

<b>Application Number:</b>	2012/162	<b>Application Type:</b>	Full
<b>Proposal:</b>	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 139 dwellings, with associated car parking, landscaping & other ancillary development	<b>Location:</b>	Rossendale Hospital, Off Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall
<b>Report of:</b>	Planning Unit Manager	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Development Control Committee	<b>Date:</b>	20 November 2012
<b>Applicant:</b>	Taylor Wimpey Manchester	<b>Determination Expiry Date:</b>	23 November 2012
<b>Agent:</b>	Turley Associates		

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REASON FOR REPORTING	Tick Box
Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member Call-In Name of Member: Reason for Call-In:	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 or more objections received	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state):	Major Application

## 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.

## 1. RECOMMENDATION

That Permission be granted subject to a S.106 Obligation and the Conditions set out in Section 11.

## 2. SITE

This application relates to two parcels of land adding up to approximately 4.5ha in area that were formerly part of Rossendale General Hospital, but does not include Balladen House (now used as a mental health resource centre).

### Site A

The smaller parcel of land is located to the west side of Union Road, near to its junction with Haslingden Road (A681). This L-shaped site measures approximately 0.15ha in area and was formerly occupied by the Out Patients Clinic, a 1-storey building with little presence in the street-scene due to its setback from Union Road and the surrounding trees. This building was demolished in 2006 and the site is now used in part by local residents for parking their cars, the terraced houses opposite possessing no in-curtilage parking of their own.

### Site B

The larger parcel of land can be accessed by vehicles at a point further up Union Road, or via a private road directly from Haslingden Road, and is occupied by the main complex of buildings of the hospital, which closed in September 2010, when its remaining functions were finally transferred to the new purpose built Health Centre in Rawtenstall town centre.

The latter parcel of land comprises of an extensive range of buildings, dating from 1870 to 1991. The earliest of the buildings are of stone and slate construction and include the Workhouse , a 3-storey building with an attractive symmetrical front elevation, incorporating a pair of towers that rise to a height of 30m. Standing to each side of the rectangular area to the front of the Workhouse building are 2-storey buildings of similar age and with front elevations that likewise make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the site. Whilst there are other buildings of stone/slate construction, of between 1 and 3-storeys in height, they tend to be of later date and do not contribute to the same extent to the character and appearance of the site. Other even

later buildings are of varied height/design/facing materials and do not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the site, including 2-storey flat-roofed brick buildings. The buildings in total occupy 11,477 sqm of footprint and have a volume of 81,295sqm.

The topography of the area has largely influenced its historical development, the complex of buildings and their associated hardstandings occupying a plateau cut into the hillside midway up its rise from Haslingden road towards Haslingden Old Road. From the southern boundary of the plateau the site drops steeply down to Haslingden Road , the intervening woodland hiding the buildings from public view from the main road. A retaining wall of approximately 2m high defines the northern boundary of the complex of buildings, high stone walls on the western and eastern boundaries. Besides the area of woodland extending down to Haslingden Road, other vegetation of note includes : tree cover near the eastern boundary that screens the existing building from view from Union Road to a significant extent; a line of old Flowering Cherry trees that runs between the main service road and a retaining wall that runs through the site on an E-W axis; trees on the fourth side of the rectangular area enclosed by the Workhouse and wing buildings; and trees within and bounding the more open area towards the NW corner of the site. Just beyond the SW corner of the site is a residential property, accessed by means of the private road climbing up to the hospital site directly from Haslingden Road.

The upper part of the Workhouse building is visible to the public, at a distance, from the development on the south side of the valley, the lower buildings around it obscured to a significant degree by the mature woodland. The public has good view of the extent of the complex of building from steeply-rising / poorly-surfaced part of Union Road beyond its junction with Lower Cribden Avenue, Public Footpath 322 which runs on an E-W axis beyond the northern boundary of the site and has unadopted paths rising up from it towards Pike Law, and Public Footpath 321 which runs

on a N-S axis beyond the western boundary of the site and has unadopted paths rising up from it towards higher land to the west (on which there is an electricity pylon with wires that project over the open area towards the NW corner of the application site). An area of woodland to the rear of houses fronting Ventnor Road/Yarmouth Avenue prevents view from them over the site, but residents of Dearden Heights do have clear view over it.

The built-development visible in the street-scene on the approach to the application sites can be characterised as being residential in use and of stone/slate construction where fronting Haslingden Road and at the lower end of Union Road, but further up Union Road and extending into Lower Cribden Avenue is of more modern house types and brick/tile construction.

Whilst the built-development to the east side of Union Road and the housing estate to the west which Ventnor Road/Yarmouth Avenue form part of lie within the Urban Boundaries of Rawtenstall and Haslingden respectively, both the application sites form part of the narrow belt of Countryside between them that has been designated as Green Belt.

### **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

None

### **4. PROPOSAL**

#### **Site A**

It is proposed that two short terraces (containing four 2-bed and three 3-bed houses) are erected on the former clinic site, intended to reflect the properties at Egypt Mount opposite. They are to be separated from Union Road by front gardens edged with walls of similar style to those fronting Egypt Mount and with 19 car parking spaces to the rear to meet the needs of their own residents, with surplus spaces for residents of the terrace of 7 houses opposite.

#### **Site B**

For this site the application proposes demolition of all the buildings presently occupying it, including the Workhouse building, and erection of 132 houses. There would be a mix of detached and semi-detached houses and short terraces, 13 of 2-bed, 39 of 3-bed & 80 of 4+bed.

