

Conversion of Stable to Dwelling for Disabled Person

Brooksbottom Road, Radcliffe M26 4HX

PLANNING STATEMENT

It is proposed to convert an existing stable block into a bungalow for occupation by the applicant's elderly mother who is suffering the symptoms of dementia.

The applicant lives at number 27, on the opposite side of Brookbottom Road. He is from an old farming family in the area and retains ownership of a small area of land next to the road. The land contained a former agricultural building which was becoming increasingly derelict. The concrete base remains. The stable block was erected as a replacement building but on a different site.

Conditional planning permission number 54954 was granted in May 2012 but 2 subsequent applications (numbers 62430 and 62886) were refused because of changes to the building considered to be detrimental to the character and openness of the Green Belt and because of lack of information on historic coal working.

Planning permission number 65126 for the building in its present form was granted in 2020.

The Proposed Development

The existing building has a total of four stables, two each side of a central corridor. There are 3 horses which will be moved to stables nearby and continue to be exercised on the adjoining paddock.

The lower external walls are cavity brick and block with timber cladding on blockwork above. The internal walls are constructed in solid blockwork with a traditional slate roof above. There is a concrete floor containing thermal insulation and a damp proof membrane. The submitted plan shows the proposed layout which is proposed to cater for the needs of the elderly occupant and a carer when required.

Planning Policy

Local planning policies are contained in the old Bury Unitary Development Plan. Current planning guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework which was produced in its revised form in September 2023.

The UDP was adopted as long ago as 1997. It defines the boundaries of the Bury Green Belt. The site is currently within the Green Belt as is the adjacent land where permission has been granted for new dwellings as set out below. The site is also within a Special Landscape Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the grant of planning permission for sustainable development which is in accordance with the development plan. In terms of Green Belt policy there is little change from previous version of the NPPF which would affect the proposal. .

Paragraphs 147 to 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policies OL1/2 and EN/1 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan are relevant to the proposed development.

Most forms of development are considered to be "inappropriate development" which "is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances".

Paragraph 150 of the NPPF points out that certain forms of development are "not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it". These include, as in this case, "the re-use of buildings providing that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction". A structural assessment of the building is appended to confirm that the building is suitable for conversion.

The NPPF emphasises the need to identify deliverable housing land. Bury's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment indicates that the Council is unable to demonstrate a rolling five year supply of suitable land.

The Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing is less than 75% of the housing requirement over previous years. There are no adverse impacts that would outweigh the benefits of granting permission. A "tilted balance" can be applied which would support the development.

The Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan has allocated the land to the east of Brook bottom Road for "a broad mix of around 3500 houses". The boundary will include the planning application site as shown on the submitted plan. Consultations on the Plan have been completed and the Inspector's final verdict is awaited prior to adoption.

The site is currently in the Green Belt but unlikely to be for much longer.

Layout

The proposed internal layout is shown on the submitted plans. The solid internal walls will be retained to provide a living room, dining kitchen, 2 bedrooms and a bathroom, all accessed off a central hallway. .

Design and Materials

The existing building is rectangular in shape with a central doorway. The slate roof and brickwork to the lower walls will be retained. The horizontal timber weatherboarding to the upper walls needs to be replaced. Existing upvc windows will be retained and supplemented with similar windows. No extensions are necessary.

Ecology

A survey has previously been carried out and found no evidence of the presence of protected species. Bat and bird boxes have been provided following the granting of planning permission for the stable.

Drainage

The building is connected to the sewage system by a combined drain which runs round the building. It also has mains electricity and mains water.

Contaminated Land

It is very unlikely that any contaminated land issues will be identified. Survey work was carried out in connection with the planning application for the stable which confirmed that there were no issues with coal workings.

The building is of recent construction. There is no asbestos in the building and a formal asbestos survey should not be necessary.

Construction Management Plan

Construction work is almost entirely confined to an internal fit out

The site is accessed by a 4.5 metre wide gate which would allow the largest of vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear with space within the site for turning and for parking of contractors' vehicles.

There is a hard surfaced area adjacent to the building for the storage of materials. Waste or surplus materials would be sorted for recycling where possible.

Other Matters

- The property is in a sustainable location with mains services already installed and close to the bus route on Higher Ainsworth Road.
- The domestic curtilage is defined by existing fences. Landscaping will include hedging with native species.
- The new dwelling will be thermally efficient and would meet or exceed standards in current Building Regulations.
- There is already level access to the front door. The design and layout would be in accordance with Lifetime Homes guidance including door widths to facilitate wheelchair access and careful positioning of light switches and sockets.
- The building is not in an area where there is significant air pollution. It is intended to install an electric vehicle charging point.

Conclusion

Despite the likelihood that the building will soon not be in the Green Belt, relevant policies and guidance must still be applied. The building is capable of conversion to a dwelling without significant alteration. In principle, the proposal is appropriate development. In detail, use as a dwelling rather than stables will not harm the openness of the Green Belt.

STRUCTURAL SURVEY

The applicant is in the building trade as a long established roofing contractor and construction has evidently been carried out to a high standard.

There is a traditional concrete strip foundation supporting cavity brick and blockwork to the external walls and single block internal walls.. The walls have a conventional damp proof course.

A concrete floor has been laid over a damp proof membrane and a thermal insulation layer. It is likely that additional insulation will be needed to comply with current Building Regulations but there is sufficient height to allow for its installation.

Externally, the upper walls are weather boarding on a timber frame on blockwork. The boards have been laid horizontally allowing water to lodge and causing warping. They need to be removed and replaced with similar boards over insulation.

The roof is natural slate on battens over felt on rafters. There is no evidence of rot or decay in the roof timbers. A flat ceiling with fibreglass insulation could be installed or there could be insulation at roof level if a vaulted ceiling is preferred.