The future of traditional farm buildings
Rural Heritage and Spatial Planning Advocacy Groups

Hendall Manor Barns, Heron’s Ghyll, East Sussex, TN22 4BU

10th November 2014: 1030-1630

Throughout the English countryside, the future of our traditional farm buildings is at stake.

Traditional farm buildings, which provide the English countryside with a distinct sense of place, setting and local character, have continued to be lost to dereliction in large numbers. Long-term economic, technological and demographic changes have left many farm-buildings without a modern use, while national, European, and international policy arrangements fail to create the right incentives for farmers to actively maintain them.

There is now a recognition among practitioners that a collective strategy and solution to ensure that traditional farm buildings are not lost needs to be developed. The need for a solution has become even more pressing in light of recent government changes to the planning system, including the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), prioritisation of sustainable development objectives, the introduction of new prior approval schemes, changes to Common Agricultural Policy priorities, alongside the ongoing housing crisis and threat to greenbelt land. The independent heritage sector and those involved in maintaining these buildings need to work with government, existing legislation and good practice advice, to collectively identify, address and influence the future policy regime to ensure that the long-term financial incentives and maintenance of traditional farm buildings is ensured.

The Heritage Alliance, through its Rural Heritage Advocacy Group and Spatial Planning Advocacy Group, would like to invite you to a day workshop addressing the future of traditional farm buildings and to collectively identify solutions and a strategy for their future.

The day will discuss the current problems facing traditional farm buildings by members of the specialist English Heritage Advice Team, alongside providing several case studies of various solutions ranging from high-quality design, agri-environment schemes, subsidies, and change of use. This day will finish with a panel debate and open floor discussion, which will act as an opportunity to identify key common objectives and solutions which could help inform practitioners, while also forming the basis of future EH good practice advice. They day will also provide the opportunity to discuss problems and solutions as well as network with others working with issues.

Main objectives of the workshop

- To address the current problems facing traditional farm buildings in England, and to provide a discussion on the best possible means of securing their future on a national scale.
- Gather opinions and work out routes forward to influence future EH best practice
- Capacity Building: Information-sharing to identify issues and key trends concerning TFBs.
- Networking: opportunity to connect with others working on the maintenance and conservation of TFBs.
Day Program

1030-1100: Registration and coffee on arrival

1100-1230: Context - What are the issues that traditional farm buildings face?

- Welcome from the Heritage Alliance (Jonathan Thompson, Country Land and Business Association)
- Welcome from Hendall Manor Barns (Peter Young, Hendall Manor Barns)

Presentations:
- The scale of the problem facing traditional farm buildings (Vince Holyoak, Head of Rural Policy, English Heritage)
- Problems facing the re-use of traditional farm buildings: the evidence base
- What is the future political, economic and financial landscape that traditional Farm buildings face?

Questions/discussion

1230-1300 Case Studies/Outcomes:

- Introduction: Jonathan Thompson (Country Land and Business Association, and Co-Chairman, Heritage Alliance Rural Heritage Advocacy Group) (Chair): Scope of the problem and outline of potential solutions and outcomes

- Solutions and Case Studies:
  - Public subsidy especially via Agri-Environment Schemes, and how this is declining – (Jo Barnes, Historic Environment Specialist, Natural England)

1300-1400 Lunch (Including tour of Hendall Manor Barn: The Stone Barn, The Old Dairy, and 17th century sandstone barn)

1400-1500 Outcomes and case studies continued:

- Conversion to new uses, commercial, residential (Judith Norris, The Rural Planning Practice)
- Finding Sustainable new uses for farm buildings (Ben Greener, Heritage Lottery Fund)
- What happens when conversion does not seem to be a viable or allowable option? (Anthony Peers, Deputy Chairman, Ancient Monument Society and heritage consultant)

1500-1510 Tea Break

1510-1615 Panel and open-floor discussion: Is there a future for traditional farm buildings?

- Within the current and future economic, political and social context, what is the future for Traditional Farm Buildings?
- When is subsidy the solution?
- When is conversion the solution?
- Is dereliction/demolition a solution and what does this mean in practice?
- Are changes needed to planning legislation, policy, or practice? Are Local Authorities right to refuse almost all applications for TFB conversion outside existing larger settlements on “sustainability” grounds? Should much greater weight be given to heritage and design factors in these decisions?
- What would be the main points that English Heritage should prioritise in future best practice advice?
- Can anything be done about the cost of bringing in services?
- What else could be done to solve or mitigate the problems?
Chair: Henry Russell OBE (Chartered Surveyor, Chairman of Heritage Alliance’s Spatial Planning Advocacy Group)

Speakers from the day will form a discussion panel to elaborate and draw on problems and solutions presented throughout the day.

- **Introduction**: Summary of main points from the day
- **Speakers**: Address the question based on the day’s discussions: do traditional farm buildings have a future, and how?
- **Questions/discussion**