DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCORPORATING HERITAGE ASSET STATEMENT

ADDRESS : Barn at Cowdale Hall, Cowdale, Near Buxton, SK17 9SE
APPLICANT : JRD Morten
PROPOSAL : Conversion and part demolition of redundant farm building to form two holiday units
DATE : July 2012 JOB No. : 2011.1784

DESIGN

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This application follows the refusal of Planning and Listed Building application HPK/2012/0011for the reason that insufficient survey information had been submitted regarding the possible presence of bats in the application building. This resubmitted application is accompanied by a revised Bat Report prepared by Absolute Ecology.

Assessment Area

The application buildings are curtilage buildings to Cowdale Hall, a Grade II Listed Building. It is considered that the appropriate Assessment Area should focus on Cowdale Hall, the application buildings and other curtilage buildings within the site.

Physical

Cowdale Hall is dated 1637 and has been the subject of later remodelling. It is a dwelling and constructed of coursed rubble limestone with gritstone dressings. It is a two storey building occupying a 'T' plan. The barn proposed to be retained and converted (Building A) has a date stone of 1777. It is a two storey building constructed with coursed rubble limestone with a slate roof. The front elevation has a central large opening and six square window openings at ground floor (three either side of the central door) and two square shuttered openings at first floor (one either side of the central opening). There is a small stable door in the west gable, and to the north of that, two stone buildings- one two storey and flat roofed, the other single storey having a lean-to slate roof. Both buildings are proposed to be retained but not incorporated in the development. Against the eastern gable is a low, modern concrete block and sheet roofed building (Building B) which is proposed to be demolished, with the cleared area being used for car parking with the use of additional planting. There are three equally spaced square windows at first floor and a rendered block wall against the ground floor section of the building. A suspended sheet roof (Building G) is proposed to be removed.

Opposite the application building are further modern concrete block and corrugated fibre sheet roofed buildings (Buildings C and D). These also are proposed to be demolished with the cleared area grassed to provide a pleasant foreground to the application building.

Planning Policy

The proposal relates to:-

1. The retention of the main application building (A) and its conversion to two holiday units;

2. The demolition of building B and the site laid out as a car park;
3. The demolition of buildings C and D and the site laid out as a grassed area;
4. The demolition of the roof that forms building G to allow additional light into the rear of building A.

The development plan for the area comprises the saved policies of the **Derbyshire Structure Plan** (adopted Jan 2001) and **High Peak Local Plan** (adopted March 2005). The local plan carries the policies that are relevant to this proposal and this statement focuses on LT12 Tourist Accommodation, BC7 Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings, BC8 Setting of Listed Buildings and BC9 Demolition of Listed Buildings.

LT12 Tourist Accommodation

The provision of good quality tourist accommodation is a key part in the strategy to persuade more visitors to stay in the High Peak. The Local Plan acknowledges that new accommodation is most likely to be provided through the conversion of existing buildings. Policy LT12 therefore encourages the conversion of existing buildings into self catering tourist accommodation provided that it is already closely related to tourist development and can be absorbed into the landscape.

Comment: The application building is closely related to tourist development in that there is already tourist accommodation on the site.

BC7 Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings

This policy requires proposals to extend or alter a Listed Building to be sympathetic in scale, proportion and materials to the existing building and to not detract from its character or setting.

Comment: The application proposes not extensions to this listed curtilage building. External alterations are limited to new joinery to existing openings, the addition of five roof lights and the repair of scars following the removal of modern agricultural buildings.

BC8 Settings of Listed Buildings

The setting of a Listed Building is an essential part of its character. This policy therefore resists development where it would materially harm the setting of a Listed Building in terms of its use, scale, size, siting, detailed design, external appearance or illumination.

Comment: It is considered that the removal of modern agricultural buildings- either attached or within its setting- will enhance the character of the listed curtilage building.

BC9 Demolition of Listed Buildings

The Council has a duty to ensure that all works to Listed Buildings preserve their special historic or architectural character. There is therefore a general presumption against the total or substantial demolition of any Listed Building without convincing evidence that real efforts have been made, without success to sustain its existing uses, to find viable new uses, that the building is demonstrably beyond economic use, or that clear evidence that redevelopment would produce substantial planning benefits for the community which would outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

Comment: The buildings that are proposed to be demolished are listed by association with an historic curtilage building and have no intrinsic architectural or historic interest. There is clear public benefit to be gained by their removal through

the substantial improvements to the appearance and setting of the application building.

National Planning Policy Framework
The NPPF was published on the 23 March 2012 and it sets out the Government's planning policies to promote sustainable development. Paragraph 118 of the Framework requires that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Comment: The application is accompanied by an updated survey that shows that the proposal does not raise any biodiversity issues.

