3581 Reddish Farm

Design and Access Statement

This report has been prepared to support of planning application for conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to residential use and alterations and extensions to the farmhouse at Reddish Farm, Reddish Lane, Whaley Bridge.

This planning application is a part resubmission of application HPK/2011/0276.

Location

The site falls within the built-up area of Whaley Bridge adjacent to open countryside and overlooking Toddbrook Reservoir. It sits adjacent to a residential housing estate and close to a primary school and recreational ground.



Site Location

Site - Context

History

Reddish Farm has ceased operating as a farm for many years. The original farm was a dairy farm, with a small on-site dairy which processed milk for delivery to the local community. Since the 1960s the farm ceased operating as a dairy farm and was used as a base for Slack's Dairy where imported milk was processed.

There is a history of residential development on the site. The fields surrounding the farm were sold off to the council in the 1960s for housing land. Later, in the 1980s, the fields immediately around the farm buildings were granted permission for residential development.



The site is surrounded by residential development

The farmhouse was occupied by Mr Slack throughout his life. The farm has been unoccupied since Mr Slack's death. There have been no previous planning applications for the site.

Existing Site

The farm is in a beautiful setting with views stretching across the open meadows. It provides a walking route from the local area to the town centre along footpaths leading to the recreational area. The farm is bounded by residential development and included within the boundary of Whaley Bridge.





The farmhouse and barns sit within a residential area

The farmhouse and buildings form an isolated agricultural group within a residential area. The area of land associated with the farm is 4.26 hectares which is not enough land to support a farm business. This land is currently used by Overton Hall Farm for summer grazing.

Approach

Reddish Lane is a Public Right of Way which forms part of the Mid Shires Way.
There is a public right of way from Mereside Gardens, which leads via a stile onto the side of Unit 6. This path will be reconfigured to lead forwards to join the access road, giving access to the existing right of way.

The site is approached via Reddish Lane, which opens onto meadows with views of the reservoir and hills beyond. The road is single track, bounded by a stone wall and mature trees to the left, and a ditch to the right.



Farmhouse



Barn 2

Existing Buildings

The existing buildings on the site comprise a stone farmhouse and a series of barns and outbuildings built in coursed natural gritstone with stone tile, slate or corrugated sheet roofing. The barns vary in height with some two storey structures enclosing the courtyard with single storey additions beyond. The barns are nineteenth century or older with traditional agricultural features, including stone steps and stone tile roofs. A small two-storey barn has evidence of residential use with the provision of stone chimneys at the gable ends.

The existing barns are all “tied” shippons, in that they require the cows to be tied at the neck – these do not meet current animal welfare standards. There are no modern agricultural buildings on the site. The barns are not large enough to store farm machinery. A well used public footpath also runs though the farm yard. The close proximity of houses to the farm (20ft away) precludes the keeping of livestock due to flies, noise and smells which would upset the residents. Therefore the farm is unviable.

- The buildings are not listed.
- The site is not in a conservation area.
- The site is not in a flood zone.
- There are no Tree Protection Orders affecting the site.
- The site is connected to mains sewerage and power supplies.



View from the footpath



Farmhouse

The existing farmhouse is constructed in natural coursed gritstone with a stone tile roof. It occupies a central position within the farmyard and is surrounded in part by a low stone wall which defines its curtilage.



Farmhouse



Barn 2

The farmhouse is a utilitarian dwelling and does not take advantage of views towards the reservoir, but faces the farmyard. It has not been updated since the 1960s. The house is entered through a lean-to building which also houses the dairy. This lean-to further compromises the narrow space between the buildings.

The single storey barns to the South of the house had been used as residential storage and garages for the house.

The farm buildings also include a separate stone garage/implement shed situated towards the reservoir, which sits within the curtilage of the farmyard, but falls outside the built-up area boundary into open countryside. There is a large open hayloft behind the barns.



Barn 1 – implement shed



Barn 6 opposite the farmhouse



Barn 3-4



Barn 5

Supporting Information

A Structural Survey of the barn buildings has been completed and the report is included with this submission.

An Ecological Survey of site has been completed and the report is included with this submission. There was no evidence of bat roosting activity in the buildings.

The recommendations will be incorporated into the development. Bat boxes and bird boxes will be installed and mature trees and hedges will be maintained. Plants and shrubs which encourage insects and birds, noted in Appendix 3 of the Ecologist's report, will be included in the soft landscaping scheme for the communal areas.

A Tree Survey has been completed and the report is included with this submission.

Design Approach

Site

A distinctive quality of this site is the setting with views across the meadows towards the reservoir beyond. New openings have been inserted into the house, positioned to take advantage of the views and direct interest away from adjoining properties.

