

Proposed Replacement of Barn with Dwelling

Adjacent to The Byre, Loe Farm, Redisher Lane, Ramsbottom

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Introduction

The planning application is for the replacement of an existing building which had permission to be converted into a dwelling. Planning permission (number 64520) was granted on 23 September 2019 subject to 12 conditions, several of which were required to be discharged before the development commenced.

The project is part completed. A complaint (source unknown) was made to the LPA that it was not being carried out in accordance with the approved plans. The Council's Enforcement Officer advised that a planning application needed to be submitted to legitimise any changes to the appearance of the building before work could be completed. Briefly, they include minor changes to window positions and sizes plus the intention to clad the first floor in timber boarding.

As requested, a planning application (number 69954) was submitted. It was registered on 31 July 2023 as:-

“Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans) and 12 (external finishing materials) and Removal of condition 11 (obscured glazing on window) on planning permission ref. 64520 – Revised proposed elevations to doors and windows including the removal to install the side window and amendments to external materials”

The Planning Officer visited the site and subsequently informed me that, in her opinion, the development was effectively a new dwelling rather than conversion of an existing building. Consequently the application was withdrawn as being invalid.

The current planning application is for full planning permission. The previous plan accompanying application 69954 showing proposed elevations is resubmitted together with the other necessary plans.

Planning Policy

Unitary Development Plan

Bury's development plan is still the Unitary Development Plan that was adopted as long ago as 1997. Loe Farm is in the Green Belt (Policy OL/1) and a Special Landscape Area (Policy EN9/1).

UDP Policy OL1/2 – New Buildings in the Green Belt states that “the construction of new buildings inside the Green Belt is inappropriate development” with exceptions that include “limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings”. “Inappropriate development” can also be acceptable if “very special circumstances” can be proved.

Policy OL1/4 confirms that the “Conversion and Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt” is not inappropriate development providing that it complies with a list of factors, a) to g).

- a) The conversion will not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt.
- b) The extensions will not conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the garden is already established.
- c) The building is capable of conversion.
- d) The form, bulk and general design are in keeping with the building's surroundings.
- e) Access is from an existing route.
- f) All necessary services are available.
- g) The building does not contain any protected species. (This has been confirmed by a survey)

National Planning Policy Framework

Green Belt policy in the old Bury UDP has been superseded by current guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, with the latest version issued in July 2021. It encourages the grant of planning permission for sustainable development. Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems and to use conditions to make developments acceptable.

Paragraph 147 of the NPPF confirms 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. In my opinion “very special circumstances” can be proved to justify the grant of planning permission.

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF sets out the categories of new building which can be considered as appropriate in the Green Belt. These include:-

- d) The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.
- 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.

The barn was used for storage purposes and is within a complex of stables i.e. previously developed land. It was not an agricultural building and was used for the storage of materials in connection with the applicant’s central heating business. On this basis the development is “appropriate”.

Paragraph 150 sets out other development that is not inappropriate including “the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction” and planning permission number 64520 was granted on this basis.

The NPPF emphasises the need for LPAs to boost the supply of housing in both the short and long term with a rolling five year display of deliverable housing land. Bury’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sets out the latest housing supply position. The Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land and this must be treated as a material factor when determining planning applications.

Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF states that where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies for determining the application are out of date planning permission should be granted unless policies in the Framework provide a clear reason for refusing the development or any adverse impacts of doing so would outweigh the benefits when assessed against NPPF policies taken as whole.

- Planning permission should be granted for a new dwelling.
- It will contribute to the Borough’s housing shortage.
- It constitutes the partial redevelopment of previously developed land.
- It will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, i.e. the original barn or its replacement.

Justification

Loe Farm is no longer in agricultural use. It has been subdivided between different members of the family. There is a substantial group of buildings including stables. The applicant lives in the house known as The Byre with the barn adjacent. There is a very large garden to the south of the house and barn. The vehicular access to The Byre is the main farm access but there is another access from the south for emptying the midden which is at the side of the barn.

Work commenced on converting the barn in accordance with the approved plans but, although the structure above the ground was essentially sound, it soon became apparent that the foundations were inadequate. The introduction of piled foundations prejudiced the stability of the walls which had to be rebuilt. The original footprint has been retained and the size of the dwelling will be the same as the barn. The current appearance of the elevations is as approved with minor alterations to external openings.

The previous application has confirmed that access and parking arrangements are acceptable. The barn did not contain any bats. An application has been submitted to discharge conditions: number 3) contamination; 7) landscaping; 8) domestic sprinkler system. The landscaping will contribute to biodiversity.

The application (number 69954) to vary the appearance included the existing alterations to external openings and the proposed timber cladding to the first floor. Otherwise the appearance would be as approved under application 64520. This is still the case with the current application. If a complaint had not been received the project could have been completed with the appearance of the finished dwelling undetectable from the approved plans. Permission number 64520 confirmed that the design and materials were in character with its rural surrounding and Green Belt location.

- The proposal complies with NPPF guidance as redevelopment of previously developed land.
- If this is not accepted then Very Special Circumstances can be claimed to justify the granting of planning permission. Effectively the dwelling will be as originally approved.
- It will not harm the openness of the Green Belt.
- It will contribute to meeting housing need within the area of the local planning authority.
- A partly completed building or an empty site will cause more harm to the openness of the Green Belt than the proposed dwelling which, in appearance, will be as previously approved.
- A precedent has been set by the approval of a similar application (number 59140) in October 2015 at Coney Green Farm in Radcliffe where a barn had been demolished in the course of conversion to two dwellings.

Planning permission should be granted so that dwelling can be completed.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Design and Appearance

The design and appearance have previously been accepted. The addition of timber cladding will give the building a more barn like appearance appropriate to its setting in the countryside and the Green Belt.

Extensions

The proposed garage has a catslide roof typical of an agricultural building.

The existing building had a volume of some 555 cubic metres. The garage has a volume of 67 cubic metres, approximately 12% of the volume of the original building.

Highways

The access is as previously proposed and which was deemed to be acceptable. Two parking spaces are now indicated. Other buildings at Loe Farm have been converted to dwellings without a condition requiring sprinklers. Existing rights of way would not be affected.

Contaminated Land

The previously imposed conditions have been complied with.

Use

The building will be a detached house.

Amount of Development

The house will have 4 bedrooms. A garage will be added.

Layout

The layout is determined by the position of the barn next to the access to the stables and the large garden in front. The main aspect is to the front which is south facing and has open views. The fill to the ground floor has been removed to achieve a full two storey height within the dwelling.

Scale

The size and shape will not change compared with the original building. The extension is clearly subsidiary to the original building

Landscaping

The existing garden was mainly lawned with a vegetable garden in front of the barn. There is a pond close to the southern boundary where leylandii trees have been removed. The garden will be subdivided between the original house and the converted barn. A landscaping scheme has been submitted.

Access

The existing access is via an up and over door facing the stables and a door in the side. The land at the side will be excavated with steps down, but the main access will be to the front where there is already a road to the midden. There will be level (maximum 1:12) access to the front door.

Lifetime Homes

Door widths will allow access by wheelchairs. Switches sockets and door and window handles will be positioned at a height where they can be easily reached. There will be an accessible toilet on the ground floor.

Protected Species

A survey confirmed the absence of bats before building work started. .

Sustainable Drainage

Foul drainage will be to an existing septic tank, subject to confirmation of its capacity and condition. Surface water drainage will be to a soakaway.

Waste Disposal

Coloured bins for waste and recyclables will be located at the side of the house, as shown on the plans and moved outside for collection.