PLANNING STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION TO EXTEND 3 MOUSLEY BOTTOM



Introduction

This statement is in support of a planning application for a two storey extension to the dwelling house known as No 3 Mousley Bottom, New Mills SK22 3JA (the “Application Site”).

The applicants are the freehold owners and occupiers of No 3 Mousley Bottom, a three bedroom detached house. The applicants work from home, have a young son and hope to add to their family. Having already invested in a number of internal improvements to their home, the applicants would like to remain and raise their family at No 3 Mousley Bottom, but consider that an increase in their living accommodation is both desirable and necessary. The proposed development comprises a two storey extension, including the addition of an en-suite bedroom, a study and the creation of a kitchen/diner.

The existing dwelling house on the Application Site was authorised by a full planning permission granted on 28 June 2004 under reference HPK/2004/0157 for the construction of six new houses (the "Original Permission"). Four of the houses permitted by the Original Permission have been constructed, and two remain at foundation level. The reason for the grant of the Original Permission is stated on the face of the decision notice as follows:

> "*having regard to existing developments in the area and the provisions of the development plan the proposal would be in accordance with the plan, would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area or the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and would be acceptable in terms of highway safety and car parking*"

This Planning Statement identifies relevant sections of the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies ("Local Plan") and applies them to the proposed development. It demonstrates how the proposals comply with both:

- the development plan; and
- national planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework

such that the application should be positively determined by the planning authority in accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Green Belt

The Application Site is located on the edge of the North West Derbyshire Green Belt, as identified on the High Peak Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map Central Area (North) dated March 2005. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt were laid down in the North West Derbyshire Green Belt Local Plan (adopted in December 1990), and it is noted that this boundary has remained largely unchanged since that time.

Whilst it is accepted that Green Belt policies must be a material consideration in the determination of this application, this needs to be balanced against the special nature of the Application Site. The existing dwelling was built on brownfield land (a former scrap yard) which was redeveloped in 2008 as part of a larger residential development of six houses. The remediation and redevelopment of the former scrap yard represented a considerable

improvement of this part of the Green Belt, and the extension of the existing dwelling proposed by this application represents a continuation of this improvement and investment in the area.

Chapter 3 of the Local Plan contains the following policies and explanatory text pertaining to the conservation and enhancement of the open environment:

Paragraph 3.10 sets out the following five principal purposes of including land in Green Belts:

· to restrict urban sprawl on a permanent basis
· to safeguard the countryside from further encroachment
· to maintain the separate identity of settlements
· to assist in the regeneration of nearby urban areas
· to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

Paragraph 3.12 goes onto state that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt and that development conspicuous from it should not injure the visual amenity of the Green Belt by way of siting, materials or design.

Policy 10 entitled “OC2 - GREEN BELT DEVELOPMENT” provides as follows:

