

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to	Full Council
Date	8th December 2011
Subject	Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design Guide for the Urban and Rural Environment – Guidance Note 14: Conversions in Rural Areas
Portfolio Holder(s)	Commissioner Alex Aldridge
Lead Officer(s)	Nia Haf Davies
Contact Officer	Nicholas Philip Williams
Nature and reason for reporting	
<p>To seek the Commissioner's approval for the adoption of the Supplementary Planning Guidance that has recently been out for public consultation and has also been scrutinised and approved by the Council's Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The revised Supplementary Planning Guidance will form part of the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'Design Guide for the Urban and Rural Environment' and supersede the previous guidance note 'Buildings in the Countryside'.</p>	

A – Introduction / Background / Issues
<p>In May 2008 the Council adopted new Supplementary Planning Guidance called 'Design Guide for the Urban and Rural Environment'. The 'document' consists of a range of standalone leaflets that provide concise guidance on various design issues that are commonplace in planning applications.</p> <p>One of the guidance notes is called 'Buildings in the Countryside'. The note primarily deals with the conversion of rural outbuildings into residential dwellings. Since the Design Guide's adoption in 2008 the note has been used as a material consideration in determining new applications for conversion schemes.</p> <p>It has come to light over the past twelve to eighteen months that the note should be updated in order to provide more detailed and explicit guidance on what is acceptable in design terms.</p> <p>On Anglesey it is generally considered that the best examples of outbuildings suitable for conversions have already been developed and that in effect new applications now have tended to involve what is left within the rural environment. This has led to issues in regards to the quality of design in various conversion schemes.</p>

A – Introduction / Background / Issues

Issues such as percentage tolerances for demolition and extensions have been raised in internal meetings, as has the suitability of different types of buildings for conversion schemes.

B – Considerations

It is standard practice for all supplementary planning guidance documents to go through a period of internal consultation in order to obtain the professional opinions of relevant members of staff.

A two-month public consultation has also been carried out, which gave external consultees and the general public an opportunity to comment on the document.

It is felt that the revised version of the guidance note is more robust and informative than its predecessor following the extensive rounds of internal and external consultation.

C – Implications and Impacts

1	Finance / Section 151	N/A
2	Legal / Monitoring Officer	N/A
3	Human Resources	N/A
4	Property Services	N/A
5	Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	N/A
6	Equality	N/A
7	Anti-poverty and Social	N/A
8	Communication	N/A
9	Consultation	N/A
10	Economic	N/A
11	Environmental	N/A

C – Implications and Impacts		
12	Crime and Disorder	N/A
13	Outcome Agreements	N/A

CH – Summary

Following the extensive internal and external consultation periods, the Supplementary Planning Guidance is now ready for adoption in order for it to be used as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

D – Recommendation

In light of the recent changes to the Council’s executive powers arrangement, it is felt that the Proposed Changes version of the document should be presented to the Commissioner for approval.

Name and author of report **Nia Haf Davies**

Job Title **Planning Manager (Policy) Joint Planning Policy Unit
(Anglesey and Gwynedd)**


Date **8th December 2011**

Appendices:

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design Guide for the Urban and Rural Environment – ‘Guidance Note 14: Conversions in Rural Areas’

Background Papers:

None

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version


**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
 DESIGN GUIDE FOR THE URBAN & RURAL ENVIRONMENT**


GUIDANCE NOTE: 14

CONVERSIONS IN RURAL AREAS



**Isle of Anglesey County Council
 Planning Service
 Council Offices
 Llangefni
 LL77 7TW**

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk


 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version


1.0 Design Guide for the Urban and Rural Environment

- 1.1 This leaflet is one of a series of guidance notes that form the Supplementary Planning Guidance document ‘Design Guide for the Urban and Rural Environment’, which is a material consideration in the decision-making process.
- 1.2 It may be necessary to refer to several guidance notes from the series for certain planning applications. The range of guidance notes in the ‘Design Guide’ series may be subject to additions and modifications in the future. Please ask at reception for an up to date list of the guidance notes included in the range. This note replaces ‘Guidance Note: 14 – Buildings in the Countryside’, which was adopted in March 2008.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Anglesey is predominantly a rural area with a wide range of buildings in the countryside that have ceased to be used for their original purpose. Many of these buildings are considered to be of significant architectural and/or historic merit. Due to their obsolescence many of these disused buildings are increasingly at risk. The conversion of such buildings presents an opportunity for them to be safeguarded and brought back into beneficial use.
- 2.2 The re-use and adaptation of buildings in rural areas must not have a detrimental impact on their original character or the surrounding environment. Technical Advice Note 6 ‘Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities’ states: *“Conversion proposals should respect the landscape and local building styles and materials. If a planning application is submitted for the re-use of a building which the planning authority considers has a significant adverse effect on the landscape in terms of visual amenity, it may be appropriate in connection with any proposed structural changes to impose conditions to secure an improvement in the external appearance of the building.”*

