

Item 4c **11/01086/FUL**

Case Officer **Christopher Hobson**

Ward **Adlington and Anderton**

Proposal **Alterations to the existing building including the erection of a single storey rear extension following the demolition of part of the existing building along with the creation of new entrance doors**

Location **Ridgeway Arms, 176 Chorley Road Adlington Chorley Lancashire**

Applicant **Mr Tom Jones**

Consultation expiry: **27 February 2012**

Application expiry: **6 February 2012**

Proposal

1. Planning permission is sought for a single storey rear extension and a number of alterations to the Ridgeway Arms public house, Chorley Road, Adlington.
2. The proposed single-storey rear extension would be 7.2m in length and 6.7m in width. It would have a flat roof with a height of 3.3m. The application also seeks permission to make a number of alterations to an existing single storey side extension, these include the demolition of a small part of this extension, the insertion of new entrance doors at its front and rear, and the removal of two windows and a glazed roof feature. An existing single-storey lean-to extension to the rear of the public house would also be rebuilt on the same footprint and further alterations would be made to the external area of the site including the repainting of car parking spaces, installation of new lighting and a plant area within the rear yard.
3. The application site comprises of a currently vacant two-storey public house with a single-storey side/rear extension. The public house is an early/mid 19th Century building faced with sandstone, grey Welsh slate roof and timber window frames. It has a number of single-storey extensions of varying architectural quality to the side and rear of the original building. To the rear of the public house is a car park, beer patio area and a garage.
4. The Ridgeway Arms sits on an approximately 0.1ha site which slopes gently upwards from Chorley Road towards its rear boundary. The site is bounded by commercial properties fronting Chorley Road and to the north east of the application property, on the opposite side of Chorley Road, are further commercial properties. To the north of the Ridgeway Arms car park is a single-storey industrial building and associated external yard, whilst to the south are two-storey commercial and residential properties on Railway Road. To the rear (south west) of the car park are terraced houses on Mill Street.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that this application is granted conditional planning approval.

Main Issues

6. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
 - Principle of the development;
 - Design and impact on the street scene;
 - Impact on a heritage asset;
 - Impact on neighbours; and
 - Highway safety and provision of parking spaces.

Representations

7. A letter has been received from the occupants of no. 128 Railway Road. This letter states that if it is intended that the building will remain as a public house they have no objections to the proposed development. However, the letter states that if the building is to be converted into a shop they would have a number of objections to the proposed development. These include the fact that neighbours have not been notified that the use of the premises will be changing, insufficient parking, impact on highway safety, impact on surrounding shops, noise from refrigeration units and insufficient space for delivery vehicles.
8. Another email has been received which does not object to the proposed development but queries what the intended use of the building is.

Consultations

9. Mr Ian Heywood – Chorley BC Conservation Officer – has noted that the application property is a designated heritage asset as defined by PPS5 and that the proposal must be judged in terms of its impact upon the significance of this heritage asset. The Conservation Officer has also noted that the building has been empty for at least three years and has been marketed for the last two. As such, he considers that it is clear that in its present form the building is not fit for purpose and is in a deteriorating condition, which will only get progressively worse. The Conservation Officer considers that the proposed development would undo some of the poor quality works to the building from the more recent past and would be both sympathetic and pragmatic. He therefore concludes that the proposal would be acceptable as it would sustain, or even enhance, the significance of the heritage asset and will see it brought back into active use.
10. Coal Authority – Standing advice.
11. Adlington Parish Council – have stated that they consider that a more specific permitted use should be included in the application as there may be concerns if it were to be changed to another use. They also note that the land to the front of the public house which is presently used for parking is part of the highway and that the submitted plans do not indicate where internal facilities such as a bar or kitchen would be located. The Parish Council also express concern about noise from an air conditioning unit.

