

**BANK HALL FARM BARN- PROPOSED ALTERATION AND EXTENSION  
PRE-APPLICATION SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

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## **Bank Hall Barn – Pre-Application Supporting Statement**

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## **1.0 Purpose of the Statement**

1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the prospective applicant, Rick Curtis (the “Applicant”) in relation to the proposal to convert Bank Hall Farm Barn to a single dwelling (four bed) for the purposes of guiding pre-application discussions with the Local Authority.

1.2 The report derives support from evidence prepared by the following professionals:

- Mr Ian Flack of Ian Flack Architects – Project Architect
- Mr Andrew Whitham acting on behalf of Crowley Associates – Heritage Professional

1.3 Mr Flack has developed the scheme of conversion for the Applicant and has prepared a Design and Access Statement (DAS). Mr Whitham has prepared a baseline assessment of the significance of the building (Statement of Significance (SoS)).

1.4 The DAS and the SoS have been submitted with the pre-application enquiry and should be read in conjunction with this statement.

1.5 In addition, the pre-application enquiry is supported by a series of drawings developed to illustrate the Applicant’s intentions. The drawing package includes:

- 15014(PL)001 Rev B Location Plan and Block Plan - Existing
- 15014(PL)002 Rev A Site Plan - Existing
- 15014(PL)003 Rev A Existing Floor Plans
- 15014(PL)004 Rev ‘-’ Existing Elevations
- 15014(PL)011 Rev B Block Plan
- 15014(PL)012 Rev B Site Plan - Proposed
- 15014(PL)013 Rev B Proposed Floor Plans
- 15014(PL)014 Rev B Proposed Elevations

## 2.0 Background

2.1 The building referred to as Bank Hall Barn (the “Barn”) was acquired by the Applicant with an extant planning permission and with the intention of converting it to a single residential dwelling. The consent (referenced below in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3) extant at the time of purchase expired on 03 January 2016.

2.2 With the permission having expired the Applicant is now in possession of a redundant hay barn/cart shed, which is currently in use as stabling and storage. The Applicant has no desire to continue using the building for its current purpose on the basis that it is not fit for the purpose to which it is being put. With reference the current use of the building the baseline position is:

- As a hay barn/ cart shed, the building is redundant
- The building is going to fall into disuse

## 3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The Applicant is seeking to apply for planning permission to convert the building to a single (four bedroom) dwelling.

3.2 Matters of access, layout, scale and appearance are detailed in the drawings which accompany this pre-application enquiry and the DAS explains how the programme of intervention and conversion has been designed to respond to the building and its setting. Officers are referred to its contents.

## 4.0 Significance

4.1 It is important to note that the Barn is, historically, tied to the Bank Hall Estate. More specifically and according to the SoS “the *barn forms part of an extensive group of ...buildings [the] home of the Frith family and from the 1860’s Henry Constantine Renshaw, a wealthy Salford Flax merchant*”. A number of other buildings on the estate are identified as designated heritage assets (listed at page 3 of the SoS).

4.2 Noting the presence of a number of designated assets, the report states that the value of the non-designated heritage assets on the estate is also “*considerable*”, particularly the group, which includes the Barn.

4.3 The SoS describes the Barn as dating from around 1870, and a structure which:

*“comprises three open “cart” bays, characterised by sturdy stone piers of neatly cut and tightly coursed, rocky faced, gritstone”.*

4.4 The SoS goes on:

*“The building is typical of a quality of late nineteenth century functional architecture, constructed to a precision and style that could serve both industrial or agricultural use and in its own way is extremely elegant. The whole sits beneath a slated roof, again on broad overhanging gables and eaves with plain roof trusses decoratively exposed for maximum visual and functional expression”.*

4.5 Mr Whitham in his statement concludes; that despite having been insensitively altered the Barn should be categorised as being of historic significance and is worthy of retention. Officers are referred to the contents of the SoS.

## **5.0 Context**

5.1 The context is examined in detail within the DAS and the SoS wherein the following matters are specifically addressed:

- The origins of the Barn
- The Barn’s current use
- The immediate context
- The wider context
- The Barn’s role within the wider group
- The Barn’s relationship with the wider group

- The extent of the Applicant's ownership

Please refer. The intention is not to repeat their findings here.