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version

2.3 There may be occasions when the Council examines the re-use of buildings under agricultural permitted development rights to assess whether there is genuine agricultural justification for the conversion of a structure for domestic or commercial use. Technical Advice Note 6 'Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities' states: *"Planning authorities should examine particularly carefully applications for re-use of buildings erected under agricultural permitted development rights. This should alert them to the possibility that the building was in breach of planning control when it was substantially completed, because there was no genuine agricultural justification."*

3.0 Scope of Conversion Schemes


3.1 Whilst conversion schemes are usually associated with traditional buildings, there is scope for changing the use of more modern buildings where it can be established that the current use is now obsolete.


3.2 The Council will carefully examine applications for the re-use of modern buildings to ensure that there are sound planning reasons for a conversion to a residential unit and that its current use is genuinely obsolete.

3.3 Conversion schemes involving obsolete buildings which could potentially enhance the visual appearance of an area may be viewed favourably. There may be instances where a modern building is of architectural merit and is worthy of conversion to an alternative use.

3.4 However, there may be instances where some buildings are not considered to be suitable for conversions. Such buildings include those that are structurally unsound, of temporary construction, eyesores which should be removed in the interests of improving the aesthetic quality of an area, those that are situated within flood risk areas and buildings that retain their original functions e.g. residential garages that are used for vehicle storage.

3.5 Any application for the conversion of a modern building, such as a residential garage, must be accompanied by a written statement of justification to establish that its current use is genuinely obsolete.

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version

4.0 List of Basic Requirements


4.1 The following list provides details of the information that should accompany a full planning application for conversion schemes.


- Full structural survey and detailed drawings incorporating findings of the survey. A visual survey is insufficient.
- Design and Access Statement.
- Details of materials to be used in the proposed scheme e.g. traditional Welsh slate, wooden sash windows, etc.
- Details of rebuild and new build shown on submitted plans.
- Ecological inspection and survey.
- Existing and proposed cross-sections.
- Existing and proposed floor levels and roof heights.
- Existing materials.
- Location plan.
- Photographs of the existing structure and immediate surroundings.
- Confirmation that the site is not within a TAN 15 flood risk area.

5.0 Policy 55 – Conversions (Ynys Môn Local Plan)

5.1 The conversion to a dwelling or holiday accommodation of an existing building which is not located within or on the edge of a settlement will only be permitted where:-

- i. The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding or extension tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling.
- ii. Any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained and any features of historical or architectural importance are safeguarded.
- iii. The conversion scheme respects the character, scale and setting of the existing building, and involves only minor external alterations, unless it can be demonstrated that significant enhancement of the appearance of the building will be secured.
- iv. The proposal, including any associated curtilage and infrastructure, would not result in an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, or harm the amenities of the locality.
- v. Satisfactory access, parking, amenity space, and sewerage arrangements are provided.

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version


6.0 Criterion of Policy 55


6.1 i).The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding or extension tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling

- All principle accommodation should be contained within the original footprint with any extensions for additional rooms only.
- There should be a floor area of at least 40m² per unit within the existing building to provide an acceptable standard of residential accommodation. There may be instances where the floor area for holiday use buildings can be lower than 40m².
- Any demolition of existing walls must be kept to an absolute minimum. In instances where the demolition of existing walls exceeds 25% a written statement of justification must be submitted.
- Excessive levels of demolition of structurally sound elements of a building must be avoided.
- Whilst it is preferable that the existing roof structure is present, this is not essential as partly or unroofed buildings will be considered for conversion purposes. The existing ridge height and proposed roof pitch should not be altered significantly.
- Extensions must be subservient to the original structure.

6.2 ii). Any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained and any features of historical or architectural importance are safeguarded

- Schemes should adopt the principle of adapting to the building rather than radically changing its appearance to suit the new use.
- Features that no longer perform a function in new conversion schemes such as steps or recesses must be retained in order for the building's original use to be understood.
- Traditional or vernacular windows and doors should be retained, repaired and re-used where possible. Where it is deemed necessary to introduce new or replacement windows and doors they should match the originals.
- When making internal alterations it is important that as much of the original fabric is retained as possible, along with special features of interest.

