

The Applicants Case

The application should be approved for the following reasons:

- It is within the urban boundary
- It is in a sustainable position in terms of public transport, employment opportunities and other services
- The three storey building has come to the end of its economic life as a commercial property. It has been marketed by professional agents for some considerable time and they have confirmed a lack of interest in it for commercial uses.
- Its conversion to make a family home for the applicant provides the only foreseeable way of ensuring that the building does not continue to deteriorate, to the detriment of adjoining residents
- The adjoining commercial garage (not part of the application) used to have a dwelling above it but it is no longer used. In this sense the conversion will not give an additional dwelling over what was once the situation
- The building has architectural interest and the conversion will ensure its restoration and future maintenance, to the general benefit of the area as a whole
- The use of the premises for a dwelling will remove the need to service the building from the main road if it was to continue in use for commercial purposes

2. Relevant Planning History

2006/370 – Conversion of an empty commercial premise to one dwelling at 352 Burnley Road East, Waterfoot. REFUSED

3. Policy Context

Rossendale District Local Plan

Policy DS1
Policy DC1
Policy DC4

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan

Policy 1
Policy 2
Policy 12
Parking standards

Other Material Planning Considerations

PPS 1
PPG 3
PPG 13
Housing Position Statement

4. CONSULTATIONS

LCC(Highways)

Comments to be reported at the meeting

County Archaeology Unit

A building of a similar size and orientation as to that proposed for conversion can be seen on the 1st Edition 1:10560 OS, surveyed in 1844-7 and again on the 1:2500 mapping of 1891 when a gantry would appear to link the building to Edge Side Fulling Mill.

The textile mills of the North West are of great historical importance, shaping the landscape and communities in which they were built and which surrounded them. Where conversion is proposed the Lancashire Archaeology Service would recommend that an archaeological record, comprising plans, drawings and photographs should be made of the mill and any associated buildings such as this. Lancashire Archaeology Service would therefore recommend that the above work be secured by condition.

RBC Forward Planning

Although the site is within the urban boundary; taking into consideration the information contained in the Housing Land Position Monitoring Report (May 2006) and given the over-supply housing position in respect to the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan, (plus with no supporting information that this site meets an identified housing need), it is considered that this development cannot be supported, as it is contrary to Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the Housing Position Statement

5. REPRESENTATIONS

Site notices were posted and to date, five letters have been received, which have raised the following points:

- The mill has only been on the market for approximately four months and therefore has not given it enough time to see if there would be any interest in a commercial use.
- The distance between the two buildings is 9 feet (3 metres). Even if the windows were to be obscure glazed; there would still be a loss of privacy when these windows are opened.
- This property is not suitable for conversion to living accommodation.
- The garage, where parking arrangements have been made is a working garage and any vehicle would be an obstruction.
- No arrangements have been made for bin storage or any other items that may need to be kept externally and there is no land associated with this property.
- The garage is rented and the tenant has no intention of sub-letting any space for the parking of a vehicle.

6. ASSESSMENT

The main issues to be considered as part of this development relate to the principle of the development, residential amenity, highway issues and housing supply.

Principle

The location for the proposed development is within the urban boundary and therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy DS1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

The proposed development involves the conversion of an existing building to residential use, which is in accordance with government guidance in the form of PPG3: Housing, which states that priority should be given to 'maximising the re-use of previously-developed land and the conversion and re-use of existing buildings.' The location for the proposed development is within walking distance of a bus stop and is in a sustainable location, thereby according with PPG3: Housing and PPG13: Transport.

Residential Amenity

The proposed development may impact upon the amenity of the residents of the properties which back on to Wall Street. There are existing openings on the ground floor, first floor and second floor levels. It is considered that the most significant impact upon the amenity of the neighbouring residents will be at first floor level. It is acknowledged that the proposed development will impact adversely upon the amenity of the neighbouring residents, although it is considered that the potential adverse impact may be ameliorated through the imposition of conditions. No external alterations are proposed to the building and therefore, the proposed development will not look out of place within the locality. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies DC1 and DC4 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

Highway Issues

The applicant has negotiated the use of a space within the adjoining garage, and therefore one off-road parking space has been provided. However, the consultation process with neighbouring residents has revealed that this may not be the case. It is acknowledged that the existing use of the building would result in a more intensive use of the site, in relation to vehicular movements. The comments of the highways authority will be reported at the meeting.

Housing Supply

One major issue associated with this application, is one of housing supply. The level of supply is calculated by deducting the total number of completions (992 identified in Housing Land Position Report) from the number of dwellings identified in the Structure Plan (i.e. of 1920), equating to a remaining provision of 928. The number of dwellings with planning permission equates to 1268. Therefore, the number of dwellings with planning permission, in addition to the number of dwellings lost, equates to an oversupply of 255 dwellings. Therefore,

it is considered that there are sufficient residential planning permissions to meet Rossendale Borough Council's housing requirement to 2016 and that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (2001-2016).

As per the policy, contained within the Housing Position Statement (as approved at Executive Committee on 17th August 2005), the proposed development will result in a net gain in the number of dwellings within the borough and is not located within the Bacup, Stacksteads and Britannia Housing Market Renewal Initiative Area or the Rawtenstall Town Centre master plan. Therefore the proposed development is not in accordance with the Housing Position Statement.

Special Circumstances

There are no external alterations proposed as part of the proposal and it would be extremely difficult to provide the off-road parking necessary for a commercial use. It is noted that the building is of historical interest and the applicant has provided evidence that the site for the proposed development has been marketed for 6 months and in that time only one offer on the building has been received by the marketing company. However, it is considered that one off-road parking space will not meet the Council's adopted car parking standards and thus, on balance, it is considered that the case has not been made to warrant permission being granted for this proposal as an exception to housing policy.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development is contrary to Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the Housing Position Statement and therefore, the proposed development should be recommended for refusal.

8. RECOMMENDATION

That permission should be refused, for the following reasons:

1. It is considered that the development is not currently required to meet the housing requirements of the Borough. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the provisions of Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 and the Housing Position Statement

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