

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

HPK/2023/0108
Valid: 22/03/23

50, WEST ROAD, BUXTON,
DERBYSHIRE, SK17 6HG

CONVERSION OF ATTACHED
OUTBUILDING TO FORM
ADDITIONAL SPACE AND
FORMATION OF LIGHTWELL
TO FRONT TO PROVIDE
ACCESS TO CONVERTED
BASEMENT (FULL -
HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Design Considerations
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Impact on Highway Safety
- Nutrient Neutrality

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site lies within the settlement boundary for Buxton as defined by the Local Plan policies map. The site relates to a two-storey mid-terraced property, which is located within a predominantly residential area. The dwelling includes a cellar and accommodation within its roofspace. To the rear the dwelling has a two storey outrigger and single storey projections beyond. A small yard is located to the rear and small area of hardstanding to the front. The site lies within the Buxton (Higher Buxton) Conservation Area, which is subject to an Article 4 Direction.

PROPOSAL

This application proposes the conversion of the cellar to habitable accommodation. To facilitate this a lightwell, with sash window, would be provided to the front, which requires the excavation of part of the front hardstanding. The scheme also proposes the conversion of the small garage to the rear. The existing garage door would be closed with stone work, while a new rooflight is proposed.

Revised proposals have been received which removed the previously proposed French door to the front, a smaller lightwell/removal of external access and the demonstration of the parking.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

High Peak Local Plan (Adopted 2016)

S1 Sustainable Development Principles

S1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S7 Buxton Sub-area Strategy
EQ6 Design and Place Making
EQ7 Built and Historic Environment
CF6 Accessibility and Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Residential Design (2005)
High Peak Design Guide (2018)
Buxton Conservation Areas Appraisal (2007)

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 12: Achieving Well-designed Places
Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

HPK/2018/0134 - Replacement double glazed windows and front door – Approved –
02/07/18

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 25/04/23
Neighbour consultation period ends: 10/07/23
Press Advert:

Public Comments

One letter of comments received:

- Concern relating use of building and proposals would intensify that use
- Why is the building being split into smaller units
- Parking issues
- Issues during construction
- Drainage
- Adjacent approval had escape window rather than doorway

Town / Parish Comments

N/A.

DCC Highways – Further Comments

There are no highway safety objections to the above mentioned planning application, subject to space being provided within the site for a single vehicle as shown on the revised proposed plans.

DCC Highways – Initial Comments

The proposal seeks the conversion of an outbuilding / basement to form additional living space including a bedroom.

The proposed conversion results in the introduction of an additional bedroom and the loss of the existing single vehicle garage. The loss of the garage will result in no off-street parking to serve the dwelling.

Therefore, the Highway Authority recommends that the applicant provides a replacement off-street parking space (measuring a minimum of 2.4m x 4.8m) which could be provided on the area of land adjacent to the garage.

Alternatively, the applicant may wish to revise the proposal and retain the single garage.

Accordingly, before making my formal recommendations I would be obliged if you could ask the applicant to submit revised plans in view of the above comments and in the meantime, please hold the application in abeyance until revised plans have been submitted.

Conservation Officer – Further Comments

The revised plans see drwg ref: revised proposed 01-A , show the creation of the new lightwell focused at and equal to the basement level window, with the omission of the stairwell, French doors and large excavations seen previously. This is then reflected in drwg ref: revised proposed 02-A , these sections show boundary wall at front elevation with a small amount of paving between this and the new railings surrounding the proposed lightwell. The revised section appears to show the original boundary treatment with railings inserted on top or behind this?

I note that materials and methods to tackle the cellar remain despite my previous concerns, consequently I advise strongly that ventilation is included for the new basement level kitchen. In addition to this, I encourage the following:

- New paving slabs at front elevation around lightwell are to be laid at an angle and set a few increments away from the footings of the property. This is to ensure rainwater run-off is directed away from the walls of the property and to mitigate pooling in the lightwell.
- I presume drainage and water management has been considered for the lightwell though it is not clear on the revised plans.

To conclude; the revised plans show a more subservient scheme and therefore I now do not anticipate harm imposed on the Conservation Area.