The Design & Access Statement accompanying the application identifies the main constraints in preparing a design for this part of the site to include :

- Maintaining the openness of the Green Belt
- Working with the topography of the site
- Accommodating suitable heritage mitigation measures
- Needing to serve the site via the existing access points
- Respecting the location of the existing services crossing the site, both underground and overhead
- Protecting the existing trees on the site, especially those of high value

The DAS identifies the main opportunities to be :

- Reducing the volume and footprint of built form compared to the existing hospital
- Opening up pedestrian links between Haslingden Road and Pike Law
- Increasing the off-set between the built form and the Green Belt boundary
- Enlargement of the separation between the towns of Rawtenstall and Haslingden
- The ability to celebrate the history of the site in the development design
- Providing new areas of public open space
- Maximising views from new homes across the valley to the south-east
- Enhancement of the ecological value of the site

Arising out of the constraints and opportunities presented by the site the scheme for it proposes :

- Re-profiling into a number of terraces stepping down the site, each separated by new retaining walls of varying heights. The resultant form of layout is one which is linear in character, similar to the orientation of the existing hospital buildings and maximising the number of homes with views across the valley.
- The area at the north-east be characterised by cul-de-sacs and private driveways allowing properties to look out over the retaining wall to their south side, which parallels the main estate road entering the site from Union Road.
- The area to the north-west be characterised by houses that face towards a loop-road, for the most part located away from the site boundary, with gardens to their rear, the steepness of the land rising to the north side making it impractical to have houses face Pike Law.
- Houses on the south side of the main estate road entering the site from Union Road and of the loop-road that are sufficiently near to woodland of a height and density to limit the residents views out of the site from it or the publics' view of it from any public vantage point.
- That the houses be constructed artificial stone, with art stone details, and artificial slate roofs.

The DAS advises that :

- The streetscape is designed to reflect the general character of residential areas in the vicinity, with short, flat-fronted terraces interspersed with detached properties with more articulation in the front elevation. Some properties are pulled forward from the building-line to create more visual interest, in a manner similar to that on Lower Cribden Avenue.
- The majority of the houses are to be 2-storey (85%), with some of 2.5 and 3-storeys used in landmark locations, such as above the main retaining wall adjacent to the site entrance and elsewhere to provide interest in the rooflines. The main group of 3-storey houses, flanked by 2.5 storey houses, is in the approximate position of the Workhouse building.
- In addition to the specific design of units in the approximate position of the Workhouse building, a number of other design elements have been incorporated in the scheme to help mitigate the heritage loss arising from its demolition. Most particularly :
  - Placement of a domed tower on either side of the entrance road into the site; for reasons of cost/practicality the original intention to bring down the existing 2 domed towers and their supporting columns from on the Workhouse building to form 9m high structures to each side of the road has been dispensed with in favour of modern structures of approximately 4m in height.
  - Reclamation of ashlar stone from the existing buildings for use in construction of walls at key focal points within the scheme - and in particular the walls at the main T-junction at the centre of the site - in which any date stones and foundation stones will be incorporated.
  - Retention of a stone arch that sits at the top of the main retaining wall through the site.
  - A series of information panels at points across the site explaining different elements of the site's history.
- The internal layout has been designed with Manual for Streets in mind to ensure maximum permeability as well as reduced vehicular speeds and with areas giving pedestrians and

cyclists priority over cars. Although the private access to the site direct from Haslingden Road will remain it will not be used by vehicles associated with the development.

- An area of open space has been located at the entrance of the site off Union Road, providing a sense of arrival and openness on entering the site. A further area of open space is to be provided to the north west corner of the site, linking to the open grassland beyond and extending the green separation between Rawtenstall and Haslingden. These open spaces have an area of approximately 0.35ha.
- Their Tree Survey considered over 200 individual trees and further groups of trees within the site. Most of the trees within the main body of the site will be lost as a result of the remediation and re-grading works, but are largely specimens of limited quality, and the proposed landscape design incorporates 73 trees of various types and sizes.

The application is also accompanied by :

- A Statement of Community Involvement referring to a pre-submission public consultation exercise undertaken in October/November 2011, entailing :
  - a) A leaflet-drop to approximately 350 properties in the vicinity of the site (with an illustrative plan for redevelopment of the site with 170 dwellings) and enclosing a pre-paid envelope for comments to be returned.
  - b) A public exhibition held one afternoon/evening at Rossendale Museum in December 2011, advertised by way of neighbour letters to approximately 350 properties, site notices and press notices in the Rossendale Free Press and Lancashire Telegraph
  - c) Use of a website and liaison with Rossendale Civic Trust, the local Councillors and the MP for the area.

A total of 87 responses were received, 15% in favour of the development, 20% objecting in principle and 65% objecting to specific issues. The most commonly raised issue was that of extra traffic, particularly in relation to congestion on Union Road and in the vicinity of the Union Road/Haslingden Road junction and pedestrian safety having regard to the nearby All Saints Roman Catholic Language College and Cribden House Special School. The second most common objection was to demolition of the workhouse, the third being to loss of the car park on Site A used by local residents and the fourth design of the houses not being in-keeping with the character of the area.

