

Item B. 8 **06/01150/COU** **Permit Full Planning Permission**

Case Officer **Caron Taylor**

Ward **Eccleston And Mawdesley**

Proposal **Change of use of redundant barn to offices and single storey extension to rear.**

Location **Barn North Of Ash House Farm Blue Stone Lane Mawdesley**

Applicant **Thos. Mawdsley**

Proposal: The application is for the change of use of a barn to offices and single storey extension to the rear.

Background: The application building is a barn situated to immediately to the north of Ash House Farm, Bluestone Lane, Mawdesley. The barn is situated in the Green Belt, with open land to the north.

Planning History: An application was submitted earlier this year (06/00812/COU) also proposing a change of use and extensions to front and rear, however this application was withdrawn before it was determined.

Planning Policy: PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
DC1: Development in the Green Belt
DC7A: Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Green Belt

Consultations: Three letters of objection have been received from surrounding properties. Their objections can be summarised as:

- The barn has been vacant for the past 30years and is a haven for various kinds of wildlife, including barn owls, kestrels, bats, stoats;
- As an agricultural building, it could in fact have brought back into its original purpose by accommodating ponies or horses and we are aware of a number of families in the area eager to use it for that purpose;
- The building has been improved to its present form without planning permission;
- The proposals would change the appearance and character of what is a traditional rural building;
- The proposals are out of keeping with what is primarily a residential area and there is already sufficient office space located in existing commercial developments with un-let units.
- Bluestone Lane is an extremely busy road and already a cause for concern for residents, to have an additional hazard of people constantly moving in and out will only aggravate the situation;
- It will cause noises and disturbance to nearby properties;
- Are the proposed parking facilities adequate?

Representations: Environment Services
Have no objection to the proposal and no comments to make.

Planning Policy

State that Policy DC7A and the associated SPG give preference to the re-use of existing buildings in the Green Belt for commercial, business and employment uses. This proposal is therefore acceptable provided it meets the criteria of Policy DC7A of the Local Plan Review. The sequential test in PPS6 is not relevant to this application due to the small number of offices proposed.

Lancashire County Highways

State that if the Council are satisfied that the proposed development accords with Government guidance on the re-use of redundant agricultural building, then they state a number of conditions should be applied to any permission.

Assessment:

Policy DC7A covers conversion of rural buildings in the green belt. The supporting text of policy DC7A states that preference will be given to the re-use or conversion for commercial or business uses. Discrimination in favour of these non-residential uses is supported by government advice contained in PPS7. Policy DC7A states a number of criteria that such conversions should meet. These are:

- It will not have a greater impact than the present use of the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- The re-use will not result in additional farm buildings which would have a harmful effect on the openness of the Green Belt;
- It is not an agricultural building that has been completed in the last four years;
- It is of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- The development respects the form, bulk and general design of the building and is in keeping with its surroundings;
- The building must be capable of conversion without the need for additions or alterations which would change its existing form and character;
- The building must already have reasonable vehicular access to a public highway that is available for use without creating traffic hazards and without the need for road improvements which would have an undue environmental impact;
- The development would not result in the loss of or damage to any wildlife habitat of importance.

The Council has also produced Supplementary Planning Guidance - Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Countryside. This states that many employment uses can be carried out in rural areas without causing unacceptable disturbance. The use of a building such as a barn for storage, workshops, offices and industrial purposes are usually the most sympathetic types of uses for rural buildings as they typically involve minimal alteration to the building, with the larger internal spaces often being retained.

Conversion schemes can provide very useful workspace for businesses in rural areas, help expand and diversify the rural economy and reduce the demand for new commercial buildings.

The guidance states that the Council will give favourable consideration to small-scale employment uses (including classes B1 and B2) and that the Council will prefer the conversion of buildings to workspace rather than residential use because of the economic and social benefits to rural areas.

Although the building has clearly been improved, its material appearance has not been changed and therefore the works would fall under maintenance and repair, for which planning permission is not required.

Design

The withdrawn application earlier this year proposed a design for the barn that totally destroyed its agricultural origins. The design now proposed does not try to disguise its once having been a not unattractive barn. Further windows are not now proposed but existing openings utilised with the incorporation of full height glazing, one of which would form the main entrance.

A structural survey has been supplied with the application showing the building is sound and worthy of re-use. In terms of additions, a small extension is proposed at the rear, but it is only minor in nature being 2.1m x 4.7m in size, providing 9.8m² extra floor space. This extension would have a cat slide roof and be built of reclaimed brick with natural slate roof tiles. This complies with the SPG in that it is minor in nature and is complementary to the character and style of the existing building.

The existing curtilage of the barn would not extend any further than at present.

Neighbour amenity

The nearest property is Ash House Farm, next door to the south and is at a higher level than the barn. Although there are side windows in Ash House Farm, there is a fence on the boundary and the level difference means that the proposals will not impact on this property, even though parking is proposed at the rear.

The nearest property to the north is 2 Ash Cottage, approximately 55m from the barn. The detached property of Plovers Green is situated on the other side of Bluestone Lane. Given the distance between these properties and the barn it is not considered that the proposal will have a detrimental impact on them.

Parking

Five parking spaces will be provided within the curtilage of the site so will not result in cars parking on the highway, which is a Class A road.

Wildlife

The barn has had repair and maintenance works undertaken recently, including a new roof, although these have not affected the external appearance of the building so would not have required planning permission. The case officer has visited the barn and been inside. It is clear that there is no wildlife residing in the barn at the present time, however, an informative will be placed on any permission that it is the developers responsibility to ensure they comply Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, if any protected species are found on site.

Conclusion: The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Recommendation: Permit

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission
Conditions**

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Notwithstanding the provision of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (Schedule 1, Part 3, Class B) or any Order amending or revoking and re-enacting that Order, the building hereby permitted shall only be used for purposes within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, no part shall be used for purposes falling within call B8.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with Policy EP20 of the adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

3. The permission hereby granted does not imply or grant consent for the demolition and rebuilding of any external walls of the building to be converted.

Reason: To define the permission and prevent inappropriate rebuilding or new build within an area subject to policies of development restraint and to protect the special character of the building and in accordance with Policy No. DC7A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review

4. The rear extension hereby permitted shall be constructed of external facing materials that match in form, colour and texture those on the existing building.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area in general and the existing building in particular and in accordance with Policy Nos. GN5 and DC7A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

5. Before the development commences, full details of the treatment of all the proposed windows and doors shall have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include the proposed method of construction, the materials to be used, fixing details and their external finish including any surrounds, cills or lintels.

Reason : In the interests of the character and appearance of the building and in accordance with Policy No. DC7A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

6. Before the development is first occupied, that part of the access extending from the highway boundary for a minimum distance of 5 metres into the site shall be paved in tarmacadam, concrete, cobbles, or other approved materials.

Reason: To prevent loose surface material from being carried on to the public highway thus causing a potential source of danger to other road users and in accordance with Policy No. TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

7. Any gateposts erected at the access shall be positioned 5 metres behind the nearside edge of the carriageway and visibility splay fences or walls shall be erected from the gateposts to the existing highway boundary, such splays to be not less than 45 degrees to the centre line of the access. The gates shall open away from the highway. Should the access remain ungated, 45 degree splays shall be provided between the highway boundary and points on either side of the drive measured 5 metres back from the nearside edge of the carriageway.

Reason: To permit vehicles to pull clear of the carriageway when entering the site, to assist visibility and in accordance with Policy No.TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

8. The use hereby permitted shall be restricted to the hours between 8.00am and 7.00pm on weekdays, between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and there shall be no operation on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Policy Nos. EM2 and EP7 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.