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk


 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version


6.3 iii). The conversion scheme respects the character, scale and setting of the existing building, and involves only minor external alterations, unless it can be demonstrated that significant enhancement of the appearance of the building will be secured

- Existing openings should be reused in order to retain a building's character and to reduce the impact of any new works.
- New openings must be kept to an absolute minimum and take account of the overall proportions of the building.
- The impact of creating new openings has to be taken into account, not only the size and function of extensions.
- Traditional buildings are often grouped together as they all served a common function. Conversions of buildings into multiple units should retain these linkages.
- No new chimney stacks, porches or dormer windows should be introduced into a conversion scheme.
- Traditional conservation style roof lights should be used where it is deemed necessary for additional openings in the roof space.

6.4 iv). The proposal, including any associated curtilage and infrastructure, would not result in an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, or harm the amenities of the locality.

- Curtilages should be kept to the minimum area required for occupation of the premises and follow established boundary walls and hedgerows.
- Existing boundary walls, hedgerows and trees should be retained where possible.
- Farm buildings are usually very functional in appearance. Therefore, simple surfaces such as gravel or loose stones are usually more appropriate than formal finishes such as paving and concrete kerb stones.
- Hard surfaces should be avoided where none previously existed.
- The colour of the surfacing material should be similar to those found in the surrounding built environment.
- There should be a balance between hard and soft landscaping in the curtilages of converted buildings.
- Careful consideration should be given to the siting of external paraphernalia such as refuse storage and washing lines. It is imperative that such items are discretely positioned within the curtilage so as not to detract from the aesthetic qualities of the building.

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version

- All new and proposed boundary treatments should respect and reflect the local vernacular such as stone walling, timber fencing and/or cloddiau.


6.5 v). Satisfactory access, parking, amenity space, and sewerage arrangements are provided.


- Garages should ideally be located in existing outbuildings on the site. In cases where no additional structures are available, new garages (if required) must be constructed from similar materials to the principle building and be subservient in form and position to the living quarters.
- Parking should be in accordance with the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Parking Standards’ (2008). Careful consideration should be given to the sensitive siting and design of car parking associated with the conversion.
- Sites subject to conversion schemes should be easily accessible.
- Details of appropriate sewerage arrangements should be included in all new applications.
- Where there is an opportunity to improve the existing foul and surface water arrangements, this should be encouraged.

7.0 Ecological Inspections and Surveys

7.1 It is imperative that a full ecological inspection is undertaken and a survey accompanies all conversion proposals. The survey should include evidence of use by bats, which are protected by law, and if present, provide details of appropriate mitigation measures to cover the whole site including trees, not only the building itself.

7.2 The survey should illustrate how bat-friendly features are to be included in the scheme. Additionally, when nesting birds are present, work may have to be restricted to certain times of the year. For further advice please contact the Council’s Ecological and Environmental Advisor.

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version

8.0 Building Methods and Materials in the Conversion of Traditional Buildings


- 8.1 Traditional methods and materials should be used in the conversion of traditional buildings as modern building techniques are usually considered to be inappropriate and in some cases harmful to the historic built environment.
- 8.2 For example, most traditional buildings used lime mortar and plaster. Therefore, materials used to repair or replace original masonry should have similar properties.
- 8.3 Cement pointing is hard, non-resilient and comparatively non-absorbent. The use of such a material in a traditional building can cause rapid weathering and should be avoided.
- 8.4 Further information on traditional building methods and materials can be found on the Cadw and Building Conservation websites, which are included in the 'Contacts' section.
- 8.5 It should be highlighted that neither of these websites are associated with the publication of this document.


9.0 Pre-Application Consultations

- 9.1 Prior to submitting an application for the conversion of a building it is strongly recommended that a pre-application consultation is sought with the Council's Planning Service to discuss any potential issues that may arise.

10.0 Checks

- Check whether the site is situated within any environmental or landscape designations e.g. the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Reference should be given to other guidance notes in the 'Design Guide' SPG range on issues such as sustainable design and landscaping.

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Supplementary Planning Guidance
	Design Guide For The Urban & Rural Environment
Guidance Note	Conversions in Rural Areas
Planning Service	Proposed Changes Version


11.0 Contacts

11.1 The contacts provided are independent organisations, with the exception of the Built Environment and Landscape Section, and are not affiliated with the publication of this document in any way. The list is intended to be a guide for people looking for further information on the issues contained within this SPG.

Built Environment	-	www.anglesey.gov.uk
Building Conservation	-	www.buildingconservation.com
Cadw	-	www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

12.0 Further Reading

Cadw	-	Chapels in Wales – Conservation and Conversion
Cadw	-	Converting Historic Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice

 CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	Phone	(01248) 752428
	Website	www.anglesey.gov.uk