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Employment Land Statement – An assessment of viability

Land and Property at Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith

August 2010



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1 Introduction

1.1 Brief

This report considers land and buildings at Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith. It provides:

- A description of the site's main features and characteristics;
- The strategic planning context for the site;
- A review of the supply of employment premises and land in the High Peak borough, including competition, market conditions and the quantum of space allocated for employment uses in the local planning framework;
- Commentary on demand for employment uses, with reference to current market conditions and patterns of historical take-up of space;

(This report reflects the agency advice provided by Roger Lee FRICS, of Frank Marshall & co)

1.2 Format

The remainder of this document is set out as follows:

- Chapter 2 – Site and Surrounding Area;
- Chapter 3 – Planning Policy Context;
- Chapter 4 – The Regional Employment Land Market;
- Chapter 5 -The Local Employment Land Market;
- Chapter 6 – Re-use and Redevelopment Considerations.

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2 Site and Surrounding Area

2.1 Site Description

2.1.1 The site is accessed directly from the A6 Sheffield Road and is situated at the eastern edge of Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire.

2.1.2 The site is bounded to the north east by open fields and commercial / industrial buildings, the south by Sheffield Road and Buxton Road junction and the west by a public footpath and the rear curtilages of properties within the Chapel-en-le-Frith central conservation area.

2.1.3 We understand that the site extends to 3.79 acres (1.53 hectares) and is currently used for a range of commercial operations and vehicle storage uses. Black Brook, a sluiced watercourse, effectively separates the site into two sectors.

2.1.4 The southern sector is formed from hardstandings of variable quality interspersed with traditional, stone built, 19th Century commercial structures and modern high eaves vehicle storage buildings. The northern sector of the site is accessed by a centrally located bridge over the Black Brook and as with the southern sector is typified by formal and informal hardstanding and mixed traditional and contemporary commercial and vehicle storage structures. (See Appendix 1).

2.1.5 The location plan below illustrates the layout of the site:

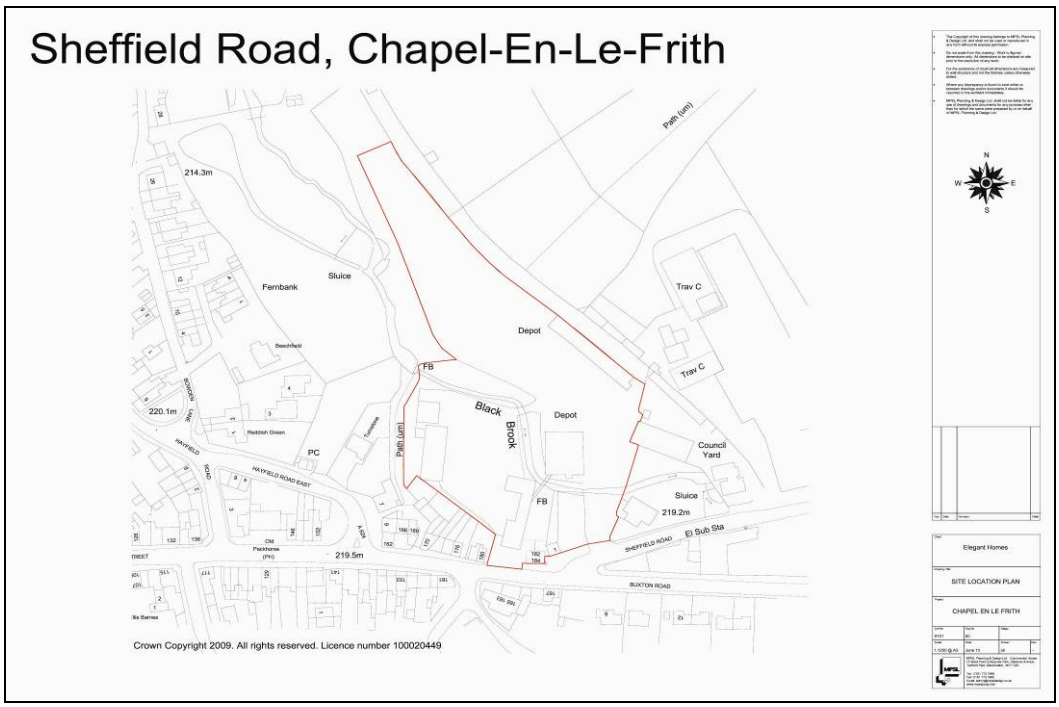


Figure A: Site location Plan

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2.1.6 The photographs below illustrate the characteristics of the site:



Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith



Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith



Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith



Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith

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3 Planning Policy Context

3.1 The High Peak Development Plan

High Peak Council is the Local Planning Authority. The Development Plan is made up of:

3.1.1 The High Peak Local Plan – This was adopted in March 2005. We understand that the majority of policies within the UDP were saved under the transitional arrangements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3.1.2 Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan – This was adopted in January 2001.

