

320130488P

Design, Access & Planning Statement

**In support of Planning Application for a change of use from one
dwelling into two residential dwellings**

On behalf of

Stonyhurst Estate, c/o Agent.

Introduction

This Statement supports a planning application to form two residential dwellings at Higher Jud Falls, Stonyhurst College to enable staff to live within the vicinity of the college. Currently Higher Jud Falls is too large for one family therefore sub dividing it into two dwellings will increase the capacity of the site and provide accommodation for two families. Paragraph 14 and 49 and 55 of the NPPF talks about sustainable development and sustainable development in rural areas which this application complies with fully.

Site Context

The site is to the north of the village settlement of Hurst Green and is within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There is a need for residential dwellings for staff and this building would sub divide to form two dwellings and enable the building to be used to capacity. As the external elements of the building will not be changed and remain as existing this will not have any visual or harmful impact on the AONB.

Design and Appearance

The proposed dwellings will remain a two storey building and be sub divided to provide 3 bedrooms, lounge, kitchen, WC and family bathroom providing family accommodation to each dwelling. The proposed dwellings will be sited as shown on the location map and to the west of the existing dwellings at Lower Jud Falls. The scheme will also provide 2 parking spaces to the east (side of the one property) and 2 parking spaces to the west (side of the other property). Materials used will remain as existing as no external alterations are proposed with this application.

Layout

Access to the site will be the existing access from Knowles Brow. The layout proposes a garden area to the rear and side of the properties which is already fenced to ensure the amenity of the neighbouring residents is not compromised.

Landscaping

The fences and existing planting surrounding the site will remain as existing. There will be no sub-division of the front garden

Access

The existing access will remain from the existing driveway off Knowles Brow. There is adequate room on the site for the turning and manoeuvring of vehicles and room to provide 2 parking spaces per property, as well as room for emergency services if they were ever required on site.

National Policy Context

In considering the recent publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 14 of this document states that 'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF also advises that 'Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development', with paragraph 55 advising that 'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'.

In considering the proposal against the above, it is clear that the site is suitably located to maintain the vitality of an existing rural community. The site is re-using an existing building and is therefore considered to be an entirely sustainable. It is also in close proximity to the college and within walking distance.

Finally, paragraph 17 of the NPPF highlights as one of its 12 'Core Planning Principles' that planning should 'Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value.'

Ribble Valley Borough Council Policy Context

Ribble Valley Borough Council Local Plan was adopted in 1998 and is currently under review, and the following saved policies saved in 2007 are considered relevant to the site and the development proposal.

Sub Division of Properties

Planning Policy H7

In areas of Open Countryside such proposals will be refused unless specific justification exists.

In areas of open countryside such subdivisions can have a similar effect to new buildings, with increased pressures for car parking and garaging increased pressures on curtilage etc.

As an existing 8 bedroom dwelling it could have more vehicle movements than two, three bedroom dwellings therefore reducing traffic movement.

This policy will be implemented via the development control process. As well as the normal development control criteria regard will also be taken to the history of the building and any previous use, the need for housing in rural areas and the benefit of the availability of smaller units in such areas.

In relation to the above policy, this application meets the required needs of the above policy as the subdivision of the existing building will ensure it is used to its full capacity and would provide family accommodation for two families working at the college. The impact on this proposal will be minimal due to re using an existing building; therefore no changes are proposed to the external elevations or access, leaving the external materials as existing. There will be no visual or harmful impact on the immediate area as there are no external changes proposed.

Planning Policy G5

Outside the main settlement boundaries and the village boundaries planning consent will only be granted for small scale developments which are:

1. essential to the local economy or the social well-being of the area; or
2. needed for the purpose of agriculture or forestry; or
3. sites developed for local needs housing (subject to Policy H20 of this plan); or
4. small scale tourism developments and small scale recreational developments appropriate to a rural area subject to Policy RT1; or
5. other small scale uses appropriate to a rural area which confirm to the policies of this plan.

This policy recognises the need to protect the countryside from inappropriate development. In doing so, it must be accepted that the countryside is a working area and a source of many Ribble Valley residents' livelihoods. As such it is subject to change and to development pressures. If properly managed, these can be accommodated without harming the basic character of the area.

The change of use of the large residential dwelling at Lower Jud Falls will create one additional dwelling on site for a local need (college staff accommodation). As it stands the property is too large for a family to live in and has been redundant for some time therefore the change of use will allow the building to accommodate 2 families within the existing footprint of the large dwelling without any detriment to the local area nor the building or its setting therefore; it complies with points one and three of the policy. As no material changes are taking place the countryside is protected from inappropriate development, and will provide much needed accommodation for college staff within an area of the Borough which is a large employer with much employment being provided to local people. As properties within Stonyhurst do not come up to rent very often the College feel that they can provide a good standard of accommodation for two families in what is a large redundant house within their ownership which will then mean that at least two employees and their families will be able to live within close proximity to their place of employment.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy ENV1

The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. In addition development will also need to contribute to the conservation of 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 the development will be important factors in deciding planning applications (see Policy G1). The protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment will be the most important considerations in the assessment of any development proposal. Regard will also be had to the economic and social well – being of the area.

The Forest Of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is of recognised national landscape value. The principal duties of the local planning authorities that administer this area are the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty. This does not mean that no development will be allowed in the area. Where possible new development will be accommodated through the re use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Indeed other policies in this plan accept that there is a need for development to allow for appropriate employment generating facilities, countryside recreation opportunities and housing for those in need. However this should not be at the expense of those qualities which make the area special. This policy will be used to ensure that development which does take place is both appropriate and actually enriches the landscape character of the area.

This application meets Policy ENV1 as the design, materials, scale, massing and landscaping of this proposal will remain as existing. The conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area will remain unharmed as the application proposed is for the sub division of an existing large dwelling and no external changes are proposed within the application, nor is any increase in domestic curtilage proposed, ensuring that the landscape character of the area remains the same with no harmful or visual impact.

The proposal will reuse a building which is not fit for purpose by virtue of its size scale and mass and increase the efficiency of the site by allowing the change of use to form two, three bedroom dwellings which will be easier to fill than a large eight bedroom house. This can be done very simply by creating two internal walls with the elevations remaining the same, this in turn has no adverse impact on the AONB, the local area nor the street scene on Knowles Brow.

Summary

In considering this proposal against the guidance contained within the NPPF and that of the Ribble Valley Local Plan Adopted in 1998 saved in 2007 planning permission should therefore be granted for the creation of one additional residential dwelling as there are no adverse impacts in doing so that would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the change of use of the existing large dwelling into two smaller units. The proposal will have no adverse impact on the existing dwelling at Higher Jud Falls as the alterations can successfully be completed by the creation of two internal walls with no changes taking place to the external of the property.

There is already adequate parking on the site and the domestic curtilage is already in keeping with the size of the property, the division of this will not have any formal boundary treatment therefore ensuring that the plot retains its character and simplistic form. Due to the location of the site, the scheme is considered an entirely sustainable development, and is therefore in accordance with the current and relevant Local and National Planning Policies.