

5. FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION OF FORMER GARAGE & WORKSHOP TO FORM SINGLE DWELLING AT HILL CROSS, ASHFORD IN THE WATER. NP/DDD/0223/0147.

APPLICANT: MR & MRS J WOOD

Summary

1. The application seeks permission to convert an existing garage/workshop to a one bedroomed residential dwelling at Hill Cross, Ashford-in-the water.
2. In this case, it is considered the scheme would accord with housing policy HC1 in that it would achieve conservation and enhancement of a vernacular building. Consequently, the proposal is recommended to members for approval.

Site and Surroundings

3. The former garage/workshop building is located on the north side of Hill Cross Ashford-in-the water. The property is part of a row of terraced properties that descend and follow the levels of Hill Cross.
4. Hill Cross is exclusively residential with the typical vernacular of properties being mostly limestone under blue slate roofs.
5. Access to the building is directly off Hill Cross. The property and associated land are sited within the village Conservation Area (CA).

Proposal

6. Conversion of former garage/workshop to form a one bedroomed residential dwelling.

RECOMMENDATION:

7. **That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**
 1. **3 year time limit.**
 2. **Adoption of submitted plans.**
 3. **Design and materials.**
 4. **Approval of details for bin storage**
 5. **Climate change mitigation measures to be implemented.**

Key Issues

8. The principle of development, the potential impact on the character and appearance of the host property, the privacy and amenity of neighbouring dwellings and highway safety.

History

9. No relevant history on file.

Consultations

10. Highway Authority – The Highway Authority does not consider that the proposed conversion of the garage to a dwelling would result in such severe harm to highway safety. Accordingly, there are no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions (Full extract can be read in the Highway section of the report below).

11. Parish Council (PC) – Object, stating that due to the limited parking in this area, cars are already continually parked at the junction, causing a daily hazard to pedestrians and drivers alike. To add more cars to this already dangerous situation will only serve to exacerbate the possibility of potential road traffic accidents. Also, the demolition of the garage represents the removal of a parking space in an area already vastly overcrowded with vehicles.

Representations

12. Two letters of general comment have been made, one regarding the parking issues around the locality and the other concerning the proposed location of refuse bins in association with the proposed dwelling. Both comments are addressed in the following report.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

13. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date.
14. In particular Para: 176 states, that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
15. Section 16 of the NPPF sets out guidance for conserving the historic environment.
16. Paragraph 194 states "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."
17. Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
18. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy and the new Development Management Policies (DMP). These Development Plan Policies provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application.
19. In this case, it is considered there are no significant conflicts between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and government guidance in the NPPF.

Main Development Plan Policies

Relevant Core Strategy (CS) policies:

20. GSP1, GSP2 - *Securing National Park Purposes and sustainable development & Enhancing the National Park*. These policies jointly seek to secure national park legal purposes and duties through the conversion and enhancement of the National Park's landscape and its natural and heritage assets.

21. GSP3 - *Development Management Principles*. Requires that particular attention is paid to the impact on the character and setting of buildings and that the design is in accord with the Authority's Design Guide and development is appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park.
22. DS1 - *Development Strategy*. Allows conversion or change of use for a number of uses including housing, preferably by re-use of traditional buildings.
23. L3 - *Cultural Heritage assets or archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance*. Explains that development must conserve and where appropriately enhance or reveal the significance of historic assets and their setting. Other than in exceptional circumstances, development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause harm to the significance of any cultural heritage asset or its setting.
24. HC1 - *New housing*. Provides the detailed housing policy. Where exceptionally, new housing can be accepted when in accord with GSP1 & GSP2, it is required in order to achieve conservation and/or enhancement of valued vernacular or listed buildings.
25. CC1 - *Climate change mitigation and adaption*. Sets out that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources. Development must also achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency.

