

# **Planning and Heritage Statement**

In respect of

**Change of use to microbrewery and micro-pub of  
the former sorting office to the rear of the Post  
Office, 5 Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith**

on behalf of:

**Mr Tim Boothman**

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Revised 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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<b>Job. No:</b> 15-015
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## **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. This planning statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the change of use to microbrewery and micro-pub of the former sorting office to the rear of the Post Office, 5 Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith.
- 1.2. Historically the stone structure was used for the sorting of post for distribution by the Post Office to which it relates. This application seeks permission for the setting up of a microbrewery and micro-pub within the former sorting office building. The application seeks solely the change of use of the building and there are no associated operational works proposed.
- 1.3. The post master owns both the Post Office and the associated land to the rear, where the former sorting office is located. He is seeking to diversify his use of the site in order to supplement and support the retail and Post Office elements of his business.
- 1.4. The microbrewery will produce a small quantity of beer - six barrels per month which equates to 24 firkins (1 firkin = 9 gallons). Some of the beer will be sold within the Post Office/retail unit at 5 Market Place, for which the necessary licensing application has been submitted. Some of the produce will be sold to local pubs whilst the remainder will be for sale within the micro-pub. The micro-pub will be open on a Saturday evening only for approximately 12 people to taste and buy the produce.

## 2. Site Description and Heritage Considerations

- 2.1. As shown on the site location plan submitted with the application, extract below, the proposal site is located to the rear of the Post Office, 5 Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith.



*Extract from site location plan and internal layout of the former sorting office*

- 2.2. The former sorting office is a single storey stone built structure, likely to have been constructed at a similar time to the 1773 Post Office, see photo below. The building is single storey and measures 4.2m by 9m giving a total area of around 38 square metres.
- 2.3. Access to the site is via a pedestrian route running alongside the south western edge of the property in addition to vehicular access off Roebuck Place, which leads to private parking for the post master and his family. It is however, intended that the few people who attend the micro-brewery beer club will access the site on foot. The delivery of one 250kg pallet of raw materials will be delivered once monthly to the front of the property. The post master will move the delivery by hand to the former sorting office via the alleyway which runs along the south western side of the site.
- 2.4. The site is located within the designated Chapel-en-le-Frith Town Centre and also lies within the Conservation Area. Neither the former sorting office nor the Post Office are listed although a number of listed structures exist nearby. However, the secluded nature of the former sorting office and the fact that this application seeks no operational development means there will be no impact on any listed buildings or the Conservation Area. Whilst this development does not propose any operational development it does seek the reuse of a building which can be considered to be local in character and

its reuse will ensure its retention and maintenance into the future and a continued contribution to the Conservation Area.

- 2.5. This proposal can be considered to be small scale and entirely appropriate in both its nature and contribution towards the town centre's vitality and viability. Surrounding the former sorting office are a number of uses ranging from residential, garage, retail, public house and commercial uses. It is a mixed area within the town centre of Chapel-en-le-Frith. Therefore this proposed change of use can be considered an appropriate addition to the immediate locality.



*The southern elevation of the former sorting office and view of the pedestrian access looking towards Market Place and private vehicular access and parking off Roebuck Place.*



### 3. Site imagery



*View of former sorting office eastern elevation and rear of Post Office*



*View of Roebuck Place and western elevation of the former sorting office, showing roof and facing materials*



*View of Post Office from Market Place and the Post Office and neighbouring retail unit with pedestrian access to former sorting office shown in the left of the photo*

## 4. Site Planning History

- 4.1. Over the last twenty years the Post Office site has been subject to a number of planning applications pertaining to signage, shopfront design and disabled access in addition to more recent applications to implement a temporary former sorting office structure and extend the living space of the property. The following table details the applications on record which have been submitted in relation to the Post Office and associated buildings.

