) The siting of the existing barn which is to be extended to the rear has been shown on the proposed location and site plan (plan 01B) and is considered to be appropriate to the rural character and settlement pattern of Knock. The scheme as a whole is considered to be of an appropriate design and appearance for the site and its local rural setting. The application in terms of its overall footprint, scale, form, design, materials and overall appearance is considered to be modest and acceptable in the context.
- b) The change of use and conversion of an existing outbuilding/barn to be used as a single dwelling is appropriate to the density of the rural settlement of Knock.
- c) There will be no change to the croft access as a result of this planning application and maintenance of the access can be protected by condition; as such the sustainability of the croft is not considered to be adversely affected by the proposed development.

#### Placemaking, quality and design

- 12.5 Policy NBH1 of the OHLDP requires that development proposals should relate to the specific landscape and visual characteristics of the local area, ensuring that the overall integrity of landscape character is maintained. The principle of a single dwelling in this location is considered to be respectful of the crofting landscape character type of the area.
- 12.6 Policy PD1 of the OHLDP; together with policy 14 the NPF4 requires that development proposals must demonstrate a satisfactory quality of place-making and design that respects and reflects positive local characteristics and will complement or enhance the surrounding built and natural environment, while taking account of the guidance contained within the Outer Hebrides Design Guide. Policy sets out criteria that should be met addressing siting, design, amenity space, topography and neighbour amenity.
- 12.7 The new dwelling is proposed as a conversion of an existing building with new rear extension. The scale and form of the existing building together with the proposed extension is considered to result in an acceptably scaled new dwelling which is sympathetic to and fits in well with the surrounding form of development in Knock. The proposed materials to be used in the scheme are considered suitable and would fit in with the rural character of the area whilst allowing a modern attractive design and appearance.
- 12.8 Proposed windows and doors on the new dwelling are considered to be acceptable in design terms. Comments on the impact on neighboring properties is addressed later in this Report.
- 12.9 The proposed domestic shed (3.5m x 5m x 3.6m high) is considered to be suitably scaled for the rural context. The siting of the shed to the front of the dwelling is not considered to impact negatively on the visual amenity of the area of Knock and is not considered to have any adverse impacts which would affect visibility for vehicles leaving the site.
- 12.10 The overall scale, design, siting, materials and design of the application scheme as a whole is considered to be acceptable and policy compliant.

#### Impact on neighbour amenity

- 12.11 The proposed dwelling converts and extends an existing barn on the site associated with 20 Knock. The siting and form of the dwelling is not considered to adversely affect neighbour amenity in terms of loss of light or overbearing impact.

- 12.12 Windows and doors on the barn are to be completely reconfigured with existing openings being closed up and new openings made that are suitable for the applicant's living arrangements. Openings on the north side elevation looking over croft 19 towards no. 18 Knock include an obscure glazed window to serve the bathroom and a letterbox style window to serve the kitchen. Given the separation distance of approximately 20 metres between the two properties with croft 19 between, the kitchen window is not considered to give rise to any significant overlooking resulting in a loss of privacy to occupants of no. 18 Knock.
- 12.13 Openings on the south side elevation looking towards 20 Knock include a window and a glazed door leading out onto a decking area. In terms of windows on this elevation there would be some overlooking of the rear elevation and garden of 20 Knock, though not considered unusual in terms of overlooking found between many properties on Lewis. It is considered that the overlooking could be mitigated by imposing a condition requiring a physical barrier such as a fence or some mature planting measuring at least 1.8 metres in height along the southern boundary from the rear building line of the original barn to the south east corner of the red line development site. This would provide sufficient mitigation to protect the amenity of both the new dwelling subject to this planning application and no. 20 Knock to the south.
- 12.14 Overall, with mitigation measures proposed, the application scheme is considered to comply with policy PD1 of the OHLDP in regard to ensuring reasonable neighbour amenity levels are retained as a result of the development.