Relevant Development Management (DM) Policies:

26. DMC3 - *Siting, Design, layout and landscaping*. Reiterates, that where developments are acceptable in principle, Policy requires that design is to high standards and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape. The siting, mass, scale, height, design, building materials should all be appropriate to the context. Accessibility of the development should also be a key consideration.
27. DMC5 - *Assessing the impact of development on designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting*. The policy provides detailed advice relating to proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, requiring new development to demonstrate how valued features will be conserved, as well as detailing the types and levels of information required to support such proposals. It also requires development to avoid harm to the significance, character, and appearance of heritage assets and details the exceptional circumstances in which development resulting in such harm may be supported.
28. DMC8 - *Conservation Areas*. States, that applications for development in a Conservation Area, or for development that affects it's setting or important views into or out of the area, across or through the area should assess and clearly demonstrate how the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced. Applications should also be determined in accordance with policy DMC5 taking into account amongst other things, form and layout, street pattern scale, height, form and massing, local distinctive design details and the nature and quality of materials.
29. DMC10 - *Conversion of a heritage asset*. Conversion will be permitted provided it can accommodate the new use without changes that adversely affect its character, including enlargement, subdivision, or other alterations to form and mass, inappropriate new window openings or doorways and major rebuilding, and that any changes conserves or enhances the heritage significance and it setting in accord with policy DMC5.

30. In addition, proposals under Core Strategy policy HC1C I will only be permitted where the building is a designated heritage asset and that it can be demonstrated that conversion to a market dwelling is required in order to achieve conservation and/or enhancement. In all cases attention will be paid to the impact of domestication and urbanisation brought about by the use on the landscape character and built environment.
31. DMT3 - *Access and design criteria*. States amongst other things, that a safe access should be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it.
32. DMT8 - *Residential off street parking*. Off-street parking for residential development should be provided unless it can be demonstrated that on-street parking meets highway standards and does not negatively impact on the visual and other amenity of local communities.

Assessment

Principle of the development

33. The proposal is for the change of use of a garage/workshop to create a single open market dwelling.
34. DS1 provides the development strategy. It allows conversion or change of use for a number of uses including housing, preferably by re-use of traditional buildings, subject to other policies within the Strategy.
35. Whilst HC1 provides the detailed housing policy. This explains that provision will not be made for housing solely to meet open market demand. However, exceptionally, new local needs housing, key agricultural, or forestry workers dwellings may be permitted.
36. The most relevant provision to the current proposal is part C of HC1, which in accordance with GSP1 and GSP2, HC1C (I) allows conversion of valued vernacular or listed buildings, where the conversion is required in order to achieve conservation or enhancement of the building.
37. In addition, Development Plan Policy DMC10 states, that any proposals under HC1C (I) should demonstrate that conversion to a market dwelling is required in order to achieve the conservation and where appropriate, the enhancement of the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution to its setting.
38. In this case, Paragraph 12.18 of the Core Strategy sets out the key aspects of policy HC1, as follows.
39. *‘Occasionally, new housing (whether newly built or from re-use of an existing building) may be the best way to achieve conservation and enhancement (for example of a valued building) or the treatment of a despoiled site. Sometimes this requires the impetus provided by open market values, but wherever possible and financially viable such developments should add to the stock of affordable housing, either on the site itself or elsewhere in the National Park. It is accepted that for small schemes capable of providing only one dwelling (whether new-build or changing the use of a building such as a barn) this is unlikely to be viable...’*
40. Therefore, where it is established that a scheme is for and able to accommodate only one dwelling unit, (as is the case here) there is no requirement within policy for that unit to be affordable or for applicants to discount other uses in order to justify an open market house.

41. Subsequently, the application has been submitted solely for open market housing. The key judgment therefore, is whether the building is a valued vernacular building of sufficient architectural or historic merit to justify an approval on an exceptional basis and if so, whether conversion to an open market dwelling is required to achieve its conservation and enhancement.
42. In this case, your Officers consider that the building has a degree of historic and vernacular merit and therefore the principle of conversion to a single open market dwelling complies with HC1C (I) and in accord with GSP1 & GSP2 and DMC10, in that its conversion is required to achieve conservation and enhancement of a 'Non-Designated Heritage Asset'.

