

RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION

3, BASSFIELD FARM, MANCHESTER ROAD, RAMSBOTTOM BL9 5LY

PLANNING STATEMENT

Introduction

Bassfield Farm is one of a small group of dwellings situated between Manchester Road and the M66 motorway. It is no longer a farm but some of the land has been retained. The planning application relates to a building to the south of the existing house which must originally have been in agricultural use. Subsequently it has been used as a garage and for storage. The owner, Chris Real, began converting it into a bungalow at least 15 years ago without planning permission. He died 11 years ago and no further work has been carried out.

The building is of substantial construction with mostly stone walls and a stone flagged roof. There is a small, historic, flat roofed extension. It is within the garden area of the house with a paved patio to the north and a circular lawn and driveway to the east.

The submitted existing plan shows the extent of the work that has been carried out which includes plastering, rewiring, under floor heating and a new drainage system. It needs both planning permission and consent under Building Regulations for the project to be completed in compliance with current standards before the property is fit to live in. Mrs Real intends to move from the main house into the smaller bungalow. Her daughter Rachael will occupy the existing house.

Planning Policy

The Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted as long ago as 1997 but it is still Bury's development plan. The property is in the Green Belt where most forms of development are "inappropriate". However, UDP Policy OL1/4 – Conversion and Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt confirms that this form of development is not inappropriate and will be permitted subject to complying with certain criteria i.e.

- a) It does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- b) any extension of re-used buildings, and any associated uses of land surrounding the building do not conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it (e.g. because they involve extensive external storage, or extensive hardstanding, car parking, gardens, boundary walling or fencing)
- c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- d) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings;
- e) suitable access and likely traffic generation can be accommodated without creating a traffic hazard or the need for major road improvements or lengthy new reroutes;
- f) all the necessary services can be accommodated without extensive works
- g) it can be established by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, whether or not the building contains any protected species, such as bats or barn owls. Where it is shown such species are present, measures to prevent damages to habitat will be required.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was issued in revised form in December 2023. Like previous guidance, it states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with the emphasis on sustainable development. The NPPF points out that “local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems and should seek to approve applications for sustainable development wherever possible”. .

Like the UDP, it confirms, in paragraph 155, that the reuse of buildings of permanent and substantial construction is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Greater Manchester (PfE) was adopted in March this year with Policies relevant to the proposed development.

JP-S2: Carbon and Energy.

Much of the work that has already been done will not have adequate thermal insulation which will need to be retrained. The glass wall to the living room will be replaced by a masonry wall with cavity insulation. The conversion will comply with Part L of the latest Building Regulations

An electric vehicle charging point will be installed.

JP-C2 Digital Connectivity

The property is some distance from the road. Full fibre broadband will be installed if feasible.

Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing

Room sizes comply with National Space Standards. A table is attached confirming this.

There will be 2 dwellings on area of 800 square metres which equates to 25 dwellings per hectare.

Biodiversity Net Gain is not a requirement because a customised dwelling for the owner's occupation is an exempt form of development.

Justification

Both the UDP and the NPPF encourage the granting of planning permission for the change of use of a building of substantial and permanent construction in the Green Belt to a dwelling..

- The conversion and change of use is not inappropriate development. There will be no impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- If the work had been completed and the residential use had commenced over ten years ago a Lawful Development Certificate could now be issued.
- There will be no extension to the building which is within an established garden.
- No reconstruction is necessary.
- The form, bulk and general design are in keeping with the surroundings.
- There is vehicular access to the building and a circular driveway for cars to enter and leave in forward gear.
- The building has access to all mains services including new drains which will be connected to the existing sewer.
- The building does not contain any protected species such as bats and barn owls.
- The requirements of PfE will be incorporated in the development.

There are no reasons why planning permission should not be granted.