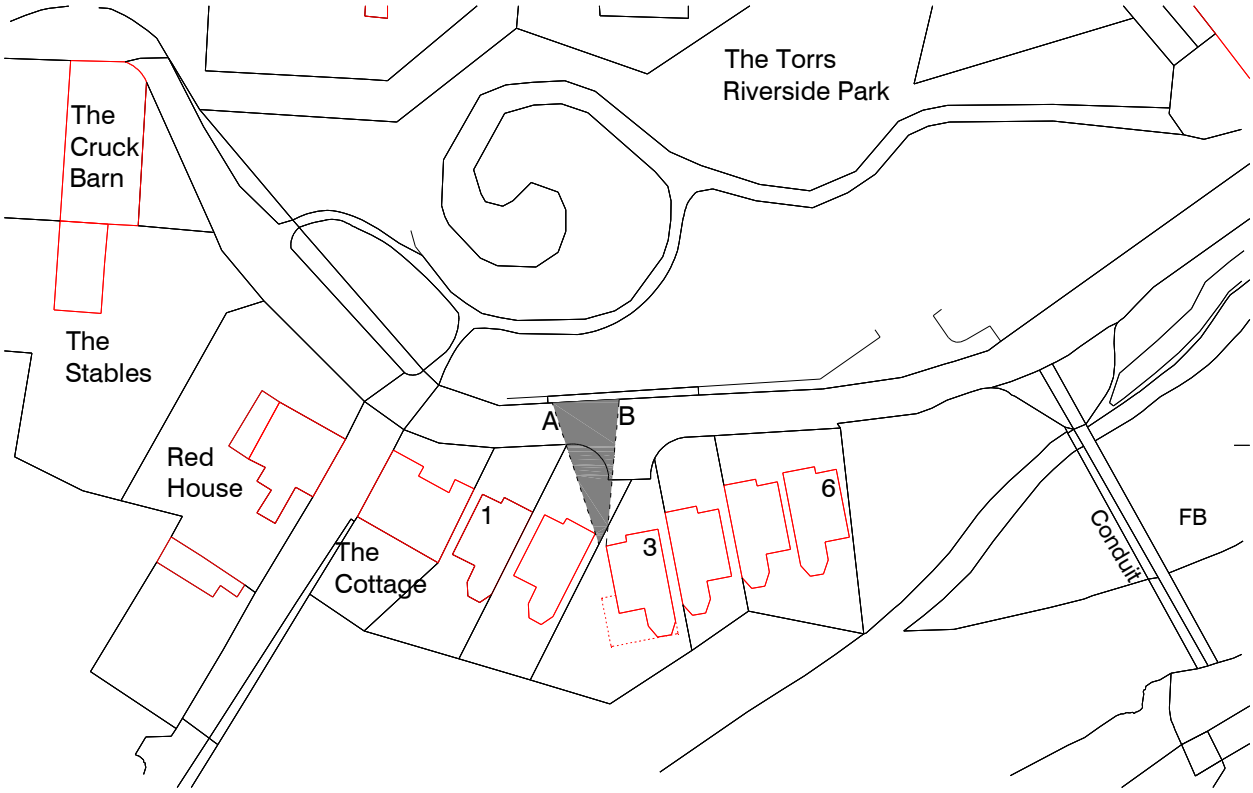
> “*In the area of green belt defined on the proposals map approval will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings for purposes other than:*
> *- agriculture and forestry;*
> *- essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and cemeteries;*
> *- limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;*
> *- limited infilling or redevelopment at existing major developed sites;*
> *Other development, including material changes in the use of land and buildings, will only be permitted where it maintains the openness of the Green Belt and does not compromise Green Belt purposes. Development within or conspicuous from Green Belts should not injure the visual amenities of the Green Belt.*”

It is noted that the reason for the grant of the Original Permission did not explicitly address the location of the site within the Green Belt. However it is evident that the planning authority considered that the development of six houses in this part of the Green Belt would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area.

It is noted that Policy 10 sets out a list of categories of development which may be permissible in the Green Belt, including “limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings” and “limited infilling or redevelopment at existing major developed site”. It is contended that the proposed development should be considered within one or both of these categories. Once permitted development rights are taken into account, the proposed additional gross area created by this application would be 30.6 square metres. This would equate to an increase of 16.5% and represents the minimum size extension to achieve the applicant’s aspirations for increasing their family’s living accommodation. Furthermore, the proposed extension can be described as limited infilling at an existing residential development, which itself was built on a former brownfield site.

Even if the proposed development is considered as “other development” in the context of Policy 10, the extension proposed by this application would have no injurious effect on the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

Only a very small part of the extension (the wrap around element at first floor) would be visible from the front of the property above the existing fence line, and even then only from a limited area when standing between points A and B marked on plan below (due to the configuration of residential properties, gas works and trees).

