

A.E. Planning Consultants

**Planning Statement submitted in connection with a Planning Application for
the conversion of three outbuildings/barns into five dwellings.**

Gow Hole Farm, Gow Hole, Furness Vale, Derbyshire SK23 7QE.

Applicant: Mr. J Wood.

June 2015

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of an application seeking full planning permission for the conversion of three outbuildings/barns into five dwellings. Photographs of the site and the buildings are attached as Appendix 1. The existing farm house would be retained as a dwelling. The site is owned and occupied by Mr & Mrs Wood and their family.

2 LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED WITH THE APPLICATION

- 2.1 Documents submitted with this application include: -

- Building No.1 – 01 Plans as existing – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.1 – 02 Elevations as existing – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.1 – 03A Plans as proposed – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.1 – 04A Elevations as proposed – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.2 – 01 Existing plans, sections and elevations – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.2 – 02A – Proposed plans, section and elevations – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.3 – 01 – Existing plans and elevations – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.3 – 02A – Existing plans and elevations – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.3 – 03 – Existing section and elevations – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.3 – 04A – Proposed ground floor and front elevation – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.3 – 05A – Proposed first floor and rear elevation – 1:100@A3.
- Building No.3 – 06A – Proposed side elevation and section – 1:100@A3.
- Site Plan B – 1:500@A3.
- Location Plan A – 1:5000@A4.
- Location Plan – 1:1250@A4.
- Flood Risk Assessment – Ambiental – February 2014.
- Structural Survey – March 2015.
- Phase 1 Site Investigation – Peak Environmental Solutions.
- Bat Survey – Rachel Hacking Ecology.
- Appendix 1 – Photos.
- Topographical Survey – CPLS.

3 SITE LOCATION AND PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The 0.3 hectare site is located to the west of Marsh Lane in Gowhole and to the north of Furness Vale. The site comprises an engineering workshop, a farmhouse adjacent to Marsh Lane and a small complex of barns and out-buildings arranged around a courtyard area. Photographs of the site are attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Application HPK/2011/0291 granted full planning permission for a new access onto Marsh Lane in September 2011. This new access has been constructed.

4 THE APPLICATION

4.1 This section explains the design principles of the proposal under the following headings: -

- Use
- Amount
- Scale
- Layout
- Access
- Landscaping
- Appearance

Use

4.2 The application site comprises of an existing three-storey stone farmhouse and a two-storey brick built engineering workshop (Barn No.2) adjacent to Marsh Lane. The other outbuildings (Barn No.1 & 3) are located to the west and are arranged around a small courtyard. Barn No.3 is situated on the north side of the yard and is a long rectangular, two storey stone built shippon currently used for storage. Barn No.1 is a stone built shippon situated on the south side of the yard. On the ground floor are the remnants of former pig sties with the first floor in use as a games room. To the south west of the yard there is an open sided breeze block and corrugated sheet barn used for the general storage of machinery, vehicles and hay. There is no agricultural use at the site.

Amount

4.3 The proposal involves the conversion of Barn No.1 into three dwellings (two 1-bed/one two bed). A general storage area for these properties would be provided at the south west end of the building. Barn No.2 would be converted into a 1-bed house. Barn No.3 would be converted into a 2-bed house. The remaining, central part of Barn No.3 would be retained for general storage for the new house and the adjoining farmhouse.

Scale

4.4 The proposed houses would all have accommodation provided over two floors.

Layout

4.5 Barn No's.1 and 3 would have their front elevations facing towards the central courtyard which would be used for general circulation and amenity space. Small gardens would be provided to the west of Barn No.3 and to the south of Barn No.1. Barn No.2 would have its front elevation facing towards Marsh Lane with a small garden at the rear of the building. The existing farmhouse would have a small garden provided to the south on the opposite side of the existing driveway running between the house and the engineering workshop (Barn No.2).

Access

- 4.6 Vehicular access into the site would be from Marsh Lane via the access approved in September 2011 by application HPK/2011/0291. Parking would be provided close to the new dwellings and within the existing courtyard.

Landscaping

- 4.7 The application does not provided any details of hard and soft landscaping and this can be dealt with by a planning condition.

Appearance

- 4.8 The existing render to the front elevations of building No.1 and No.3 would be removed to reveal the natural stone beneath. The elevations would then match the rear of the buildings and the adjoining farmhouse. Any new roof slates would match the existing and this can be controlled by an appropriate condition. All new windows and doors would be constructed from timber which would either be painted or stained. With the use of appropriate materials the proposal would result in a significant enhancement to the overall appearance of the buildings.

