

Old Mill Lane Building Conversion, Thurgoland, Barnsley.

Planning Statement

Process Assessment:

The site of the proposed development is located adjacent to Spring Bungalow off Old Mill Lane in the village of Thurgoland. The overall site area equates to approximately 5 acres of predominantly open land on the southern side of Old Mill Lane. The location of the site and the building to be converted are shown on the Ordnance Survey extract that forms part of the application submission. The land that is the subject of this application is outlined in red on the submitted plans and the adjacent land owned by the applicants is outlined in blue.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to support the submission of a formal planning application by Simon M Elliott – Dip URP. The purpose of this report is to highlight the relevant issues and policies that need to be taken into account in the consideration of a formal planning submission for the above-mentioned development. The arguments included within this document all provide support for the proposed development as detailed in the attached Planning Application and needs to be considered along with the detailed plans and all other supporting submissions.
- 1.2 This report takes account of the current status of the application site, its buildings and its immediate surroundings. Account has also been taken of the current Barnsley Local Plan Policies and any relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, where they relate to development in general in the Green Belt as well as the conversion of existing buildings to form a dwelling unit, as proposed in this application.

- 1.3 This report also takes account of all other material planning considerations that are believed to be relevant to the proposed development or may influence the LPA's decision on this Planning Application. These include the architectural and historical merits of the buildings on the site in question and the Government's current advice, as contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), where it relates to development of the type proposed in this application.

2. Site & Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site of the proposed development is located off Old Mill Lane in Thurgoland, Barnsley. The land in question was used for many years as a coal yard with raised concrete bases formed, on which hoppers were erected for loading coal from the site into bags and then onto coal lorries. It is thought that the site and the coal business would originally have been operated using horses and carts to deliver coal to the local community and the building that is the subject of this application being used to stable the horses and then used later to house, amongst other things, pigs and chickens. It is thought that the site was used from the 1950's and 60's and even before this as a coal yard, until around 2003, when the coal business use ceased. However, the applicants continued to use the site, as evidenced by the number of vehicles and items stored on the site and within the existing building.
- 2.2 The overall site is generally a rectangular shaped area of land and is currently enclosed with post and rail fencing as well as natural stone walls. Access to the site is currently gained via a gated entrance directly onto Old Mill Lane between Spring Bungalow and Avalon. This access also serves to provide access and egress to the adjacent land. A separate access also exists to the site, but this has not been used for a number of years and that access and driveway have been overgrown with vegetation for what looks like a number of years.
- 2.3 The site slopes down from Old Mill Lane across the site towards the river to the rear of the land. The closest property to this building is Spring Bungalow, which is located at a higher level than the application building roughly at the same level as Old Mill Lane. The building that is to be converted is set at a much lower level than that property and it is considered that there will be no loss of amenity to the occupiers of the adjacent bungalow as a result of this proposal. There are a number of trees in close proximity to this building and a tree survey has been carried out to cover the trees that are closest to the building.

- 2.4 The building that is to be converted on this site is constructed of a mixture of red facing bricks and blockwork with timber trusses and purlins to the roof supporting corrugated roofing sheets to the roof. There are also two timber sheds on the adjacent land that were apparently previously used as hen huts.

3. Outline of Proposals

- 3.1 The development, as proposed, involves alterations to the existing building on this site to form a small bungalow. The residential properties that are closest to the site are faced with facing brickwork or rendered walls with flat profile concrete tiles, corrugated sheets and natural slate to the roofs. However, the proposed development would retain the existing character of the building on this site through the an appropriately coloured through coloured render to the external walls and an improved roof covering of concrete tiles, or artificial or natural slates to the roof, to the satisfaction of the LPA. The existing concrete floor can be retained as it appears to be in good condition and an insulated floating floor can then be added to bring the building up to comply with the current Building Regulations. In addition to this the conversion works would incorporate serious green construction techniques and credentials to meet and exceed the current standards required under The Building Regulations.
- 3.2 The design of the proposed bungalow is intended to replicate the design and external appearance of the existing building, although it is proposed to retain the front to back roof pitch but provide an insulated and tiled or slated roof. This will ensure that the character and visual amenity of the area are retained without having a detrimental impact on the outlook or amenities of the neighbouring residents. The development will also involve the removal of all of the vehicles and parts of vehicles that have been stored here for many years, which will also benefit the appearance of the site. There is ample parking space within the site for future residents and it is proposed to continue to use the existing site entrance where it is at present rather than to try and re-open the other access that is site further to the west along Old Mill Lane.

- 3.3 All of the existing boundary walls and fences that currently enclose the site will be retained and the majority of the trees adjacent to the building are also proposed to be retained. There are some tree branches that are currently overhanging the building. However, these can be removed to protect the integrity of the building without having a detrimental effect on the character or visual amenity of this part of the Green Belt. It should also be noted that the bungalow has been designed to ensure that there is only one window facing onto Old Mill Lane but that window is to serve the hallway and not one of the habitable rooms within the bungalow.