- A Ground Condition Report which indicates that : a) an 'exploratory phase' ground investigation has been undertaken in those parts of the site which were accessible and it has not revealed anything that would preclude residential re-development. However : b) made-ground in parts of the site is of a depth it may make it appropriate to use piled rather than strip foundations, but gas monitoring has not found significant concentrations of methane; c) asbestos fibres encountered in 2 localised areas would need to be removed and disposed of at a suitably licensed waste facility; slightly elevated concentrations of inorganic contaminants in other parts of the site which will require a minimum 600mm clean soil cover; & d) prior to commencement additional investigation is needed, most particularly in relation to inaccessible areas (once building demolition has occurred), in order to finalise the remediation works required.
- A Flood Risk Assessment which indicates : a) the site to be within an area with a low probability of flooding; b) the run-off from adjacent higher land represents a threat that needs to be reduced by improvement of land drainage at the site boundary; & c) the

flows of run-off from the site can be limited to no greater than at present (with an allowance for climate change), with all existing drainage outfalls to be utilised subject to inspection/rectification of defects, incorporating SUDS facilities where possible.

- A Structural Inspection Report (by Wardell Armstrong) relating solely to the Workhouse building and concluding : a) brickwork, stonework and concrete elements of the building are generally in reasonable condition, the stonework of the rear elevation and upper part of the front elevation requiring re-pointing; b) the timbers of the roof and floors of the building have deteriorated due to extensive water penetration caused by loss of lead-flashing (and some roof tiles) around roof junctions, initial assessment suggesting that replacement of nearly all structural timbers would be required, but upon fuller inspection indicating a need to replace 50% of structural timbers and replaced of individual timbers elsewhere; & c) concrete floors did not appear to have structural defects and tend to be able to take higher than domestic floor loads, but timber floors that remain sound would still require replacement if the building is to accommodate offices.
- A Feasibility Cost Plan for Repair and Conversion to Residential Apartments of the Workhouse Building (by EC Harris) entailing calculation of the costs of refurbishing the building as 43 apartments having regard to the up-dated Structural Inspection Report of Wardell Armstrong and costs of converting buildings in similar condition from experience and with reference to published cost data from Spons and BCIS. On this basis the creation of 43 2-bed apartments would cost £5,695,363 (exc VAT).
- An Assessment of Financial Viability of the Residential Conversion of the Workhouse Building & New-Build Residential Development of the Remainder of the Site (by Jones Lang LaSalle) entailing use of the EC Harris Cost Plan for refurbishment of the Workhouse building, cost in construction of the new housing and return from the sale of all these dwellings, drawing upon their own experience and the advice of Knight Frank and Weale & Hitchen regarding sales values that might be expected. Its initial assessment concluded that conversion of the Workhouse building would result in a loss of £5.345m, assuming a nil land value and no affordable housing. As a result of Officers requiring further work by Wardell Armstrong and EC Harris regarding the condition and costs associated with refurbishment of the Workhouse building, and supplementing their own knowledge of the likely sales values of the apartments and houses created, Jones Lang LaSalle are now of the view that the conversion of the Workhouse building would nevertheless result in a loss of £3.6m using the Weale & Hitchen revenue figure and £5.1m using the lower Knight Frank figure.

On this basis Taylor Wimpey has made a Financial Appraisal for a scheme entailing conversion of the Workhouse building to 43 apartments and erection of 69 houses on the remainder of the site. It has concluded : *“In doing this there is the potential of a limited profit of between £1,548,131 using the lower Knight Frank revenue and £2,773,080 using the higher Weale and Hitchen revenue. However these returns equate to a profit on GDV of 9.88% and 16.44% respectively, both of which are likely to be too low to attract a developer given the inherent risk involved with a conversion scheme and given that overheads would need to be included within this profit. Furthermore, it is important to emphasis again that these appraisals assume a nil land value with the land gifted to the developer and that limited S.106 financial obligations are imposed, this is a situation that would be untenable to the NHS Trust and would be likely to be untenable to the Council”.*

- A Heritage Asset Statement (by Wardell Armstrong) and an Urban Design Appraisal to assess whether the existing buildings and trees on the site are worthy of retention within a scheme of redevelopment by reason of their heritage value/place-making quality,

entailing a desk-top study to place the premises into a historical context and site inspection/recording of the 22 buildings and features of historical &/or archaeological interest. It concurs with the English Heritage assessment of the Workhouse building in 2008 that it is not of sufficient heritage value to justify inclusion on the national List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, but is of local heritage value. The significance of this building is derived from its architecture (the imposing nature of its frontage and its commanding presence) and from its historic interest (the role it played in the daily lives of local inhabitants), though internally altered and with later additions to the rear. The remainder of the hospital complex comprises of buildings of lesser value or interest, even so with the wing buildings that flank it and are of comparable age, due to their general lack of architectural quality and the degree to which they have been modified. It is considered that none of the buildings on the site are of national or regional significance and, therefore, not worthy of retaining/converting. The former Workhouse is considered to be of local significance but, due to alterations throughout its history and deterioration of the internal and external structures, it is thought to be sufficient to make a record of it. A number of heritage benefits would be delivered by the proposed scheme, including the incorporation of recovered materials into the public realm, ensuring distinctiveness and the re-use of architecturally significant features as part of place-making, alongside information boards in locations which provide detail of the development of the hospital.

- A Planning Statement makes the following points :  
The proposal comprises a wide range of high quality housing, including affordable housing, which will introduce more housing choice within the area and will assist in the delivery of balanced, integrated and sustainable communities. The location of the application site offers good access to a range of community facilities, jobs, services and infrastructure. There is also good access to local schools. The site is very conveniently located for a wide range of local facilities and is accessible by modes of transport other than the car.

