29 DEC 2010

For some time the Spring Tavern has proved to be a non viable business and has failed to sell, resulting in the business ceasing to trade in April of this year. This planning application provides documentation that gives evidence of the trading position of the business prior to closure, the attempts to sell the business, and gives evidence of businesses in the area that provide a similar service to the community. It therefore proposed that development of the site into domestic property is of far greater benefit to the area than dereliction, which has happened to another public house within immediate vicinity.

The site has previously been granted planning consent for a small domestic development of 4no terraces to the far end of the site leaving space for car parking between the proposed development and the public house, the approval for this will not expire until March 2013. This new planning application looks to convert the existing building which is part pub and part domestic into 1no 3 bed and 1no 2 bed domestic properties which, along with the adjoining property, will create a small back of footway terrace of 3 units. Subsequently, as there will no longer be a need for the car parking area, the new proposals will utilise this space by including additional new domestic property which will now consist of 6no 3 bed semis in total.

The site is situated a mere 250 meters along from the start of the A57 Improvement Corridor as defined within the Local Plan, and as such the development proposals will be expected to be of a high standard, and the layout, scale, design, external appearance, boundary treatment and landscaping must enhance the appearance of the area.

Other development in the immediate area is particularly varied and includes a derelict former public house, small commercial developments of industrial units, a long row of back of footway mill workers style properties and semi detached properties and bungalows set back from the road. There are also clear views of larger detached property that are part of the recently built estate behind the site. Directly opposite the site across the road is the river Etherow with green belt agricultural land beyond affording panoramic views with the village Mottram in the distance.

Views on to the site can be gained mainly from the A57 from passing vehicles or pedestrians. The topography of the land behind is of wild grassed banking up to a

mature row of dense tree planting that separates the land from the Longdendale Trail, with rear gardens of the estate property to the other side of the trail. The mature planting and elevation is such that during the majority of the year there is no view of the rear of the existing building and little more of the car park from the trail, and during the months when the foliage isn't adorning the trees the view is still greatly obscured. The site can also be viewed from the neighbouring property at Hillside, but again through trees and shrubbery.

Comments received from High Peak Planning Department, after consultation on previous design layouts, were that the development needs to provide adequate amenity space especially in relation to the refurbishment element, the use of the extension as garage parking would be visually incongruous and the development should look to avoid contrived and remote parking on the rest of the site. Also, the design should take into consideration the views onto the site from A57 and from the Longdendale Trail behind, and the overall design solution should support the street scene. It is felt that all of these aspects have been dealt with in the current design layout.

The settlement pattern of the area is, by the nature in which it has evolved, irregular and organic and the style of domestic property is modest in its appearance and vernacular detailing.

To give some context of the development in its location and setting, the journey along the A57 from the north will start with a distant view of a red brick property, which is Hillside, in an elevated position with a large mature Sycamore tree at the bottom of the front garden overhanging the footway and carriageway. As one gets closer to the site the view of the new build property will become evident at first broken up through the spread of the large tree, but then opening up a full view of the new houses set back from the highway. All the while there will be the existing back of footway building creating a pinch point at the end of the development. The approach from the south will create a similar felling of changing landscape starting with the closed view of the existing building with the townscape subsequently opening up as one proceeds along. It is felt that this design will create changing views in keeping with the surrounding settlement pattern and thus support the street scene.

The new build properties, which are to be 3 pairs of semis, move away from previous design solutions where a large block of properties towards one end of the site created a large central parking area which possibly disconnected the overall development. Now the semi detached property allows the development to be spread across the site creating a fluid layout that seamlessly connects the existing building and the neighbouring property. At the same time the solution allows the spread of vehicular parking, detracting from this element and creating focus on the actual properties themselves.

In consultations with the planning department and the highways authority the new vehicular crossover has been identified as an acceptable design solution, however planners have expressed the desire to minimise the openings onto the site and look to keep the street line continuous. The solution put forward for vehicular movement utilises a partial one way system, the proposed crossover at the northern end of the site will be used for access for the six units, with only the one most northerly unit using it as a means of egress, providing adequate movement on site to allow vehicles to exit in a forward gear and affords appropriate site lines in line with Highways requirements. It also mitigates concerns over the influence of vehicles in regards to the visual aspect and also the amenity of the dwellings. In order to make the design work the existing side extension will be demolished, which again negates particular concerns over the visual incongruousness of garage parking put forward in previous layouts. Finally, in order to keep the continuous street line, it is proposed to remove the existing hedgerow and replace this with a new stone wall reflecting that present in the approach to the site.

The parking provision is 2 spaces per unit which is in line with current design guidance.

Particular consideration has been given to the front elevation of the new property, whereby the design has looked to be understated and modest while in keeping with traditional forms. It should be noted that the requirements of the Environment Agency and the Building Regulations have had a significant impact on the look and feel of the elevations of the property, notably the requirement to set the ground floor level above the predicted 1 in 100 year flood levels, creating a stepped approach to the front door. The final design is one that incorporates the character of the traditional small scale villas historically prevalent in the High Peak. Such houses are

arranged semi-detached, set back from the street and often give the appearance of a larger detached home by being symmetrical with halls adjoining, which is how these properties have been designed. The pitch of the roof to the front elevation has incorporated into it a small flat roof dormer to accommodate the internal layout, and it is felt that this was a more appropriate detail than a gable frontage which, whilst possibly more traditional, would have created a more imposing building due to the nature of a gable and the height created through the requirements of the flood levels. Again, to create a more understated development the rest of the frontage is simple with bay windows removed from the design.

The construction materials of the semis will be stone front elevation (or a high quality artificial stone) to match the existing building adorned with simple flush quoins, stone sills and lintels, with the rear and gable elevations being in a through coloured off white or cream colour render. The roof tiles will be flat profile concrete tiles (or high quality artificial slate). The doors and window frames will be finished in a graphite grey colour.

This application includes proposals for demolition of the existing rear extension, which is one of white washed engineering brick and flat roof connected to a corrugated acrylic canopy over what was a beer garden, and subsequent erection of a new double height extension on a smaller footprint. Planners comments received on this element have resulted in the dimensions of the extension being reduced and currently come within the tolerances of permitted development as this was seen as a way of mitigating any possible overbearing visual impacts of the additional storey during the months when this element would be visible from the Longdendale Trail. In addition the smaller footprint increases the amenity space which again was a concern on previous site layouts. The choice of materials for the extension are proposed to be an off white or cream through coloured render to all sides with roof tiles to match existing and window frames to be of graphite grey. It is proposed that the existing stone will be reused to create the new gable once the side extension has been demolished.