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CONVERSION OF EXISTING BARN INTO ONE DWELLING AND DEMOLITION OF ATTACHED AND DETACHED STABLE BUILDINGS

BARN AT MOORGATE EAST FARM, BURNEDGE, ROCHDALE OL16 4QL

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

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THE SITE

The application site is occupied by a detached, stone built barn, located within the Green Belt and adjacent to Moorgate East Farm, which is a Grade II Listed Building. The building has a number of attached ancillary structures and detached outbuildings within its curtilage. The buildings are currently used partly for stabling and partly for storage purposes, but are largely vacant. The area surrounding the site is primarily open in character, although there are several residential properties in close proximity.

THE PROPOSAL

This application is seeking consent for the demolition of some of the ancillary buildings and the conversion of the original barn to form a single dwelling. The new dwelling would provide three bedroom family accommodation over two storeys and include private gardens and parking facilities within its curtilage.

No alterations to the existing access arrangements are proposed, with the existing access serving the new dwelling and also still providing access to the field to the rear, which is within the applicant's ownership.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

A previous application for the same development (reference 16/00454/FUL) was approved subject to a number of conditions on 19th October 2016, but this consent has now expired.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 reformed the development planning system in England. Section 38(6) of the Act requires that all planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, provided the policies or proposals it contains are relevant and unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise.

The development must therefore be assessed against national planning policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), together with the local planning policies as set out in the Rochdale Local Plan.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) first came into effect in March 2012 and a revised version was published in July 2018. Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the revised NPPF set out that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework. Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should endeavour to approve applications for sustainable development. Section 5 – 'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes', Section 13 – 'Protecting Green Belt land', and Section 16 – 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' are of particular relevance to this application.

The government also published its NPPG in 2014. This is intended to complement the NPPF and to provide a single resource for planning guidance, whilst rationalising and streamlining the material. Almost all previous planning Circulars and advice notes have been cancelled.

The Local Development Plan

The relevant local planning policy documents are the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The Core Strategy, adopted in 2016, provides an overview of the Council's objectives for the whole of the borough and all other plans and policies must accord with the provisions of the Core Strategy. The 2006 UDP remains in place until the Allocations Development Plan is adopted.

Local Supplementary Guidance

Rochdale Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Residential Design Guide' (2007) is also relevant.

In this policy context the main issues relevant to the proposed development are addressed below.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the Development

The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and accordingly development is directed towards the reuse of previously developed land in accessible locations. To reflect this, policy C1 of the Core Strategy, 'Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places', states that the Council will provide sufficient land to deliver at least 460 net additional dwellings per year up to 2028 to assist in the creation of successful, inclusive and mixed communities and meet the housing needs of the borough. Policy C1 also states that the in achieving the provision of the addition homes, the reuse and regeneration of vacant and underused previously developed sites, particularly those which currently detract from the quality of the residential environment will be important. The policy also seeks to ensure that new dwellings are sustainable, with good access to local services, green infrastructure, shops, jobs, schools, and public transport.

In accordance with the NPPF and Policy C1, the site is previously developed. Although the site lies within a relatively rural location, it is easily accessible to the nearest highway, Broad Lane, either on foot or by private car. There is a bus stop within close walking distance along Broad Lane. It is therefore considered that the site is in a sustainable location with adequate links to shops and services via the public transport network. Due to its semi-rural location, the site also has excellent access to areas of open land, outdoor recreation, and the public rights of way network.

Core Strategy policy C3 'Delivering the right type of housing' seeks to ensure that the supply of larger and higher value housing in the borough is improved to attract and retain residents. In accordance with policy C3 the proposed development would make a positive contribution towards the borough's housing stock by providing a high quality, three bedroom family home for future occupants. In this regard the proposed development is also compliant with the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework which states:-

"It will be important to increase the attractiveness of the northern areas to a wider range of people. In particular, there is the potential to increase the number of higher income households who choose to live in the north. The influx of more entrepreneurs and skilled workers could help to increase business creation and support local economic activity, as well as reducing pressure in the southern areas which currently have high levels of demand".

The site lies within the Green Belt as designated under policy G/D/2 of the UDP and policy G4 of the Core Strategy. Core Strategy policy G4, 'Protecting the Green Belt', states that development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed not to be inappropriate by national planning policies contained within the NPPF unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Policies for managing development in the Green Belt are not included within the Core Strategy as the Council considered that UDP policies largely repeated national guidance and therefore it has not carried them forward into the Core Strategy.

Section 13 – 'Protecting Green Belt Land' of the NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and their permanence. Development must not conflict with the main purposes of including land within the Green Belt, which are: -

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns and villages
- To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 143 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 146 of the Framework states that certain forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These include:

- The re-use of buildings provided the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

An updated structural survey of the building was carried by Healey Consulting in February 2021 and has now been submitted to the local planning authority. Whilst the report recommends repair works and an element of rebuilding it is clear from the conclusions of the report that the building is capable of conversion to the residential unit without major reconstruction works.

The building comfortably accommodates the proposed dwelling without the need for any extensions. In fact, the demolition of the ancillary buildings attached to the original barn will reduce the bulk and massing

of the building, thereby reducing its impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and result in a major improvement in the overall appearance of the site and its surroundings.

The building is sited within an established curtilage of a substantial size, clearly defined by existing buildings, walls, and fences. The external areas of the site can, therefore, accommodate ample parking provision and private garden areas within the existing curtilage without resulting in encroachment into the countryside or impacting on the openness of the Green Belt. The private garden areas are located partly on the site of the existing stable building to the rear of the proposed dwelling and will be defined by unobtrusive stock proof fencing.