The existing complex has a strong sense of enclosure provided by the buildings themselves and existing traditional stone boundary walls. This sense of enclosure has been retained and enhanced within the proposed conversion.

The courtyard between the Farmhouse and Barns is deemed to be too narrow for regular vehicle use, so a road has been provided to give access to garaging at the rear. This allows the courtyard to remain open as a shared pedestrian access for the barns.

Garages are accommodated beside garden stores to form a hayloft like building with a less domestic appearance, in response to planning officer comments. This linked outbuilding screens the private gardens from view maintaining the agricultural feel of the common areas.

The surface of the road leading to the site will be retained as crushed gritstone with rows of stone sets to marking the site entrance and to form transition strips to slow approaching vehicles. The access route within the development will be finished in crushed gritstone with stone flagged amenity areas and stone sets within the courtyard areas, as noted on the proposed site plan, drawing no. 3581/06.

The courtyards between the barns and the farmhouse and the barns and the new dwellings will use differing textures of hard landscaping to demarcate entrances, parking areas etc. to form a non-uniform organic surface. These hard landscaped areas will be softened by shrubs in stone troughs or beds.

With regard to the other local residents, the proposals seek to maintain the enjoyment of the public routes though the site, while introducing some screening and higher boundary walls for the privacy of the dwellings. The existing stone boundary stone walls will be maintained at 1.2m where views are required from rear gardens and 1.8m high stone walls will be used where privacy is required. A landscaped strip will be retained against boundary walls of gardens to soften the development.

Existing Farm Buildings

As the farm buildings are closely spaced, with a relatively small central courtyard, it was deemed more appropriate to provide five small dwellings with modest gardens, rather than two or three larger ones. The agricultural feel and character is maintained within the courtyard setting while the treatment of the areas facing away from the courtyard have more glazed areas and rooflights. The same materials are used in the extensions and alterations as the existing buildings, with stone walls and slate or stone tile roofs.

Unit 1
The existing walled orchard adjacent to Unit 1 will be retained and incorporated as a private garden for the farmhouse. The space within the barn is to be retained as a garage, garden store and garden room.

All other land around the rear of the barn, beyond the built-up area boundary is retained as agricultural land, although access would be required to maintain the building. The remains of a pump house to the rear of this unit are to be retained and reused as a store, with roof deck above.



Barn 1 – existing openings will be retained and reused



Barn 1 – rear pump house to be retained as store

Unit 2

Unit 2 is a charming two storey stone building which appears to have been built as a small cottage. It has a chimney and stone steps leading to the first floor. A large lean-to shelter runs along the rear and side of the building, which has been incorporated into the new dwelling as a glazed garden room. The existing features will be retained in the conversion and extension scheme.

The proximity of Unit 3 has caused a careful approach to the space between the two dwellings.



Barn 2 – existing openings will be retained and reused



Barn 3 – existing roofscape and stone detailing will be retained

Units 3 and 4

The existing roofscape with two pitched roof and valley gutter has been retained in the conversion scheme comprising Units 3 and 4. Existing openings are retained and reused wherever possible. Car shelters have been introduced at the rear with attached garden stores to limit the garden equipment on view and screen the private gardens from the rear of the development. The

carport/garden store building is similar in footprint and location to the existing Hayloft, but much shorter in height.

Unit 5 and 6
Unit 5 is a two storey dwelling with a detached single garage to the rear accommodated in the corner barn. Rooflights have been introduced rather than new window openings to preserve the character of the existing building. The proposals include an extension of the first floor to over the existing footprint to reconcile the roofs.

Unit 6 is single storey, with a single detached garage accessed from the front of the dwelling although the existing footpath access will be diverted to allow a private parking area to the side.



Barn 5 – Existing details quoins, lintels and exposed rafters to be retained



Barn 6 – Existing openings and stone detailing will be retained

Farmhouse

With the conversion of the barn buildings, the objective of the alterations for the farmhouse was to 'turn the house around' and focus the activity within the house away from the barns, towards the private garden to the east. The living and dining rooms will face the rear garden. New windows are proposed with views towards the reservoir; a garden room has been added to provide a sunlit room.

The lean-to dairy which includes the house entrance will be removed to increase the space outside unit 6. A new entrance on the other side of the house will reduce the need for access to the 'front' of the house as there will be no door on the barn side.

These additions and amendments could be deemed to be permitted development, as they do not extend beyond the principal elevation of the house. However, as the main approach to the development is from the rear of the farmhouse, the proposals for the house have been included in this submission.

The existing stone wall will be retained on the boundary and raised where required to achieve a private amenity space to the rear of the house. A private garden and garage space is accommodated in Unit 1.

Residential Amenity

Within the development care has been taken to avoid overlooking and to provide private amenity areas for each dwelling.

