

Design and Access Statement

71a Little Lane Longridge

Planning Application for change of use from office to 2 bed ground floor flat including a retrospective application for a variations to the front elevation and disabled access ramp

Planning History

3/2004/0249 Change of use from shop to flat - Refused during the housing moratorium

3/2006/1001 Proposed Bay window extension to existing shop including DDA access ramp and internal alterations including new window opening and closing 2no existing window openings - Approved

Alterations/improvements to the shop where carried out in 2006 giving the premises and the general street scene a much needed improvement. The premises has been used as an office for Michael Waite Financial Services Ltd (a co-director of MAAK Properties Ltd - and therefore at a 'discounted rent') until recently. The business employs two people and has now moved to work from home - a trend which is more and more prevalent. This premises is only small and unsuitable for more than three/four people. It is not on any of the main shopping streets and parking is limited for frequent visitors, either as a shop or an office. The current office is below a flat and even with current sound insulation standards, noise disruption is caused in either direction. There are no other business premises on Little Lane, which is a residential street. An application to submit for shop/office on this entirely residential street would raise a number of objections from local people.

When the property was bought by MAAK properties the premises was vacant and had been for many years. Various other business premises at the end of Little Lane/Fell Brow have closed and are now residential properties because the area cannot sustain small businesses like Berry Lane. Although the letter from Dewhurst Homes state that even this area is proving difficult to let.

There are many recent approvals for conversion of offices to self contained flats including:

3/2011/0023 81 Berry Lane, 3/2009/0533 47-51 Berry Lane, 3/2010/0400 25 Inglewhite Road, 3/2010/0401 23 Inglewhite Road.

Proposal

The proposal to convert to residential use requires internal alterations only. Externally 2 car spaces are retained, one for the first floor flat and one for the proposed flat. One opening to the bay window needs to be amended to have a large enough sash window for escape purposes. The application for approval for retrospective works involves the loss of a bay window to make way for a more space saving disabled access ramp and the remaining bay to made a square bay. The revised ramp position enables the parking to the front elevation to be more flexible taking account of on street parking misdemeanours.

The supporting email from Dewhurst Homes Estate agents confirms that commercial units are proving difficult to let in Longridge and that it would make more sense to utilise the space for residential. This view is also supported by Reeds Rains.

This application for change of use therefore conforms with Ribble Valley's current housing policy and would provide a much needed rental property at the more affordable end of the market.