

Application No: 2008/386		Application Type: Outline	
Proposal:	Erection of 105 dwellings & associated infrastructure	Location:	Site of Orama Mill, off Hall Street, Whitworth
Report of:	Planning Unit Manager	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Development Control Committee	Date:	19 August 2008
Applicant:	Redrow Homes	Determination Expiry Date: 27 August 2008	

REASON FOR REPORTING

Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation Yes
Member Call-In No
 Name of Member:
 Reason for Call-In:

More than 3 objections received No

Other (please state) Major/Departure/Council owned land

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.

APPLICATION DETAILS

1. The Site

This application relates to a site having an area of 3.6 hectares, through which runs the River Spodden.

The principal part of the application site is situated to the west side of the river. It is occupied by Orama Mill, comprising of early 20th Century red-brick buildings ranging in height from 1 to 5 storeys and later buildings of more modern design/facing materials. The premises take vehicular access from Hall

Street to the south, an access shared with Hallfold United Reformed Church. They are bounded by the complex of buildings at Whitworth Community High School on the higher ground to the west and by the school playing fields on the higher ground to the north. Having a gross floor space of approximately 23,225 sq m, the premises are now vacant and of deteriorating condition and appearance.

Approximately a fifth of the application site is situated to the east side of the river. The Council owns part of this relatively long and thin belt of land, which extends up to Cowm Park Way South and contains a belt of mature trees that fronts Hall Street. Although this area appears 'green' in character when viewed from beyond its boundaries, there is a hardstanding within it that was formerly used for car parking by the mill on the opposite side of the river and an associated footbridge is still to be seen.

2. Relevant Planning History

At its meeting on 18 September 2008 Committee considered an application for this site from Redrow which sought Outline Permission for its residential redevelopment with 123 dwellings, and for their layout, scale and access arrangements; only the matters of appearance and landscaping were reserved for later consideration.

In short :

- The scheme proposed by Application 2007/375 was to comprise of 9 1-bedroomed apartments, 28 2-bedroomed apartments, 46 3-bedroomed townhouses, 17 4-bedroomed townhouses and 23 4-bedroomed detached houses, none of which were to be 'affordable housing'.
- The dwellings to the west side of the river were to be contained within buildings ranging between 2 and 3 storeys in height, and were to be served by a road joining Cowm Park Way South (and requiring construction of a new bridge over the river), the existing vehicular access retained as an emergency-access.
- To the east side of the river dwellings were to be contained within two buildings of 3/4 storeys in height, one to each side of the new estate road, to be served in one case by an access to Hall Street and in the other case by two accesses to Cowm Park Way South.

In accordance with the Officer Recommendation, Application 2007/375 was refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would contribute towards an inappropriate excess in housing supply provision and would provide no affordable housing, contrary to Policy 12 of the adopted Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the Rossendale Borough Council revised interim Housing Position Statement (January 2007) and Affordable Housing Position Statement (January 2007). In this instance the case does not provide significant regeneration benefits to warrant an exception to policy being made.

2. The proposed development would result in the loss of an existing employment use to the detriment of employment land supply within the Borough. The proposal is contrary to Policy J3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan in that insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable shortfall in employment land.
3. The proposed development would contribute to an inappropriate excess of housing, failing to maintain a balance between employment and the existing Whitworth residential community contrary to the hierarchy of settlements. As such, the proposed development represents an unsustainable form of development contrary to PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and PPG13 (Transport) and policies 1 and 5 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.
4. Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable risk to flooding and as such a full assessment cannot be made and the proposal is contrary to PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk) and policy 24 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.
5. The proposed development incorporates insufficient internal separation distances between properties which would result in an unacceptable level of direct overlooking between the proposed dwellings. As such, the proposed development is contrary to policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan and PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development).
6. The proposed access onto Hall Street would be unduly close to the junction of Hall Street with Cowm Park Way South and would be sub-standard providing insufficient visibility splays owing to its position on a bend in the road. As such, the proposal is contrary to policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan, PPG13 (Transport) and Manual for Streets.
7. Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that adequate provision for public open space either within the site or through an off-site financial contribution would be provided. As such, the proposed development is contrary to policy DC3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.
8. The proposal is contrary to the Lancashire Planning Officers' Society Planning Obligations Policy Paper (2006) in so far as there is no S.106 contribution towards Transport and Library provision (adopted by Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council).

3. Proposal

This application seeks Outline Permission for residential redevelopment of the site with 105 dwellings, and for their layout, scale and access arrangements; only the matters of appearance and landscaping are reserved for later consideration.