The proposed use is compatible with adjacent land uses, as the surrounding area is residential in character.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will have a lesser impact than the existing building on the openness of the Green Belt and will bring about significant improvements in the visual appearance of the site.

Residential Amenity

Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals to demonstrate that they will not negatively impact upon the amenities of existing and future residents and occupiers.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Further, the Councils Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' states that new developments *"should be carefully designed to protect the amenity of the occupants of adjoining properties".*

The design of the scheme means that adequate levels of light and privacy will be provided for future occupiers of the dwelling. Its position, together with the location of window openings, will ensure that the occupiers of the existing dwellings to the south west of the site do not experience any loss of amenity as a result of the proposed development. The outlook from the rear of the proposed dwelling will be considerably enhanced by the removal of a large part of the existing stable block.

Design

One of the core planning principles contained within the NPPF is to always seek to secure high quality design. Furthermore, policy P3 of the Core Strategy requires all new developments, including associated landscaping, to adhere to high standards of design.

In this context the scheme has been carefully designed to take into account the character of the existing building and its proximity to a Listed Building.

Some alterations to the elevations are required to provide access and adequate light to the dwelling, but as far as possible existing openings are utilised. The external fabric of the building's most prominent south east and north east elevations will remain largely unchanged. The exposed elevations, following the

demolition of the attached structures, will be restored to match the existing building. Any new window and door openings will be introduced in a pattern and of a design reflecting the original agricultural use of the building. All proposed rooflights will be conservation style.

Access and Parking

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The access arrangements would not change as a result of this development, and adequate parking/turning facilities can be provided within the application site. Access to the land to the north west of the site, which is within the applicant's ownership, will remain through the site.

Ecology

Criterion 7 of Core Strategy Policy G7 - 'Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity' requires that development proposals which would affect a species protected by law or its habitat will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no adverse impact on the species concerned and that damage to habitats is minimal and alternative habitat provision is effective in maintaining those species.

An updated bat survey was undertaken by Angela Graham in February 2021 and has now been submitted to the local planning authority. The survey report again sets out a number of recommendations, including the undertaking of precautionary surveys prior to development taking place. As with the previous approval, the applicant is again happy to accept conditions to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the survey report and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

As the application site lies within the setting of Moorgate East Farm and No.3 Broad Lane, which is a Grade II Listed Building, Section 16 of the NPPF relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is relevant. Paragraph 189 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. At Paragraph 196 the Framework states that where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Core Strategy Policy P2 – 'Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage' states that the Council will protect the borough's heritage by conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings.

In assessing the heritage significance of the building the Historic England listing description has been referred to and reads as follows:-

> *Farmhouse. "M 1663" on door lintel, "IEM 1693"(John Milne) on porch lintel, "IM 1725" on gabled crosswing door lintel, "IM 1718" on garage wing door lintel. Also recorded is "IM 1795". Hammer-dressed stone with slate roof. 2-bay 2-storey house (1663) with gabled crosswing added to left and single- storey wing added to extreme left. Porch has coped gable with kneelers and ball finial, a chamfered door surround with obtuse-angled lintel and a stone slate roof. To the right are 5 and 4-light double-chamfered stone mullion windows with hoodmoulds, an inserted C18 door (No. 3) and 5 and 2-light chamfered mullion windows on the first floor. The later crosswing has a door with chamfered surround, obtuse-angled lintel and recessed spandrels and 4 and 3- light chamfered mullion windows. Left wing now a garage. Gable and ridge chimney stacks. Rear is rendered and has 1, 2 and 3-light chamfered mullion windows and a 5-light double-chamfered house-part window.*

Impact Assessment

Although the application site is within the setting of Moorgate East Farm and No.3 Broad Lane the proposed development has no direct impact on the Listed Building itself.

As can be seen from the aerial image on Photograph 1 below, the application building is located adjacent to the listed structure, but is detached from it, separated by an access road.



Photograph 1



Photograph 2

Photograph 2 shows the relationship between the main elevation of the Listed Building (left of the picture) with the application building, when approaching the site up Broad Lane.



Photograph 3

The unsympathetic lean to structure attached to the south west elevation of the barn currently detracts from the setting of the Listed Building and draws attention away from the attractive features of its most prominent principal elevation. Photograph 3 shows the rear of the structure and its relationship with the boundary with the Listed Building on the right of the photograph. This structure will be removed as part of the proposed scheme. Other similar outbuildings, including those attached to the rear elevation of the barn as shown on Photograph 4, are also to be removed, improving the appearance of the barn itself and the immediately surrounding area, which in turn enhances the setting of the Listed Building.



Photograph 4

The proposed treatment of the external areas around the barn is sympathetic to its location in close proximity to the Listed Building.

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed conversion will have a positive effect on the Listed Building and its setting and accordingly, in the absence of harm, there is no need to identify public benefits arising from the scheme.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with Government guidance as set out in Section 13 – 'Protecting Green Belt Land' of the NPPF, the proposed conversion is an appropriate form of development, which will preserve the openness of the Green Belt and will not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The re-use and improvement of this attractive, underused building will safeguard its future and prevent its further physical deterioration, which would have a negative impact on the local environment, including the setting of the adjacent Listed Building.

There has been no relevant change in circumstances since the approval of the previous application.