4. Planning Policy & Other Material Considerations

- 4.1 It is considered that there are a number of Local Plan Policies that are, in some way, relevant to the proposed development. These relate to development in general in the Green Belt and the conversions of buildings to other uses, including residential units in the Green Belt.
- 4.2 The Central Government guidance, as included within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also considered to be relevant to the proposed development and has been taken into consideration in the writing of this report. The latest General Permitted Development Order 2015 (GPDO) has also been taken into account as referred to below.
- 4.3 The basic principle of the proposed development is that it is considered that it will not have any material detriment to the openness and the visual amenity of the Green Belt. The buildings on and adjacent to this site are not Listed Buildings and they are not located within a Conservation Area. There are a number of trees and bushes on and adjacent to the application site and a separate Tree Survey has been produced to support the proposed Planning Application. I can also confirm that the proposed development will not have a materially detrimental impact on the amenities of local residents as it will accord with the Council's policies relating to separation distances and the positions of windows in dwelling units. It is also considered that this proposal will not have an adverse impact on the interests of highway safety as there is currently an existing access drive that serves the site and there would not be a material increase in the use of the access drive as a result of the proposed development.

- 4.4 The proposed development involves alterations to the existing building on the application site to form a small dwelling unit. As mentioned above, the main fabric of the existing building is still intact and will be retained and altered as shown on the submitted details to form the proposed bungalow. The proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the setting or character of the adjoining dwellings in any way as once again the building already exists.
- 4.5 In terms of the Policy considerations of this proposal it is considered that the development is consistent with the Council's current Planning Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes. It is considered that the proposed development will not adversely affect the character or the visual amenity of the Green Belt and should be viewed as an enhancement of the area. The proposed development is not considered to represent an inappropriate form of development as it is limited to the extent of the existing buildings on the site. The existing boundaries of the site are not to be extended in any way and the bungalow is considered to represent an acceptable form of development on this Green Belt site.
- 4.6 In addition to the above-mentioned points it is clear that the development as now proposed represents one of the forms of development that is acknowledged to be acceptable within the Green Belt by both the Council and the Government. The development does not extend the built development beyond the confines of the existing building on this site and will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing use and it would not be contrary to any of the 5 purposes of including land in Green Belts.

- 4.7 The proposed development is for the creation of a small dwelling unit adjacent to a number of existing dwellings. This proposal will not be detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt, as described in NPPF or the visual amenity and character of the Green Belt or the surrounding area. The windows, doors and rainwater goods will all be consistent with those used on the adjacent buildings and full details will be agreed with the LPA if necessary before the development is commenced.
- 4.8 The main consideration for the Council regarding this proposal is whether the development will accord with the provisions of the UDP. It is clear from a perusal of the relevant UDP Policies, together with the advice contained in the NPPF that this development can be supported by the Council.
- 4.9 It is also argued that the proposed development will comply fully with the NPPF. Paragraphs 143 to 147 of the NPPF provide the appropriate guidance relating to development of the type proposed in this application under the heading of "Proposals Affecting the Green Belt". Paragraph 143 advises that: "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstance".
- 4.10 Paragraph 144 goes on to advise that: "When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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".

4.11 Paragraph 145 then states that: “A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

4.12 Paragraph 146 of the NPPF then states that: Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- a) mineral extraction;
- b) engineering operations;
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- e) material change in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- f) development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

4.13 Paragraph 147 of the NPPF then advises that: "When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources".

This development would not extend development into open countryside as the buildings already exist. The Government has also expressed a relaxation of the regulations relating to the conversion of buildings through the recently issued GPDO. Even though the buildings on this site are not currently used for agricultural purposes it is clear that the Government is seeking to allow more dwelling units to be created through the conversion of existing buildings, adding further support to this proposal.

4.12 In terms of the Council's Policies, which relate to the control of development in the Green Belt they clearly also provide support for the proposed development. The proposed development is consistent with the design and character of the existing building and will not therefore have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 In conclusion it is my opinion that the proposed alterations to the building on this site to form a bungalow represent an acceptable form of development in the Green Belt. Several different types of development are acknowledged to be acceptable in the Green Belt and the re-use of buildings, as we are proposing, is one such form of development. The existing building has been on this site for at least 60 or 70 years and its conversion into a bungalow will not affect the openness or visual amenity of the Green Belt in any way. It is also considered that this development will improve the amenities of neighbouring residents through the removal of the numerous scrap vehicles and associated paraphernalia that has been accumulating on the site over many decades.
- 5.2 The details of the proposed development are intended to replicate the character of the existing building, to accord with the Council's planning policies and guidelines. It is also considered that this proposal would not be contrary to any of the 5 purposes of including land within the Green Belt, which are identified by the Government.
- 5.3 It is clear that this proposal will not be materially detrimental to the character or the openness of the Green Belt. As viewed from outside the site the appearance of the buildings will not be significantly affected. The design of the bungalow is consistent in all respects with the appearance of the existing building and through the changes to the exterior of the building the proposed development will clearly improve the appearance of the building. The development would not have a materially detrimental effect on the outlook or privacy of neighbouring residents as there will be no windows that can overlook the adjacent property.

5.4 In terms of highway safety considerations the access to the site already exists and its continued use will not have an adverse impact on highway safety. There will be a limited amount of traffic that will use the site, which will not significantly increase as a result of the new development. I therefore trust that this proposal will be supported by officers and that Planning Permission can be granted subject to appropriate conditions as necessary.

Views of the Existing Building to be Converted.