5.2 The Barn is located within the Parish Boundary of Chapel-en-le-Frith, a boundary which coincides with the Chapel-en-le Frith Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

5.3 For the purposes of the adopted Development Plan, the Barn is located within the Countryside. For the purposes of planning policy, the wider application site comprises brownfield land.

## 6.0 Relevant Planning History

6.1 Planning permission was originally granted for conversion of the Barn to a single dwelling in 2010 under application reference HPK/2010/0007.

6.2 The permission was replaced under application reference: HPK/2012/0641 on 3 January 2013.

6.3 According to the Decision Notice for application reference: HPK/2012/0641, the grant of planning permission was justified because:

*“the Council considers that the application has put forward a proposal that is considered to be a **suitable re-use of an agricultural building**\* that will not harm the visual qualities of the open landscape. The proposed change of use is not considered to harm the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or detract from the character of the surrounding countryside”.*

This decision is material to the matter in hand.

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\* My emphasis

## **7.0 Development Plan as a Material Consideration**

- 7.1 In accordance with the provisions of s38(6) of the Act, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. In accordance with Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved ‘without delay’.
- 7.2 The adopted Development Plan for the High Peak comprises the High Peak Local Plan 2016. With reference to the Local Authority’s website I note that the Development Plan was adopted on 14 April 2016 and that its purpose is to set out:
- 7.3 *“the Council’s vision and strategy for the Borough until 2031, the proposed locations for development and policies which will be used in determining planning applications”.*
- 7.4 With reference the matter of policies which will be used in determining any future application for the conversion of Bank Hall Barn we consider the following Development Plan policies relevant to the principle:
- Policy S1 – Sustainable Development Principles
  - Policy S1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
  - Policy S2 – Settlement Hierarchy
  - Policy EQ3 – Rural Development
  - Policy EQ7 – Built and Historic Environment

### ***Policy S1***

- 7.5 This policy builds on the advice contained within the NPPF tailoring the sustainable development principles set out therein to the specific strategic planning (social, economic and environmental) challenges which face the High Peak. The text preceding Policy S1 states that one of the challenges is to ensure sufficient land is released to *“meet assessed needs”* (page 25, paragraph 4.4.). One such ‘assessed need’ is housing. The text further states that Policy S1 *“underpins the whole Local Plan and provides a fundamental set of criteria that will be applied to all development proposals to ensure that all development*

*provides integrated solutions which meet social, economic and environment objectives at the same time” (Page 25, Paragraph 4.6).*

7.6 We note that Policy S1 is not a pass or fail policy, i.e. it is not set out such that if a development fails against one criterion, it is found to have failed against all of the criteria.

7.7 In so far as it is relevant to the proposal in hand we note that S1 “*seeks*” to ensure that development:

- Needs (for the most part) to be met within or adjacent to existing communities
- Makes effective use of buildings
- Takes account of the landscape character within the High Peak
- Enhances the environment (where possible)

7.8 The text within and preceding Policy S1 does not explain how adjacency to an existing community might be assessed nor does it define what constitutes a “sustainable location”.

#### ***Policy S1a***

7.9 Policy S1a merely repeats the presumption in favour of development which is set out at Paragraph 14 of the NPPF. The whole matter of how decision making should be undertaken in the context of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF is examined from paragraph 8.5 below.

7.10 Taken together Policy S1 and Policy S1a seek to promote sustainable development.

#### ***Policy S2***

7.11 Policy S2 directs housing development towards Market Towns including Chapel-en le Frith. According to the report prepared by the Inspector tasked with finding the Plan sound (the “Report”), the policy has to be read in conjunction with other policies within the Development Plan and it is on that basis the policy (and the constraints it places on locations for development) is justified.