Reference Number	Valid Date	Applicant	Proposed Development	Decision
HPK/0002/8924	03/01/1990	Mr and Mrs Snowdon	Disabled adaptations to first and second floor residential accommodation	Approved
HPK/0002/8925	03/01/1990	Mr and Mrs Snowdon	Disabled adaptations to first and second floor residential accommodation (Conservation area consent)	Approved
HPK/0003/6733	21/10/1997	Mr Snowdon	Alterations to shop front	Approved
HPK/0003/6734	21/10/1997	Mr Snowdon	Non illuminated projecting hanging sign	Approved
HPK/0003/9874	20/03/2001	The Post Office (Royal Mail)	Erection of relocatable building for sorting mail within rear garden	Approved
HPK/2008/0256	04/04/2008	Mr T Boothman	Second floor extension to rear	Approved

- 4.2. As the site lies within a Conservation Area some of the applications prior to the 2013 Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act are accompanied by an application for conservation area consent, a procedure which has now been abolished. The most recent application, submitted in 2008, sought a second floor extension to provide an additional bedroom within the Post Office living quarters. This application did not impact the front or rear elevations of the property and simply involved lifting the roof of the rear two storey part of the building to align with the three storey Post Office property which fronts the Market Place.
- 4.3. In 2001 an application was submitted by Royal Mail seeking the 'erection of relocatable building for sorting mail within rear garden'. The application submitted was for a temporary structure to be erected at the most northerly point of the property's garden in order to move the sorting of mail out of the original sorting office, to which this application applies. The stone built sorting room no longer met health and safety requirements and the applicant wanted to erect a temporary porta cabin on site for two years while an alternative location for this activity was found.

- 4.4. A number of concerns were raised by neighbours concerning visual and non-visual amenity. These were addressed through conditions, requested by the Conservation Officer, requiring materials which were considered to be more in keeping with the Conservation Area and limiting the operational hours and delivery times to and from the temporary structure. The application went to planning committee where it was determined that the temporary use would be given consent for 6 months only while the applicant sought a more suitable location for the sorting of mail. It is likely that the porta cabin was never constructed as the applicant later wrote to the case officer informally appealing the decision stating the six month period was insufficient but to no avail.
- 4.5. Overall the six applications detailed above do not directly affect the application to which this planning statement relates. However, these applications do demonstrate how the use of the Post Office property has evolved and diversified over time. The current post master is keen to adapt the property for the needs of his family and to diversify the offer of his business in order to supplement the limited income derived from the Post Office itself.



## 5. Proposal

- 5.1. The proposed development comprises change of use of the Post Office former sorting office to a microbrewery and tap room. The microbrewery will be a 1.5 barrel brewery brewing once weekly and producing six barrels (24 firkins) of beer per month, this equates to a very small level of production. This beer will be sold within the Post Office, currently the subject of a separate licencing application, in addition to sale within some local pubs. The former sorting office will also be used for a micro-pub within the tap room. This will be limited to opening on Saturday evenings only, as the post master is limited by his working hours at the Post Office, and the number of customers will be approximately 12 in one sitting each week.
- 5.2. This application does not propose any operational development and there will be no alterations to the structure of the former sorting office. Neighbouring property's amenity is protected through limiting the opening hours to Saturday evenings and ensuring the once monthly deliveries use the side alleyway, providing no disturbance to neighbours at the rear. The applicant is happy for the opening times and delivery access to be conditioned to support approval of this application.
- 5.3. The applicant is seeking to diversify the use of the site in order to supplement and support the retail and Post Office elements of his business. Therefore this change of use application seeks not only to provide high quality local produce but will also provide a more stable future for the Post Office and the services it provides in Chapel-en-le-Frith.

## 6. Planning Policy and Key Issues

- 6.1. The development plan comprises the National Planning Policy Framework and the Adopted High Peak Local Plan. The main planning issues, and relevant policies in the development plan, are as below.

