

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

SITE: WITTONS FARM, BOLTON BY BOWLAND. BB7 4NZ.

PROPOSAL: CONVERSION OF BARN TO DWELLING. REPLACEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS WITH A GARAGE, CREATION OF CURTILAGE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW PACKAGE TREATMENT PLANT.

INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for the conversion of the barn to a dwelling. A separate Heritage Statement, Structural Survey, and Protected Species Survey are submitted with the application.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Witton's Farm is located 3km north of the village of Bolton By Bowland. It comprises a stone farmhouse, with stone outbuildings a large detached stone barn, and various modern agricultural buildings.

The Farmhouse is on the western side of the group with the barn to the east. The farmhouse formerly had a barn attached to it on the east side which has now been incorporated into the living accommodation. The front of the farmhouse and the front of the detached barn in which there is a wagon entrance are in line with each other and both face south. To the front and rear of the farmhouse is garden area. The remaining land around the house and the detached barn is a concrete yard area. The yard and garden are in parts defined by substantial well built dry stone walls.

The modern agricultural buildings are positioned behind the stone barn on the northern side of the site and to the northwest. There are two concrete block single storey outbuildings close to the southwest of the stone barn.

This group of buildings is set on the hillside and is surrounded by open grazing land. The land slopes downhill from west to east. Vehicle access is from the south along a private farm track and there is an additional track which approaches from the west. Public footpaths approach the site from the north, south, east and west passing through the farmyard.

ASSESSMENT

The following saved policies of the Adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan are relevant to the proposal:

Policy G1 – expects high standards of design quality.

Policy G5 – outside main settlements/village boundaries planning permission will only be granted for small-scale developments.

Policy ENV1 – development in the AONB will be required to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.

Policy ENV7 – development having an adverse effect on protected wildlife species will not be granted planning permission.

Policy H2 – outside settlement boundaries residential development will be limited, but allows for the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings.

Policy H15 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to external impacts.

Policy H16 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to the building.

Policy H17 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to the scheme design.

The following elements of national policy are also relevant to the proposal.

Nation Planning Policy Framework, Section-“Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes” paragraph 55 promotes sustainable development in rural areas. Development for new dwellings in the countryside is acceptable in limited circumstances including where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and would lead to an

enhancement to the immediate setting or the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset.

NPPF section –“Conserving and enhancing the natural environment” paragraph 115 states that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas.

NPPF section-“Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” paragraph 128 requires applicants to provide information to describe the significance of any heritage assets including any contribution made by their setting. A separate Heritage Statement has been prepared. In making planning decision the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and putting it to a viable use consistent with their conservation is to be taken into account.

PLANNING HISTORY

3/2004/0634 Proposed new porches on north and south elevations and 2 narrow windows on south elevation near south east corner approved 16/08/2004

3/2003/0480 Use of redundant barn as extension to dwelling. Alteration to existing farmhouse and pigsty, and garden room extension approved 10/07/2003.

INVOLVEMENT

Pre-application advice was received on this proposal reference RV/2012/ENQ/00033. The advice confirmed that the proposal to convert the barn to a separate dwelling house is acceptable in principle. In regard to the design of the conversion several suggestions were made and these have been considered and incorporated into the scheme now submitted. In this regard as suggested the two outer narrow windows on the east elevation have been deleted. In the south elevation the small window at first floor level adjacent to the small existing door have been deleted. However in regard to the suggested removal of two central roof lights in the north elevation this has been reduced to one roof light. A justification for retaining one roof light is put forward in this statement.

The pre-application advice in relation to the proposed garage was unclear as regards the proposed use of materials. Subsequent email discussion following the written advice

confirmed that rendered concrete block with a corrugated sheet roof would be considered as traditional and appropriate materials as they reflect the character of many agricultural buildings in the locality. See appendix.

EVALUATION

The main planning issues relating to this proposal are:

- the principle of the development;
- the suitability of the building for conversion;
- the landscape impact;
- the design of the scheme;
- impact on neighbours
- highway safety; and
- nature conservation interest.

Each of these issues is assessed in turn below.

Principle

Policy G5 is the starting point for consideration of this proposal. The policy allows for small-scale development, including "other small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area which would conform to the policies of this Plan". The policy does not define what may be regarded as small-scale uses. However, the object of the policy is to protect the countryside from inappropriate development. The proposal is for the conversion of an existing building within an established group of buildings, it does not introduce new built development into an area of open countryside. Thus, the nature of the proposal is considered to be appropriate to a rural area. This is borne out and amplified by reference to other policies that specifically refer to residential development and conversion of buildings in the countryside. This policy is broadly in line with the NPPF paragraph 55 which allows for the re-use of buildings in the countryside.

There are policies in the Local Plan which specifically relate to proposals for the conversion of barns to dwellings. Policies H2 and H15 refer to whether the building is one that is suitably located for conversion. The building is not an isolated building in the landscape where problems of 'urbanisation', with which policy is primarily concerned, might arise. This is not likely to occur since the conversion relates to an existing building, the garages

will replace existing modern agricultural buildings close to the barn and the extension of the garden/curtilage area around the barn is confined to the area of the existing farmyard.