### **Policy EQ3**

7.12 Policy EQ3 seeks:

“to ensure that new development [in the open countryside] is strictly controlled in order to protect the landscape’s intrinsic character and distinctiveness”

7.13 Bullet point 12 of Policy EQ3 supports the principle of re-using:

*“redundant and disused buildings and/or the redevelopment of a previously developed site, where it does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. Where the building is in an isolated location, the development should lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting”.*

7.14 On a point of detail, we note that the wording of the relevant bullet point in Policy EQ3 departs from that contained within Paragraph 55 of the NPPF. Policy EQ3 will apparently only support the principle of re-using “redundant **and** disused buildings”, whilst Paragraph 55 supports development that would re-use “redundant **or** disused buildings”. For the avoidance of doubt we assume that the provisions of bullet point 12 of the EQ3 are meant to be interpreted as intended by Paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

### **Policy EQ7**

7.15 Policy EQ7 states a commitment to the conservation of heritage assets and this extends to:

*“preventing the loss of buildings ...which make a positive contributions to the character or heritage of an area through .....appropriate re-use and sensitive development”.*

7.16 The objectives of Policy EQ7 in so far as they relate to the matter in hand reflect the objectives of Paragraphs 126 of the NPPF.

### **Housing Supply**

7.1 With reference the Report (Paragraph 63) there apparently remained a shortfall in five-year housing land supply immediately prior to the adoption of the Development Plan and I

note that the Inspector was merely satisfied “*there would be a reasonable prospect that the Plan would result in an appropriate supply of sites to provide five-years’ worth of housing in accordance with the Framework*”. There remains an element of doubt as regards the five-year housing land supply and one must conclude that the Local Authority will therefore lend considerable weight to any application coming forward for housing development.

## **8.0 Other Material Considerations**

### ***Decision Making in the Post NPPF Era***

- 8.1 The essence of the NPPF is to promote sustainable development including boosting housing supply. Sustainable development is very clearly defined within the NPPF (at Paragraph 7) as having three dimensions: economic, social and environmental, which are mutually dependent. Paragraph 8 of the Framework states that “*to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system*”. The policies in the NPPF (paragraphs 18 to 219) taken as a whole set out the Government’s view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system.
- 8.2 Paragraph 14 states that where decisions accord with the development plan they must be approved without delay.
- 8.3 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF supports “isolated” homes in the countryside “*where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting*”.
- 8.4 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF expects local authorities to “*set out in the Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment*”. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF expects local planning authorities to take into consideration “*the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*”.

***Sustainable Development in the context of the NPPF***

8.5 The recent High Court case of *Renew Land Developments Ltd v Cheshire East Borough Council and the Secretary of State for CLG* [2016] EWHC 571 (Admin) has examined the matter of how the decision-making process should be undertaken in the context of Paragraph 14 of the Framework. In arriving at his judgement, Mr Justice Jay stated that:

*“The concept of ‘sustainable development’ is the bedrock of the NPPF. ...I think it must be obvious from a cursory examination of the concept that it is seeking to secure the attainment of a proper balance between different factors pulling in different directions.....Thus, or so the framers of the NPPF have conceptualised the matter, development which balances these factors in the right way is ‘sustainable development’.*  
(Paragraph 10)

8.6 Following on he stated the decision-taking process has become a balancing exercise and *“in most situations there will be somewhat of a trade-off between competing desiderata”* (Paragraph 19).

8.7 Thus, in the post NPPF era:

- There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is seen as the ‘bedrock’ of the NPPF (Paragraph 14 of the NPPF);
- Sustainable development is considered to have three dimensions (social, economic and environmental) that should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system (Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF);
- The decision-taking process has become a balancing exercise;
- Policies which seek to restrict development and which do not allow for any ‘countervailing economic or similar benefit to be weighed in the scales’ are not consistent with the objectives of the NPPF;

- Policies relevant for the supply of housing are not considered to be up-to-date in the event the LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing (as per Paragraph 49 of the NPPF);
- *“Due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency”* with the NPPF (Paragraph 215 of the NPPF).

#### ***Chapel- en-le Frith Neighbourhood Plan***

- 8.8 Policy H2 of the Neighbourhood plan supports the provisions of Paragraph 55 of the NPPF and thus the re-use of redundant or disused buildings in the open countryside.