Subsequently, I offer No Objection; subject to the following conditions:

Full details of facing materials such as railings type, size and colour code, boundary treatment and slabs type to front elevation are to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Once approved in writing the proposal shall be carried out in accordance with this specification.

Reason: to protect and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

New window details including type, colour code, size, material, fittings and fixtures are to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Once approved in writing the proposal shall be carried out in accordance with this specification.

Reason: to ensure design uniformity across the property and no visual impact within the Conservation Area.

Conservation Officer – Initial Comments

Objection.

Firstly, Buxton Central Conservation Area inaccurately identified as 'West Road Conservation Area' does not seem to be assessed in terms of significance, vernacular qualities, historic uniformity, setting or character of which contribute to the merits awarding the vicinity Conservation Area status. I appreciate some building materials are described though this is a minimal acknowledgement of the Buxton Central heritage asset. I am not confident there is sufficient exploration into the heritage asset to justify some of the interventions.

50 West Road is not a listed building, though it sits quietly within terraces of its 19th century gritstone counterparts. A variety of historic features along the road remain, including the general make-up of the traditional architecture of these modest dwellings. These elements consist of two or three storey in plan, bay windows, some dormers, squat chimneys, rear extensions or outriggers, some original windows, stone window and or door surrounds, and their placements set back neatly from the road, with low lying stone walling and or greenery and planting. Mentioned in the Conservation Area appraisal, the pattern of West Road is a major connecting route just a short way south from the core of Buxton Central. The earliest Historic OS Maps dated 1882 (quoted to be surveyed in 1878-79) denote this relationship; still seen today, between the vernacular terraces and their street scene.

The proposal creates a very alternative principal elevation to the dwelling. West Road does not see this unusual feature at a street facing or principal elevation, of an exposed cellar level or essentially what is envisaged to become a four storey townhouse with its now ground floor at a subterranean level. This intervention looks to elongate the building against its traditional counterparts, which looks to cause visual conflict in this setting. The front elevation appears vulnerable and see drwg ref: front sectional front elevation as proposed Proposed 01 , the inclusion of double French doors and a stairwell at the street scene makes for an untraditional and quite odd feature here. This design concept is one typically found in cities such as Brighton for example, where larger Regency architecture across the city could afford to have spreading elevations and grander entrances.

Severn Trent

No public sewers affecting the site on record.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application proposes householder development to a property which is located within the settlement of Buxton as defined by the Local Plan Policies Map. Within such locations householder development may be acceptable, as a matter of principle. The main considerations in this instance whether the design is appropriate, having regard to heritage assets, whether any amenity issues would arise, whether there would be an impact upon highway safety, and nutrient neutrality.

Design Considerations (including impact on Heritage Assets)

Policy S1 states that new development will be expected to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and where possible enhancing the environment which would be achieved by, inter alia, securing high quality and locally distinctive design. Policy EQ6 states that all development should be well designed and of a high quality and that this will be achieved by requiring development to be well designed to respect the character of the townscape, and requiring development to contribute positively to an areas character, identity and history in terms of scale, height, density, layout, appearance, materials and relationship with adjacent buildings.

Further guidance for extensions is contained within the High Peak Residential Design Guide SPD (2005), and the Design Guide SPD (2018).

The Residential Design Guide (2005) provides guidance in section 9, and states that extensions and alterations can have a significant impact on the appearance of a house, neighbouring property and the street scene. It is important, on all types of houses, that domestic development is carefully designed.

The Design Guide SPD (2018) at 5.2 states that alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building. At 7.4 states that windows are among the most important features of an elevation. They are the building's eyes, and as such deserve special care and attention.

Policy EQ 7 states that the council will conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The application site lies within the Buxton Conservation Area (Higher Buxton), which is a designated heritage asset. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies this area as having various characteristics, which includes the largest concentration of vernacular buildings, a regular rhythm of three-storey commercial buildings and terraced houses, and houses with small front gardens, back yards & alleys. These contribute towards the overall significance of the Conservation Area. The property, as a two storey mid terrace unit, with accommodation in the roof space and a small front garden and back yards is indicative of the defining characteristics of the Conservation Area and as such contributes towards its significance.