In short:

- The scheme proposes erection of 39 2-bedroomed units, 38 3-bedroomed units and 28 4-bedroomed units. The 2-bedroomed units would take the form of bungalows, flats and mews dwellings, whilst the 3 and 4-bedroomed units would take the form of mews and detached dwellings.
- Twenty-one of these dwellings would be provided as 'affordable housing', 17 in the form of 2-bedroomed flats and 4 4-bedroomed houses. The affordable housing to be provided on the site - amounting to 20% of the total number of units - will be passed to an Registered Social Landlord upon completion for occupancy on a shared-ownership basis.
- The dwellings to the west side of the river are to be contained within buildings ranging between 2 and 4 storeys in height, the 3 and 4 storey buildings for the most part sited along the western boundary were they will be backed by land rising steeply up to Whitworth Community High School. These dwellings are to be served by a road joining Cowm Park Way South (and requiring construction of a new bridge over the river), the existing vehicular access retained as an emergency-access.
- To the east side of the river nine bungalows are to be erected, three to be sited to north of the new estate road and served off a single access to Cowm Park Way South and the others to be sited to the south of the new estate road and served off two accesses to Cowm Park Way South.
- The scheme has been amended to address the Environment Agency's previously-expressed concerns regarding flood risk and to preserve and enhance the wildlife and landscape value of the River Spodden corridor. This and the other open spaces to be provided within the site are to be maintained by their own management company.
- The sum of £105,000 (ie. £1k per dwelling) is to be given to the Council to expend on off-site Public Open Space/Play Provision.
- The proposed residential development will generate less traffic movements at the morning and afternoon peak hour than did Orama Mill when operating fully and will remove the HGV traffic associated with its employment use. Notwithstanding that the Highway Authority has accepted the conclusions of its Transport Assessment which show the local road network to be capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the development without causing undue delay for other road users, it nevertheless offers to the Council the sum of £50,000 to be expended on improvement works at the junction of Hall St/Market St.

- Since the application was originally submitted the applicant has agreed to contribute circa £105,000 towards off-site Highway works/Transport improvements (rather than the £50K referred to above solely for off-site Highway works), and £30,000 towards provision of Library/Youth & Community facilities/services.

4. Policy Context

National Guidance

- PPS1 - Sustainable Development
- PPS3 - Housing
- PPG4 - Industrial & Commercial Development
- PPS9 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPG13 - Transport
- PPG17 - Sport & Recreation
- PPS23 - Pollution Control
- PPS25 - Flood Risk

Development Plan

RPG13 (2003)

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (Adopted 2005)

- Policy 1 – General Policy
- Policy 2 – Main Development Locations
- Policy 5 – Development outside of Principal Urban Areas, Main Towns, Etc
- Policy 7 – Parking
- Policy 12 – Housing Provision
- Policy 14 – Business and Industrial Land Provision
- Policy 20 – Lancashire's Landscapes
- Policy 24 – Flood Risk

Rossendale District Local Plan (Adopted 1995)

- DS1 - Urban Boundary
- E4 - Tree Preservation
- E7 - Contaminated Land
- DC1 - Development Criteria
- DC3 - Public Open Space
- H3 - Land for Residential Development
- T14 - Roads in Major Residential Sites

Other Material Considerations

Draft RSS

DfT Manual for Streets (March 2007)

LCC Access and Parking SPD / Parking Standards

LCC Landscape & Heritage SPG / Landscape Strategy for Lancashire

LPOS Planning Obligations Policy Paper

RBC Core Strategy

RBC Interim Housing Position Statement (December 2007)

RBC Interim Housing Position Statement (July 2008)

RBC Housing Market Assessment (September 2007)

RBC Draft Open Space & Play Equipment Contributions SPD

5. **CONSULTATIONS**
LCC (Planning)

With respect to the earlier application (2007/375) it advised as follows :

Housing Provision

"There are sufficient residential planning permissions to meet the Borough Council's housing requirement to 2016. The proposal as submitted proposes 123 additional dwellings. This is a substantial number that would measurably contribute to existing housing oversupply.

"Paragraph 6.3.13 of Policy 12 states that in situations of oversupply additional housing may be permitted where they make an essential contribution to the supply of affordable or special needs housing or form a key element within a mixed use regeneration project. The application does not form part of a key element of a mixed-use project, being wholly residential.....The current proposal does not include any affordable housing provision.

"The proposed development is contrary to policy 12 of the Adopted Joint Lancashire Structure Plan."

Settlement Hierarchy

"Development in Policy 5 settlements should be of a scale and nature appropriate to its location.....Urban regeneration is supported where it meets an identified need.....Loss of employment provision should be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer needed by the community.

"The proposed housing provision is substantial in scale for a settlement the size of Whitworth. I am concerned that the scale of new housing will not primarily serve local housing needs but will instead attract new residents who will commute from Rochdale and other parts of Greater Manchester.

