

**Planning Statement– Building at Spout House, Sandwith,  
Whitehaven**

**Proposal:** Conversion of domestic garage/store into a dwelling



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## **1.0 Introduction**

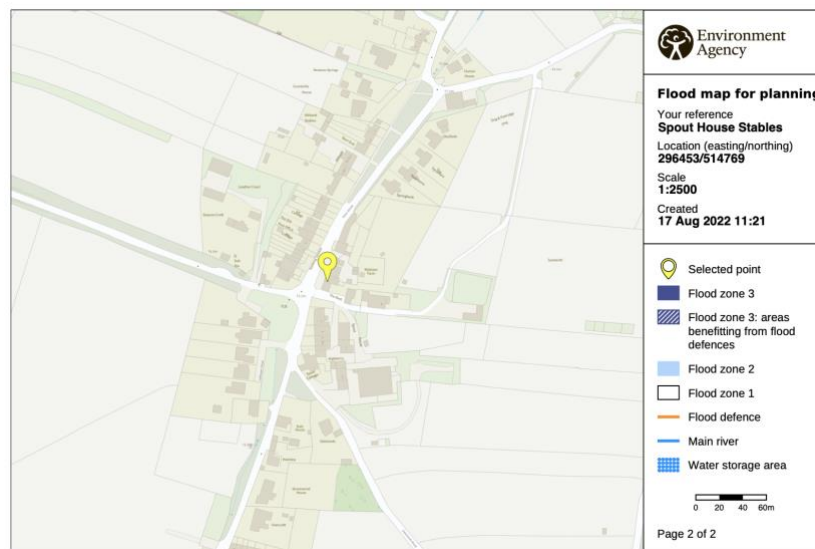
- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for at Spout House, Sandwith, Whitehaven.
- 1.2 The application is submitted in full, covering all matters relating to the development, which consists of the conversion of a domestic garage/store building to a dwelling. The purpose of this statement is to set out the planning case in support of the development, and it should be read in conjunction with the plan submitted.
- 1.3 Section 2 of this Statement will set out the site's context, Section 3 covers the proposed development, Section 4 relates to the planning history of the site and surroundings, Section 5 will set out the planning policy context against which the application must be considered and undertakes a planning assessment of the proposed development, and Section 6 will draw together the conclusions.

## **2.0 The Site**

- 2.1 The application relates to an area of land that is currently occupied by a large building associated used for domestic storage, a garden area currently used by Spout House Stables and disused land that would be classed as agricultural grazing. The site is located centrally within the village of Sandwith.
- 2.2 In terms of the site boundaries, residential properties are located to the north, west and south. To the south, the building is actually physically attached to a residential dwelling. Grassed agricultural land is located to the east.
- 2.3 The application site is situated within the envelope of the village. Sandwith is a commuter settlement within Copeland and is located less than 1 mile from the southern edge of Whitehaven. There are limited services within the village with a pub and hair dressers as the only noticeable businesses serving the community but this reflects its proximity to Whitehaven itself which is as the principle town within the Copeland Local Plan. Whitehaven town centre is located 2.4 miles drive to the north.
- 2.4 The A595 which runs through Copeland can be joined 2 miles from the site and provides easy access to Workington to the north and Egremont and Sellafield to the south. Furthermore, the A595 continues north towards Carlisle.
- 2.5 In summary therefore, the site is situated within a long-established residential area that is within reach of the best range of facilities that the Borough can offer.
- 2.6 There are no Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings on or directly adjacent to the site.
- 2.7 There are also no Tree Preservation Order's on, or near to the site, as detailed below in the extract from the Copeland Borough Council GIS Map The nearest is approximately 130m to the north:



- 2.8 The site is located in an area that the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning has noted as Flood Zone 1, and as such have a low probability of flooding. A copy of the Environment Agency's Flood Map is included below.



### 3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application is for the conversion of the building into a single storey semi-detached dwelling.

