



Maria Ferguson

PLANNING CONSULTANCY

Change of use and alteration of former workshops / store to form dwelling and
garage

The Old Joiner's Shop, Lartington

Lartington Estates

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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Maria Ferguson Planning Ltd.

planning@mariaferguson.co.uk

www.mariaferguson.co.uk



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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on the instructions of Mr J P Mayhew on behalf of Lartington Estates Ltd. to provide additional information in relation to the design of the proposed development of the Old Joiner's Shop, Lartington.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND APPLICATION PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application site comprises a small clearing in a wooded area to the north of Scur Beck, and it contains two small single storey buildings, previously used in connection with the activities on Lartington Estate. The site lies within the Lartington Hall Conservation Area, Lartington Hall RPG, and the Area of High Landscape Value. It may be regarded as curtilage listed by virtue of its relationship with Lartington Hall Grade II* listed building.
- 2.2 A full description of the site and its setting is provided in the heritage statement prepared by Archaeo-Environment and which accompanies the applications to which this statement relates.
- 2.3 Planning permission is sought for the change of use and alteration of two buildings to form a dwelling and garage / store, with associated amenity space, parking and drainage.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 National planning guidance is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021). The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.2 At the heart of NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which means approving development which is in accordance with an up to date development plan without delay. Where the development plan is silent or out of date, this means granting permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This presumption is embodied in paragraph 11 of the Framework.
- 3.3 Chapter 16 of NPPF deals with heritage matters and paragraph 194 states that in determining applications affecting heritage assets local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 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 protection.
- 3.4 Paragraph 202 states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 3.5 Paragraph 80 of NPPF refers to rural housing and states that isolated housing in the countryside should be avoided unless it meets limited exceptions. This includes where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance the immediate setting.

- 3.6 NPPF does not change the statutory position of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.7 The Development Plan for the application site is the County Durham Plan (2020) (CDP)
- 3.8 Policy 44 of the CDP relates to the historic environment. This policy states that development will be expected to sustain the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting. Development proposals should contribute positively to the built and historic environment and should seek opportunities to enhance and, where appropriate, better reveal the significance and understanding of heritage assets whilst improving access where appropriate.
- 3.9 The policy goes on to state that great weight will be given to the conservation of all designated assets and their settings. In relation to listed buildings, regard will be had to a development's respect for the historic form, setting, fabric, materials, detailing, and, any other aspects including curtilage, which contribute to the significance of the building or structure. Insofar as it relates to conservation areas, of relevance will be demonstrating an understanding of the significance, character, appearance and setting of the conservation area and how this has informed proposals to achieve high quality sustainable development, which is respectful of historic interest, local distinctiveness and the conservation or enhancement of the asset. The planning authority will take into consideration the manner in which the proposal responds positively to the findings and recommendations of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals.
- 3.10 Policy 10 (Development in the Countryside) is the policy which is most important in the consideration of the planning application. This sets out the types of development which will be regarded as acceptable in rural locations, and is broadly consistent with NPPF. Policy 10 provides support for development necessary for the change of use of an existing building or structure which (a) already makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and is capable of conversion without complete or substantial rebuilding, disproportionate extension or unsympathetic alterations; (b) results in an enhancement of the building's immediate setting; (c) does not result in the unjustified loss of a community service or facility; and (d) in the case of a heritage asset, represents the optimal viable use of that asset consistent with their conservation.
- 3.11 The following policies will also be relevant:
- 39 – Landscape
 - 40 – Trees, Woodland and Hedges
 - 41 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

4.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

Context

- 4.1 The application site comprises a site containing traditional buildings, located in a sensitive and historic landscape. The landscape setting (namely the RPG, conservation area, and setting of Lartington Hall) are critical in terms of sensitively converting and re-using these buildings. The

buildings themselves exhibit no particular architectural merit, but they are curtilage listed and they play an important role in understanding the history and context of the Lartington Hall Estate and are associated with its past use.

Design Principles

- 4.2 The simplicity of the site, the buildings, and their past commercial use ancillary to the operation and maintenance of the Lartington Estate are important existing features. This past use means that informality is part of the special significance of the site. The buildings appear functional, and their setting informal. Retaining this as part of a domestic conversion is one of the design challenges.
- 4.3 To retain this special character the following decisions were taken in arriving at the final design:
- Retention of surrounding trees, and their protection during the development;
 - Retention and re-use of existing openings, using traditional window style and materials;
 - The use of aluminium doors (dark grey) was considered less domestic than timber painted;
 - Replacing the roof with natural blue slate in keeping with the area;
 - Installation of a flue will be beneficial to the intended use, but will also not be discordant with what was an old workshop;
 - Retaining the appearance of a courtyard that would have existed between the application buildings and the demolished south range that is apparent on old OS maps – the careful use of hard surfaces and the re-introduction of cobbles to reinforce this;
 - No 'garden' which would suburbanise the setting.

Access

- 4.4 The entire building, being single storey will have level access and easily accessible to the disabled. Vehicular access to the site is via an existing informal track leading from a private road. This informality is important in terms of preserving the ancillary character of the buildings and the wider site.