5 POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 The Statutory Development Plan for the area comprises of the Adopted High Peak Borough Local Plan. The most relevant Saved Local Plan (LP) Policies include: -

- Policy GD4 Character form and design
- Policy GD5 Amenity
- Policy GD6 Landscaping
- Policy H1 Principles of housing provision
- Policy OC1 Countryside Development
- Policy OC2 Green Belt
- Policy TR5 Access, parking and design

- 5.2 Relevant policies within the Emerging High Peak Borough Council Local Plan – Submission Version (April 2014) include:-

- S1 – Sustainable Development Principles
- S1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- EQ2 – Landscape Character
- EQ3 - Countryside and Green Belt Development
- EQ4 – Biodiversity
- EQ5 – Design and Place Making

- 5.3 The determination of any planning application is to be made pursuant to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which is to be read in conjunction with section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Section 38(6) requires the local planning authority to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) provides that in determining applications the local planning authority shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations. In this respect the Development Plan currently consists of the High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies 2008. Policies contained within the adopted Local Plan carry full weight where they conform to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.4 The new draft Local Plan for the borough has been submitted to the Secretary of State (August 2014) and has recently undergone public examination and is currently awaiting the Inspectors report. At present, the policies remain untested and, as a result carry less weight. Nevertheless, the local plan is at a relatively advanced stage and it constitutes a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications, in line with the advice contained in Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.5 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF explains that at the heart of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision makers this means that when considering development proposals which accord with the development plan, they should be approved without delay, but where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant planning permission unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. Paragraph 47 states that to boost significantly the supply of housing, Local Planning Authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a five year supply of housing.
- 5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. It views delivery of sustainable development as a key consideration for the planning system. Indeed within the Framework there is '*a presumption in favour of sustainable development*'.
- 5.7 The Framework identifies and outlines three principle roles the Government considers the planning system should play in the delivery of sustainable development, these are:
- **an economic role** – by amongst other means, contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
 - **a social role** – by amongst other means, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- **an environmental role** – by amongst other means, contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.8 The Framework identifies a set of core land-use planning principles which should underpin both plan and decision-making processes of Local Planning Authorities. Those that are relevant to this application include:

- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
- seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- conserving heritage assets so that they can be enjoyed by future generations;
- the continued protection of the Green Belt from inappropriate development which should not be approved except in very special circumstances

5.9 Paragraph 19 of the Framework indicates that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

Requiring good design

5.10 The Framework indicates that the Government attaches great importance to design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

5.11 The Framework indicates that planning plays a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and will support the move to a low carbon future. Local planning authorities are required to “*actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings*”.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

5.12 Paragraph 49 of the Framework indicates that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Protecting Green Belt land

5.13 The NPPF identifies the five purposes of the Green Belt as follows: -

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

5.14 The NPPF indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings in Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless they fall within the exceptions identified at paragraph 89 of the Framework. Paragraph 90 indicates that the re-use of buildings within the Green Belt, which are of permanent and substantial construction, is not inappropriate development provided that the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

6 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The principle of development in the Green Belt and the affect on character and appearance.

- 6.1 The site lies within the Green Belt as defined in the High Peak Saved Local Plan. Saved Local Plan (LP) Policy OC2 identifies those types of development that would be acceptable within the Green Belt. This includes the re-use of buildings where this maintains the openness of the Green Belt and does not comprise Green Belt purposes. Policy EQ3, within the Emerging Local Plan, supports the conversion and re-use of appropriately located buildings of a permanent and substantial construction without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension for commercial use, unless it can be demonstrated that such a use would not be viable or suitable. In such cases a residential use will only be supported where the building is suitable and worthy of conversion for residential use, it is in a sustainable location and a marketing exercise has been carried or other evidence provided that the building would be unsuitable for a commercial use or conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded.
- 6.2 Saved LP Policy OC2 accepts the conversion of rural buildings in the Green Belt where they are of a permanent and substantial construction. Emerging Policy EQ3 also supports the conversion of rural buildings but will only support a residential use when it can be demonstrated that the building is unsuitable for a commercial use. Whilst Policy EQ3 is a material consideration it carries little weight until the publication of the Inspectors report on the new Local Plan. It should be noted that Policy EQ3 is also more restrictive than Paragraph 90 of the NPPF. Notwithstanding this comment the proposal will be assessed against both Policy OC2 and EQ3.
- 6.3 No marketing exercise for an alternative business use at the site has been undertaken due to the fact that the conversion of the buildings to a business use would not be viable in this location. The site is located off a narrow country lane that is not ideal for commercial vehicles or suitable for the likely resultant increase in vehicular traffic that would occur with a commercial use of the buildings. The character and appearance of the countryside would also be more likely to be adversely affected by a business use rather than a residential use.