The application submission demonstrates that the proposed redevelopment will result in a quantifiable net benefit to the openness of the Green Belt as a result of reducing the amount of built development within the site and will not compromise the ability of Green Belt to continue serving its principal purpose in this location of preventing the merger of neighbouring settlements.

The Workhouse Building inhibits optimum use of the brownfield opportunity and prevents a successful redevelopment of the whole site thereby limiting the scale of public benefits including the positive contribution to economic vitality of the area and high quality housing that the site can otherwise deliver.

It is considered that on balance, the loss of the Workhouse Building is justified by evidence and is far outweighed by the public benefits that flow from development of the site in the manner proposed.

- A Socio-Economic Impact Assessment states that :
  - a) The scheme proposes a mix of house sizes/types which will assist meet local housing needs, with 111 of the dwellings to be provided as market housing and 28 (20%) as affordable housing.
  - b) The housing proposed is likely to have a positive impact on the supply of highly skilled labour locally and thereby make the area more attractive for investors and business.

- c) The development can be expected to have a population of approximately 375 people, with an annual spend of £3.2m, approximately half of which is likely to be at shops/leisure facilities within the Borough (supporting 20-24 fulltime equivalent jobs) and sustaining demand for local health and education facilities.
  - d) Over a 6 year period the development could attract a New Homes Bonus for Rossendale BC of approximately £1m and LCC of approximately £0.2m.
  - e) The scheme would take approximately 4 years to develop, cost around £14m to build-out and employ an equivalent of 70 people per year over the construction period.
- A Suitability/Viability Appraisal for Mixed Use Development of the Site (by Nolan Redshaw Ltd) which states : a) The buildings are now vandalised and in poor condition, and, in its professional view, beyond economic use; b) there is no precedent for this size of site being converted or redeveloped for employment purposes in Rossendale; c) there is no viability for industrial or office development in Rossendale at present and this is unlikely to alter within 3-5 years; & d) the only sensible alternative use in the present circumstances would be a residential redevelopment of the site. In arriving at this view it has had regard to the sale/rental values of commercial premises in the local property market and the availability of such premises and employment land now and going forward (with reference to the Council's most recent Employment Land Annual Monitoring Report and the NLP Employment Land Study 2010). The hospital site is in a secondary/tertiary employment location, not having a frontage to the A681 Haslingden Road and where the predominant local land use adjacent to the site is residential, making partial use of the site for offices or light industrial unviable.
  - A Carbon Reduction Report concluding that the proposed development will deliver an estimated site-wide 7% carbon dioxide emission reduction relative to a Building Regulation Part L (2006) compliant specification by enhanced material specification. Additionally, the majority of dwellings will benefit from a suitable oriented roof plane to facilitate the installation of renewable energy technology by the residents.
  - An Ecology Report which concludes that the development proposed can proceed with minimal risk of harm to protected, BAP or rare species or to local nature conservation and makes recommendations that could improve the site for local wildlife. Surveys conducted in respect of the site and its surrounds found :
    - Trees within the woodland were limited in terms of features suitable for use by roosting bats, trees within the site were mostly of low to medium roosting potential and those building which were available to survey (some buildings/parts of buildings out of bounds for health & safety reasons) exhibiting no signs of present/recent roosting or having significant roosting potential, though demolition of buildings would need to be proceeded immediately by further survey and trees to be retained suitably protected for the duration of works.
    - Badger holes which were found had collapsed and were overgrown , indicating they had been out of use for some years, but warranted further survey of the site immediately prior to any ground works being undertaken.
    - The woodland, trees, shrubs and hedgerows on/around the site provide potential nesting and foraging opportunities for birds. Site clearance and works proposed to existing buildings, trees, or hedges should be conducted outside the bird breeding season.
    - The site has generally low potential to support a population of reptiles, no ponds or suitable habitat for great crested newts.



- A Transport Assessment which concludes : a) the internal road layout has been designed in accordance with ‘Manual for Streets’ in mind, with adequate off-street parking proposed for the proposed houses and existing residents of Egypt Mount; b) traffic likely to be generated by the proposal will be lower than with the previous use of the site and can be accommodated on the existing highway network without unacceptable inconvenience for other road users or detriment to safety; & c) the site benefits from being located in close proximity to bus stops on Haslingden Road, the site can be better connected with the public footpath network and the application is accompanied by a Framework Travel Plan to further reduce reliance on the private car. Accordingly, there is no reason not to grant permission subject to :
  - The signalisation of Union Road/Haslingden Road junction
  - The provision of a pedestrian refuge on Haslingden Road close to the second access
  - The widening of footway along Union Road or removal of highway trees along Union Road
  - The improvement of a pedestrian/cycle link from Union Road along the Old Haslingden Road
  - The upgrading of the definitive footpaths numbered 321, 322, 340 and 341
  - An adopted link from the development to definitive footpath 322 to improve accessibility
  - An adopted link between plots 64 and 66 to improve accessibility
  - A scheme of restricting vehicles and signage

The associated report on Accessibility of Facilities on Foot from the site states that it is very conveniently located to a wide range of facilities that are accessible within reasonable walking distance - from the centre of the site - being 400m to bus stop on Haslingden Road, 900m to Tesco superstore to west, 1000m to Whitaker Park to east, 1,600m to Rawtenstall town centre.