"The RSS EIP Panel recommended that the role of Key Service Centres will be considered as part of a Partial Review of RSS. This may provide the opportunity to re-examine the function of centres such as Whitworth but at the current time it is considered premature to consider the proposal on the assumption that re-designation will occur."

Financial Contributions

The site is calculated as having an accessibility score of 33 and to have “medium” accessibility. Having regard to the number/size of dwellings proposed the sum of £144,000 should be payable. This should be primarily utilised for funding public transport improvements, plus ensuring high quality walking and cycling links.

The approved LPOS Planning Obligations Policy Paper also identifies a specific need to improve Whitworth Library. An indicative contribution of £35,000 is required.

Other Matters

There appears to be very little in the way of landscaping/accessible green space within the development. It is not clear to what extent existing trees are to be pruned/felled, or if adequate mitigation/compensation is possible/to be provided. It has ecological concerns with the impact of the proposal in respect of bats, nesting birds, the river corridor and habitat connectivity.

The textile mills of the north west are of great historical significance and this mill should not be demolished prior to its an archaeological record of it being taken.

Conclusion

*“The proposal is for a large housing development on an existing employment site within a village. It will add to existing housing oversupply in the Borough. It is recognised that refurbishment of the existing mill is unlikely to be commercially viable and the recent guidance in PPS3 and draft RSS need to be taken into account. Overall, however, I consider that the changing national and regional guidance context do not override aJLSP policy and the housing oversupply situation and conclude that **the proposal is contrary to the aJLSP.**”*

With respect to the current application LCC(Planning) advises as follows :

“The JLSP has been saved by the Secretary of State and will form part of the statutory development plan until such time as it is superseded by the new Regional Spatial Strategy, approval of which is likely by the end of Summer 2008.”

Housing Provision

“Notwithstanding that this current application is for fewer dwellings than the previous application, the addition of 105 dwellings would exacerbate an existing situation of oversupply in Rossendale with respect to Policy 12 of the JLSP.

“Paragraph 6.3.13 of the Explanatory Memorandum states that, in situations of oversupply, additional housing may be permitted where it makes an essential

contribution to the supply of affordable or special needs housing or form a key element within a mixed use regeneration project.....The current outline application proposes that 20% of the proposed housing will be affordable. Your Council would need to be satisfied that the proposed affordable housing would contribute to meeting an identified local need and that the amount proposed is sufficient for the development to be acceptable within the terms of paragraph 6.3.13.”

Settlement Hierarchy

“Development in Policy 5 settlements should be of a scale and nature appropriate to its location.....Urban regeneration is supported where it meets an identified need.....Loss of employment provision should be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer needed by the community.

“Orama Mill is a substantial mill that was previously a major employer in the area, though it is recognized that numbers employed in the building have significantly decreased in recent years. It is recognised that refurbishment of the existing mill is unlikely to be commercially viable.”

Financial Contributions

Besides making reference to the financial contributions previously sought in respect of Transport and the Library, it asks for a contribution of £62,265 towards Youth & Community facilities/services and the sum of £50,400 towards Waste Management.

Other Matters

With respect to the other matters: a) it notes that the current application is accompanied by an Ecological Report that addresses its previous concerns; & b) repeats the need for archaeological recording of the mill prior to demolition.

Conclusion

*“The Director of Strategic Planning And Transport considers that **the proposed development conforms to the JLSP subject to the comments above.***

“The Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to the Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England have been published and are a material consideration. The Director of Strategic Planning and Transportation considers that significant weight can be attached to it.”

LCC (Highways)

With respect to the earlier application, the Highway Authority advised that it was satisfied that the local road networks could accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the 123 dwellings then proposed. However, it had objection to the access proposed onto Hall Street.

With respect to the current application, which proposes the erection of less dwellings, it again raises no objection in principle. It welcomes deletion of the previously-proposed vehicular access to Hall Street, but wishes :

- The two drives proposed to Cowm Park Way South between the Hall Street junction and new estate road to be combined into one.
- All of the dwellings proposed between the river and Cowm Park Way South to have the facility for 2 cars to park and turn clear of the highway, although satisfied that provision of parking elsewhere at the ratio of 1.5 spaces per dwelling accords with approved parking standards.
- The proposed roads be constructed to adoptable standard, and the bridge to a specification which has been submitted and approved, in accordance with an agreed timetable.
- Wheel-wash facilities to be available during the period of demolition/development.

It notes that the applicant is proposing to contribute £50,000 towards the cost of works to improve the Hall Street/Market Street junction. It advises that this sum of money is unlikely to cover the full cost of the signal-controlled junction shown on an illustration accompanying the application.

RBC (Regeneration)

Redrow state that this site is no longer viable as an employment site when they have had no discussion with the Regeneration Unit who could have offered assistance in exploring opportunities for its redevelopment, including access to Brownfield Regeneration Funding and support through the North West Development agency.