### ***National Planning Policy Framework:***

- 6.2. Within the NPPF's 'Core planning principles' (paragraph 17) guidance for all planning decisions a number of relevant statements are made which support the use of the former sorting office for the proposed use:
- Bullet point 3 states that planning should 'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs'.
  - Bullet 4 seeks to secure 'high quality design and good amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings'.
  - In bullet point 5 it states planning should 'take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas'.
  - Bullet point 6 encourages the 'reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings'.
  - Bullet point 9 seeks to 'promote mixed use development, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas'.
  - Bullet 11 argues that decisions should 'actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking, cycling'.
- 6.3. The proposed change of use makes a positive contribution to the vitality and character of Chapel-en-le-Frith whilst encouraging a range of types of business to help the area thrive. Reuse of this building preserves its contribution towards the history of the Post Office but also the immediate area. Despite its hidden location the former sorting office would have historically been part of the town centre activity. The proposal complies with the NPPF in the promotion of a mix of uses on site to make best use of the site and protect its existing key role as a Post Office.
- 6.4. The amenity of existing and future occupants of the site and neighbouring properties is protected through limited opening hours and the use of the pedestrian route to the south west of the site for deliveries. Thus negating the need for delivery vehicles to access the rear of the site off Roebuck Place. Furthermore, the sustainable location of the proposed development is within easy walking distance of frequent local bus services and footpath links and would encourage by its very nature customers to access the beer club by sustainable modes.

- 6.5. Section 3 of the NPPF 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy' (paragraph 28) iterates in bullet 1 the importance of 'supporting economic growth in rural areas including the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings'. Whilst this signifies a small scale expansion of a business it will still provide economic benefit to the town.
- 6.6. A key aim of this proposal is to retain the Post Office through diversification of uses on site. Bullet 4 in this section actively promotes 'the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops'. The Post Office is however, considered to be more valuable than most local shops and its retention should be a key concern of the community and local authority.

### ***High Peak Development Plan:***

#### ***Saved Policies***

- 6.7. The proposed change of use lies within the designated Chapel-en-le-Frith town centre. Policy 27 of the High Peak Saved Local Plan seeks development which 'sustains and enhances the vitality and viability of the centre'. This scheme achieves this through providing an additional use within the town centre, expansion of an existing small business and offering needed additional support to the Post Office.
- 6.8. Policy 28 seeks to encourage a Town Centre Environment which 'maintains and enhances the quality and character of the built environment'. Whilst this development does not propose any operational development it does seek the reuse of a building which can be considered to be local in character and its reuse will ensure its retention and maintenance into the future and a continued contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 6.9. Policy 33 deals with the evening economy which although on a small scale, this application will contribute towards. The proposal does meet the policy tests however, as it not within a predominantly residential area, the area contains a great mix of uses, nor can it be considered to be a bad neighbour in terms of noise, vibrations, odours, pollutants, activity or traffic due to the very limited opening times and very small scale of production proposed in addition to limiting the location where deliveries will be brought on to the site.

### ***Emerging Local Plan***

- 6.10. The emerging High Peak Local Plan is currently undergoing Examination in Public and although it is not a formally adopted document it does carry some weight in planning decisions due to it being in the latter stages of production.
- 6.11. Policy CF1 of the emerging document seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, which includes Chapel-en-le-Frith. This will be achieved by 'appropriate retail, leisure, cultural and business development where they are considered of a scale and type appropriate to the role and function of that centre'. This proposal can be considered to be small scale and entirely appropriate in both its nature and contribution towards the town centre's vitality and viability.
- 6.12. The extent to which other policies within the emerging Local Plan are relevant is limited since the proposed development does not make any visual change to the Conservation Area nor affect the shop frontage of the Post Office on Market Place. The impact of this development in policy terms will therefore more simply relate to the scale and degree of the operations and opening times on site.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1. This planning statement has been provided to support a planning application for the change of use to microbrewery and micro-pub of the former sorting office to the rear of the Post Office, 5 Market Place, Chapel-en-le-Frith.
- 7.2. Overall, the development as proposed has been found to accord with relevant policies in the development plan, and should be granted planning permission by the local planning authority for the following reasons;
- There will be no visual impact to the Conservation Area due to there being no operational development proposed. In fact the development proposed secures the use of the former sorting office retaining the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area.
  - The opening times of the micro-pub will be limited to Saturday evenings only, deliveries will not be made to the rear of the property and the scale of production is very small therefore protecting neighbouring amenity.
  - The development contributes to the vitality and viability of the Chapel-en-le-Frith town centre and supports the Post Office. In policy terms the proposed development is entirely appropriate in terms of its location, scale and type.