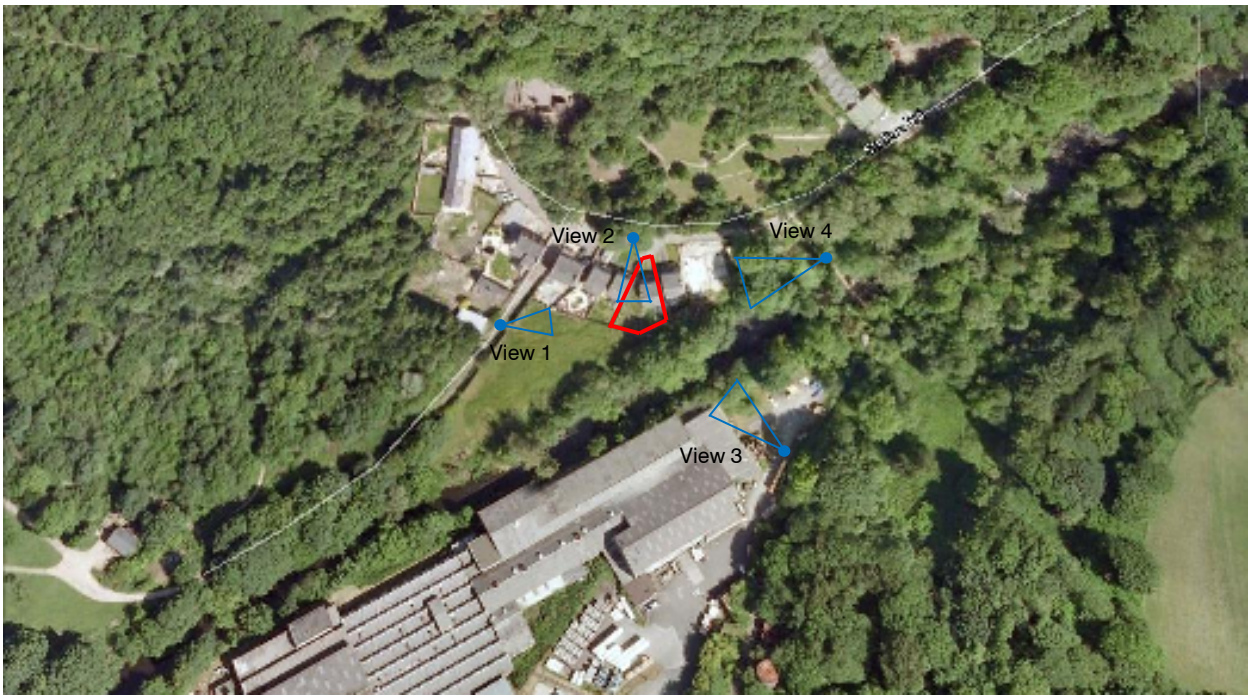


The main part of the proposed extension is to the rear of property and would only be visible from:

- the neighbouring properties (No 2 and 4 Mousley Bottom), the occupiers of which support this application; and
- the land directly behind the Application Site which comprises a narrow strip of land and which the developer of the six houses was required to lay out as amenity land pursuant to the terms of the Original Permission. This amenity land cannot be built upon or accessed by the public.

Beyond the strip of amenity land is the River Goyt, and the uses on the opposite side of the river are exclusively industrial. Moreover the view of the Application Site from this industrial land (currently occupied by a packaging factory) is obscured by trees located on the river banks.

In conclusion, the openness of the Green Belt will be maintained and the Green Belt purposes will not be compromised by the proposed development.



Aerial photo of Mousley Bottom showing viewing points of site



View 1 from track to SW of site



View 2 showing limited view from front



View 3 from factory over river showing tree cover



View 4 from footbridge to East showing tree cover

Conservation area

The Application Site is located in the New Mills Conservation Area.

Chapter 4 of the Local Plan contains policies and explanatory text pertaining to the conservation and enhancement of the built environment:

> Paragraphs 4.15 and 4.16 outline the special character and status of conservation areas.
>
> Paragraph 4.17 then clarifies that conservation area status does not rule out new development and suggests that development will often be welcomed where it is of a high standard which can be assimilated without adversely affecting the character or appearance of the area.
>
> Paragraph 4.18 states that proposals must respect the features of the Conservation Area which warranted its designation.
>
> Policy 20 entitled "BC5 - CONSERVATION AREAS AND THEIR SETTINGS" provides as follows:
>
> > "*Within Conservation Areas and their settings planning permission will be granted for development, including extensions, alterations and changes of use, provided that:*
> > *- the use, siting, scale, detailed design, external appearance and landscape treatment of the development will preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the area; and*
> > *- important buildings, open spaces, views, trees, walls and other natural and man-made features which positively contribute to the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the area will be protected from harmful development.*"

Policy 20 is therefore a permissive policy which supports new development (including extensions) in conservation areas provided that such development preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area.

The New Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal (adopted July 2008) sets out the special character and appearance which warranted its conservation area designation. The Application Site is located within Area 6 (Mousley Bottom), the character of which is described as follows:

> "*Area 6 - Mousley Bottom*
> *2.31 Where the River Goyt leaves The Torrs just downstream of Torr Vale mills, the valley broadens out into Mousley Bottom. Here, well below the level of the main Streets of New Mills is an area of semi-rural character where the principal sound is from the rushing water of the Goyt.*
> *2.32 The only road into or out of the area is the very narrow Station Road, leading down from the town centre, first to Central Station half way down the gorge side and then to two small industrial premises. Further on, where the land levels out, the lane gives access to a former gasworks site, a former scrap yard (recently developed to provide residential development), two houses and recently renovated timber-framed barn and attached stables. Beyond but just outside the conservation area is a reclaimed refuse tip now grass sown and planted with trees.*
> *2.33 This area has good prospects for the future. Much land reclamation has been carried out and is still going on to recover this riverside area and reinforce its natural assets. The area however is somewhat blighted by the industrial premises.*
> *2.34 So effective is the present tree cover in this area that one is unaware of the adjacent areas of the Torr Valley terraces and High Lee Park - even the railway line is out of sight until you approach the station up the lane. The footbridges carry footpaths, including the Midshires Way, through the area and link the adjacent areas.*"

It is clear from the Character Appraisal that the overriding character of the Mousley Bottom area is semi-rural, with a mix of uses and construction styles and materials. The blight caused by the industrial premises is noted in the Appraisal, as is the presence of tree cover which screens the whole Mousley Bottom area from the wider conservation area.

The proposed development preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the Mousley Bottom area. It extends an existing residential use within the residential part of the area. The scale is in keeping with the mix of residential properties located in this area. The design of the extension is of high quality and would contribute to the characterful mix of construction styles and materials in the Mousley Bottom area.

Residential development

Chapter 6 of the Local Plan contains policies and explanatory text pertaining to population and housing:

> Policy 46 entitled "H11 - LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT" provides as follows:
>
> > "*Planning Permission will be granted for residential development, including extensions, alterations and changes of use, provided that it will:*
> > *- incorporate good design that reflects its setting and local distinctiveness; and*
> > *- make efficient use of available land; and*
> > *- promote safe and accessible living environments which include a mix of housing types and sizes; and*
> > *- protect amenity by having regard to the guidelines set out in Appendix 2*"
>
> Paragraph 6.89 recognises that there is a demand for extensions to existing dwellings as a means of forming better living accommodation or as an alternative to moving house. It also notes that many existing dwellings will be suitable for alterations and extensions in order to improve internal space standards and amenities.
>
> Paragraph 6.90 states that the scale of the extension or outbuilding should not be disproportionate to the original dwelling (ie. as built or as existed in 1948, whichever is the later). It suggests as a guideline that most extensions of more than 50% of the original volume will require particularly careful attention.
>
> Paragraph 6.91 states that attention must be given to the impact of the development upon neighbouring property, and off-street car parking space and the private garden/amenity space around the dwelling should be retained at adequate levels.

Policy 46 is a permissive policy which supports residential applications. The supporting text to the policy recognises the demand to extend existing dwellings to support better living accommodation, which is what the applicants are seeking in this application. The proposed development complies with Policy 46 as follows:

- It makes excellent use of available land;
- It retains more than adequate private amenity space around the property;
- It has no detrimental impact on neighbouring properties. Neighbouring properties will not be overlooked as a result of the proposed development so there will be no loss of privacy. Both neighbours support the application and it should be noted that the tapered roofline on the eastern elevation has been designed to respect the existing sunlight/daylight enjoyed by No 4 Mousley Bottom;
- It represents 46.9% of the original volume of the house, which is not disproportionate to the original dwelling and represents the minimum size extension required to achieve the applicant's aspirations for increasing their family's living accommodation and providing the extra space needed for home working. It should also be noted that a smaller extension would not be economically viable since the additional of a good size en suite master bedroom is key to achieving the costs/value benefit of extending the property;
- It incorporates high quality design, which is acceptable in the context of the existing building and the setting at Mousley Bottom (see below for further discussion on design and facing materials);
- The existing integral single garage and 2 parking spaces on the front drive represent an appropriate level of off-street parking.

Design, external materials

Policies and explanatory text pertaining to design and materials can be found in a number of chapters in the Local Plan:

Policy 3 entitled “GD4 – CHARACTER, FORM AND DESIGN” provides as follows:

“*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”

Paragraph 6.90 states that extensions should reflect the character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. The use of appropriate materials of construction, texture and colour is important to ensure that the new development will blend with the original.

Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.7 relate to facing materials, and seek to ensure that the built environment of the area is preserved and enhanced, and that new development respects the existing architectural and visual qualities of the High Peak. The use of traditional local materials and methods of building is encouraged in new developments, particularly where they are prominent or conspicuous from public view points, but notes that high quality artificial substitutes will be appropriate in some cases.