Assessment

Principle of the Development

12. Policy EC10 of PPS4 encourages local planning authorities to adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development and states that applications which secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably.
13. Local Plan policy GN1 states that for land within Chorley in areas excluded from the Green Belt there is a presumption in favour of appropriate development, subject to normal planning considerations and other policies and proposals in the Plan.
14. The application site is within Adlington Local Centre as defined on the Local Plan proposals map. Policy SP6 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the vitality and viability of District, Neighbourhood and Local Shopping Centres in the Borough. It aims to resist the loss of retail and commercial uses at ground floor level in these centres and states that such proposals will only be permitted when it is shown that there is no demand for the retail or commercial use for the property concerned.
15. The application seeks permission to make a number of alterations and an extension to a public house in order to allow the building to be brought back into a beneficial use. It is considered that bringing this building back into use has the potential to have a positive impact on the Local Centre in Adlington and could help secure sustainable economic growth. The proposal would not lead to the loss of commercial floor space in the centre and, as a result, is consistent with policy SP6 of the Local Plan. The principle of the proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

16. A letter has been received from the occupants of a neighbouring property which raises concerns that the building may be converted into a shop. The applicant has stated that neither the end occupier nor the end use of the site has been finalised. The application does not however seek planning permission to change the use of the building and instead the application solely seeks permission for a single storey rear extension and a number of physical alterations to the building. It is however noted that the existing use of the building as a public house falls within Use Class A4 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). As such, planning permission would not be required to change the use of the building to a restaurant (Use Class A3), an office for financial or professional services (Use Class A2) or a shop (Use Class A1). Consequently, as planning permission is not sought to change the use of the building and nor would it be required for certain uses including a shop, objections to the proposed development on the grounds that it would be converted into a shop are not material to the present application.

Design and Impact on the Street Scene

17. Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) seeks to ensure that development is well designed and adopts the Government's principles of sustainable development. Paragraph 34 states that "planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted".
18. The importance of ensuring that new development is well-designed and built to a high standard is also emphasised by policy DP7 of the Regional Spatial Strategy. Similarly, policy GN5 of the Local Plan underlines the importance of securing high standards of design in new development. It states that the design of proposed development will be expected to be well related to their surroundings and that the appearance, layout and spacing of new buildings should respect the local distinctiveness of the area.
19. The Chorley Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) recognises that good design results in the creation of accessible, safe and secure development which relates well to its surroundings. It also asserts that new development should respect the scale, design and materials of surrounding buildings.
20. The application site occupies a prominent position on Chorley Road. The proposed extension would however be situated to the rear of the property and would not be visible from Chorley Road. The extension would be visible from Mill Street to the rear of the application site. However, it would be relatively modest in scale and would also be of similar design to previous extensions to the rear and side of the original building. As such, it is considered that the proposed extension would not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the building or the street scene.
21. The removal of part of the existing single-storey side extension would have a limited impact on the design and appearance of the building as a whole. The removal of two windows and a glazed roof feature would also have a little impact on the architectural character of the building, especially as the windows to be removed are situated on the side elevation of the building and are not particularly visible from Chorley Road. The proposed entrance doors would have some impact on the character of the building largely due to the amount of glazing and the proposed use of aluminium frames. Nevertheless, the entrance doors are located on the more modern existing extension to the building and a more contemporary design is therefore considered to be acceptable. In addition, the proposed entrance would be located in the position of an existing window which would reduce the amount of alterations to the building frontage.
22. The proposed rear extension and alterations are therefore considered to be acceptable and the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy GN5 of the Local Plan and the Chorley Design Guide SPG.