#### Access and parking

- 12.15 Policy PD2 of the OHLDP states that road design and car parking should be suited to the type, location, scale and circumstances of the development. New development will be assessed against the car parking standards. All new vehicle accesses have a list of criteria which must be complied with.
- 12.16 The submitted site plan (Plan 01B) shows two parking spaces for use of the new dwelling which is considered to comply with the policy requirement. A further two spaces are identified on the site plan to accommodate informal use of part of the site by the neighbouring dwelling at 20 Knock. The Comhairle Road's has been consulted on this application and no objections were raised.
- 12.17 The application site, (part of a croft) currently provides the off-road parking provision for the adjoining house 20 Knock, which is in different ownership. While there is sufficient land within the curtilage of house 20 Knock to accommodate dedicated off-street parking, no such provision is currently provided within its curtilage. The proposed development does, however, make provision for parking of four cars. This provision includes, albeit on an informal basis, for continuation of the historic parking arrangements for house 20 Knock and the off-road parking space is anticipated to remain available for the duration of the current ownerships. This informal arrangement does reduce potential for the development contributing to road safety risks from roadside parking by the neighbouring house.

#### Water and waste water

- 12.18 Policy EI2 of the OHLDP deals with water and waste water; stating that new development will be required to adopt the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). New buildings in settlements with public sewerage systems will be required to connect to the public sewer.
- 12.19 In this case it is an existing building being converted but the plan is still to connect to the public sewer. Scottish Water have been consulted on the planning application and have confirmed that there are connections available to feed a water supply to the new dwelling and for connection for waste water treatment. Surface water is to be dealt with onsite and is proposed to be directed to croft drainage.

#### Waste management

- 12.20 Policy EI4 of the OHLDP requires that space to accommodate the provision of recycling facilities must be designed into all new residential development proposals both during the construction phase as well

as the completed development. An area for the storage of waste containers is shown on the plans to the north of the house which complies with this policy requirement.

#### Climate crisis, nature crisis and biodiversity

- 12.21 Policies 1 and 2 of the NPF4 require that when considering all development proposals, significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises, and that developments should be designed to reduce, minimise, or avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The development would be considered to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, by meeting modern insulation and heat loss standards, which will largely be achieved as a result of the requirements of the Building Warrant process. Given the scale and nature of the proposal, it is considered that it would not conflict with national and international aims in relation to the global climate and nature crises. Furthermore, the proposed use would be unlikely to result in a material increase in the use of energy. Consequently, the impact of the proposal on greenhouse gas emissions is not considered unacceptable in this instance.
- 12.22 Impact on biodiversity is a key consideration in the suitability of development. Policy 3 of the NPF4 states that developments should conserve, restore, and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance. Measures should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development. The relatively small scale of this development, being the conversion of an existing building to a single house, which is within a developed area of hard-standing, is not likely to harm biodiversity or prejudice nature corridors. The need to consider even minor measures to enhance biodiversity can be highlighted by the use of an informative.

#### **REASONED CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 Planning Authorities are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. An assessment has been carried out against the provisions of the OHLDP and the relevant policies of NPF4 and consideration has been given to all relevant material planning considerations.
- 13.2 The application for conversion of an existing outbuilding/barn to create a new dwelling and erection of garden shed in Knock, Point, Isle of Lewis is considered to be appropriate in principle, form and scale. The application scheme provides a good level of design, and the plans show sufficient levels of parking provision, connection to services and space for bin storage. The dwelling will not give rise to unacceptable effects on landscape or townscape character, visual impact, drainage, or road safety. It is acknowledged that there will be an element of overlooking from windows on the side elevations, but those impacts are not considered to be detrimental given the separation distance between properties on the north side of the dwelling; or to the south given the proposed mitigation. Adequate space can be provided within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles and the existing means of access to the site and croft beyond is considered appropriate and can be managed by condition.
- 13.3 As a result, subject to conditions, it is concluded that the development would be acceptable and would accord with the National Planning Framework 4 and the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan 2018 as a whole and, in particular with NPF4 Policies 1, 2, 3, 14, 16, 17, 29 and OHLDP Policies DS1, EI2, EI4, PD1, PD2 and NBH1. No material considerations exist which would justify a decision other than in accordance with the Development Plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 14.1 It is recommended that the planning application be approved subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 to this Report.