Building Suitability

The building is regarded as one suitable for conversion with regards to criteria in Policies H15 and H16. In particular:

- the property is within a group of buildings which includes a dwelling where services and utilities are already provided so that no additional expenditure by public authorities on the provision of infrastructure would be required;
- a structural survey is submitted with the application. It confirms that the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without needing major rebuilding;
- the building is of sufficient size to provide suitable living accommodation without extension; and
- being of traditional form and materials, the character of the building and its materials are appropriate to its surroundings. The building is worthy of retention.

Landscape Impact

The scheme will have no damaging impact on the character or appearance of the landscape within which it sits and, thus, the proposal complies with the relevant criteria of Policies ENV1, H15 and H17. The proposed garden curtilage for the barn conversion is within an area presently occupied by modern agricultural buildings and the concrete farm yard area from when it was a working farm. The new package treatment plant will not be visible above ground. There is no proposal to alter the vehicle access which will continue to be the private track which approaches from the south. The conversion will have very little impact on the visual amenities of the AONB and will make an improvement by the reduction in the number of modern outbuildings around the barn and the replacement of the corrugated sheets on the lean to roof with slate.

This complies with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 55 which requires the re-use of redundant or disused buildings also to include an enhancement to the immediate setting

and paragraph 115 in that the re-use of this traditional farm building preserves the building for the future and its contribution to the cultural heritage of the area.

Design

The proposed design of the conversion is of a high standard and complies with the various criteria and Policies G1 and H17. The barn is constructed out of stone and has large horizontal quoins to each corner and beside the wagon entrance. The roof is covered in stone flags laid in diminishing courses. The roof is asymmetrical with the longer roof slope on the south side. There are two high level windows in the south roof slope and none on the north side. On the rear of the barn is a single storey lean-to also built of stone with a corrugated sheet roof within which is set three large panels for light.

The layout of the rooms within the barn has been informed by the position of the existing door and window openings to take best advantage of these and to ensure that the number of new openings is kept to a minimum. On the south elevation there are no new openings proposed. The roof lights retain their current position and are slightly enlarged; the wagon doors are replaced by a glazed entry. On the north elevation the existing openings are reused and the corrugated sheet roof on the lean to roof is replaced with a slate roof. The position of the roof light is altered in order to provide light to the more central parts of the ground floor of the building. The replacement of this roof covering with the bank of new roof lights is a significant improvement to the appearance of the building. Additionally on this elevation four 'breathing holes' are proposed on the upper part of the main barn to light the first floor area together with three new roof lights. On the west elevation one new window opening is proposed on the ground floor. It is a similar size to the forking hole above and is slightly off-set beneath, otherwise the existing opening are re-used. On the east elevation again all the existing openings are reused but in addition there are two new 'breathing holes' proposed.

The new window, breathing holes and roof light are considered to be the minimum amount of openings required to light in the interior of the building. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are some openings already within the building and the design of the interior has been created to take best advantage of these, the size and depth of the barn requires some additional openings in order to provide adequate lighting. The new openings have been designed to reflect the traditional agricultural character of the building and a domestic appearance has been avoided by the use of 'breathers' and roof lights.

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The internal layout has incorporated a full height space in the centre of the barn. The various floor levels within the barn have also been retained. Whilst the pre-application advice requested the removal of the central two roof lights on the upper roof slope of the north elevation after careful consideration this has been reduced to one roof light. The ability to light the central part of the barn from this roof light is a key element to the design of the internal space which includes a full height space in the centre of the barn. In addition the positioning of roof light in traditional barns usually follows the regular pattern of the bays and the position of the trusses inside the barn. The roof lights are positioned to reflect this traditional pattern and are positioned centrally over bays 1 3 and 5.

Neighbour Amenity

The change of use of the barn to a dwelling is compatible with the existing residential use of the farmhouse. Each property will have its own garden area and parking area. The driveway to the property is to be shared.

Highway Safety

No alterations to the existing vehicle access are proposed.

Nature Conservation

A protected species survey is submitted with the application and concludes that the proposed conversion and demolition work is unlikely to result in the loss or destruction of a bat roost or cause disturbance, injury or death of a European Protected Species. The proposal complies with Policy ENV7.

Judith Douglas BSc (Hons) Dip TP, MRTPI

Janet Dixon Town Planners Ltd

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May 2012

Appendix

Pre-application advice

Gareth Fort
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gareth.fort@ribblevalley.gov.uk
RV/2012/ENQ/00033

April 27, 2012

Dear Ms Douglas,

PRE APPLICATION ADVICE WITTONS FARM, BOLTON- BY BOWLAND

I am writing in response to your request for pre- application advice in respect of the above- named proposal site.

You propose the conversion of the barn to provide detached annexe accommodation. You submitted detailed plans, drawings and supporting documents with the enquiry.