## 5. **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **National**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (2012)**

- Section 1 Building a Strong Competitive Economy
- Section 3 Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy
- Section 4 Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 7 Requiring Good Design
- Section 8 Promoting Healthy Communities
- Section 9 Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding & coastal change
- Section 11 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

### **Development Plan Policies**

#### **Regional Spatial Strategy for the NW (2008)**

- DP1-9 Spatial Principles
- RDF1 Spatial Priorities
- RDF2 Rural Areas
- RDF 4 Green Belts
- W1 Strengthening the Regional Economy
- L1 Health, Sport, Recreation, Cultural & Education Services Provision
- L4 Regional Housing Provision
- L5 Affordable Housing
- RT2 Managing Travel Demand
- RT4 Management of the Highway Network

RT9	Walking and Cycling
EM1	Environmental Assets
EM2	Remediating Contaminated Land
EM3	Green Infrastructure
EM5	Integrated Water Management
EM18	Decentralised Energy Supply

#### Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011)

AVP4	Rawtenstall, Crawshawbooth, Goodshaw & Loveclough
Policy 1	General Development Locations and Principles
Policy 2	Meeting Rossendale's Housing Requirement
Policy 3	Distribution of Additional Housing
Policy 4	Affordable & Supported Housing
Policy 8	Transport
Policy 9	Accessibility
Policy 16	Preserving and Enhancing Rossendale's Built Environment
Policy 17	Rossendale's Green Infrastructure
Policy 18	Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Landscape Conservation
Policy 19	Climate Change and Low & Zero Carbon Sources of Energy
Policy 22	Planning Contributions
Policy 23	Promoting High Quality Designed Spaces
Policy 24	Planning Application Requirements

#### Other Material Planning Considerations

LCC Landscape Strategy for Lancashire (2006)
LCC Planning Obligations in Lancashire (2008)
RBC Open Spaces & Play Equipment Contributions SPD (2008)

## **6. CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

### LCC (Highways)

No objection to the application on highway grounds subject to Conditions/S.106 Obligations to address various matters the proposal gives rise to.

The off-site works include most particularly :

- The signalisation of the junction of Union Road and Haslingden Road to improve highway safety, accessibility and sustainability of the development; this to include the removal of the existing zebra crossing.
- The provision of a pedestrian refuge on Haslingden Road close to the secondary access road for pedestrians and cyclists onto Haslingden Road to improve highway safety, accessibility and sustainability of the development.
- A scheme to either widen the footway on Union Road or to remove the highway trees to improve highway safety, accessibility and sustainability of the development.
- The provision of a pedestrian and cycle link from Union Road on the unmade section to Haslingden Old Road to improve accessibility and sustainability.
- The upgrade of definitive footpaths 321, 322, 341 and 340 to a shared pedestrian and cycle way from the development to Sandown Close to improve accessibility and sustainability.

Within the site the following works are required :

- An adopted link from the development through the public open space onto the definitive footpath 322 to improve accessibility and sustainability.
- An adopted link from between plots 64 and 66 to the access road to improve accessibility and sustainability.
- The existing secondary access road requires a scheme for the restriction of vehicles, information signage and improvement to the footway by either widening or complete removal to improve accessibility and sustainability.
- The improvement of visibility at the access road onto Union Road.

With respect to the latter point the Highway Authority has advised that the sightline to the south is not an issue however there is insufficient sightline to the north and the concern with this is compounded by the acute angle that the access road joins Union Road. This causes drivers to have to look back over their shoulder to see any vehicles travelling down Union Road. It is appreciated that this was the main access road to the Hospital buildings, however when this road was being used at capacity there was no traffic travelling south down Union Road as the land above had not been developed. The speed limit on Union Road is set at 30mph, however there are plans to reduce this to 20mph and the Applicant has confirmed in writing that this junction *“can be tweaked in the detailed design process to maximise the visibility potential”*.

### LCC Education

This consultation response seeks to draw the Council's attention to impacts associated with the above development and proposes mitigation for these impacts through a planning obligation. Failure to secure the contributions sought would mean that the County Council cannot guarantee that children living on this development would be able to access a school place within a reasonable distance from their homes.

Latest projections for the local primary schools (within 2 miles of the site) show there to be approximately 66 places available in 5 years' time, whilst the latest projections for the local secondary schools (within 3 miles of the site) show there to be approximately 121 places available in 5 years' time. However, implementation of other residential schemes already permitted can be expected to fill some of these places.

With an expected yield of 49 primary-school aged pupils from this development a contribution of £23,271 is sought to add to primary school capacity in the local area for 2 pupils. With an expected yield of 35 secondary-school aged pupils from this development a claim is not needed at this stage to add to secondary school capacity in the local area.

### Environment Agency

No objection in principle to the proposed development subject to the inclusion of conditions to address the following matters.

#### Flood Risk :

The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted with the application proposes that the new buildings will direct surface water to one of the existing culverted watercourses that cross the site and ultimately discharge to an open channel on the south side of Haslingden Road. The calculations suggest that the proposed flows from the site to this culvert would be reduced and the receiving culvert is to be surveyed to ascertain its condition/repaired or replaced, and this should be done in accordance with a scheme which has been submitted and approved.

#### Pollution :

The proposed development site may be associated with a potentially contaminative historic

land uses. The site is located close to some natural springs which we consider may be at risk from potential land contamination. We recommend that assessment of any risks posed to controlled waters from land contamination should be undertaken and imposed by conditions.

