

**Planning application for the proposed conversion of an existing
outbuilding / workshop to a live/work unit at
The Beeches, Marsh Hall Lane,
Chapel-en-le-Frith for Mr. D. Wright.**

Planning, design and access statement

Site description

The building for which an alternative use is being proposed, is located on the western margin of Marsh Hall Lane, Chapel-en-le-Frith, adjacent to and on the south side of the residential property known as The Beeches. The building is owned by the applicant in association with the domestic occupation of The Beeches, the building under consideration lies outside of the residential curtilage of the property. The applicant also owns the agricultural land which adjoins the property.

Until recently, the front section of the building has been utilised as an engineering workshop by the applicant's father, who operated a small business repairing golf buggies. The rear section of the building comprises a stable, a former tack room subsequently used as a wood store, and a larger general storage area.

The building is constructed of breeze block to the walls, built upon a low brick plinth. The walls are cement-rendered externally and painted white. The roof is dual-pitched and constructed of natural blue slate. The building measures 12.7 metres in length, 7.65 metres in width, and has a maximum height of 5.8 metres to the ridge.

Although the primary uses of the building have been restricted to the ground floor, the building is two-stories in construction with a loft space within the roof. There are a number of existing door and window openings, including double timber-boarded garage doors on the front elevation, and a sliding timber-boarded garage-sized door on the rear elevation. There is a potential to insert Velux windows within the roof, which could facilitate usage of the first floor area.

The building is structurally sound and is therefore capable of conversion into an alternative use without substantial rebuilding.

National Policy Considerations

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering sustainable development

PPS1 sets out the Government's key objectives for the planning system and defines the main aims for sustainable development, advocating protection of the environment; the prudent use of natural resources; and the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing

PPS3 sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Governments' housing objectives. This PPS reflects the Governments commitment to improving the affordability and supply of housing in all communities, including rural areas. The delivery of housing in rural areas should respect the key principles underpinning this PPS, providing high quality housing that contributes to the creation and maintenance of sustainable rural communities in market towns and villages.

One of the Governments' key objectives, is that Local Planning Authorities should make effective use of land by re-using land which has been previously developed. In identifying suitable locations for housing development, priority should be given to previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings.

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4): Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth and Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

The Governments' policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitable constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives

Policies contained within both PPS 4 and PPS7 favour the re-use and conversion of buildings in the countryside for economic development purposes, particularly those which are closely related to towns or villages. However, it is acknowledged that whilst re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building.

Local Planning Policies relevant to this application

The building is located outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary of Chapel-en-le-Frith, within an area designated as Countryside within the High Peak Local Plan. As such Policies GD4, GD5, OC1, OC4, OC7 and TR5 of the High Peak Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2008 are applicable.

Policy GD4 Character, Form and Design

This stipulates that planning permission will be granted for development provided that:

Its scale, siting, layout, density, form, height, proportions, design, colour and materials of construction, elevations and fenestration and any associated engineering, landscaping or other works will be sympathetic to the character of the area, and there will not be undue detrimental effect on the visual qualities of the locality or the wider landscape.

Policy GD5 Amenity

This states that planning permission will be granted for development provided that it will not create unacceptable loss of, nor suffer from unacceptable levels of, privacy or general amenity, particularly as a result of overlooking, loss of sunlight or daylight, overbearing effects, pollution or traffic safety and generation.

Policy OC1 Countryside Development

This policy aims to protect the countryside for its' own sake and to direct most new development to existing built-up areas. However, certain forms of development, which are an integral part of the rural economy are acceptable. Whilst most forms of development of an urban character, will normally be resisted in the countryside, the policy does make provision for agricultural developments, farm diversification schemes, recreation and tourism facilities, and small-scale extensions to existing development.

Policy OC4 Landscape Character and Design.

Where development is considered appropriate in the countryside, as defined in policies OC1 and OC3, it will be required to be of an appropriate design which complements and relates to the particular type of landscape in which it is located. It will be necessary to have regard to and conserve (amongst other factors) the landform, and the scale, layout, design and detailing of vernacular buildings.

Policy OC7 The Re-Use of Buildings in the Countryside.

This stipulates that planning permission will be granted for the re-use of buildings in the countryside provided that;

- (i) the proposed use, including associated activities, will not materially harm the character of the area or the building itself; and
- (ii) the building is of adequate size, shape, construction and structural integrity for the use without significant enlargement or alteration; and
- (iii) the form, bulk and general design of the building is in keeping with the surroundings; and
- (iv) service provision, including access, parking and amenity areas will not cause undue harm to the setting, character or appearance of the building or to the wider landscape; and
- (v) provision is made within the scheme to safeguard the roosts of bats and owls.

Where appropriate conditions will be imposed to control the extent of demolitions and reconstructions, future extensions / alterations, and other development within the curtilage which might be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

Policy OC7 generally advocates that new uses for rural buildings should provide employment opportunities in the countryside. A residential use is not normally acceptable unless it can be shown that a business use is not feasible, or unless it forms part of a scheme for business related conversion. A live / work unit would fall within this latter category.

Policy BC1 External Materials

This states that planning permission will be granted for development provided that the type, colour and specification of all external materials and the way they are applied will be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the immediate surroundings and the wider area.