Design, materials & impact on the streetscene and CA

43. DMC3, requires that design is to high standards and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape.
44. DMC5 asks, that new development should demonstrate how valued features will be conserved, as well as detailing the types and levels of information required to support such proposals.
45. Whilst DMC10 states, that conversion will be permitted provided it can accommodate the new use without changes that adversely affect its character, including enlargement, subdivision, or other alterations to form and mass, inappropriate new window openings or doorways and major rebuilding.
46. According to the agent, the property was last used as a workshop/garage space. The current proposal would be to convert it into a modest one bed roomed dwelling.
47. The changes would be to the principal (street facing) elevation. Where the large garage door opening would be replaced with a single window and the reinstatement of a doorway at street level and a window at first floor level.
48. The new stonework required would be to match the existing walling and the windows and door to follow a traditional design in line with a cottage of this period. Both would be conditioned accordingly to meet these requirements.
49. These changes would effectively mirror the adjoining property, which would suggest that by conversion this would re-introduce the probable historic residential use of the property, enhancing the property whilst conserving the character and appearance of the CA.
50. Moreover, the conversion, would introduce a modest one bed roomed dwelling that would be of a size and type that is considered more affordable and would add to the housing stock of the village should the property be put on the market once converted.
51. Consequently, and subject to the appropriate conditions, the scheme is considered acceptable in design and conservation terms, in accord with GSP3, L3, DCM3, DCM5 & DCM10 in these respects.

Potential amenity impacts

52. Outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight are fundamental considerations when altering or extending a property.
53. GSP3 states that all development must respect the living conditions of communities

whilst DMC3, affirms that particular attention will be paid to the amenity, privacy and security of the development and of nearby properties.

54. In this case, due to the area being wholly residential, the proposed development would have no adverse impact or significantly harm the residential amenity of these or any other residential dwellings in the locality, therefore accords with policies GSP3 & DMC3 in these respects.

Potential Highway matters

55. DMT3 Access and design criteria states that a safe access should be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it.
56. The Local Highway Authority on assessment, comment, *'that the existing garage/workshop doesn't currently serve any dwelling in the vicinity of the site. Additionally, the depth of the garage is insufficient for the parking of a vehicle, therefore, it is not considered that the conversion of the garage/workshop to a dwelling would result in the loss of off-street parking.'*
57. *In view of the above it is likely that any vehicles associated with the garage/workshop park on the surrounding public highway. Based on the character of Hill Cross, it is unlikely that on street parking for the proposed dwelling would occur on Hill Cross as the limited width with would likely result in vehicles obstructing the highway which would be an enforceable offence. Therefore, vehicles associated with the proposed dwelling would likely park on Greaves Lane (B6465) or Vicarage Lane'.*
58. The Highway Authority have also noted, (in correspondence with the agent), that the storage of waste bins would be provided inside the dwelling, whilst on collection day bins would likely be positioned on the footway fronting the proposed dwelling. This situation would be similar as the collection arrangement for other dwellings on Hill Cross.
59. In view of the above comments, the Highway Authority does not consider that the proposed conversion of the garage to a dwelling would result in such severe harm to highway safety. Accordingly, there are no objections to the proposal, and it is recommended the following condition is included in any consent;
60. *'No part of the development shall be occupied until details of arrangements for storage of bins have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details and the facilities retained for their designated purposes at all times thereafter'.*
61. Consequently, and subject to the above condition being implemented, the development is considered acceptable in Highway Safety terms in accord with policies DMT3 & DMT8 in these respects.

Climate change management & sustainability

62. The submitted information has stated, that the proposal would make good use of and enhance the existing housing stock, whilst achieving the stringent standards set out in the current building regulations for heat and power.
63. In this case, the above would generally meet the requirements set out in policy CC1 in these respects.

Conclusion

64. It is concluded that the proposal is required to conserve and enhance the building in the long-term, which is considered of vernacular merit by virtue of its simple architectural and historic character and appearance. Therefore recommended to members for approval.

Human Rights

65. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

66. List of Background Papers (not previously published)

67. Nil

68. Report Author: Steve Coombes, South Area Planner.