Design & Access Statement

Proposed residential conversion of outbuildings adjacent to School House Farm, Desford Road, Newbold Verdon, LE9 9LG.

July 2010

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
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Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of the planning application for the proposed residential conversion of outbuildings adjacent School House Farm, Desford Road, Newbold Verdon, LE9 9LG.

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) Order 2006.

In accordance with National Planning Policy advice in Circular 01/2006 (DCLG) "Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System" the level of detail presented in this DAS is proportionate to the scale and complexity of the application.

References were made to the relevant planning policies associated with the site history. These are predominantly the saved Local Plan policies as they take primacy in the determination of such an application and are consistent with the broader aims of Regional and National Planning Policy Statements.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the following documents submitted in support of the proposal:

Structural Report: MKC Design Consultants 8th July 2010.

Biodiversity Report: Curious Ecologists 9th July 2010.

Relevant Local Plan Policy

Policy BE20 - Reuse and adaptation of rural buildings

In the countryside planning permission will be granted for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings unless:

a) the proposed use of the building has an adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape;

b) the building is in a structurally unsound condition and thus incapable of conversion without significant adaptation and rebuilding;

c) the proposals for re-use and adaptation are detrimental to the design, character, appearance and setting of the building;

d) the conversion involves extensions that would significantly alter the form and general design of the building in a way which would detract from its existing character and appearance. Extensions and alterations should utilise materials which match or complement the original building material;

e) the buildings are located where the amenities of future occupiers of any proposed conversion would be adversely affected through noise, smell or other disturbance from a working farm or other rural activity;

f) the proposal would adversely affect highway safety

g) the proposed conversion adversely affects any wildlife habitat

h) the proposal does not comply with the local planning authority's standards for layout and design and highway criteria unless there are particular circumstances related to the location concerned where those standards can reasonably be relaxed without adverse effect on the amenities of nearby residents or to the rural character of the area; or

i) the proposals involve significant areas being utilised for external storage, which due to their visual impact cannot be mitigated through appropriate screening and landscaping.

Policy NE5 states that the countryside will be protected for its own sake. Planning permission will be granted where the proposal does not have an adverse affect on the character and appearance of the landscape; is in keeping with the scale and character of existing buildings and the general surroundings, and is effectively screened by landscaping.

Policy BE1 'Design and Siting of Development' states that planning permission for development proposals will be granted where they: complement or enhance the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, design and materials; ensure adequate highway visibility and parking standards; do not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring properties; incorporate landscaping to a high standard.

Policy T5 of the Local Plan refers to the application of appropriate standards for highway design and parking targets for new developments unless a different level of provision can be justified.

SPG: Conversion of Rural Buildings June 2004.

Principle & Use

The site has a countryside designation under Local Plan policy however its close proximity to the settlement boundary means it is read in conjunction with the existing residential built form.

The accompanying structural report states the outbuildings would benefit from the proposed works to ensure the long term integrity of the buildings and therefore the range as a whole.

A commercial use was considered but discounted due to the predominantly residential character of the locality and constraints associated with the access. Pre – application advice was sought from the Highway Authority who confirmed a commercial use would be inappropriate in relation to the width of the access.

The email correspondence (21st June 2010) from Andy Gatward following a site visit states:

"I refer to your email dated 7th June 2010 (below) regarding a development proposal at the above location.

As you are aware, the Highway Authority has no objection to the principle of additional turning traffic in this location when considering the access to road network policy contained in the developer guidance document, "Highways, Transportation and Development".

Having visited the site, it would appear that the existing access drive (unmade track) is approximately 3 metres wide, however there is an overall corridor width of approximately 5 metres between the boundary hedges. This would enable the access to be improved to generally comply with Highway Authority standards for shared private drives serving no more than five dwellings.

When considering the suitability of the vehicular access to cater for more intensive vehicular uses, it is unlikely that the Highway Authority would be in a position look favourably on proposals for the creation of commercial uses of the site. Highway Authority standards for industrial/commercial developments indicate that the minimum EFFECTIVE* width of a 6.0 metres should be provided. It would appear that your client is not in a position for provide an access that would comply with this standard on land within their control.

(*Where access is bound by a wall, fence or other physical barrier, an additional 0.5 wide strip should be provided. Where the access is so bound on both sides, 0.5 metre wide strips should be provided on both sides of the access.)

I hope this is of use, however if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me."

Regards,

Andy Gatward

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With the site located adjacent to an established residential area of Newbold Verdon, it occupies a sustainable location close to all local public amenities and transport links, therefore residential development is considered acceptable in principle.

Amount & Design

The overwhelming aim of the proposal is to maintain the integrity of the buildings and the semi rural setting of the site as a whole. With no significant structural alterations beyond the insertion of a new door to service the kitchen, the external appearance of the buildings will remain largely unaffected. The use of matching and complementary materials, combined with conservation roof lights, ensures the rural essence of the built form is maintained in accordance with LP policy.

The proposal meets the requirements in terms of separation distances and private garden area, therefore amenities of the adjacent properties will remain unaffected.

Heritage and Conservation

Although internally the proposal will be by definition modern, in terms of preserving the original fabric and setting of the building, the scheme is wholly sympathetic to the Heritage and Conservation aims of the Local Plan policies.

Ecology

Careful consideration was given to the Ecology Trigger List given the location and quality of the local environment. A protect species survey was carried out by Curious Ecologists on 9th July 2010 concluding a cautionary approach should be taken in relation to the timing of the works but no formal mitigation measures were necessary.

Access

The current access and parking arrangements will remain largely unchanged and are capable of meet the requirements of the HTD document. The existing courtyard provides ample parking for both the existing and proposed use.

Play and Open Space Contributions

If the need can be clearly demonstrated by the LPA, the applicant would not object to a condition applied to any permission requiring a financial contribution for the provision and maintenance of off-site open space or facilities in accordance with policy REC3 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion & Justification

The conversion will contribute to bringing the buildings up to the required modern standards whilst preserving the simple architectural style of the original design.

The proposed use respects the rural tradition of the site and will provide a long term and sustainable proposition for not only the current owners but all future occupiers of the site.

Public views into the site will remain largely unchanged and relatively limited ensuring the character of the semi-rural location is preserved. The proposal either meets or exceeds all relevant Local Plan policy requirements and represents an integrated and sensitive conversion that is appropriate within the local context. The application is submitted on this basis and is recommended for officer support and subsequent approval.

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