Redrow state that this site is “*an old industrial complex with access difficulties (new bridge), not unsubstantial clean up costs and demolition so viability even for residential could be compromised if the planning obligations become onerous*”.

However, to date no viability assessment has been submitted to properly quantify the ‘abnormal’ costs said to be associated with the redevelopment of this site and show how this impacts upon viability.

The offer of 20% of units as affordable housing falls short of the requirement to accord with the Council’s current policy, and there are concerns about the appropriateness of the size and tenure of the units presently proposed.

RBC (Environmental Health)

Raises no objection in principle, but recommends conditions relating to demolition, investigation & remediation of ground contamination and limitation of construction hours.

Whitworth Town Council

Whilst the Council does not oppose new housing within Whitworth, it considers 105 dwellings would be inappropriate for this site on the grounds of :

1. The excessive amount of traffic this will generate - adding to danger/congestion close to local schools and in terms of cars traveling along Market Street, the only road in and out of the village.
2. The lack of amenities to support such an influx of population.

Should the application be permitted it would wish to be involved in decisions about how S.106 monies are spent.

Environment Agency

It objected to Application 2007/375, but advises that the supplementary work since undertaken on the applicants behalf and submitted with the current application addressed the outstanding flood risk issues. Accordingly, it has no objection in principle to the proposed development but recommends that any approval be subject to conditions in respect of : floor levels; drainage arrangements; details of works to preserve and enhance the wildlife interest of the River Spodden corridor and connecting greenspace.

United Utilities

No objection provided the site is drained on a separate system, with only foul drainage connected into the foul sewer.

Sustrans

The application site lies adjacent to Regional Route 92 of the National Cycle Network being developed between Rochdale and Bacup, via Healey Dell and Whitworth. If the application is approved:

1. a financial contribution should be secured towards improvements on RR92 and links to it;
2. require travel planning
3. ensure the layout of the site permits vehicular speeds of no more than 20mph and provides storage for bikes/pushchairs.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised by way of a newspaper notice and site notices, together with letters to neighbours.

Two letters/emails have been received from local residents, objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- The Orama Mill site should be retained for industrial/employment - no grounds have been given for its loss to residential use.
- The land to the east of the river is a well-used greenspace and should remain as such - if it is to be developed this should take the form of bungalows for elderly/disabled people.

- The proposed development would add considerably to traffic on local roads already at capacity.

7. Assessment

I will deal with the main issues this application gives rise to by taking in turn each of the eight Reasons for Refusal in respect of Application 2007/375.

1. The proposed development would contribute towards an inappropriate excess in housing supply provision and would provide no affordable housing.

Application 2007/375 was considered in the context of Policy 12 of the Structure Plan and this Council's Revised Interim Housing Policy Statement (January 2007) and Affordable Housing Policy Statement (January 2007).

I have set out above the comments of LCC(Planning) in respect of the previous application and the current application in order that Members may appreciate the change in its stance in relation to housing policy. In short, whereas the previous application drew an objection on the grounds that it would contribute substantially to housing oversupply and proposed no affordable housing, it does not recommend refusal of the current application as being contrary to Policy 12 of the Structure Plan. Whilst noting that an element of affordable housing is now proposed, it highlights the need for this Council to satisfy itself that the affordable housing being offered is sufficient (in terms of number and other respects) to make an essential contribution to meeting the local need for it.

At its meeting on 30 July 2008 Cabinet considered a report proposing adoption of a revised Interim Housing Policy in light of changes in the policy context relating to housing, most notably up-to-date government guidance in respect of the need to ensure a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites and the enhanced wait to be given to the emerging the Regional Spatial Strategy given the stage to which it has now advanced.

At that meeting Cabinet formally adopted a revised Interim Housing Policy for the purposes of development control with immediate effect. Accordingly, the current application needs to be considered in relation to it. In summary, the previous policy has been up-dated to try and achieve a balanced approach which takes into account concerns regarding housing provision, but also regenerative priorities and the delivery of affordable housing.

The housing policy relating to sites within the Urban Boundary of Whitworth is as follows :

New residential development will be encouraged where:

1. It uses existing buildings/previously developed land or is for replacement dwellings; and
2. It makes an essential contribution to affordable housing and uses previously developed land/buildings; and
3. It is built at a density of no less than 30 dwellings per hectare; and

4. Residential schemes would not undermine the focus for most residential development to be in the main development locations (of Rawtenstall, Haslingden & Bacup) and regeneration priority areas (of Rawtenstall Town Centre AAP and Bacup, Stacksteads & Britannia AAP) where the sustainability of the proposals can be demonstrated; or
5. Proposals are for solely affordable and/or special needs housing as defined in the Glossary.