Paragraph 4.7 states that the design of extensions should not be considered in isolation and the completed work should blend in with the original. It recognises that there may be occasions where the materials used in the original building are incongruous to the area, and in these circumstances the use of more appropriate materials will be expected, to help enhance the area.

Policy 17 entitled “BC1 - EXTERNAL MATERIALS” provides as follows:

“*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. In particular, natural facing materials will be required in locations conspicuous from public viewpoints within:
- areas conspicuous from the peak district national park and in conservation areas and their settings
-other areas where natural materials predominate.”

As noted previously in this statement, the Application Site is not visible from the surrounding Conservation Area, and is not proximate to the national park. Natural materials do not predominate in the Mousley Bottom area, due to the mix of residential and industrial uses and also due to the mix of housing construction styles and materials (the Red House is of red brick construction, the Cottage has an extension that is rendered and painted).

The two storey extension to number 3 Mousley Bottom provides the minimum extra space required by the owners. This extra space will cater for their need to work at home, allow them to expand their family and avoid the upheaval of moving house with a young family.
The design of the extension has been very carefully considered within the restrictions set by the proximity of neighbouring properties, the amount of space required and the need for the extension to be sub-ordinate to the original house.

Whilst the ideal position for an extension to the property would be solely to the rear, this is not possible over two floors due to the proximity of Number 4 Mousley Bottom and its associated conservatory. Any two storey extension across the rear of the existing house would result in an unacceptable loss of light to the neighbouring house. As a result the extra space required has been provided to the south west by extending beyond the width of the existing gable. The section that projects beyond the existing gable has been kept lower than the main body of the extension in order to minimise its impact on the existing house. As a result the extension will appear from the front of the house as a small, side, lean-to extension.

The existing property was built relatively recently and was constructed on the site of a former scrap yard. Despite the fact that the house lies within a conservation area and within the greenbelt, it is a modern development, on a “brownfield site”. The property is traditional in construction, with natural stone walls, a slate roof and painted timber windows.

Due to the fact that the house is within a conservation area, particular attention must be paid to the external materials used in the extension. These must be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the immediate surroundings. The properties around number 3 Mousley Bottom vary hugely in their appearance and character and are constructed using a wide range of external materials.



The Red house (red brick and render)



The Cottage (render and stone)

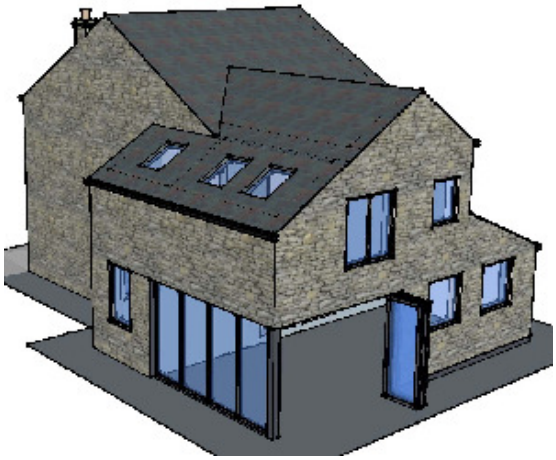
It can be therefore assumed that the varied nature of the character and appearance of the conservation area can be applied to the proposals at 3 Mousley Bottom. The new extension has been designed to match the materials of the existing property when viewed as part of the streetscape, as this is only area from which the extension can be seen.



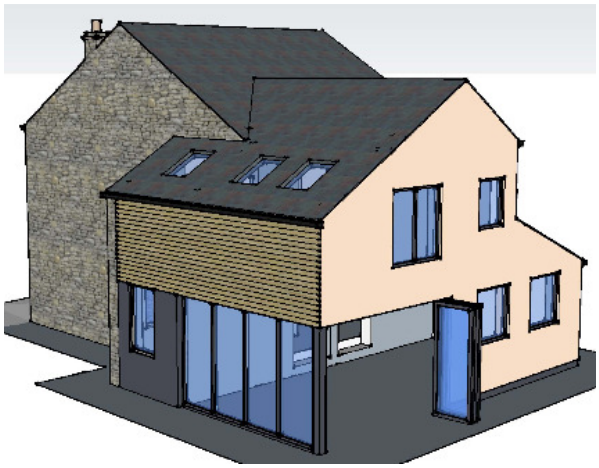
3D visualisation of view as seen from public footpath to front of the property

The rear of the extension will be constructed using light coloured render and timber cladding to the walls, with a natural slate roof throughout.