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- 3.2 The proposed conversion is generally within the existing structure, with the proposed external changes consisting of the replacement of a door for a window on the east elevation, the blocking up of double doors on the west elevation and the enlargement of an existing door and addition of a further door on the north elevation. Furthermore, there will be two rooflights added to the roof on the west elevation.
- 3.3 The dwelling will be an L shape, with an overall length of 11m and a width of 9.2m. It will utilize the existing dual pitched roof with an overall height of 5m. The proposal will incorporate a kitchen, living room two bedrooms and a bathroom. A small garden and driveway is included to the north of the building on the site plan.
- 3.4 The application site is considered well related to the existing residential developments to the west, south and north, the road network and it is considered that the development of the site in the proposed form is possible without having any adverse impact on residential amenity to the surrounding properties or the local landscape.
- 3.5 The previous application received no objections from the Town Council and no objections from Cumbria County Council in their role as Local Lead Flood Authority and Highways Authority. No other objections were received from the neighbour notification and site notice process, and two neighbour letters in support were received.
- 3.6 The application is now also accompanied by a structural survey to confirm that the building is capable of accepting the proposed conversion works, and a further ecology survey to confirm that there is no bat activity seen emerging from the building, or any ecology interest in the building.

#### **4.0 Planning history**

- 4.1 The below is the recent planning history directly on the application site:
  - 4/93/0265/0 – Conversion of garage/outbuilding to a dwelling – Spout House, Sandwith – Approved
  - 4/95/0276/0 – Garage – Spout House, Sandwith - Approved
  - 4/21/2010/0F1 – Conversion and extension of a garage to a dwelling – Withdrawn
  - 4/22/2011/0F1 – Conversion of domestic garage/store into dwelling (resubmission) - Refused

#### **5.0 Planning Policy and its application to the proposed development**

- 5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The Local Development Plan consists of policies within the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (December 2013). The policies in the following paragraphs are considered relevant to the proposed development.
- 5.3 The Local Plan sets out a long-term spatial vision and strategic objectives to support Copeland's vision which is "Working to improve lives, communities and the prosperity of

Copeland". Although it was adopted before the updated NPPF (2021) it was adopted after the first NPPF that was published in March 2012 and therefore closely follows the principles of sustainable development, as defined by national policy and delivering sustainable housing in accordance with that policy.

#### Strategic Policies of the Copeland Local Plan 2013 - 2028

- 5.4 **Policy ST1** of the core strategy sets out the fundamental principles that will achieve sustainable development. Amongst other things it seeks to ensure that development created a residential offer which meets the needs and aspirations of the Boroughs housing markers.

*'ii) Ensure development provides or safeguards good levels of residential amenity and security*

*iii) Accommodate traffic and access arrangements in ways that make it safe and convenient for pedestrians and cyclists to move around.'*

- 5.5 **Policy ST2** sets a spatial development strategy whereby development should be guided to the principal settlement and other centres and sustain rural services and facilities. As detailed above however, this policy that relates to the settlement boundaries is considered out of date until such time that the settlement boundaries are fully reviewed and adopted in a new Local Plan document. It is detailed below:

- 5.6 *'Development in the Borough should be distributed in accordance with the following principles:*

*A Growth: providing for and facilitating growth in the local economy, particularly in the energy sector, accompanied by net growth in jobs and an associated increase in demand for housing and services*

*B Concentration: development will be located in the Borough's settlements at an appropriate scale, within defined settlement boundaries, in accordance with the Borough's settlement hierarchy as set out in Figure 3.2:*

*i) Focussing the largest scale development and regeneration on Whitehaven and the important development opportunities there*

*ii) Supporting moderate levels of development reflecting the respective scale and functions of the smaller towns (Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom), and contributing to the regeneration of the town centres*

*iii) Permitting appropriately scaled development in defined Local Centres which helps to sustain services and facilities for local communities*

*C Restricting development outside the defined settlement boundaries to that which has a proven requirement for such a location, including:*

*i) Energy - nuclear: support for the development of new nuclear generating capacity at Moorside, and a willingness to discuss a potential Geological Disposal Facility for higher level radioactive waste in the Borough*



