

Trevor Gilman Chartered Engineer
2, Roseneath, 4, Hardwick Mount, Buxton, Derbyshire. SK17 6PP
Telephone Email
Website

Planning Department
High Peak Borough Council
Town Hall
Buxton
Derbyshire SK17 1AQ

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**PLANNING APPLICATION HPK/2023/0433, STONERIDGE, 9, PARK ROAD,
BUXTON**

I have been asked by neighbours to respond to the above application on their behalf. The owner of Stoneridge, 9, Park Road is proposing to demolish an existing building and replace it with a taller structure on the same footprint. Although now owned by No 9, it is actually situated between No 7 and Park Hall, No 5 Park Road, and used to be within the curtilage of No 7 Park Road.

The initial reaction is that it is an improvement on the first application. HPK/2023/0263, which was rejected. However, there are some aspects that do not meet the national and local requirements for validation of a new planning application. Because of these shortfalls, it should not have been accepted as a valid application by the Planning Department.

According to the application form, the site area is 50 sq metres. This includes only the building and a drive in front of it. The work cannot be done without encroaching on land belonging to No 5 and No 7, and the extent of this encroachment should be included in the site area. The red line on the Site plan should show this. In this case Certificate A is not appropriate because the applicant does not own all of the land to which the planning application applies. The form states that there is no car parking provision on site, but there is, of course, the drive in front of the existing building. The plans submitted with the application are in pdf format and it is impossible to assess the building's size, height, distance to boundaries, etc. In particular, the distance to the boundary with No 5, Park Road, appears to have been exaggerated, but it is impossible to check. The plans show a slight, but undefined, difference in ground level along the boundary with No 5 Park Road. This height difference has been measured and is about 1.8 metres. This is very significant and must be shown accurately. The plans and elevations reference an A1 sheet. Very few people have a printer capable of coping with this size. For this reason and to allow the plans to be properly assessed, all of the submitted plans must include a Scale Bar. The application should be withdrawn or deferred until these issues have been addressed.

Neighbours fully agree with the need to demolish the existing building. It leans towards the boundary with No 5 to such an extent that its life is limited. The wall is between 140 and 160mm out of vertical, measured over a height of 2000mm. Even if we accept that the wall is double skin and most likely 225 blockwork then its ability to carry a vertical

load down to the foundations is severely limited. Furthermore, a neighbour has checked the lean over the past seven months and has found that the building moves slightly according to whether the ground is sodden or dry. Another neighbour told me that it has been leaning for many years, but I feel that it could be brought down by an autumn storm or heavy winter snow, both increasingly likely with global climate change. The application suggests that the existing can be demolished ‘delicately’. During a lifetime in construction, this is the first time I have seen the words *demolition* and *delicately* in the same paragraph! The applicant refers to ‘some kind of temporary shuttering and retaining boards’. Full details are required for assessment by neighbours. The impact on neighbouring property will be ‘minimal’. This word is meaningless in this context, and could mean anything. Demolition must be undertaken with care. The work must be undertaken by an experienced contractor, under the supervision of the Local Authority’s building inspector. The importance of this cannot be stressed enough.

The applicant has explained the problems posed by the geology of the site. The large villas and boarding houses were all built with a knowledge of the wet ground conditions; this building was not. The application refers to the new foundations being designed only after demolition, yet the impact of the ground work required is profound, and some idea of the extent of this groundwork needs to be known before neighbours can assess the impact on their property, both in the extent of the encroachment and the time it will take to construct. Occupants of No 7 Park Road will have no access to their usual entrance for the duration of the work.

Since the previous application, the applicant has admitted that the building is not a domestic garage but is currently used in conjunction with the business carried on at Stoneridge. The extent of the business activities at No 9 can be assessed with a brief search for websites. On three separate websites, Stoneridge is being marketed as a Guest House, Holiday Cottage and Air b&b. These machines are served by electricity and water supplies, although it is far from clear how these supplies get to the building. Similarly, a drain is required to take away waste water. This should go to a foul drain, but again this is not clear.

The application refers to a possible future use as a workshop. This word conjures up the potential for noise and disruption. If this reference is left in the application it could be wrongly assumed at some time in the future that any permission granted would include workshop use. To be absolutely sure that there can be no ambiguity in the future any reference to a workshop must be removed from all of the documents.

Some of the photographs in the application were taken from the patio of No 7. Mrs Budd has confirmed that no one has asked for permission to go onto her property to take photographs, nor has anyone approached her to discuss access onto the property in the future. As such she would feel disinclined to grant any such access, other than the conventional ‘pass and repass’ right of way shown in the deeds. This access is limited to the passage between No 7 and the proposed building, along with a narrow strip along the south elevation – the latter no longer used by the applicant because the door and window on this elevation have been blocked up.

Some aspects of the design of the building are concerning. The door in the access passage between the building and No 7 should open inwards instead of obstructing the access to No 7. The applicant describes the height increase as ‘modest’. This increase

needs to be assessed in the context of the Conservation Area. The height increase also increases the area of wall above the double doors, but no information is given about this material.

It is obvious that something has to be done about the existing structure. It needs to be demolished before it falls down and causes injury or damage. Deciding what to do with the resulting vacant land is a separate matter. The current proposal is unsuitable for the above reasons, and must be refused. Before submitting a further application, it would be prudent for the applicant to engage fully with neighbours.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Gilman