

## Draft Supplementary Guidance 11

# New Uses for Redundant Rural Buildings







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## Introduction

Traditional buildings in the countryside make a significant contribution to the quality of the landscape of the district of Stirling. As well as dwellings, there are many different types of buildings for example barns, stables, mills, churches and schools.

However, changes in rural life and farming practices, have caused many buildings to become redundant and fall into disrepair.

Not only derelict buildings, but also insensitive conversions can be eyesores in the landscape. This guidance explains and illustrates general design principles to encourage owners of redundant rural buildings to bring them back to use by converting them in a sensitive manner, retaining their traditional architectural character and enhancing their setting.

The Council generally supports the re-use of such buildings provided that the building is of quality and its character is not materially altered.

A variety of new uses may be appropriate depending on the location, including housing, holiday accommodation, outdoor education, retail, catering, light industry and craft workshops. Proposals for a particular new use will be assessed against the Local Development Plan policies.





## Design Advice

Converting a redundant rural building is rarely a straightforward exercise, and we strongly recommend that you seek professional design advice.

The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland can provide you with a list of architects.

Relevant addresses and telephone numbers are listed on the back page of this leaflet.

## Suitable Buildings

A building which is suitable for conversion must be:

- Redundant, with no requirement for the previous or a related use in the foreseeable future;
- Structurally sound and capable of conversion without major structural change. A structural report will normally be required;
- Capable of being serviced with water, drainage, electricity and vehicular access to the satisfaction of the relevant authority;
- Visually worth retaining, with the potential to contribute to the rural landscape;

Applications are considered according to the particulars of each case. Always discuss your proposals with a Planning Officer at an early stage before you formally submit your planning application.



## Design Guidelines

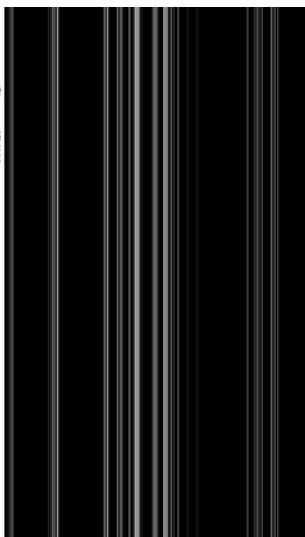
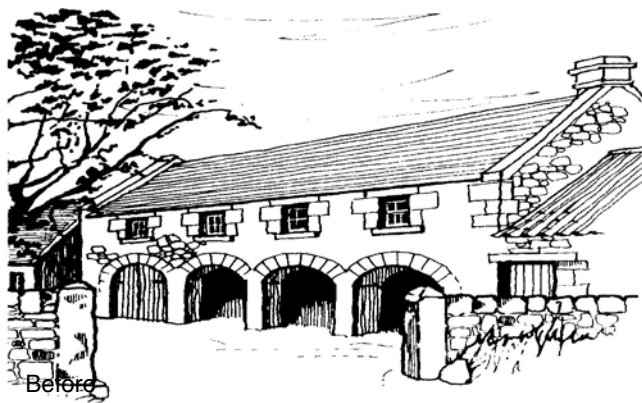
The majority of redundant rural buildings are farm buildings. Most of these are simple traditional structures with few openings and plain steeply pitched roofs, usually covered with slates or pantiles.

While the following guidelines use farm buildings as examples, the same principles also apply to the conversion of other rural buildings.

## General Principles

The design of any conversion should respect the basic shape and traditional design of the original building, and should not materially alter its character.

Always take account of the materials, architectural details and surroundings – and in new works, use materials and details which match or are in keeping with the original building.



After

Sensitive conversion scheme, utilising existing openings, introducing limited new opening discreetly on less visible elevations.



### Creating more space

Many redundant rural buildings may not be capable of conversion without creating more floor area, either by building an extension or by converting the roof space in the existing structure.

If you want to create more space, discuss your proposals with a Planning Officer before you submit your application. The following guidelines will help you:

- Limit the size of the ground floor of your extension to one which is both subordinate and sympathetic to the original building(s).
- Preserve the traditional character of the original building(s).
- Do not adversely alter the character and form of the existing roof - roofs are often a dominant feature in the countryside and may be visible from some distance.
- Keep the design and pitch of a new roof similar to that of the original building (normally between 39° and 44°). It must not extend above the existing roof ridge.
- Retain architectural features such as hay lofts, dovecots, skews and gable details, barge-boards.
- Dormer windows are not traditional features in most farm buildings. However, where traditional dormers or haylofts exist at present, additional dormers may be considered as long as they match in character and appearance and do not dominate the roofline.