3.2 The High Peak Local Plan

3.2.1 We are informed that the site is identified within the Proposals Map of the adopted High Peak Local Plan (aHPLP) as being located within a Primary Employment Zone (PEZ).

3.2.2 The site is therefore subject to Policy EMP4 of the aHPLP, which states:

"Land and buildings within the Primary Employment Zones will be safeguarded, and planning permission will be granted, for employment development within the following classes of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987: B1, B2 and B8 and other employment generating uses".

3.2.3 It is important to note that section 8.41 of the 'reasoned justification' for EMP4 concedes that in "exceptional circumstances" residential use may be appropriate if the proposed development accords with associated policy EMP9

3.2.4 Within the local plan, Policy EMP9 provides for a variety of circumstances whereby material change of use of the whole or part of a PEZ may be appropriate and in compliance with the objectives of the aHPLP:

"Planning permission will be granted for the change of use of Industrial or Business land or premises provided that:

- The development achieves demonstrable improvements to the size, quality or accessibility of the employment use of the site;
- The developer can clearly show that there is no market demand for the site for employment use;
- The proposed development will be compatible with adjoining uses;
- The development does not conflict with the principles of sustainability or the green belt;
- The development achieves a strategic aim of the plan, which brings a greater benefit to the area than the retention of the existing use".

3.3 Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan

3.3.1 The Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan is broadly supportive of the proposed development. In essence, the proposal will allow for sustainable development, with good access to public transport and services, allow for a mix housing and employment uses, utilise previously developed land, contribute to a five-year supply of housing and avoids any prominent intrusion into the countryside. This policy support is illustrated by the below Structure Plan policies:

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3.3.2 General Development Strategy Policy 1: Sustainable Development:

New development will:

- Minimise the overall need to travel by ensuring convenient access between homes, jobs and services;
- Encourage the increased use of public transport by developing in locations well served by, or with the potential to be well served by the public transport network;
- Re-using land and buildings in preference to developing greenfield sites;
- Protecting and improving the natural and built environment.

3.3.3 General Development Strategy Policy 2: Scale and nature of development:

New development will:

- Contribute to a mix of land uses, particularly of housing and employment, avoiding the domination of large areas of development by a single land use.

3.3.4 General Development Strategy Policy 3: Location and Density of Development:

New development will:

- be located within or well related to settlements;
- make full and effective use of opportunities for redevelopment and rehabilitation provided by derelict, despoiled, unused or underused land and buildings;
- make good use of existing or potential infrastructure, particularly where this would enable a choice of travel mode and favour the use of public and non-motorised transport;
- increase in density towards main public transport nodes;
- be located so as to avoid potential problems in providing utility access;
- avoid prominent intrusion into the countryside.

3.3.5 Housing Policy 2: Housing Land Supply

- provision will be made for adequate land for housing development to the level proposed in total and for the City and each district council area;
- such provision will seek to ensure that a five-year supply of land is available at all times.

3.3.6 Housing Policy 4: Housing Development Well Related to Urban Areas

The provision may include new housing development well related to urban areas that:

- is well related in scale and location to existing development;
- is capable of being integrated with the existing settlement pattern and land uses;
- contributes to establishing a mixture of compatible land uses;
- is located where significant public transport infrastructure is available or in a published programme of improvements or will be facilitated directly by development;
- does not result in prominent intrusion into the countryside or important areas of open land and
- makes full and effective use of derelict, despoiled, unused or under-used land and buildings.

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3.3.7 Economy Policy 1: Scale and Range of Business, general Industrial and Distribution Provision

- Provision will be made for a diversity of sites and buildings, in terms of location, size and environment.