#### Coal Authority

No objection, subject to a Note for Applicant in accordance with its Standing Advice.

#### Electricity North West

No objection. Within the site there is a sub-station which originally supplied the hospital that will require removing/disconnecting. There are two other items of apparatus which appear unaffected by the proposal, another sub-station and the over-sail of a 132kv Line.

#### East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

Support the proposal for the following reasons :

- The site has been reserved/preserved for future business development. This seems highly improbable given the prospective cost of conversion, the more obvious alternatives in the area and the lack of interest/demand over a period.
- Its location, topography and other constraints render the site unattractive.
- The centre of Rossendale is the recognized priority area for development and growth.
- In terms of boosting the economy, Taylor Wimpey's plans should create an estimated 70 jobs during construction, including an apprentice scheme; this proposal could be a most welcome catalyst to colleges' provision of courses for construction.
- Regeneris have estimated that new residents will spend around £1.5m per annum in the local economy.
- Incoming families could well boost the local schools' numbers.

#### LCC Archaeology

Rossendale General Hospital is a non-designated heritage asset, the main block originally the Haslingden Union Workhouse (Historic Environment Record PRN 21086), built 1866-69, designed by Henry F. Lockwood and William Mawson, later extended in 1912 and throughout the 20th century. Lockwood & Mawson are well known for having designed many of Bradford's most imposing buildings, as well as elements of Saltaire in an Italianate Classical style, a style which is replicated in the design of the Haslingden Union Workhouse.

Although the main Workhouse block was not considered worthy of designation as a Listed Building by English Heritage, it was recognised that *"it is a building with an impressive facade and that it has clear interest in a local context."*

The Heritage Asset Statement (Wardell Armstrong 2012) has identified that of the 22 buildings on site, those buildings considered to be of historic interest comprise the main Workhouse block (1 on fig. 2), the Infirmary (2) and former Gardeners Store (3) which all date to the period 1866-69, the Estates Maintenance building (10) built around 1893, and the Nurses Home (21) constructed in 1912 as a new Infirmary.

The current proposals would see the demolition of all the buildings considered to be of historic interest. Part of the justification for this approach in regard to the main Workhouse block has been due to its poor condition and the prohibitive cost of repair. The Structural Inspection Report does however include numerous references to the reasonable condition of much of the Block (both its interior and exterior) with only the repairs to the roof highlighted as possibly being both extensive and costly. The report does however also

make it clear that the current poor condition of the Workhouse Block is due to neglect as the site has been the frequent subject to vandalism but that security measures to prevent it were only a recent arrangement. National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 130 is clear that "*Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.*"

Given the apparent long-term problems with unauthorised access to the site only having been addressed recently, it would appear that little or no weight should therefore be attached by the Borough Council to the potential increased costs incurred by the owners in determining the current application as part of their justification for the demolition of the main Workhouse block.

LCAS is also of the opinion that the Borough Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Policy 16 provides further reasons for not granting planning permission for the current development as it would be contrary to:

- Part 1 – the proposals for the main Workhouse block cannot be seen as promoting the positive management of the Borough's heritage assets as in this instance they require their destruction
- Part 5 – the current main Workhouse block has been recognised as being of local significance. Its demolition would therefore severely adversely affect the distinctive quality of the historic landscape and setting in this area, whilst the replacement development could not be considered as enhancing its character.
- Part 7 – demolition cannot be considered in any way as a means of maximising the potential for the re-use of buildings of historic or local interest.

Furthermore, the Borough Council's own appraisal of the site (Rossendale Hospital – Historic Context, see Rossendale Borough Development Policy web pages) came to the conclusion that demolition of the main structure would not be appropriate.

LCAS would therefore recommend that the proposals as currently submitted should not be granted planning permission as they fail to meet the criteria of NPPF para. 130, and are considered to be contrary to Rossendale Borough Core Strategy Policy 16, Preserving and Enhancing Rossendale's Built Environment (parts 1, 5 & 7) and the Borough Council's own appraisal of the significance of the site.

However should the Borough Council consider that the above approach is unreasonable, or that other circumstances make such an approach unfeasible, then I would request that LCAS is contacted in writing outlining the Council's position. At that point the Archaeology Service will then form its own an opinion as to how best proceed in addressing the remaining archaeological issues, and in particular those outlined in NPPF para. 141.

### Rossendale Civic Trust Object

We are dealing here with the loss of a much appreciated building, one of the few in Rossendale to have been designed by a nationally-recognized firm of architects, and a proposal for development that is most unwelcome in content and unsuitable for the site. Thus, resulting in loss of heritage and new houses taking up countryside when so many old ones are vacant.

It recalls the discussion at the Core Strategy Inquiry on the issues of the Hospital being Locally Listed and in the Green Belt. These it took as positive factors in the control of development in this sensitive area.