As well as attracting more traffic a business use would also result in more parking at the site. An independent commercial use would also have the potential to have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of the retained farmhouse. The existing engineering workshop is currently used by Mr Wood who also lives in the adjoining farmhouse. This means that the current use of the workshop does not cause any problems of noise and disturbance for the occupiers of Gow Hole Farm.

- 6.4 The structural report submitted with this application concludes that the buildings can be converted without the need for extensive re-building or repair. The report recommends that there are certain areas where some localised re-building is required and these areas are highlighted in Appendix B of the report. All external elevations would be re-pointed to match the existing. The buildings to be converted are of permanent and substantial construction. The proposal would not, therefore, constitute inappropriate development and would not harm the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.5 The proposed conversion would be sympathetic to the overall appearance of the existing buildings and where possible retain and utilise the existing window and door openings. The removal of the white painted render would also result in a significant visual improvement to the buildings. All redundant farm buildings and machinery, including the slurry store would be removed from the site. The proposal would use an existing access point and provide adequate levels of parking/amenity space for both the existing and future occupiers of the site. With appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment the proposal would result in a significant enhancement to the overall visual appearance of the site. The proposal, therefore, satisfies the requirements of Saved LP Policies GD4, GD5, GD6 and TR5.

Impact on Protected Species

- 6.6 An ecological survey has been carried out at the property in line with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The report prepared by Rachel Hacking Ecology concludes that the proposed development would have no impact on any protected species and that the barns to be converted have no evidence of use by either bats or Barn Owls. It is recommended that a small number of bat and bird boxes should be incorporated within the development.

Contaminated Land

- 6.7 A Phase 1 site investigation has been carried out at the site. The report prepared by Peak Environmental Solutions Ltd recommends that further site investigation will be required in connection with soil and gas sampling. This Phase 2 investigation can be dealt with by means of a planning condition and would ensure any necessary remediation takes place prior to occupation of the dwellings.

Flood Risk Assessment

- 6.8 A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared due to the fact that the site lies adjacent of the River Goyt and is crossed by an unnamed tributary. The report prepared by Ambiantal concludes that the risk and impact from flooding is currently moderate. The report makes a

number of recommendations to ensure that the development would be suitable for this location.

Sustainability

- 6.9 The site lies in the Green Belt but, in terms of accessibility, lies within 0.5km of the community facilities provided within the village of Furness Vale. These include Furness Vale Primary School; 2 Public Houses (The Crossings and The Soldier Dick); The Imperial Palace Indian Restaurant; a fish and chip shop on the A6 and the Furness Vale Social Club on Yeadsley Lane. There is also a small industrial estate situated on Calico Lane. Furness Vale Railway Station is located on Station Road and is within 0.5km of Gow Hole Farm. The public highway leading from Gow Hole into Furness Vale also benefits from a pavement which provides a safe route for pedestrians. The sustainable location of the site, close to Furness Vale means that movements to and from the site would not have to rely on the use of the private car. The site is located within a short walk of good quality public transport connections and is also within an easy walking and cycling distance of a range of local facilities including employment, education and community facilities which would all serve residents at the site.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; environmental, social and economic. The proposal satisfies the relevant core planning principles within the Framework and the requirements of Saved LP Policies OC1, OC2, GD4, GD5, GD6 and TR5 for the following reasons: -

- The buildings are of substantial and permanent construction and the proposal would not harm the openness of the Green Belt or the purposes of including land in it. Therefore, it would not constitute inappropriate development.
- In environmental terms the proposed development would sustain and enhance the overall appearance of these traditional buildings. It would also result in substantial physical improvements to the buildings which would significantly improve their energy efficiency. The proposal would secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers.
- The proposed development would make a small contribution towards an increase in housing supply.
- The scale and design of the development is appropriate for this location and would improve the residential amenities of the existing farmhouse:
- The proposed development would not result in any harm to protected species.
- The proposed development would not result in any risk from land contamination or flooding.

7.2 In light of the above it is requested that planning permission be granted for this proposal.

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