3.3.8 Economy Policy 2: Location of Business, General Industrial and Minor Distribution Provision

Proposals for business, general industrial and minor distribution development should:

- Aim to provide a balance of growth of employment and housing;
- Be located where significant public transport infrastructure is available or in a published programme of improvements;
- Provision will be made for a diversity of sites and buildings, in terms of location, size and environment.

3.3.9 Economy Policy 7: Office and Institutional Developments

- Provision will be made for major office and institutional developments within the urban areas, provided that the effect upon local amenities and traffic generation is acceptable and public transport, car-parking and servicing arrangements are appropriate.

3.4 The Local Development Framework (LDF)

3.4.1 In line with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, a Local Development Framework is being prepared for the High Peak Borough, together with a number of Supplementary Planning Documents. The draft Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Joint Core Strategy has now been prepared which was subject to consultation between 03 June and 15 July 2010. It is anticipated that the final draft will be published on October 2010 for a six week consultation period relating solely to the 'soundness' of the document. The final version of the plan is proposed to be submitted to Secretary of State in March 2011, for examination in Public in June 2011 and adoption of the final Core Strategy in November 2011.

3.4.2 Although the plan has not yet been adopted, due to its progression thus far to the Preferred Options stage it is now considered to be a material consideration, albeit with limited weight attached.

3.4.3 Policy CS8 encourages the redevelopment, intensification and more efficient use of existing employment sites and premises in sustainable locations where they are not fully utilised or unsuited to modern employment requirements, particularly those sites located within the main towns and those with good access by a variety of transport modes. This ambition is also supported by other supportive criteria such as – encouraging and making provision for office development within the market towns.

3.4.4 Policy CS 9 also encourages maximising the potential of former employment sites that are no longer suited to meeting the needs of modern businesses. Policy CS 9 goes on to encourage proposals for the redevelopment of former employment sites identified in the Site Allocations Plan Document where these are no longer conducive to meeting the needs of modern businesses, whilst also encouraging mixed use developments, which support local economic growth sectors.

3.4.5 Development Management Policy DM 1 states that "Development proposals involving the redevelopment or change of use of existing business or industrial land or premises for non-employment uses will only be permitted where:

1. *the continuation of the land or premises in industrial or business use is no longer financially or commercially viable as demonstrated by a comprehensive marketing assessment and marketing exercise or;*

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2. the current use is incompatible with the surrounding properties and land uses".

DM 1 goes onto state that "preference will be given to mixed use development over that involving the total loss of business land or premises".

3.5 National Guidance

3.5.1 PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS1, Paragraph 23, states that all planning authorities should recognise that all local economies are subject to change; planning authorities should be sensitive to these changes and the implication for development and growth. It goes on to require that planning authorities should ensure the provision of sufficient, good quality, new homes in suitable locations.

Paragraph 27 promotes urban and rural regeneration to improve the well being of communities, improve facilities and promote high quality and safe development. Mixed use development should also be promoted for locations that allow the creation of linkages between different uses. Planning should also actively manage patterns if urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres. Importantly, Paragraph 27 goes onto advocate the more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of previously developed land.

3.5.2 PPS3: Housing

Paragraph 10 provides for a sufficient quantity of housing taking into account need and demand and seeking to improve choice. This delivery of housing should be developed in suitable locations which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

Paragraph 38 includes for new housing growth options re-using vacant and derelict sites or industrial and commercial sites for providing housing as part of mixed-use town centre development. The location of housing should also facilitate the creation of communities of sufficient size and mix to justify the development of, and sustain, community facilities, infrastructure and services.

Paragraph 40 states that a key objective is that Local Planning Authorities should continue to make effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed. Paragraph 41 goes on to state the national target of at least 60 per cent of new housing should be provided on previously developed land.

3.6 High Peak Employment Land Review

3.6.1 We have briefly considered the findings of the Peak sub-region Employment Land Review, which was published in August 2008. It refers to the policies of the High Peak local Plan and the requirement to ensure that sufficient industrial and commercial land is available to provide a wide choice by size, location and suitability for different uses.

The conclusions of the Employment Land Review state that at present there is a stock of available land of 56.9ha, with only a land requirement up until 2026 of 35ha for High Peak. This leaves a residual over supply of employment land for High Peak of 20.9ha. This is recommended for de-allocation from employment land if deemed suitable.