In amplification, it states :

1. The development of the site for 100% housing, rather than for mixed use, is not compatible with the Core Strategy.
2. The proposals clash with the policy for Green Belt, which allow for housing in exceptional circumstances only.
3. The siting of the houses spills over the boundaries of the present buildings on the site, which must constitute an overdevelopment.
4. While not expecting all the buildings on the site to remain, ask for retention of the original Workhouse building (with its impressive central towers) which makes such an impact on the landscape for miles around. Do not feel all possible compatible uses of this building have been fully explored, and the proposed use of dismembered fragments as ornamentation degrades its architectural status
5. The developers propose to use only one access road to the site which : a) has a gradient of 1 in 7 (incompatible with national guidelines of 1 in 12); & b) has a junction with a major road that is near to All Saints' School and is already suffering from traffic congestion at certain times of day.
6. There is no indication that there is any recognition of the surrounding woodlands/fields; it is not clear what the applicant proposes for management of any natural features or wildlife on land they may acquire.
7. Altogether, the proposal shows a lack of regard for the nature of this semi-rural site and its highly distinctive heritage. In terms of both buildings and landscape, it is inappropriate to this sensitive area.

It has also submitted a petition bearing 227 names, and organized its members to submit 85 letters, with these grounds of objection.

#### Rossendale Ramblers

Object : The proposal will not have an adverse affect on existing rights of way. However, pedestrian connection to the existing path network is proposed only at the western edge of the site to FP321/FP322, which looks insufficient. Union Road will be much busier if this development goes ahead. It therefore looks more than sensible to arrange a link to the existing footpath network at Pike Law from the north of the site.

## **8. NOTIFICATION RESPONSES**

To accord with the General Development Procedure Order the application has been publicised by way of a newspaper notice on 26/4/12, 8 site notices were posted on 27/4/12 and 128 letters were sent to neighbours on 23/4/12.

In addition to the 85 letters of objection from members of Rossendale Civic Trust referred to above, and the 227-name petition, a further 156 letters/emails objecting to the application have been received, doing so for the same reasons and the following additional reasons :

- The original hospital was paid for by public subscription, to be run as a hospital in perpetuity, not to be sold, leaving the public with a historic and civic loss of amenity.
- The Community Consultation undertaken by the applicant was farcical with even those looking out for it missing it; that only 97 responses were received from a valley of 65,000 people does not show that people are in favour of it or don't care, but that they did not know about it. Nor do the results refer to the petitions against demolition of the workhouse of both Jake Berry MP (with 300+ names) and Rossendale Civic Trust.

- The developer acknowledges the hospital workhouse building to be important in a local context and its external walls to be in reasonable condition, although the roof and floors/ceilings to have deteriorated. It should therefore be possible to rebuild within the main external structure, and thus save the fine architectural features of the main front and the cupolas above.
- The intention to retain the domed towers as entrance features is welcomed by some but said by others to be of little compensation as they will not be a landmark visible across the valley.
- It is hardly sustainable to use only a small part of the stone in the demolished buildings for boundary/feature-walls and cart away the rest and import artificial stone to import the new houses. Nor will this result in inclusive, locally distinct design. Taylor Wimpeys suggestion that the layout of houses will allow residents to 'retrofit' solar panels may result in inconsistent appearance of dwellings/limited energy generation.
- The proposed Heritage Trail is a cheap and easy way to remind people of what they have lost and in 10 years any information boards will have rotted and been removed.
- To link the Urban Boundaries of Rawtenstall and Haslingden with a development that does not retain such a visible/iconic building is not appropriate in Green Belt terms.
- Many people have been born and have died in the Hospital building and it is an integral part of their histories.
- The proposal does not accord with Green Belt policy due to greater spread - from 28,806sq m to 39,940sq m (if drives and gardens are taken into consideration) - and height of buildings near boundaries.
- Presently there is no demand for this much housing.
- Union Road is in a poor state of repair, reduced to single-lane by on-street parking and so steep that in icy weather it is impassible. Exit from it to Haslingden Road can already take a long time such is the traffic which uses it, making for congestion and danger for children at nearby schools. The proposed development will add to these problems and to traffic noise/pollution for existing residents of Union Road.
- Disagree with the applicants statement that retaining the workhouse building is not affordable - Ilex Mill was in a far worse state of repair and scheduled for demolition several times before it was rescued.
- The proposed development has the potential to generate significantly more traffic movements than did the hospital - not fully occupied for more than 20 years and generating traffic movements that were not concentrated to the morning and mid-afternoon rush-hour.
- At present the car park at the bottom end of Union Road is used by around 25 cars, yet only 8 spaces are proposed for them.

Four letters/emails of support have been received. One is from Hurstwood Holdings expressing the view that : the site is unsuitable for any type or mix of commercial

development and there are far more appropriate sites available within the Borough for such uses; & the site is eminently suitable for residential development and will deliver much needed high quality housing. The other is from a person renting a nearby house and wishing to buy, who says that mortgage lenders seek a higher deposit for older properties than new and there are so few new houses built in Rawtenstall, nor any benefit in keeping a derelict and dangerous building up.

## 9. **ASSESSMENT**

The main considerations of the application are :

1) Principle; 2) Heritage; 3) Design/Visual Amenity; 4) Access/Parking; & 5) Contributions.

### **Principle**

The site is located adjacent to the Urban Boundary of Rawtenstall, within an area of Countryside designated as Green Belt. Indeed the complex of buildings on the main hospital site virtually fills the gap between the Urban Boundaries of the settlements of Rawtenstall and Haslingden, which at this point has a width of only 400m.