The proposed works include the creation of a light well to the front elevation and insertion of a window. This would add some vertical emphasis to the property,

although the works would be largely obscured due to the modest size of the light well and subterranean nature of the development. The proposed opening would align with the existing openings which is considered to be appropriate. The lightwell would be enclosed by railings which would also help to obscure the development and, subject to detailed design, would be complementary to the existing front boundaries. It is also acknowledged that similar developments have occurred in this row of terraced dwellings. It will be necessary to condition details of the proposed window to ensure that it is sympathetic with the host building, the terraced row and wider Conservation Area.

To the rear the scheme proposes the conversion of the garage. The existing garage is, to some degree, at odds with the prevailing single storey outriggers and the replacement of the opening with stonework is not considered to affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It would be necessary for the rear rooflight to be appropriately design, details of which can be secured by condition.

For the above reasons, with appropriate condition, the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would not cause harm to its significance.

Amenity

Policy EQ6 requires development achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

The proposed works would not increase the scale and mass of the existing building. As such there would be no detrimental impact on neighbouring properties through loss of light, overbearing or overshadowing. A new window is proposed to the front elevation, however this would be subterranean and as such would not result in amenity issues for neighbouring properties. Additionally, the new rooflight in the garage conversion would not result in loss of privacy or amenity issues due to its position in the roof slope.

The proposed cellar conversion would have a poor outlook, although given the number of habitable rooms within the property the effect is unlikely to be so severe to result in adverse effects on the amenity of future occupiers. Further, the light well proposed would allow for light filtration to the room.

Concern has been raised with regard to disturbance during construction. Such matters are a consequence of development and, generally, would only occur for a short period of time. Given the scale of the development it is not considered that the proposals would result in such adverse effects to amenity.

Highway Safety

The proposal does not include an increase the number of bedrooms at the property, the conversion works would provide a kitchen within the cellar, and living area within the garage.

Highways initially raised concern with regard to the loss of the garage. The size of the garage would not be fit for purpose as an area to store a private motor vehicle due to its extremely limited size. Further there is scope for parking along the rear alley and the site is within a sustainable location. Nonetheless, the applicant have demonstrated that an off street parking space could be provided within the rear yard. Following review of the amended proposals, DCC Highways have raised no concerns with regard to the proposed development.

Nutrient Neutrality

The site lies within the catchment of the River Wye which forms the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Council has been notified that action must be taken to address exceedances of phosphorus in the River. As such, the Council cannot grant consent for development unless it can rule out “likely significant effects” on the SAC. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required when the plan or project creates a source of water pollution or has an impact on water quality and when it is within the catchment of the SAC. Initially, a screening assessment will be required to consider if “likely significant effects” (alone or in-combination) on the SAC can be ruled out. If not, this will be followed by an “Appropriate Assessment” where the impact of the plan or project is considered in detail.

Screening Assessment

The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of a European site. The proposal will not surface water run-off from the site. However, the proposal does involve additional bedroom/bathroom accommodation but the application relates to an existing dwelling. A condition can be added to ensure that this remains the case. On the basis, of an average occupancy rate of 2.4 persons per dwelling, however, there will be no increase in waste water generated by the proposals. Therefore, it will not risk having a significant negative effect on the SAC either on its own or in combination with other proposals and therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.

Other Matters

Concern has been raised that the building is being used as an AirBnB and that the development would intensify this use. It is not clear whether a material change of use of the property has arisen, nonetheless the plans demonstrate that the building would not be subdivided into separate units as has been suggested. If there is a suggestion that a material change of use of the property has occurred then this would be a matter, initially, for planning enforcement. The lawful use of the premises is as a dwelling and householder development, as proposed, is acceptable. The conditions recommended above will ensure that the accommodation remains ancillary, is not subdivided or used as a separate unit of holiday accommodation.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

It is considered that the proposals would comply with the policies contained within the Development Plan and guidance within the NPPF, and as such it is recommended that the application be approved.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Declan Cleary

Recommendation Date: 13/07/2023

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of High Peak Borough Council