Interestingly, the Employment Land Review also notes an employment land requirement of 9ha for office space within High Peak.

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The proposal therefore complies fully with the local employment evidence base by de-allocating this site form employment use, whilst providing much need office space.

3.7 Planning Assessment (Summary)

3.7.1 Planning Policy is broadly supportive of the part de-allocation of this site and the future mixed use development of the site.

The site represents a sustainable location for housing development, being in close proximity to community faculties, services and public transport provision. The site is classified as previously developed land and as such the proposal accords with national targets for 60 per cent of housing development to be built on previously developed land.

In employment terms, although there is an overall quantum loss of employment land, the density of the proposed office scheme will provide qualitative gain. It also has the potential to provide employment for greater numbers of people than are currently employed on site.

Locating new housing development at this site, within close proximity of the town centre is supported under national and local policy. The site provides for excellent access to local shops and services, as well as sustainable transport options including walking and cycling. This support for local services will further help to underpin the local employment base off site.

In summary – the proposed B1 development will result in an improvement and betterment of employment provision, whilst also providing sustainable housing.

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4 The Regional Employment Land Market

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This chapter considers the market for employment land. Firstly, it reflects upon conditions in the industrial property market at a regional level, before examining the local market around Chapel-en-le-Frith.

4.2 The North West Industrial and Office Market Commentary

4.2.1 Since September 2007 there has been a notable cooling of investor appetite triggered by the 'credit crunch' and illustrated by the outward movement of both primary and secondary yields. There is strong evidence to suggest that the restricted lending environment has impacted on the leasing or owner occupier market. If significant uncertainty continues in the broader UK and Global Economies during the course of 2010, it is likely that occupier demand will continue to be adversely affected. We have already experienced some occupiers finding board approvals difficult to come by as a result of either funding issues or perceived doubts about the economy as a whole.

4.2.2 With banks and financial institutions becoming less willing to lend money to fund property acquisitions, reducing their loan to value ratio and increasing the cost of borrowing, this is clearly having an impact not only upon demand but also the price purchasers are willing to pay.

4.2.3 In terms of current market activity we are in the midst of a severe economic downturn. This is having an impact upon the property values, as occupiers struggle to obtain mortgages to fund property acquisitions. Some occupiers who have previously been actively looking for alternative premises have put acquisitions on hold until they are more certain that property values will not fall any further still.

4.2.4 The credit crunch is leading many occupiers to experience difficulties in obtaining mortgages to fund acquisitions, with those able to obtain funding being asked to pay deposits of 40% to 50%. As mentioned above this is impacting upon demand and putting a downward pressure on values as purchaser seek large price reductions to off set the large deposits they are required to pay.

4.2.5 The level of enquiries for industrial premises for the North West Market as a whole has been reasonable in certain prime locations but understandably lower than 24+ months ago, with the majority of demand for those prime locations from the rented sector for small to medium sized units ranging in size from anything from 5,000 to 100,000 sq ft.

4.2.6 For non-prime locations such as Chapel-en-le-Frith demand remains low, and is envisaged to remain so into the short-medium term.

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5 The Local Employment Land Market

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Local agents, Frank Marshall & Co, have prepared a short report on the marketability of the premises at Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith. The purpose of this report was to provide information and analysis in relation to the supply and demand for industrial land and buildings in Chapel-en-le-Frith and the surrounding area of the High Peak.

5.1.2 The report has been prepared by Roger Lee FRICS of Frank Marshall & Co which are a broadly based firm of valuers and auctioneers serving clients throughout the North West and particular in the High Peak and Cheshire. The Buxton office has over the years dealt with many commercial property sales, lettings and rent reviews and has a good knowledge of the local market.

5.1.3 The main findings from this report have been summarised below.

5.2 Background:

5.2.1 Within the High Peak area there are various industrial estates which have developed in a sporadic manner over many years. Typical examples of this are the Harpur Hill Industrial Estate in Buxton and Botany Works at Whaley Bridge. This latter has been substantially redeveloped over the years by the present owners and an element of residential development was incorporated.

5.2.2 Modern industrial development from virgin sites has taken place at Staden Lane, Buxton and Bowden Hey Road and Frith Knoll Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith.