For sites outside the regeneration priority areas the essential contribution to the supply of affordable housing for developments proposing 20 or more dwellings is 30%. The type and tenure of these houses shall be agreed with the Council and based on local need, set out in the most up-to-date housing needs assessment/Strategic Housing Market Assessment. A reduction in the affordable housing requirement will only be acceptable where the applicant pays for the Council to approach an independent specialist to test their arguments on viability.

The current application neither satisfied the previous Revised Interim Housing Policy Statement or the criteria of the latest Interim Housing Policy Statement. With respect to the latter, the application proposal :

- Uses existing buildings/previously developed land
- Does not make an essential contribution to affordable housing as policy requires 30% of the total number of dwellings proposed to be affordable, and not the 20% proposed. Furthermore, RBC(Regeneration) has concerns about the appropriateness of the size and tenure of the units presently proposed as the affordable units.
- The site is to be built at an appropriate density.
- In this instance the site, its location and the development proposed for it are not considered likely to undermine the focus for most residential development to be in the main development locations and regeneration priority areas.

2. The proposed development would result in the loss of an existing employment site, to the detriment of employment land supply within the Borough, and insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that there would not be an unacceptable shortfall in employment land.

Policy 14 of the Structure Plan states that existing Local Plan allocations for business and industrial land will be assessed to gauge their continued suitability for business and industrial uses. Application 2007/375 was considered in the context of Policy J3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan, which states that existing and proposed employment areas and the needs of industry and commerce will usually be given priority over housing, specifically in the determination of planning applications.

Subsequent to the determination of Application 2007/375 Policy J3 of the Local Plan ceased to be a 'saved' policy. Consequently it cannot be given consideration in the determination of the current application.

Nevertheless it is appropriate to assess the continued suitability for business and industrial use of this site and for the need to retain it for such use.

The Orama Mill complex of buildings provide a very substantial floor area for employment purposes, together with substantial areas of hardstanding. However, it is undoubtedly the case that much of that floor area is within buildings that are not well-suited to the needs of modern industry/business and cannot be occupied such are their physical condition. I also give some credence to the applicants submissions that the site is not well located in relation to the motorway network/served by roads designed for HGV use.

The application is accompanied by documentation : a) concluding that the refurbishment of the existing building and redevelopment of the site for employment purposes would not secure the level of occupancy/command the rentals to be viable; & b) showing the efforts that have been made to market the site for employment use/ employment re-development without success.

King Sturge LLP were commissioned by the Council to undertake an Employment Land Study for Rossendale. Its Report suggests that to ensure that the lack of available employment land does not impede the local economy 2 hectares per year of genuinely available and suitable employment land be available in Rossendale. It is evident from the study that lack of suitable supply is a constraint to employment.

RBC(Regeneration) has cast doubt about the submitted information purporting to show this site is no longer viable as an employment site and I consider the marketing exercise undertaken to be deficient in a number of respects. However, the site is not well-served by roads that are designed for HGV use (or could easily be made so), the site could not easily be re-developed with a mix of employment uses and residential properties and is within an area that is

bounded by housing/church/schools. I am therefore satisfied that this site is not particularly well-suited for employment redevelopment and having regard to the fact that Policy J3 of the Local Plan is no longer saved, I do not consider a refusal of the current application on the basis that the proposal will result in loss of an employment site can be substantiated.

3. The proposed development would contribute to an inappropriate excess of housing, failing to maintain a balance between employment and the existing Whitworth residential community, contrary to the hierarchy of settlements and representing an unsustainable form of development.

LCC(Planning) has again highlighted the need for consideration to be given to Policy 5 of the Structure Plan, which seeks to ensure that development within the settlement of Whitworth reflects its position within the hierarchy of settlements below that of Rawtenstall / Haslingden / Bacup (“the main development location” within the Borough).

It recognises that the site is a previously-developed site within the Urban Boundary of Whitworth and is reasonably accessible by means of travel other than the private car, and therefore appropriate in principle for redevelopment. However, as the proposal entails loss of so large an employment site and so great a number of new houses, I can appreciate its previously expressed concerns about the proposal being contrary to the hierarchy of settlements and representing an unsustainable form of development.

This remains an important issue. However, in light of my conclusions in respect of the need to retain this site for employment purposes (spelt out in the Section above), I do not consider that a refusal for this reason could be substantiated by reason of the new housing so long as sufficient of it is meeting a local need rather than simply attract new residents who will commute to and from Rochdale and other parts of Greater Manchester. In the absence of 30% of the units on the site being affordable housing I am not satisfied that the proposal adequately meets a local need. Accordingly, it remains my view that the proposal before you should again be refused on the grounds that it is contrary to the hierarchy of settlements and represents an unsustainable form of development.

4. Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable risk to flooding.

The Environment Agency is satisfied that the current submission adequately addresses its previously-expressed concerns regarding flood risk.

5. The proposed development incorporates insufficient internal separation distances between properties which would result in an unacceptable level of direct overlooking between the proposed dwellings.

This reason for refusal of Application 2007/375 was particular to that scheme.

Whilst the application before you seeks Outline Permission, only details of appearance and landscaping are reserved for later consideration. Accordingly, it is appropriate to consider the implications of the layout, scale and access arrangements now proposed.

The applicant has taken on-board concerns previously-expressed in some quarters in respect of Application 2007/375 about the lack of bungalows and its intention to erect 3/4-storey buildings between the river and Cowm Park Way South. Also the scheme more appropriately seeks to preserve/enhance the River Spodden corridor as a wildlife/landscape/open space asset.

However, in my view the submitted scheme is not of good design and will detract to an unnecessary and unacceptable extent from the character and appearance of the area. Most particularly:

- a) parts of the scheme proposed for the west side of the river unsatisfactorily juxtapose 2-storey detached buildings adjacent to 3-storey apartment blocks and terraced-buildings, there being a need to ensure a better transition between buildings varying in height/bulk; &
 - b) the part of the scheme proposed for the east side of the river fails to retain mature trees/planting that contributes positively to public visual amenity.
6. The proposed access onto Hall Street would be unduly close to the junction of Hall Street with Cowm Park Way South and would be sub-standard providing insufficient visibility splays owing to its position on a bend in the road.

This reason for refusal of Application 2007/375 was particular to that scheme.

Whilst the Highway Authority welcomes the fact that the access to Hall Street previously-proposed has been deleted, it considers the part of the scheme proposed for the east side of the river to detract to an unnecessary and unacceptable from highway safety by reason of its multiplicity of private drives to Cowm Park Way South and as it will result in reversing of vehicles on to the highway that detracts from highway safety.

7. Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that adequate provision for public open space either within the site or through an off-site financial contribution would be provided.

The applicant is now proposing that the River Spodden corridor and the other open spaces to be provided within the site be maintained by their own management company. They are also offering to the Council a sum of £105,000 (ie. £1k per dwelling) to expend on off-site Public Open Space/Play Provision. Accordingly, I do not consider the current application to be deficient in this respect.

8. The proposal is contrary to the LPOS Planning Obligations Policy Paper (2006) in so far as there is no S.106 contribution towards Transport and Library provision.

The application as originally submitted offered to the Council £105,000 to expend on off-site Public Open Space/Play Provision. Since the application was originally submitted the applicant has agreed to contribute circa £105,000 towards off-site Highway works/Transport improvements and £30,000 towards provision of Library/Youth & Community facilities/services. Accordingly, I do not consider the current application to be deficient in respect of the financial contributions being offered.

The matter of affordable housing is dealt with separately above.

8. **CONCLUSION**

Development of this site is acceptable in principle, as the site is a previously-developed land within the Urban Boundary of Whitworth and is reasonably accessible by means of travel other than the private car. However, the proposal does not meet any of the criteria laid down in the Council's Interim Housing Policy Statement (July 2008), which sets out the housing policy for Rossendale in a position of housing oversupply and the requirements to provide affordable housing. Most particularly by reason of its failure to offer affordable housing that accords with the requirements of the policy. Accordingly, the proposal also fails to accord with Policy 5 of the Structure Plan in that it is contrary to the hierarchy of settlements and represents an unsustainable form of development. Furthermore, in a number of respects the submitted scheme is not of good design and will detract to an unacceptable extent from the character and appearance of the area and highway safety.

9. RECOMMENDATION

That the application be refused for the following reasons :