In assessing your proposals I have been mindful of policy in the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan in respect of conversions (H15, H16 and H17) and those relating to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ENV 1.

ENV 1 seeks to protect the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It states that the AONB's landscape and character will be protected and enhanced. Any development within the AONB will need to contribute to the natural beauty of the area. The environmental effects of proposals will be a major consideration, and the design, materials, scale, massing and landscaping of development will be important factors in deciding planning applications.

Policy H15 relates to the location of the building to be converted, which states that the conversion of appropriate buildings within settlements or which form part of already defined groups is acceptable. As the building is within an existing group, and benefits from an existing access and services, I am confident that the proposal complies with this policy.

Policy H16 relates to the building itself. It states that the building should be structurally sound and capable of conversion, without the need for extensive building or further alterations, which would adversely affect its character or appearance. The building should be of sufficient size to provide for minimal living accommodation without the need for further extensions, which would harm the character or appearance of the building. The building should be in appropriate materials and worthy of retention because of its intrinsic interest. The building should have a genuine history of use for agriculture or other rural enterprise.

I am confident that the Barn that is proposed for conversion fulfils all of the above criteria. The building is of a sufficient size and would require no further extensions. I note that you include a structural survey with your pre- application material, which evidences the building's capability for conversion.

Policy H17 relates to design matters. Proposals for conversions will be permitted where the design of the conversion is of a high standard and is in keeping with local tradition, particularly in terms of materials, geometric form and window and door openings. The Plan gives further detail on the general design requirements for barn conversions. It states that the "single most important external feature of a traditional farm building is the roof... large unbroken roof slopes are a characteristic of the Borough and should be respected." New openings in walls should be resisted to protect the simple rural character and detailing of the buildings. Modern materials should be avoided in the repair and finishing of the conversion. Curtilages of converted buildings should be tightly drawn and uncluttered, and not have any adverse impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In general the design is sensitive to the existing character of the building and the area, however, I do have some concerns with some of the new openings proposed; and would suggest that the following new openings be deleted in any submitted scheme

East Elevation: The two outer narrow windows at first floor level

South Elevation: The small window at first floor level adjacent to the small existing door

North Elevation: The two central rooflights

In relation to the garage, I am confident that this would fit within the suggested curtilage outlined in Graeme Thorpe's letter to Mr Flanagan on 28th May 2010. The garage would replace an existing agricultural building and is likely to be of similar or less impact on the surrounding landscape. In terms of design of this element, and bearing in mind guidance in Policy ENV 1, traditional materials that are sensitive to the area's local character would be preferable.

It is my view that, in principle, the proposed scheme would be acceptable in planning terms, although as outlined above I have concerns in relation to some of the design elements of the scheme. The barn would be acceptable for residential use, however, you asked about presentation of the application as conversion as annexe accommodation to the main farmhouse. It is my view that the same policies outlined above would be considered in the determination of any planning application in relation to this type of use, however, it would be for the applicant to identify the proposal accordingly, and make reference to the use in the design & access statement.

Please be mindful of the fact that the above advice has been given on the basis of the level of information submitted as part of the pre-application enquiry, which sought guidance on the general principle of development on this site.

I trust that you find the above observations of use and stress that they represent officer opinions only, at the time of writing, given without prejudice to the final determination of any application submitted.

Yours sincerely

Gareth Fort
Pre-planning advice officer

Ms J Douglas
10A Whalley Road
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 1AW

Further Clarification on pre-application advice

From: Gareth Fort [mailto:Gareth.Fort@ribblevalley.gov.uk]

Sent: 03 May 2012 09:32

To: Judith

Subject: RE: Pre-application enquiry RV/2012/00033

Hi Judith,

As discussed, the design of the garage would be appropriate bearing in mind some concerns about avoiding overly domestic or urban rendering finishes

Kind regards,

Gareth

From: Judith [mailto:judith@jdixontownplanners.co.uk]

Sent: 03 May 2012 09:16

To: Gareth Fort

Subject: Pre-application enquiry RV/2012/00033

Dear Gareth,

Please can you clarify the advice you gave about the materials for the garage. "In terms of design of this element, and bearing in mind guidance in Policy ENV 1, traditional materials that are sensitive to the area's local character would be preferable." What type of materials would you consider appropriate?

We designed the garage in line with advice we received from Graeme Thorpe recently at an application for a barn conversion at Bay Gate Farm. At first we had proposed a standard domestic style garage in stone with a double pitched slate roof. Graeme considered this too domestic in appearance; we amended the garage to reflect the design of an existing outbuilding (mono-pitched roof) that the garage was to replace. We designed the garage at Wittons Farm similar in shape to the outbuildings already there. As the roof of the garage is near flat to keep it low and "agricultural" it is proposed to have a profiled metal roof as many agricultural sheds are. The walls are proposed to be rendered - which is quite traditional. If we change the material for the roof for the garage we will have to alter the pitch of the roof.

Kind regards

Judith

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