5.3 Occupier Requirements in the Area

5.3.1 Occupier requirements clearly differ in individual cases but our experience shows that the following requirements are most common:

- - Existing industrial warehouse units generally for floor areas being between 175 sq.m. and 465 sq.m. (2,000/5,000 sq.ft.)
- - Adequate working/eaves height usually 4 - 5m. (13'0" x 16'0")
- - Single span construction.
- - Office content usually not more than 10% of floor area.
- - Adequate external loading and car parking, preferably for exclusive use.

5.4 High Peak market overview

5.4.1 The area is relatively cut off with no surrounding motorways or other fast dual carriageway routes that encourage mobile companies to relocate.

5.4.2 Businesses occupying the larger sites such as Street Crane, Otter Controls, Fibracon and Bradburys etc. have been established in the area for many years and have been prudent in acquiring additional land to accommodate expansion.

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5.4.3 Take up of both new and second hand space is almost exclusively from existing local business wishing to expand or relocate to more suitable premises within the locality. An example being Fibracon relocating their main operation from Whaley Bridge to Bowden Hey Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith

5.4.4 We have no evidence of any company having to move away from the area because they have not been able to find suitable alternative accommodation or land to build on. There is clearly a desire to maintain existing work forces

5.5 Existing Developments

5.5.1 Given below are the various significant industrial sites in the area, identifying at the strategic level the current advantages, as well as any redevelopment / expansion opportunities.

5.5.2 Bowden Hey Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith (EMP2) (Appendix 3)

The overall site has been developed over the last five years with two substantial owner occupiers (including Fibracon). Five units are located on site, each of approximately 225 sq m. (2,400 sq ft.) and all let to local companies, including Simbal, BnG Coaches, sorting office (let by a consortium of local post offices) and Rob Kenyon MOT.

The development constitutes modern buildings and good road access.

Importantly, there is additional land available, amounting to 2.46 hectares (6.07 acres) with a further 2.24 hectares (5.53 acres) accessed from the nearby Firth Knoll Road. This land is available for future development at a modern and accessible estate. (Appendix 2)

5.5.3 Station Yard, Chapel-en-le-Frith (Appendix 4)

This industrial estate is located close to the centre of town and occupied by a variety of small business. The condition of the accommodation is presently poor, but with investment including unit modernisation, along with some improvements to access this site could be available for employment into the future.

5.5.4 Botany Works, Whaley Bridge (EMP4) (Appendix 5)

The site has been redeveloped over the years to provide modern steel framed buildings and generally having 100% occupancy from locally based companies.

5.5.5 Bingswood Industrial Site, Whaley Bridge (EMP4) (Appendix 6)

This estate consists of mainly older buildings with a variety of modern additions. It accommodates a variety of long established users.

Access to the site is currently poor but further development at this location could be facilitated once a new access bridge over the canal is developed.

5.5.6 Tongue Lane and Dew Pond Lane, Buxton (EMP3 & 4) (Appendix 7)

The area comprises modern industrial buildings, along with approximately 4 ha (9.88 acres) of undeveloped land designated for employment use. This employment land will be fully opened up once new access has been developed as part of proposed housing development nearby.

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5.5.7 Staden Lane Industrial Estate, Buxton (Appendix 8)

A modern and developing estate with good road access which typifies the preferred location/environment for businesses. Recent transactions which have taken place are:

i Redevelopment of the former Peak Aquatics building into smaller units, now let.

ii Assignment of lease, Unit 3, to Pennine Aggregates.

iii Purpose built unit for Devonshire Bakery, a long established local business.

iv Short term letting of unit 4B to Bradburys who are expanding on their own site.

The majority of units on this estate are between 185–315 sq.m. (2,000–3,400 sq.ft.), which suits the market and occupier requirements. The above is considered to be fairly typical of the transactions which take place throughout the High Peak.

The sale of a plot of land at Staden Lane Industrial Estate (Rockhead) was completed approximately three years ago to Messrs Markovitz Builders Merchants. This further illustrates the preferred option of local owner occupiers to expand their existing premises rather than relocating.

Further land is available for development at the northern end of the site amounting to approximately 1.25 hectares (3.08 acres).

5.5.8 Harpur Hill Industrial Estate (Appendix 9)

This estate consists of some modern units alongside other less attractive accommodation. If the market dictates, these could be redeveloped to provide good quality units which adhere to requirements of any incoming future tenant.