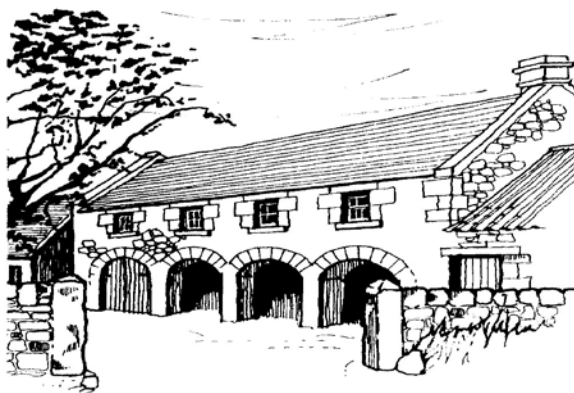
### Surroundings and garden ground

Rural buildings are often sited in visually open locations, and farm buildings in particular may be grouped around a courtyard.

If your conversion means using adjoining land to provide a garden, space for drying areas, car parking, green houses or storage sheds, respect the existing character and landscape setting of the building, by locating these directly internally within the courtyard or away from prominent views. Also:

- Retain and extend existing traditional boundary treatments where appropriate (eg. Stone dykes, post and wire fences, hawthorn hedges).
- Retain existing trees and planting
- For new planting, use trees and shrubs which are in character with the rural setting. Fast growing conifers eg. Leyland Cypress and exotic, ornamental shrubs are not generally considered appropriate, because of their 'suburban' appearance.
- Retain traditional stone slabs, setts or gravel surfacing and avoid the use of extensive areas of tar-macadam.

Full details of proposed boundary treatments and landscaping will normally be required with any application.



Keep farm yards simple: Diagram illustrates insensitive conversion of building and inappropriate outdoor space.

### Using other outbuildings

Any associated outbuildings which are not part of the main conversion may be suitable for garaging, storage or workshops. It is important to preserve the character of these buildings, and the Council will expect them to be retained and re-used as an integral part of the proposals.

### Wildlife Interests

Uninhabited buildings often support a variety of wildlife, including various plants, birds and mammals. Some, for example barn owls and bats, are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. If you find, or suspect the presence of any wildlife in your building, contact the local Scottish Natural Heritage office for advice on legislative requirements prior to starting any work. Wilful damage or destruction of legally protected wildlife or their habitat may result in prosecution.



### Barn Owls:

generally breed in March, with the young leaving the nest 2 to 3 months later. They usually roost on high ledges or crevices in barns and outbuildings, or in holes in trees. Their feeding habitat is rough grassland and pasture, and they are important in controlling rodents.

### Bats:

breed in the summer months. They usually roost in roof spaces and external crevices, and return to the same roost each year. They do not generally cause damage or seek to share space with humans.

Both species are sensitive to human disturbance, and therefore susceptible to any work on the building they inhabit eg. Roof repairs, timber treatment, pest control chemicals.

Their survival depends on the preservation of their living environment, which may mean timing your work to avoid their breeding season. Consider designing owl or bat 'boxes' into your renovated building.

### Permissions

The conversion and change of use of any rural building will require some or all of the following permissions:

- Planning Permission
- Listed Building Consent
- A consent under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Building Warrant

All relevant addresses and telephone numbers are listed on the back of this leaflet.



## Contacts

Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent and Landscape Advice

Planning Services, Stirling Council, Viewforth, Stirling, FK8 2ET.

Tel: 01786 443002. Fax: 01786 443003.

Building Regulations

Building Standards, Stirling Council, Viewforth, Stirling, FK8 1AY.

Tel: 01786 442828.

Architectural Advice

Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, 15 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, EH1 2BE.

Tel: 0131 229 7205.

Wildlife Advice

Scottish Natural Heritage, The Beta Centre, Innovation Park, University of Stirling, FK9 4NF.

Tel: 01786 450362.

Drainage and Flood Risk Advice

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

SEPA, Perth Office, Strathearn House, Broxden Business Park, Perth, PH1 1RX.

Tel: 01738 627989





## Further Information

**Please contact:**

Economy, Planning and Regulation  
Planning Services  
Stirling Council  
Viewforth  
Stirling  
FK8 2ET

Telephone: 01786 442522

E-mail: [LDP@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:LDP@stirling.gov.uk)

[www.stirling.gov.uk/localdevplan](http://www.stirling.gov.uk/localdevplan)

If you need help or this information  
supplied in an alternative format  
please call 0845 277 700.

