

TITLE: 2005/360 CONVERSION OF EXISTING BARN TO FORM A TWO STOREY DWELLING AT RAVENSHORE BARN, RAVENSHORE, HOLCOMBE ROAD, HELMSHORE

TO/ON: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE 2nd AUGUST 2005

BY: TEAM MANAGER DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

DETERMINATION EXPIRY DATE: 8TH AUGUST 2005

APPLICANT: MR & MRS HAWORTH

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Human Rights

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights: -

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

Site and Proposal

The applicant seeks permission for the conversion of a redundant barn to a two storey dwelling at Ravenshore Barn, Helmsore. This is a freestanding disused natural stone and stone slate former barn. It is located approximately 260 metres east of the junction with Holcombe Road and the track which forms access to this building and around 6 other dwellings in the immediate vicinity.

The site is located within the green belt and is therefore outside of the Urban Boundary as defined by the Rossendale District Local Plan.

This proposal was requested to be heard by this Committee by a ward Councillor.

Relevant Planning History

2005/095 – Conversion of existing barn to form a two storey dwelling at Ravenshore Barn, Holcombe Road, Helmsore. REFUSED.

Notification Responses

Site notices were posted and one letter of objection has been received, which has raised the following points:

- A belief that the proposed development is not feasible without unreasonable encroachment upon the neighbouring property.
- There are already too many houses within the borough of Rossendale.

The applicants' agent has submitted a structural survey and a supporting statement in support of the proposal, which raises the following points:

- The barn is in a rural location, which is designated as green belt land. Ravenshore Lane is a narrow unmade cul-de-sac with severely restricted width unsuitable for commercial vehicles. The barn's location would suggest that an employment use is unlikely to prove viable or sustainable and could be harmful from the point of view of the openness of the green belt. The barn has not been used beneficially for two decades.
- The building is within 0.5 mile of Helmshore village, which offers a range of local facilities and amenities and is within walking distance of a regular local bus route.
- A residential conversion of the barn with care in terms of design, access and outlook would result in a successful and sustainable re-use of an interesting stone building incorporating a walled garden on the north side and access lane improvements could be incorporated for the benefit of the surrounding dwellings.
- The barn is not in an isolated position, there are six other dwellings within the immediate hamlet of Ravenshore.
- The provision of one additional dwelling is of little significance, but will add to the diversity of supply.

Consultation Responses

County Highways

No objections to the proposal on highway grounds.

County Archaeology Service

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1:10560 map, surveyed in 1844-7 (Lancashire Sheet 79) shows a building in the same location and to the same scale as that proposed for conversion.

The building should be considered of some historic interest, originating in the first half of the 19th century or earlier and having undergone some changes and alterations during its working life. The development proposed will have a significant impact on the historical character and appearance of the building.

Front elevation: The proposal show an appreciation of the essential characteristics of many barns, but could be improved by the removal of the rooflight to the rear elevation. I would wish to see evidence for the door opening, in the form of door jambs, to be retained as an indicator of former access into the building, and that new cills be inserted between them. The timber doors to the cart entry could be retained by the creation of an internal porch in the proposed entrance hall, and which would close behind the proposed glazed panel and door.

Rear elevation: Original openings should where possible be retained. Consequently the proposals to lower the height of the existing cart entry should not be allowed.

Gable (east) elevation The original jambs to the door which it is proposed to change to a window should be retained in order to preserve evidence of former access into the shippon, and any new cills be inserted between them.

Gable (west) elevation Again the original jambs to the door which it is proposed to change to a window should be retained in order to preserve evidence of former access into the shippon, and any new cills be inserted between them.

Subject to the comments above, the County Archaeology service has no objection to the proposed conversion to residential use, subject to the inclusion of a condition.

RBC Forward Planning

The site is outside of the urban boundary (Policy DS1) and within land designated as Green Belt (Policy DS3).

The decision would be to recommend refusal of the application for residential development as the application is contrary to Policies DS1 and DS3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan, Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan through which there are already sufficient planning permissions to achieve the target of 1,920 homes by 2016 and guidance in PPG3 whereby priority is given towards re-using previously developed land within urban areas, bringing empty homes back into use and converting existing buildings, in preference to the development of greenfield sites.

Environmental Agency

No objections subject to the inclusion of conditions.

Development Plan Policies

Rossendale District Local Plan

Policy DS1 (Urban Boundary) states *“the Council will seek to locate most new development within a defined boundary – the urban boundary – and will resist development beyond it unless it complies with Policies DS3 and DS5.”*

Policy DS3 (Green Belts) of the Rossendale District Local Plan states that *Within the Greenbelts, planning permission will not be given except in very special circumstances for the erection of new buildings and for the change of use of other buildings other than for the purpose of agriculture, forestry, outdoor sport and recreation cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds, or other uses appropriate to a rural area. The change of use of a redundant building may be permitted within the terms of national greenbelt policy.*

Policy C6 (Re-Use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings) of the Rossendale District Local Plan. This policy states that the re-use of rural buildings will normally be permitted and will be assessed on Policy DC1 and the following criteria:

a) that the building form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings.