Impact on a Heritage Asset

23. Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. The overarching aim of PPS5 is for the historic environment and its heritage assets to be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.
24. Policy HE7 of PPS5 identifies the principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to heritage assets. It states that when considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, local planning authorities should take into account the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that it holds for this and future generations. It advises that consideration should be given to the desirability of sustaining the significance of the heritage asset and the positive contribution it makes to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities. It is also recommended that local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.
25. The Practice Guide that accompanies PPS5 lists the potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme. These include if it sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset, if it reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset, or if it secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.
26. The need to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment is also emphasised in the RSS, particularly in policies DP2, DP7 and EM1, and by Policy 16 of the Joint Central Lancashire Core Strategy.
27. Policy HT10 of the Local Plan relates specifically to buildings included on the Council's list of Locally Important Buildings. The policy states that proposals for the extension, change of use or demolition of any building identified as being locally important will only be permitted where the size, scale and design of the extensions/alterations reflect the character of the building and appear subordinate to the existing property. The policy also requires existing features of the building to be retained wherever possible and for the materials used to match the existing building in type, colour and texture.
28. Whilst the Ridgeway Arms is not a statutory Listed Building, it is included on the Council's list of Locally Important Buildings and is considered to have special importance because of its character and local significance. As such, the building is classified as a heritage asset for the purposes of PPS5. The building is however boarded up and is presently vacant.
29. The main heritage value of the building is in front elevation of the two storey part of the building. The proposed development would not result in any major alterations to the principle elevation of the two-storey element of the building. Therefore, in accordance with policy HT10 of the Local Plan, the proposal would retain the important external features of the building.
30. The existing single storey side and rear extensions are unsympathetic to the original building and have been poorly constructed. These previous extensions are therefore of lower heritage value and it is considered that the proposed extension and the alterations to these elements of the building would not detract from the design of the building as a whole. The proposed alterations would have a relatively contemporary appearance. Nevertheless, the Council's Conservation Officer has stated that the proposals are sympathetic to the original building but also contemporary in appearance, which he considers to be entirely appropriate to the situation. The Council's Conservation Officer has therefore concluded that the proposed development would sustain, or even enhance, the significance of this heritage asset. Furthermore, as the building has been vacant for at least three years, and actively marketed for the last two, it is considered that the proposed development would reduce the risks to this heritage asset and support its long term conservation by bringing it back into active use. The proposal is therefore considered to be aligned with PPS5 and its Practice Guide and policy HT10 of the Local Plan.

Impact on the neighbours

31. The proposed extension is relatively modest in scale and would be screened from the properties on the opposite side of Chorley Road by the original building. It would also be largely screened by the original building from the adjacent properties on Railway Road and would be in excess of 30m from the dwellings to the south west on Mill Street. As such, it is considered that the proposed extension would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
32. The proposed alterations to the existing side extension would be visible from surrounding properties. Nevertheless, it is considered that these alterations would not cause any significant detrimental harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents.
33. The application does not propose to make any alterations to the flue and extraction equipment and the applicant has stated that if the end occupier needs to relocate this equipment, a separate application, if required, would be submitted. There are presently no restrictions on the hours of operation of the premises. The applicant has stated that the proposed hours of opening are presently unknown due to the end user of the site not being finalised. They have however suggested that if the building were to be operated as a shop it would probably be open from 06:00 – 23:00, if it were to be used as a bank it would be open from 09.00 – 17.30 and if it were to be used as a café/restaurant/bar it would be open from 10.00 – midnight. It is however noted that there are no conditions relating to the hours of operation for the building at present. Consequently, as the application does not seek to change the use of the building, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to impose a condition limiting the hours of operation.
34. Concern has been expressed from the occupants of a neighbouring property about the noise from refrigerator units if the property is converted to a shop. The applicant has submitted a number of indicative floor plans one of which does show that fridge units could be positioned adjacent to the south western wall of the building. Nevertheless, as noted above, the application does not seek permission to change the use of the building to a shop and has stated that the end use of the site has not been finalised, as such, it cannot be assumed that the building would be converted to a shop with fridge units positioned against its south western wall. In addition, it is noted that the adjoining property to the south west, no. 178 Bolton Road, is a hot food takeaway. As a result, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the occupants of neighbouring properties.

Highway Safety and Provision of Parking Spaces

35. Policy TR4 of the Local Plan requires proposals for new development to provide safe and adequate access and also provide sufficient off-street parking in accordance with adopted standards.
36. Whilst the application property is presently vacant, its use as a public house is established and, as noted above, the proposal does not seek permission to change the use of the building. The proposed development would result in the erection of a single-storey rear extension but would also involve the partial demolition of previous extensions to the property. As such, the increase in footprint of the building would be fairly limited. The applicant has stated that the internal configurations of the building have not yet been finalised due to the fact that the end user is presently unknown. However, indicative floor plans which have been submitted in support of the application suggest that the public floor area of the building would be similar to the existing.
37. The existing driveway to access the car park is narrow, irregular in width and has restricted visibility when entering and leaving. The proposed development involves the demolition of a small area at the side of the building which would improve the vehicular access arrangements for the building. In particular, this would result in the access to the rear car park being widened from approximately 3.8m to 5.3m. As such, the access to the car park would be wide enough to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site at the same time.