The heritage section of the Framework requires a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
Comment: The application is a "curtilage" building within the grounds of Cowdale Hall. Its heritage significance relates to its historic association with the agricultural background of the hall. The barn has received some inappropriate additions in the past. These are proposed to be removed as part of this proposal and will therefore assist the setting of the application building and the Hall itself.

EVALUATION AND DESIGN
Planning policy guides the proposal towards a scheme that embraces sustainability by relating it to existing tourist development, involving a building of suitable construction, respecting the character and setting of the existing Listed Building and its historic curtilage buildings and protects wildlife.

The application site is in a relatively remote rural location with limited access to public transport. However, the proposal relates to rural tourism which, by its nature, is located away from population centres. Whist the proposal will generate more private car journeys in the countryside, it is the nature of holiday units that arrival, and the bringing of necessary supplies is mainly by car, supplemented during the stay by occasional shopping, in many case en route as people travel to enjoy the assets of the area. In that holiday units are an accepted means of enabling people to enjoy the pleasures of rural recreation, then travel to and from relatively remote sites such as the application site are an inevitable consequence, and one that is well established in this area. The application site already accommodates holiday accommodation that has been delivered by similar conversion proposals. Whilst the remoteness of the site causes some conflict with the broad thrust of transport sustainability policy, issues of economic sustainability and the delivery of a long-term use to an existing and historic building carries significant weight with developments of this nature.

The nature of the proposed changes to this listed curtilage building have been kept to a minimum. All existing door and window openings are to be retained and only four new rooflights will be formed. Existing openings will receive new joinery of an appropriate design. From an inspection of the application building it is considered that the level of damage through the removal of modern additions is to be low and easily repairable. It is not proposed to create areas of curtilage around the building; there will therefore be no need for boundaries to be erected. An area of car parking

will be formed to the east of the application building where building B is situated. There is already a tall hawthorn hedge between this area and the highway which would screen cars from the lane. Additional hawthorn plants could be put in this area if supplemental planting was considered necessary. The space left by the demolition of buildings C and D is proposed to be grassed to give a more pleasant setting to the application building, a more attractive approach to Cowdale Hall and an opportunity for the future users of the proposed holiday units for informal play and recreation.

The pre-application consultation has requested information on the historic and current use of the application buildings to first be satisfied that they are genuinely redundant and secondly to assess whether there is a likelihood of contamination on the site. The application building was used for pig rearing between 1968 and 1997. Prior to that it had been a cowshed. Since 1997 the building has been used only for the storage of livery tack and equipment. The ground floor has been into twenty compartments for this purpose. Currently only nine are used and these are planned to be relocated to other buildings on the holding in the New Year. The first floor has always been used as a hayloft. The buildings opposite the application building were also used for pig breeding, the use ceasing also in 1997. The buildings have been unused since that date. The applicant has confirmed that none of the buildings have been used for the storage of chemicals, fuel or fertilizers, nor for the storage or running of vehicles or machinery. In the circumstances there is no evidence of the buildings being put to a use that may have resulted in contamination. The roofed area of building G has been used for vehicle and machinery storage, but this use has dwindled with the changing pattern of farming on the site requiring fewer vehicles and machines. However the application proposes no future use of this site- it does not form part of the proposed holiday use and is only included in the application because the suspended roof is to be removed to allow further natural light into the application building. The area of building B is therefore not considered to pose a contamination threat.

There is no record of traffic movements at the site prior to the livery use. Existing traffic activity relates to movements associated with two families occupying the site and two existing holiday lets. The livery use generates between 10 and 15 vehicles (20-30 movements) on Saturdays and Sundays and 2/3 vehicles (4-6 movements) on weekdays. Livery associated vehicles are predominantly vehicles with trailers and large horseboxes. The proposal would result in livery associated vehicles ceasing to use the existing access, to be replaced by vehicles associated with two holiday units. It is considered that this change will not result in an increased use, and that there is therefore no justification for requiring improvements to the highway access.

The updated biodiversity report shows that no bat species were visually recorded within the building. As the surveying periods were conducted during peak season i.e. when females and pups can actively be found within maternity roosts, and males can be found generally in smaller bachelor roosts; it can be concluded with confidence that no such roosts of conservation concern exist within the building or indeed, within the zone of influence around the proposed development. The building, would appear to serve only as a temporal feeding station for foraging bats and may also provide temporal refuge.

ACCESS

VEHICULAR AND TRANSPORT LINKS

The site is located within the countryside where there is limited access to public transport. As a result, most journeys are likely to be by private car.

INCLUSIVE ACCESS

The development provides for occupation by less abled people through compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations by the provision of level accesses to the principal entrances to the application building, and provides internal arrangements, such as the width of doorways, that are suitable for less able access.