Importantly, there is a significant area of land available for redevelopment adjacent the Health & Safety Executive Premises.

Frank Marshall & Co is has now let the 6,000 sq ft. industrial unit on this estate to a local company relocating from Whaley Bridge.

5.5.9 Waterswallows, Buxton (Appendix 10)

The former Goodwin & Forbes site amounting to approximately 2.15 acres and presently used for haulage and stone storage. The site has planning approval for a new building of some 370 sq m (40,000 sq ft.) which has not yet been taken up by a developer. Frank Marshall & Co has now been instructed to sell this site. Interest has been exclusively from local businesses.

5.6 Local Employment Land Observations

5.6.1 Transactions which have taken place have, in the main, involved the relocation of existing local businesses whether they have purchased land or buildings or rented.

5.6.2 We believe the available supply of land to be as follows:

	Hectares	Acres
Bowden Hey Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith	2.26	6.00
Frith Knoll Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith	2.24	5.53

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Waterswallows, Buxton	.87	2.15
Staden Lane, Buxton	1.25	3.08
	6.62	16.76

5.6.3 The above does not take account of the land at Harpur Hill nor any smaller potential "windfall" sites which may become available.

5.6.4 Demand in the area generally is slow and limited. Such enquiries as we are receiving are for small industrial units available either to buy or to rent. Small plots of land, say ¼ of an acre to ½ an acre maximum would perhaps be saleable but in the present climate owners are most reluctant to sell and banks unwilling to lend.

5.6.5 Chapel-en-le-Frith is considered too remote from the main centres of economic activity such as Stockport and Manchester to attract outside companies seeking alternative accommodation. Our experience in letting units at Bowden Hey Road confirms this.

5.6.6 There is virtually no speculative/industrial warehousing development around the Chapel-en-le-Frith area, with perhaps the exception of the five units at Bowden Hey Road. Most new buildings are constructed to order for existing local companies.

5.6.7 In Buxton the development of the Focus Store at Staden Lane is perhaps something of an exception.

5.6.8 There are various areas of land attached to existing employment zones which could be available for development.

5.6.9 Under the Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan the take up of land in the area was estimated to be in the order of 2.5 hectares per annum. However, the revised draft High Peak Local Plan (January 2003) states that completions within the Buxton and central area between 1991 and 2001 Plan totalled only 7.92 hectares or 0.79 hectares per annum.

5.7 Marketing undertaken at Sheffield Road (Employment Use)

5.7.1 Marketing of the premises for letting was instructed by the land owner on 14 April 2008. Roger Lee of Frank Marshall & Co was instructed to carry out this marketing campaign. The premises were advertised on Frank Marshall's websites and in the local press.

5.7.2 No serious enquiries from potential purchasers or tenants were received, other than one on the 6th January 2009 for temporary storage. This enquiry did not progress and would have contributed very little in the way of employment generation. Active marketing ceased by the end of January 2009.

5.7.3 Roger Lee commented that he has experienced "very little demand for industrial property either for workshop or storage and distribution purposes". He has stated "enquiries received in recent months, without exception, are for premises in Buxton and from parties who do not wish to consider Chapel-en-le-Frith". In his opinion, he sees no reason why this situation should change in the foreseeable future.

5.8 Conclusions

5.8.1 Recent transactions in the Chapel-en-le-Frith and High Peak area have almost exclusively involved established local companies acquiring freehold land or existing built premises for their own occupation.

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5.8.2 All land and building requirements that have arisen in the locality have been successfully accommodated suggesting no shortage of available property.

5.8.3 In the present market the site does not significantly contribute to the local supply of built premises or land for industrial purposes. Should the property become vacant it is inevitable in our opinion that large parts will remain unoccupied for a prolonged and indefinite period. Furthermore, given the site context, only lower quality occupants would locate here. Indeed the longer that situation is allowed to develop the less attractive it will become to potential investors who may have problems with existing leases and the like to resolve.

5.8.4 The take up of land for employment in the locality is low and, notwithstanding the subject site, we are of the opinion that there is ample availability to accommodate demand elsewhere. Examples would be the Bowden Hey Road and Frith Knoll Road sites and in the Buxton area.