Policy TR5 Access, Parking and Design,

This aims to ensure that new development makes safe and appropriate provision for access and egress for all modes of transport including the private car. Such development should include a high standard of design and layout having regard to the parking, access, manoeuvring and highway guidelines set out in Appendix 1 (Parking Standards) of the Local Plan.

The proposed scheme

The applicant proposes to change the use of the building and convert it into a live / work unit for his occupation. The building, as existing is of sufficient size for conversion without significant alteration or extension. The building is also well maintained and is structurally sound. No rebuilding works would be required to facilitate the conversion.

The applicant is a design engineer by profession and it is his intention to both live in and work from the premises. It is therefore proposed retain the front section of the building at ground floor level, for business use, whilst also providing residential accommodation within the rear section of the building, and at first floor level.

Design Considerations

The conversion scheme proposes no significant alterations to the external appearance or character of the building.

It is proposed to create a workshop and office on the ground floor of the front section of the building, with a kitchen, dining area and lounge to the rear of the business space.

Currently, the building contains a workshop and storage facilities on the ground floor with a loft space at first floor level, but the ceiling height between the ground and first floor is somewhat high at 3 metres. It is therefore proposed to lower the internal ceiling height by 0.7 metres which would facilitate the provision of two bedrooms and a bathroom at first floor level.

Both the ground and first floor accommodation would have an internal ceiling height of 2.3 metres, to comply with Building Regulations. There would be no alteration to the external height of the building, with the ridge height remaining the same.

There would be no additional openings created within the walls of the building, as there are sufficient existing window and door openings which would be utilised. On the front elevation, the 2 no. existing pairs of garage doors would be replaced by 2 no. glazed openings each containing a personnel door with side panels. On the rear elevation, the large door opening would also be fitted with glazed doors with glazed side panels. The existing windows within the

building, would all be replaced by new timber casement window frames. New timber window frames would also replace the 2 no. picking holes currently existing on the gable elevations at first floor level. In order to provide additional light to the first floor accommodation, it is also proposed to insert 3 no. Velux roof lights on the side (south-facing) elevation, and one further roof light on the north-facing roof slope. The existing stable doors on the north-side elevation would also be replaced by windows of similar width, with the lower wall section beneath the windows being timber boarded externally, to replicate the stable-door type appearance. An existing window opening on the north-side elevation, would also be reduced in width, allowing an additional external door to be fitted into the existing opening, to serve the new kitchen area.

Access and Parking Consideration

Externally, it would not be proposed to enlarge the curtilage of the building, nor to encroach into the adjoining agricultural field. The residential curtilage would be restricted to the area of land to the front and north side of the building which forms its existing curtilage. The building already benefits from sufficient parking space on the frontage, to accommodate at least two cars. A small private amenity / garden area would be formed within the 3.4 metre wide strip of land along the northern side of the building adjacent to the existing garden wall which separates the building from The Beeches.

The access road known as Marsh Hall Lane, is unadopted and in private ownership. It therefore does not benefit from a tarmac surface, but is constructed of hardcore which is maintained in good condition. The access into Marsh Hall Lane emerges onto Manchester Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith, the B5470, at a point where a 30 mph speed restriction is in force. The road at this point is straight in alignment, with adequate visibility in both directions. As such the intensification of the use of this access proposed by the current scheme, would not cause any detriment to highway safety.

Conclusion

The development as proposed to convert the building into a live / work unit would comply with all relevant National and Local Plan policies. The scheme aims to provide workspace within the building, and living accommodation for the operator of that business. This creates a sustainable form of development, eliminating the need to travel to work for the occupier of the premises. The proposed development thus complies with the requirements of National Planning Policy documents PPS1 and PPS3 providing both employment space and living accommodation in an existing building which is currently vacant. The scheme also complies with the requirements of policy documents PPS4 and PPS7 relating to the Change of Use of Buildings within the Countryside, by providing a business use within the premises.

The minimal changes to the external appearance of the building renders the scheme compliant with Policies OC4, BC1, GD4 and GD5 of the High Peak Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2008. The size, scale and general design of the building would remain unaltered, and therefore there would be no adverse

impact on the appearance of the building itself nor of the setting of the building in the surrounding landscape.

The provision of on-site parking, commensurate with the size of the building, and the provision of an adequate access, comply with the requirements of Policy TR5 of the High Peak Local Plan.

The building has previously been occupied and operated as a workshop, and in essence the current proposal would not involve any material increase in the intensity of use of the building. The property is of adequate size, construction and structural integrity for the conversion works to be implemented without any rebuilding or significant alterations or enlargement to the building. The form, bulk and general design of the building will remain unchanged. The access to the building, and provision of parking space to the front would also be as currently exists; whilst the outdoor amenity area would be limited to land currently within the curtilage of the building, and directly adjoining the garden of The Beeches. The proposed external works involved with the submitted scheme, would therefore cause no undue harm to the setting or character of the building, nor harm the appearance of the wider landscape. As such, the scheme would also comply with Policies OC1 and OC7 of the High Peak Local Plan.

With the principle of conversion established, and a detailed scheme which would cause no demonstrable harm to the building, its' setting within the landscape, or to highway safety, it is requested the Local Planning Authority approve the development, subject to any conditions which may be considered appropriate.