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

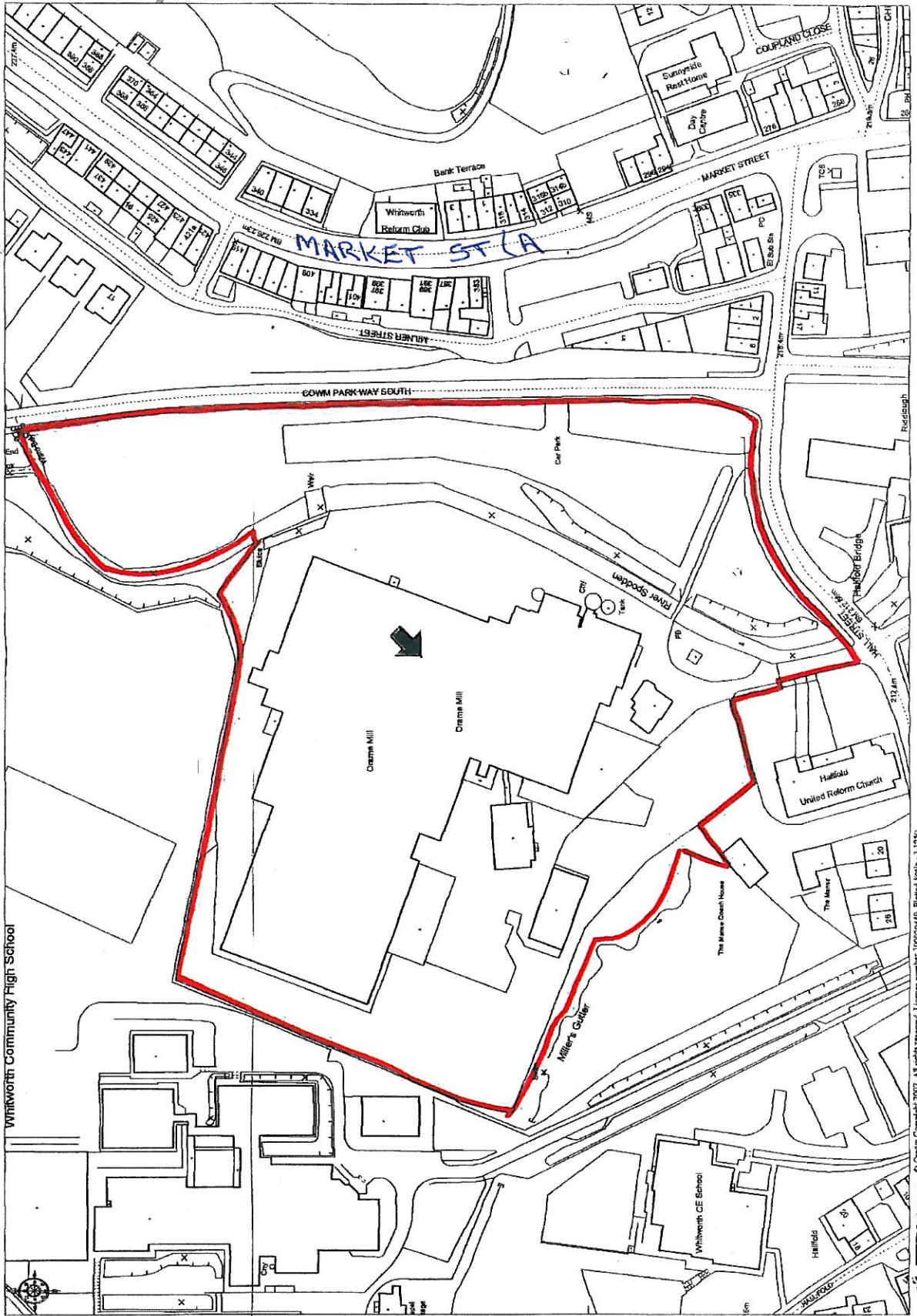
1. The proposal does not meet any of the criteria laid down in the Council's Interim Housing Policy Statement (July 2008), which sets out the housing policy for Rossendale in respect of housing land supply and the requirements to provide affordable housing. Most particularly the application does not propose adequate and appropriate affordable-housing provision. Nor is the application accompanied by the information to show it would not be viable if providing adequate and appropriate affordable-housing provision to comply with the Council's policy. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to PPS3, saved Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the Council's Interim Housing Policy Statement (July 2008).
2. Policies 1 and 5 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan. seeks to ensure that development within the settlement of Whitworth reflects its position within the hierarchy of settlements below that of Rawtenstall / Haslingden / Bacup ("the main development location" within the Borough). The proposed development would fail to maintain a balance between employment and the existing residential community within Whitworth, contrary to the hierarchy of settlements, not least by reason of the inadequate local needs/affordable housing it proposes and consequential travel movements it will generate. As such, the proposed development represents an unsustainable form of development contrary to PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and PPG13 (Transport) and policies 1 and 5 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.
3. In a number of respects the submitted scheme is not of good design and will detract to an unacceptable extent from the character and appearance of the area and highway safety. Most particularly :
 - a. parts of the scheme proposed for the west side of the river unsatisfactorily juxtapose 2-storey detached buildings adjacent to 3-storey apartment blocks and terraced-buildings, there being a need to ensure a proper transition between buildings varying in height/bulk; &
 - b. the part of the scheme proposed for the east side of the river fails to retain mature trees/planting that contributes positively to public visual amenity, and unnecessarily and unacceptably proposes the provision of a multiplicity of private drives to Cowm Park Way South and will also encourage reversing of vehicles on to the highway that detracts from highway safety.

Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to PPS1 (& its companion design guide), PPS3 and PPG17, the DfT Manual for Streets, saved Policy 1 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the criteria of saved Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

Contact Officer	
Name	N Birtles
Position	Principal Planning Officer
Service / Team	Development Control
Telephone	01706-238642
Email address	planning@rossendalebc.gov.uk

2008 / 386

8 MAY 2008



This map was created with Promap

© Crown Copyright 2007. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449. Printed scale - 1:1250

OS
Ordnance
Survey

N



Key

- Single Storey
- Two Storey
- Two and half Storey
- Three Storey
- Four Storey

Revisions

A. Storey Heights adjusted to suit access/roads to Site	06.05.08 J.J.
Lay-out	
B. Storey Heights to cell layout (padding to apartments)	07.05.08 J.J.

REDROW HOMES
Redrow Homes (Lancashire) Limited
Redrow House, 14 Eaton Avenue, Burscough Village, Chorley, Lancs. PR7 7QA
Tel: 01772 643700 Fax: 01772 643701 Web: www.redrow.co.uk

14 Market Street
Adlington
Chorley
Lancashire
PR7 4HE
Tel: 01257 485259
Mob: 0777343602
e-mail: graham.baldwin@bdc.com

baldwin design consultancy Limited

Drawing:	No.
STOREY HEIGHTS	RL-08-84-2
Development:	Scale
ORAMA MILL	1:500
	Date
	16.04.08
	Drawn
	J.J.L.

28 MAY 2008

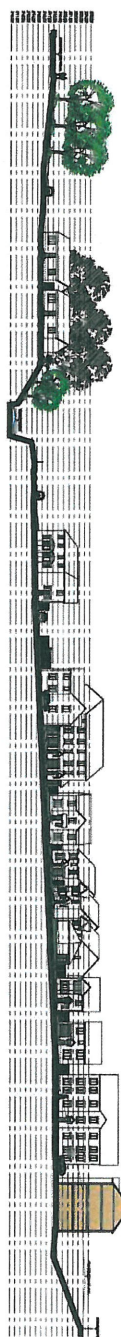
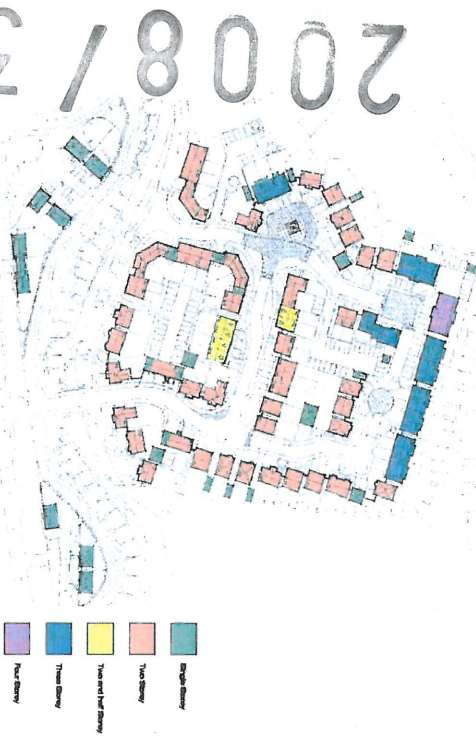
2008 / 386

Further to a public consultation last year, a subsequent refusal of planning permission and national change in planning policy, the proposals for Orama Mill above site have been changed. The revised scheme is shown opposite.

We have:

- Moved the 4 storey apartments away from Cowm Park Way South;
- Agreed to contribute towards a solution to local traffic issues at Hall St/Market St junction;
- Removed site access into Hall St; and
- Offered to provide 21 of the 27 houses required for affordable housing in Whitworth, Facit and Shawforth for the next 5 years.

Storey Height Plan



Revised Layout

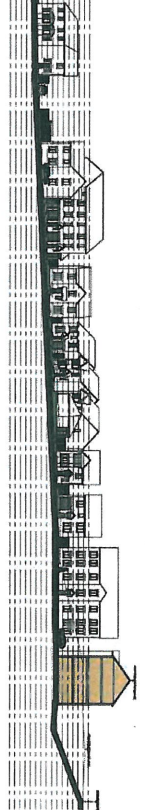


Strategy

This is part of a further public consultation with a view to submitting a planning application in early May 2008. The application will seek to establish the principle of development, that is number of units, siting and massing. Materials and landscaping will be reserved for future approval.

You will have the usual right to comment directly on the Planning Application once it has been submitted to the Council.

Section Through Site



3D Projection of Village Centre



Contact

If you have any comments then please contact Karl Longworth of Redrow Homes on 01772 643700 or karl.longworth@redrow.co.uk or Redrow Homes, 14 Eaton Ave, Bucksshaw Village, Chorley PR7 7NA.

2008/386

Orama Mill, Whitworth - Revised Proposals