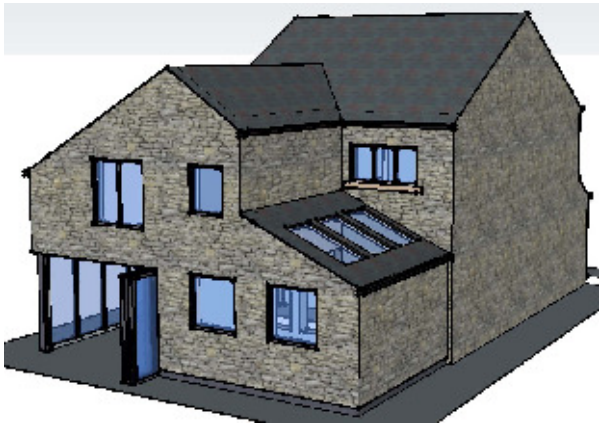
Careful consideration was given to the external materials proposed for the new extension. An extension constructed solely from natural stone would have too big an impact on the existing house and appear oppressive from neighbouring properties. As the 3D image comparison below clearly shows, the modern light construction created using render and timber is a far better solution than the solid heavy appearance when natural stone is used throughout.



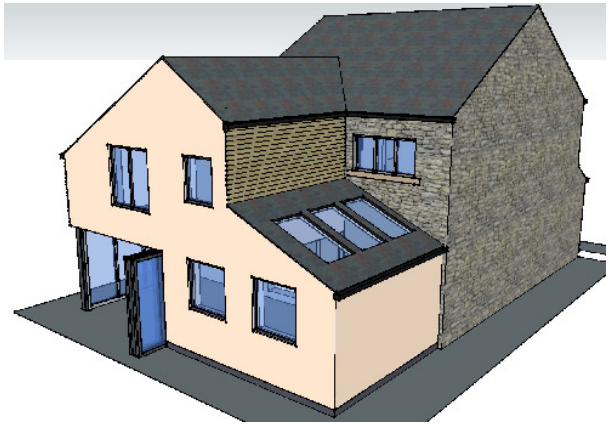
3D visualisation of rear in stone



3D visualisation of rear in render and timber



3D visualisation of rear in stone



3D visualisation of rear in render and timber

In conclusion, we feel that the design of the extension represents the best solution to accommodate the extra space required. It is of good quality, modern design and uses materials that can be seen on other properties within the conservation area that complement and do not overpower the existing house. It also provides added privacy for number 4 Mousley Bottom, whilst not impacting on the natural light the property currently receives. These proposals will allow number 3 Mousley Bottom to grow with its owner's family and provide a sustainable future for the house with very little impact on the surrounding area.

National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF")

The NPPF was published by the Coalition Government in March 2012. It is a material consideration in planning decisions, including the determination of this planning application.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as the "golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking". In practice this means:

- approving planning applications which accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:
    - any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole; or
    - specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Section 7 (paragraphs 56 to 68) of the NPPF relates to good design. Paragraph 58 recognises that planning policies and decisions should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. Paragraph 60 notes that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to confirm with particular forms or styles. It is contended that the design of the proposed development responds appropriately to the local character, surrounds and materials (the existing dwelling has a natural stone facade and this will be replicated on the front facade of the wrap extension which will be partially visible by the

public) but at the same time incorporates a contemporary and complementary design at the rear (where the extension will only be visible from the neighbouring properties).

Section 9 (paragraphs 79 to 92) of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land. The purposes of the Green Belt set out in paragraph 80 are similar to those set out in the Local Plan, and it is strongly contended that the proposed development does not compromise any of these purposes.

Paragraph 89 sets out categories of acceptable development within the Green Belt, including:

- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions; and
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously development sites which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

It is strongly contended that the proposed extension is not disproportionate in the context of either the Application Site or the surrounding area. Furthermore it represents the continuing development and improvement of a former scrap yard which will not have a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Conclusion

The applicants have a strong desire to remain living at No 3 Mousley Bottom as their family grows. The submitted application represents the living space they feel they need in order to stay at Mousley Bottom in the long term. If they cannot proceed with the proposed extension, the applicants will look to move house, most likely out of the borough in order to be closer to their workplaces in Manchester. The applicants have already obtained an indication of costs from two local contractors who will submit detailed bids for the work if and when the application is authorised. This investment in the local economy will be lost if the application is refused, and a hard working professional family will be forced to relocate from their home, most likely outside of the borough.