

Proposed Dwelling

Land at Arthur Lane, Ainsworth BL2 5PN

Planning Application Number 69178

PLANNING STATEMENT

The application is a resubmission of application number 64967 which was approved on 19 February 2020. For various reasons, as explained in the letter from the architect which accompanies the current application, the development has not gone ahead. It is proposed to create a new dwelling by converting, part demolishing and extending existing buildings which have been used as stables.

Based on the LPA's previous decision and the reasoning behind it we anticipated that obtaining another planning approval would be straightforward but a different planning officer dealing with the new application is not convinced that the proposal is acceptable. This is difficult to understand when planning policy and guidance have not changed.

Before the previous application was lodged a pre-application enquiry (number 02313/E) was submitted. The Planning Officer, Tom Beirne, concluded that "insufficient information has been submitted to give a solid steer" on a route forward but pointed out that conversion to a dwelling may be acceptable if an existing building is of substantial construction and capable of conversion without significant rebuilding. A small extension may be possible. Where there are a number of structures it may be useful to consider removal of some to counterbalance the impact of any conversion/extension of any retained structure. Any domestic curtilage would need to be limited in size.

Mr Beirne's helpful comments were taken into account and further discussions took place before the application was submitted. It was accompanied by my comprehensive Planning Statement which was presented again with the current application. There is no point in regurgitating it despite the Planning Officer's request for another "Green Belt Statement".

The Planning Officer's advice that the previous Structural Survey is out of date has been accepted. A new survey by a qualified structural engineer has concluded that the building is capable of conversion.

My Planning Statement included a list of planning approvals for new dwellings in the surrounding area. Since it was prepared there have been other approvals which are a precedent for my client's application.-

- 65373- - Demolition of stable and rebuilding as dwelling at rear of 41 Bury Old Road approved 1 December 2022.
- 67459 – Demolition of existing building and construction of new dwelling at 41 Bury Old Road approved 14 December 2021.
- 67550 – Conversion of stable to dwelling with extension at 41 Arthur Lane allowed on appeal 22 July 2022.

Planning Policy

The old Bury Unitary Development Plan is still Bury's development plan. Green Belt and other Policies are just the same as they were three years ago and were quoted in my previous statement.

The National Planning Policy Framework has been revised but Green Belt guidance is unaltered, albeit with different paragraph numbers. Again, the guidance is quoted in my previous statement.

Justification

I remind you of the conclusion of my previous Planning Statement: which was accepted by the Planning Officer.-

“In my opinion, the proposal is appropriate development and will not be harmful to the Green Belt either in principle or in the detail.

- The existing buildings have been used as stables and for agricultural purposes. The redevelopment of previously developed land, as represented by the stabling, is appropriate development.*
- The development would meet an identified housing need on providing a home for one of the applicant’s children who would otherwise not be able to afford a house in the area.*
- The development is focussed on an existing building that is capable of conversion with little alteration.*
- The new elements replace existing buildings but with a reduced volume.*
- The appearance of the buildings will be much improved, with the design and materials appropriate to the area and in character with surrounding buildings.*
- The domestic curtilage will be kept to a minimum, with an enclosed courtyard at the rear of the dwelling, screened by an existing hedge. Other native hedge planting will be carried out.*
- The site may not be in Ainsworth village but it is in a sustainable location close to village facilities and next to the terminus of a bus route.*
- Electricity and mains water are available. A private treatment plant for sewage would be installed.”*

The Planning Officer dealing with the current application is concerned on two counts, that the building’s structure is not capable of conversion and that the proposal is “inappropriate development” in the Green Belt, contrary to National Planning Policy Framework guidance.

The new structural survey indisputably deals with the first issue.

The second issue was considered by the planning officer dealing with the previous, identical, planning proposal. I remind you of his conclusions on the principle of the development in his Report to Development Control Committee:-

“As the proposal would be on previously developed land and involves the conversion of an existing building with a reduction in its overall volume, it is considered to be acceptable in principle and in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs 79, 145 and 146 (old numbers) of the NPPF.

A structural report has been submitted with the application that confirms the aluminium prefabricated building is capable of conversion.

The proposed use would not have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and as such, would be in accordance with Policies H1/2 and OI1/4 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan and the NPPF.”

It would be perverse and unreasonable to make a decision contrary to the previous approval. Planning permission should be granted subject to the same conditions as before.

John Hodgkinson BA, MSc