5.8.5 We are of the opinion that the inclusion of an element of residential development on the subject site would be beneficial both in its contribution to the required housing stock and also, in economic terms, assisting the viability of a limited amount of industrial development.

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6 Re-use and Redevelopment Considerations

6.1 Viability

6.1.1 Chapter 5 concluded that occupier and investor demand for industrial property at Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith is weak. In appraising the viability of carrying out new employment-related development on the site, we make a number of observations:

6.1.2 The preceding sections of this report have clearly shown that the site is not best located for industrial use. New employment development, where end users and occupiers have not been identified, is prohibitively high risk. We would expect very limited interest from investors and developers to develop this site. Industrial occupiers are currently in a strong bargaining position with regard to deals being secured on new lettings and space is often taken on short term, flexible leases.

6.1.3 The presence of business and residential uses in close proximity to one another is commonplace along Sheffield Road in the vicinity of the subject site. Residential occupiers may be affected by industrial-related traffic movements in to and out of the site. In this regard, if a planning application for industrial development were to be promoted on the site we would envisage restrictions being imposed in relation to working hours and noise pollution, both of which would have a detrimental impact on viability from an occupier's perspective. B1 use is considered suitable at this site and would be compatible with neighbouring residential uses.

6.1.4 Weak occupational demand and low values are detrimental to commercial development and its feasibility. End users for the proposed units may be start up or local companies who are at high risk of going into administration within the first 12 months.

6.1.5 Putting forward proposals for new developments that are financially viable is difficult in current market conditions, even for the best of schemes in prime locations. It is unusual to find developers taking on the risk of acquiring and developing out sites for low end to mid-market industrial accommodation. The rents achievable are prohibitively too low to justify such capital outlay. Also, developers are cautious when estimating void periods, which may be long

6.1.6 In summary, we consider it extremely unlikely that developers or investors would redevelop this site for speculative industrial use due to poor viability and prohibitive risk.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 We have considered the merits of the Sheffield Road site in Chapel-en-le-Frith, as a site for industrial development with regard to the suitability and viability of new development. We conclude that the site is unsuitable and unviable for employment uses for the following reasons:

6.2.2 It is unsuitable because:

- Site is located too close to the town centre and adjacent residential properties to accommodate an acceptable intensification of industrial use of the site;
- Policy CS8 of the draft Core Strategy (which is a material consideration for Development Control purposes), encourages the redevelopment and more efficient use of existing employment sites and premises in sustainable locations where they are not fully utilised or are unsuited to modern employment requirements, particularly those sites located within the main towns.

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6.2.3 It is unviable because:

- There is much competition from a number of multi-let industrial estates in and around Buxton / Chapel-en-le-Frith;
- Links to surrounding towns and cities such as Sheffield, Stockport and Liverpool are strained, and as such this limits the interest of the site to potential occupiers.
- Weak demand in the industrial sector means that any speculative redevelopment without identified end occupiers would be uneconomic;
- We consider that potential developers or investors are likely to conclude that redevelopment of the subject site for employment use is presently unviable. Even with an improvement in underlying market conditions, and the ability to obtain higher rents, we believe it would remain unviable to develop this site for industrial use alone.
- In overall summary, the lack of occupier requirements for premises in this location coupled to the availability of preferable sites elsewhere in the locality and in Buxton; and compounded further by the direct limitation of this site in terms of its proximity to residential properties and the town centre mean it is extremely unlikely that this site would receive credible interest from a developer of investor.

In our view this would be the case for the foreseeable future and an indefinite period of time to come. In this context and set against the background of local and national planning policy it is incumbent upon the local planning authority to consider alternative uses, such as residential development, positively.

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Appendix 1 – Site Plan and Site Photographs (Sheffield Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith)