The position of the habitable rooms within the barns and the farmhouse help to avoid overlooking and enhance privacy. Bathrooms and circulation spaces are directed towards the courtyard while bedrooms face onto private gardens wherever possible. New window openings have been formed in a staggered arrangement between dwellings to allow plain glazing to be used in some courtyard windows.

The southern boundary of the site is adjoined by residential properties on Mereside Gardens. Proposed Unit 6, has a common boundary with No.11, is single storey and will have a 1.8m high boundary fence and therefore should not cause as loss of privacy or amenity to the existing dwelling.

Landscape

The existing landscape of the farm and buildings is a mixture of hard surfaces with lawned areas, with stone field boundaries. Mature trees line the unadopted access road and are grouped around Unit 1.

The large mature trees along the access road will be retained, while a selection of self-seeded trees immediately adjacent to Unit 1 will be removed and the orchard beside it will be thinned.

An indicative hard and soft landscape scheme is shown on the proposed Site Plan 3581/06, using the existing landscape elements to maintain the agricultural character of the approach and the common areas of the development. Private gardens will be enclosed by stone walls or screened by garages. The new stone boundary walls will be softened by grass verges and shrub planting.

Access

Existing Access

The access to the site is via Reddish Lane, which is unadopted and single vehicle width.

The Public Right of Way WHA 470 shares this access and forms part of the Mid Shires Way. Public Right of Way WHA 471 runs to the side of Unit 6 to connect to Mereside Gardens.

The farmyard provides turning space for vehicles.

Proposed Access

The access road to the farmyard is an important amenity for local residents, providing access to a footpath along the side of the reservoir to a recreational area. The footpath is to be retained as existing without diversion; the boundary walls of the dwellings bordering the footpath have been drawn back to retain some of the existing openness.

The proposals include widening the existing access road to from passing places without removing the existing stone wall or causing damage to these important landscape trees. This is to retain as much of the existing character of the site as possible, while creating adequate means of access to the new dwellings.

The proposals will comply with requirements set out Part M of the building regulations, with at least one level threshold per dwelling and ground level toilets.

Planning Policies

Affordable Housing – H9

As Whaley Bridge has a population greater than 3,000, the threshold for provision of affordable housing is an area of 0.5 hectares or more of 15 dwellings or more.

Permission is sought for the creation of 5 new dwellings. Therefore no affordable housing is required under the terms of policy H9. It should be noted that the conversions include a mix of smaller dwelling sizes, including two and three bedroom units.

Sustainability

The development site is within the built up area of Whaley Bridge, close to schools and recreational area, within walking distance of the town centre and close to local bus stops. Therefore the re-use of these buildings for residential purposes in this location is considered to be a good use of existing resources to provide housing in a sustainable location close to existing services and transport routes.

Impact on Open Countryside

As the development site is on the boundary of open countryside, measures have been included within the design to reduce the impact of the conversions. The existing mature trees lining the access road and the side and rear boundary of Unit 1 will not change as a result of the development. Therefore the impact on the countryside should be minimal.

Consultation

Local Planning Authority

A pre- application meeting was held on 19 October 2010 with Principal Planning Officer, Mrs Elizabeth Pleasant. The meeting was followed by letter, EP/PAD/2010/0087 setting out conclusions and advice in response to the proposals tabled. The comments and advice given have been taken on board in the design development of the proposals and incorporated in this report.

Proposals in Principle

Elizabeth Pleasant (EP) confirmed that as barns 2-6 are within the built-up area boundary of Whaley Bridge and on previously developed land, she had no concerns with the proposals to convert the barns to residential units. Barn 1 is outside the built-up area of Whaley Bridge but EP confirmed that it makes logical sense to include this unit within the proposals, although more care should to be taken in the treatment of this unit.

EP confirmed that there are no objections to the proposals to the farmhouse, comprising removal of extensions and the addition of a new attached double garage and garden room.

Further Consultation

Planning and Conservation

A further meeting was held with Elizabeth Pleasant to review comments from consultees during the process of determination of planning application HPK/2011/0276 in July 2011.

Comments from the Tree Officer are reflected in the retention of Unit 1 as residential ancillary space and private garden to the farmhouse.

Comments from Highways are reflected in the retention of the existing access road width and surface, and the addition of two passing places.

A further meeting was held with Elizabeth Pleasant and Joanne Brooks in August 2011 to review in light of the comments received from Derbyshire's Principal Historic Buildings Officer and the English Heritage Listing Officer.

JB confirmed that the buildings may be defined as a heritage asset without formal designation and therefore should be treated sympathetically in their conversion.

All planning and conservation officer comments have been taken on board in the revised proposals submitted with this application.