- ii) Energy - renewable: support for renewable energy generating proposals which best maximise renewable resources and which minimise environmental and amenity impacts*
- iii) Essential infrastructure to support energy development and other infrastructure that requires locating outside settlement limits*
- iv) Existing major employment locations, especially Westlakes Science and Technology Park, and the completion of defined allocated or safeguarded employment sites*
- v) Land uses characteristically located outside settlements, such as agriculture or forestry, farm diversification schemes or tourism activities requiring location in the countryside, or prisons*
- vi) Housing that meets proven specific and local needs including provision for agricultural workers, replacement dwellings, replacement of residential caravans, affordable housing and the conversion of rural buildings to residential use.'*

#### Development Management Policies

- 5.7 Policy DM15A is the Local Plan policy regarding the conversion of rural buildings to a residential use. It states:

*'In rural areas proposals for the conversion of a building to residential use will be permitted so long as all of the following are fulfilled:*

*A Applicants can demonstrate that alternative employment or mixed use live-work accommodation or community use is not viable*

*B Where the subject building is currently or was last used for agriculture, applicants can also demonstrate that there is no alternative site or premises available in the locality within existing settlements*

*C The building is structurally sound and is capable of accepting conversion works without significant rebuilding, modifications or extensions*

*D The building in its existing form is of a traditional construction and appearance and the proposed conversion works conserve the essential character of the building and its surroundings. In this regard existing features of interest and external facing materials should as far as possible be retained*

*E The building is located within or adjacent to a village or existing group of buildings*

*F The building is served by a satisfactory access from the public highway network without the requirement for extensive private roads or tracks and domestic services such as water supply and electricity must be readily available to the site*

*G The conversion works incorporate reasonable standards of amenity*

*H The number of dwellings proposed is appropriate to the scale of adjoining development and will not substantially increase the number of dwellings in the countryside.'*

- 5.8 In terms of the above, firstly the building is not last used for agriculture, and given its recently domestic use, a domestic conversion is considered the most appropriate reuse.

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- 5.9 The building is considered capable of accepting the conversion works as confirmed in the structural survey which is included within the planning application.
- 5.10 The building itself is a traditional construction, given that it is a block/brick build with a render finish, timber roof trusses with a grey tiled roof over. Most of the adjacent dwellings in this area of the village also have a render and grey tile external finish, so it is considered traditional in relation to the village setting, and the conversion works will retain this character.
- 5.11 As previously mentioned, the building is located centrally within the settlement of Sandwith, which comprised of over 100 buildings, the vast majority of which are residential properties.
- 5.12 In terms of the access, Cumbria County Council in their capacity as the Highways Authority raised no objections during the course of the previous planning application for the building conversion, so therefore the development is considered to have a satisfactory access. Services are readily available to the site given the surrounding residential uses.
- 5.13 The building will provide a two-bedroom property following the conversion, which is considered to have an appropriate standard of amenity for a residential dwelling. Finally, being a single property, it is considered to be appropriate in the scale of the settlement it is within.

Principle – National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (as revised July 2021)

- 5.14 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF states that sustainable development has three objectives social, economic and environmental.
- 5.15 The aims listed in Paragraph 8 are as follows:
- ”a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.*
- c) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

It is noted in the above that a central aim of the NPPF is to ensure that the right type of land is available in the right areas, to ensure that the correct housing is available to meet the needs of present generations.

- 5.16 Paragraph 11 covers the issue of the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

*“For **decision-taking** this means:*

*Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

*The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

- 5.17 The above is important because specifically planning permission should be granted, unless the adverse impacts of the development significantly outweigh the benefits. Given the nature of the proposed development, no statutory consultee issues, no objections and letters in support, it is considered that the benefits of the reuse of the property as a dwelling outweigh the adverse impacts of the proposal.
- 5.18 Given the above, it is contended that the application should be supported.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The proposed development provides the opportunity for an additional dwelling through a conversion on a site that is considered suitable for residential use.
- 6.2 It is considered that the adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in terms of decision making.
- 6.3 It is contended therefore that the proposed development is acceptable and is in accordance with both national and local planning policy, and therefore the appeal should be approved.

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