38. The car park located to the rear of the building would be repainted but it would retain thirteen parking spaces and two of these would be widened to allow them to serve as disability bays. In addition, there is an unadopted lay-by / service road to the front of the building which provides additional on-street parking. It is also noted that the application site is in a relatively sustainable location within Adlington Local Centre and is served by buses on Bolton Road.
39. The applicant has stated that the arrangement for deliveries would depend on the final end use. It is stated that some deliveries would be likely to occur before the unit is open, especially if the end use is to be a café/restaurant or a drinking establishment and that larger deliveries would continue to be from the front as existing. If the building were to be occupied by a shop, the applicant has stated that larger deliveries would continue as existing but that smaller deliveries may be from the car park to the rear. The applicant does not propose to identify a specific delivery bay due to the short and infrequent nature of deliveries to any proposed use at the site. The applicant has however stated that it is envisaged that delivery vehicles would manoeuvre within the car park so that spaces 12 and 13 would be used for delivery vehicles which would enable cars to still move in and out of the car park unimpeded. Given that the application does not seek to change the use of the building, it is assumed that the proposed arrangement for deliveries would remain as existing and are therefore considered to be acceptable.
40. A 2m wide dedicated pedestrian route would be marked out within the car park and by providing an additional entrance into the building from the rear, the proposal could benefit pedestrian safety by eliminating the need for pedestrians to walk along the car park access road in order to enter the building.
41. As a result, it is considered that the proposed development would not cause significant harm to highway safety.

Overall Conclusion

42. It is considered that the principle of the proposed extensions and alterations to the Ridgeway Arms is acceptable. The proposed development would not result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, nor would it cause any significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents. In addition, it is considered that the proposal would sustain the significance of this heritage asset and would not result in any significant harm to highway safety. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with policies GN1, GN5, HT10, TR4 and SP6 of the Chorley Borough Local Plan Review and the Design Guidance SPG. Accordingly, it is recommended that the application be approved.

Planning Policies

National Planning Policies:
PPS1, PPS 4, PPS5 and PPG13

Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review
Policies: GN1, GN5, HT10, TR4 and SP6

Supplementary Planning Guidance
Design Guide

Joint Core Strategy
Policy 11, Policy 16 and Policy 17

Planning History
The site history of the property is as follows:

Ref: 07/00557/FUL
Decision: PERFPP Decision Date: 5 July 2007
Description: Erection of smoking shelter.

Ref: 2010/00293/PREAPP

Decision: CLO Decision Date:
Description: 10 2 bedroom apartments

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission
Conditions**

1. The approved plans are:

Plan Ref.	Received On:	Title:
Plan 1	12 December 2011	Location Plan
(P) 203	12 December 2011	Proposed Elevations
(P) 103	12 December 2011	Ground Floor Plans
(P) 113	12 December 2011	First Floor Plans

Reason: *To define the permission and in the interests of the proper development of the site.*

2. Before the use of the premises hereby permitted is first commenced, the car park and vehicle manoeuvring areas shall be surfaced or paved, drained and marked out all in accordance with the approved plan. The car park and vehicle manoeuvring areas shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of and manoeuvring of vehicles.

Reason: *To ensure adequate on site provision of car parking and manoeuvring areas and in accordance with Policy No. TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

3. No development shall commence until a scheme for the provision of external lighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such scheme shall include full details of the locations, design, luminance levels, light spillage and hours of use of, and columns for, all external lighting within the site and the approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to the occupation of the development. Reason: In the interests of the amenity of local residents and in accordance with Policy No. EP21A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review