- b) in the green belt the building must be genuinely surplus to the present and foreseeable needs of agriculture.
- c) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for major alterations which would adversely affect its character and appearance.
- d) the proposed development is carefully detailed and designed to ensure that the essential character of the building is retained, preserved and enhanced.
- e) the affects of the creation of a garden area together with any garaging and car parking facilities does not harm the appearance or function of the area.
- f) the access to the site is to a safe standard or is capable of being improved to a safe standard without harming the appearance of the locality.
- g) the impact of the proposal does not harm the appearance or function of the area.
- h) extensions to such buildings will only be permitted where:
 - i) they are in size, mass and scale ancillary of the existing building, and otherwise necessary to provide a reasonable standard of modern habitable accommodation.
 - ii) they are so designed and located, and are of matching materials of construction such that they reflect and enhance the character of the existing building.

Policy DC1 (Development Criteria) of the Rossendale District Local Plan

The policy states that all applications for planning permission will be considered on the basis of a) location and nature of proposed development, b) size and intensity of proposed development; c) relationship to existing services and community facilities, d) relationship to road and public transport network, e) likely scale and type of traffic generation, f) pollution, g) impact upon trees and other natural features, h) arrangements for servicing and access, i) car parking provision j) sun lighting, and day lighting and privacy provided k) density layout and relationship between buildings and l) visual appearance and relation to surroundings ,m) landscaping and open space provision, n) watercourses and o) impact upon man-made or other features of local importance.

Policy T4 (Car Parking) of the Rossendale District Local Plan states that *Development proposals will be required to provide, normally within the curtilage of the development, sufficient space to meet both operational and non operational parking requirements.*

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2006 - 2016

Policy 1 (General Policy) of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan states that:

Development will be located primarily in the principal urban areas, main towns, key service centres (market towns) and strategic locations for development and will contribute to achieving:

- a) the efficient use of buildings, land and other resources;
- b) high accessibility for all by walking, cycling and public transport, with trip intensive uses focussed on town centres;
- c) a balance of land uses that helps achieve sustainable development;
- h) rural regeneration;

Other development to meet an identified local need or support rural regeneration outside principal urban areas, main towns, key service centres (market towns) and strategic locations for development will be acceptable in principle.

Policy 5 (Development outside of principal urban areas, main towns and key service centres (market towns)) of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan states that:

Development outside of the principal urban areas, main towns and key service centres (market towns) will be of a scale and nature appropriate to its location and will mostly take place in villages and other settlements identified in local plans/local development frameworks.

Development will support rural and urban regeneration by meeting an identified local need for housing or community services or by providing for local employment opportunities that maintain, or strengthen and diversify the local economy, including farm diversification and sustainable tourism development.

Policy 12 (Housing Provision) states that provision will be made for the construction of 1920 dwellings within the Borough within the plan period (2001-2016) 220 per year between 2001 and 2006 and 80 per year between 2006 and 2016.

Parking standards require the provision of a maximum of two car parking spaces for dwellings with between two and three bedrooms, and three spaces for dwellings with in excess of 4 bedrooms

Other Material Planning Considerations

PPG1 (General Policy and principles)

Government guidance in the form of PPG1 emphasises that development should be sustainable and states that there is a need to achieve a balance between promoting economic prosperity and protecting the natural and built environment. It also identifies ways in which mixed use development can be promoted, and provides advice on design matters.

Paragraph 7 states that “Urban regeneration and re-use of previously- developed land are important supporting objectives for creating a more sustainable pattern of development. The Government is committed to:

- a) concentrating development for uses which generate a large number of trips in places well served by public transport, especially in town centres, rather than in out of centre locations; and
- b) preferring the development of land within urban areas, particularly on previously-developed sites, provided that this creates or maintains a good living environment, before considering the development of Greenfield sites.”

PPG2 (Green Belts)

This PPG states the general intentions of Green Belt policy, including its contribution to sustainable development objectives; sets out the specific purposes of including land in Green Belts and specifies the objectives for the use of that land; confirms that Green Belts must be protected as far as can be seen ahead and advises on defining boundaries and on safeguarding land for longer term development needs; maintains the presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belts and refines the categories of appropriate development, including making provision for the future of major existing developed sites and revising policy on the re-use of buildings.