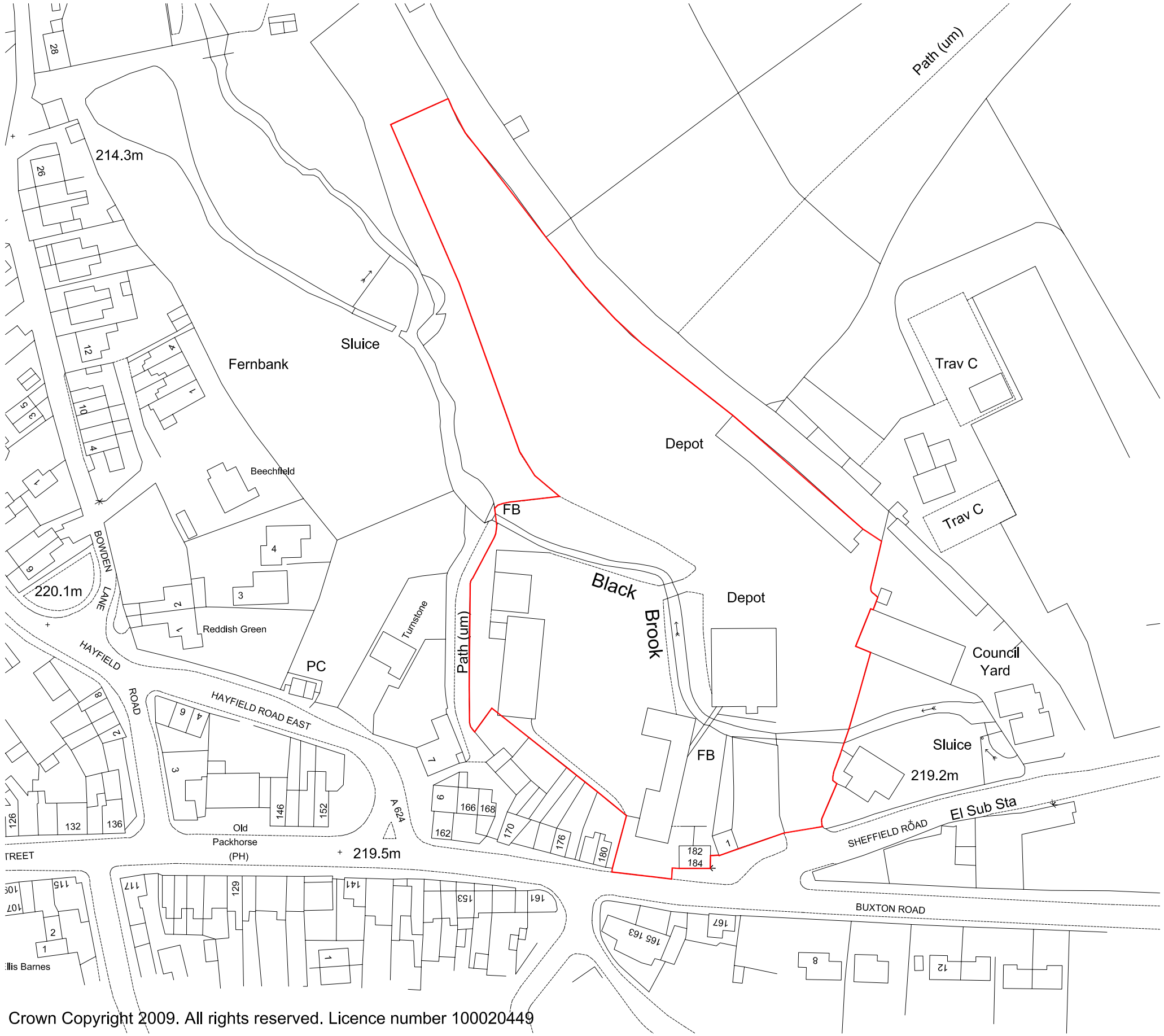








Sheffield Road, Chapel-En-Le-Frith



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Rev	Date	Revision	Initial

Client: Elegant Homes

Drawing Title: SITE LOCATION PLAN

Project: CHAPEL EN LE FRITH

Job No	Drg No	Stage	
9121	00		
Scale	Date	Drawn	Rev
1.1250 @ A3	June 10	sh	–

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Appendix 2 – Land for development off Frith Knoll Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith (Photos)





Appendix 3 – Bowden Hey Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith (photos)





Appendix 4 – Station Yard, Chapel-en-le-Frith (photos)



Appendix 5 – Botany Works, Whaley Bridge (photos)





Appendix 6 – Bingswood Industrial Estate, Whaley Bridge (photos)





Appendix 7– Tongue Lane and Dew Pond Lane, Buxton (photos)





Appendix 8 – Staden Lane, Buxton (photos)





Appendix 9 – Harpur Hill Industrial Estate, Buxton (photos)





Appendix 10 – Waterswallows, Buxton (photos)