### **9.0 The Planning Balance**

#### ***Economic Dimension***

- 9.1 In pursuing the economic dimension of sustainable development, the NPPF expects the planning system to:

*Contribute “to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure”.* (Paragraph 7)

- 9.2 The proposal would generate direct and indirect employment during the construction period and development of the site will undoubtedly provide indirect economic benefits within the local economy long term through increased spending and demand for goods and services.

#### ***Social Dimension***

- 9.3 According to the NPPF, the social role of the planning system is to:

*support “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 supports its health, social and cultural well-being" (Paragraph 7).*

- 9.4 The development will make a contribution towards housing supply and in terms of the quality of accommodation on offer, Lifetime Homes criteria are incorporated in the design, space standards are generous with the accommodation designed to provide good quality living conditions and serviced by a satisfactory amount and quality of amenity space.
- 9.5 More generally the architectural approach adopted is well considered. According to the DAS it has evolved with the specific aim of revealing the significance of the building *"stripping away the insensitive modern additions and exposing more of the original stone structure"*. The material finish is acknowledged as being of a high quality.
- 9.6 In addition, the programme of conversion will result in the direct enhancement of the setting of the Barn. Not only would the future residents of the Barn benefit from this enhancement so too would the residents of neighbouring properties.
- 9.7 We note, with reference to the DAS that the RIBA publication entitled: The Environmental Design Pocketbook, 2012, states (at page 56) distances of less than 2km should be considered suitable for walking and cycling.
- 9.8 The Barn is situated within an existing community and with reference to the Environmental Design Pocketbook and deferring to the evidence provided by Mr Flack within the DAS, we note that local services and public transport are within reasonable walking distance. More specifically, Chapel en le Frith train station is located 1km (500m as the crow flies) from the site and is accessible on foot via Bank Hall Drive, a Public Right of Way (HP6/44(PROW)). Chapel en le Frith station provides regular services to New Mills, Buxton, Stockport and Manchester.
- 9.9 Furthermore, a wide range of services and facilities capable of supporting the 'health, social and cultural well-being' of all future residents of the Barn in line with the expectations of the NPPF are located 2.1km (1km as the crow flies) north within Chapel-en-le Frith.

### ***Environmental Dimension***

9.10 The NPPF defines the environmental role of the planning system as:

*“contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimize waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”.* (Paragraph 7)

9.11 Conversion of the Barn as proposed will secure the long term future of an important heritage asset, one that is at risk of falling into disuse and long term dereliction. The principle of re-using of the building in this way is entirely consistent with the principles of sustainable development. In addition, the enhancement of the immediate setting will be of direct benefit to the visual appearance of the wider landscape and one’s experience of the group in that landscape.

9.12 There are no apparent environmental constraints identified (statutory landscape designations, flood risk, contamination) which might affect development of the site as proposed.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

10.1 The Barn can no longer be put to the use for which it was originally built and in its current use it is not fit for the purposes of the Applicant, the building is therefore in danger of falling into disuse and at risk of becoming derelict.

10.2 By our own expert’s analysis, the structure is of significance and should be classed as a non-designated heritage asset. In accordance with the objectives of the NPPF and indeed those of Policy EQ7 of the Development Plan, every effort should therefore be made to have the building conserved and where possible enhanced. In this context Policy EQ7 supports the principle of the development.

- 10.3 With the support of Policy EQ3 of the Development Plan and Paragraph 55 of the Framework, the Applicant is seeking permission to secure the future of the Barn by converting it to living accommodation in the form of a four-bedroom property.
- 10.4 The Barn lends itself well to such a proposal and the project architect has developed a programme of intervention which is carefully considered and which is designed to strip away the insensitive additions and alterations to reveal the significance of the building. In addition, the immediate setting to the Barn will be enhanced with landscape features of importance retained.
- 10.5 It is our position that the development being proposed would result in the suitable re-use of the building consistent with the objectives of the Development and those of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF.
- 10.6 Albeit but one dwelling, the development will make a contribution towards housing supply, a fact which weighs in favour of the grant of planning permission.
- 10.7 For the reasons outlined above and in sections 7,8 and 9 of this statement we consider that the development is sustainable development for the purposes of Policies S1 and S1a of the Development Plan and Paragraph 14 of the Framework. It is in this context that this pre-application submission should be considered.