Paragraph 3.8 states that “*the re-use of buildings inside a Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing:*

- a) *it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;*

b) strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings, and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building which might conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it (e.g. because they involve extensive external storage or extensive hardstanding, car parking, boundary walling or fencing);

c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and

d) the form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. (Conversion proposals may be more acceptable if they respect local building styles and materials, though the use of equivalent natural materials that are not local should not be ruled out)."

PPG3 (Housing)

Government guidance in the form of PPG 3 (Housing) states that sites for housing should be assessed against a number of criteria namely the availability of previously-developed sites, location and accessibility, capacity of existing and potential infrastructure, ability to build communities and the physical and environmental constraints on development of land.

Paragraph 22 states that *"The Government is committed to maximizing the re-use of previously-developed land and empty properties and the conversion of non-residential buildings for housing, in order both to promote regeneration and minimize the amount of greenfield land being taken for development"*.

Annex C states that *"Previously developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed infrastructure."*

Paragraph 31 highlights the importance of the location and accessibility of housing sites to jobs, shops and services by modes of transport other than the car.

PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)

Paragraph 17 states that *The government's policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic development purposes would be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building. These criteria should take account of:*

- the potential impact on the countryside and landscapes and wildlife;*
- specific local economic and social needs and opportunities;*
- settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, markets and housing;*
- the suitability of different types of building, and of different scales, for re-use;*
- the need to preserve, or the desirability of preserving, buildings of historic or architectural importance or interest, or which otherwise contribute to local character.*

PPG13 (Transport)

Government guidance in the form of PPG13 states in paragraph 19 that *"A key objective is to ensure that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling."*

Planning Issues

The location for the proposed development is outside of the urban boundary and therefore, the proposal does not accord with Policy DS1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

The site for the development falls within land, which has been designated as Green Belt. Development within the green belt will normally only be allowed if it meets the criteria set out in paragraph 3.8 of PPG2 (Green Belts). The impact of the proposed development will not have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the green belt and the proposed development will not require the extension of the building or extensive hardstanding. The building is capable of conversion without any major alterations and the conversion will retain the character of the original building. Therefore, the proposed development is in compliance with Policy DS3 and PPG2 (Green Belts).

The proposed development is not in accordance with PPG3 (Housing), in terms of the last use of the building was for agricultural purposes and therefore the land is classed as 'greenfield' land. However, both PPG2 (Green Belts) and PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) allow for the re-use of buildings within the countryside for 'economic, residential and other purposes, including mixed uses'. The building is situated within a small settlement, consisting of 6 properties and the building, in the view of the County Archaeology Service, should be considered as being of some historical interest, originating in the first half of the 19th century or earlier. The building is not located in a sustainable location, as it has no direct access to a bus service and would therefore create a reliance upon the car. However, the proposed development is 0.5 miles away from Helmshore, where access to shops and local facilities could be gained. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with government guidance in the form of PPG2 (Green Belts) and PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas).

A structural appraisal has been submitted with the application and it concludes that the barn is capable of conversion without the need for major alterations. Comments have been received from the County Archaeology service and the applicant has agreed to amend the original proposal to reflect these views. Therefore, the County Archaeology Service have no objections to the proposed conversion and it is in keeping with the character of the barn. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy C6 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

The proposed development will not have a significant adverse impact upon the amenity of the neighbouring residents. The proposed dwelling will not unacceptably overlook neighbouring properties and would not adversely affect the level of sunlight or daylight that those properties currently receive. Therefore the proposed development is in accordance with Policies DS1 and C6 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

The highways authority have no objections to the proposed development and the proposed development is in compliance with the Council's adopted car parking standards, with two off-road spaces being identified within the curtilage of the property. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy T4 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

One major issue associated with this application is one of housing supply. Policy 12 (Housing Provision) of the Structure Plan states that 1920 dwellings are required to

be built within the Borough between 2001 and 2016 in order to adequately house the Borough's population. It further states that these are to be provided at the rate of 200 properties per year until 2006 and 80 per year thereafter. In view of this, and on the basis that only 431 properties were constructed between 2001 and September 2003, it would seem reasonable to assume that there is currently a shortfall of some 1489 dwellings in the Borough. However, at 1 April 2003 there were 1606 planning permissions that were, and still are, capable of implementation. In view of this it is contended that the Council's current housing targets for 2016 can reasonably be met. With this in mind it is contended that the additional 2 dwellings proposed by this application are not currently required to meet the housing land provision of the Borough and is contrary to Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in most respects, however it is considered that the concerns relating to housing supply outweigh all other considerations at this time.

Recommendation

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

Conditions

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.

Local Plan Policies

DS1
DS3
C6
DC1
T4

Structure Plan Policies

Policy 1
Policy 5
Policy 12