Government guidance in respect of Green Belt is set out in Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In short, it states :

*79. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*

*80. Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

*87. As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.*

*88. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

*89. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this [include]:*

- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.*



Consistent with Government Guidance, Policy 1 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy states, in short :

Green Belt & Countryside

*Proposals outside the urban boundary will be determined in accordance with the relevant national and local planning guidance:*

- *The former Rossendale Hospital site, off Haslingden Road, is designated as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. Detailed boundaries and development criteria will be included in the Site Allocations DPD. The footprint of the existing buildings will form the starting point for consideration of any proposal.*

The accompanying text includes the following :

***172. The former Rossendale Hospital site is designated as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. This reflects the potential for redevelopment and the importance of ensuring the longer term environmental improvement of the site. The local significance of the original Victorian Workhouse building should be assessed and recognised in proposals for redevelopment. Development should be based on the existing building footprint reflecting guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2) "Green Belts". Development of the site as a whole should be guided by production of a Development/ Design Brief or Masterplan either prior to submission of an application or as part of a planning application.***

Accordingly, it can be said that although the application sites are within Green Belt, and there is a general presumption against the erection of new buildings therein, there is not an objection in principle to partial/complete replacement of existing buildings by reason of the Green Belt designation of the land so long as would not have a greater impact on openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. Indeed, when the Core Strategy was being prepared, so many of the hospital buildings had been vacated, there was an expectation that a scheme of redevelopment would come forward for the site. In respect of this land the Area Vision for Rawtenstall (Policy AVP4) states :

***"The former Rossendale Hospital Site is designated as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. It is the Council's preference that it be developed for mixed-use purposes, which may include a mix of market and supported housing, live-work units or offices. However single uses will be supported where it is proven to the Council's satisfaction that opportunities for mixed-use development have been explored and are not viable."***

It is a matter of regret that the Applicant embarked on their Community Consultation exercise for a scheme entailing demolition of all existing buildings/all new-build on the premise that "it is neither feasible nor viable to convert and retain the existing Victorian buildings for either employment or residential use" without first sharing with the Council the evidence for this or agreeing with the Council a Development Design Brief or Masterplan. Nevertheless, the Council is bound to determine the application it has received on its own merits.

In the paragraphs immediately below I will address the Green Belt is and then the matter of Mixed Use. The following Section of the report addresses the Heritage issue and whether it is appropriate, feasible or viable to retain and re-use any of the existing buildings.

### Green Belt

The site is located adjacent to the Urban Boundary of Rawtenstall, within an area of Countryside designated as Green Belt. Indeed the complex of buildings on the main hospital site virtually fills the gap between the Urban Boundaries of the settlements of Rawtenstall and Haslingden. The gap being so narrow in the vicinity of the site it is particularly important to ensure any scheme does not erode openness, in order that these two towns are not viewed as having merged into one.

Annex C of PPG2:Green Belts states, in respect of Major Developed Sites In The Green Belt : *“Redevelopment should :*

- (a) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;*
- (b) contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts;*
- (c) not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and*
- (d) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings (unless this would achieve a reduction in height which would benefit visual amenity).”*

Whilst PPG2 has been replaced by the NPPF these criteria form a useful basis on which to assess the Green Belt implications of the current proposal. The proposal entails a reduction in the footprint and volume of buildings. None of the proposed buildings are anything like as high as the Workhouse building. However, for Site A the 1-storey out-patient buildings are to be replaced by two 2-storey terraces. For Site B, buildings ranging between 1 and 3 storeys are to be replaced by buildings of 2, 2.5 and 3-storey. Most particularly there are currently open areas towards the southern boundary of Site B that are now to be occupied by houses and the existing buildings towards the northern boundary are for the most part 1-storey. Retention of the existing tree cover bounding Site A and the woodland towards the southern boundary of Site B will ensure the impact on openness of the development here is not significantly greater. The houses proposed towards the northern boundary of Site, though of significantly greater height than the buildings they replace are for the most part further from the boundary (by the length of their rear gardens). Being mindful also of the intention to retain many of the trees on the eastern side of Site B and as an open space the NW corner of the site (and many of its trees) the proposed distribution of houses is not considered in totality to erode openness to a greater extent.

### Mixed Use

Such is the size of the site that Policy AVP4 of the Core Strategy expresses a preference for mixed-use development, which may include a mix of market and supported housing, live-work units or offices. However it indicated that a single use will be supported where it is proven to the Council’s satisfaction that opportunities for mixed-use development have been explored and are not viable. In short, it was anticipated that any scheme brought forward could appropriately include an element of residential use but it was desirable that it also include an element and form of employment development that could co-exist with it.

It would not be appropriate for the site to be developed for industrial or warehousing purposes, such is the access to it and the surrounding uses.

The Nolan Redshaw report which accompanies the application has assessed the suitability/viability of the site for Mixed Use Development from a commercial perspective. It

has concluded that there is no viability for office development at present and this is unlikely to alter within 3-5 years. Whilst other uses have been considered it is of the view “*the only sensible alternative use [to the hospital] in the present circumstances would be a residential redevelopment of the site*”. I do not have reason to doubt its conclusion that there is no prospective of secure development of the site in the immediate future other than for solely residential purposes. I am also mindful that the applicant is proposing to provide 20% of the proposed dwellings as Affordable Housing (ie 28 dwellings), which accords with the requirements of Policy 4 of the Core Strategy. Accordingly, I do not consider refusal of the application on the basis that it proposes solely residential use could be substantiated on Appeal.

### **Heritage**

Government guidance in respect of the Historic Environment is set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In short, it states :

126. *Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment,<sup>29</sup> including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:*
- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
  - *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
  - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
  - *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*
129. *Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*
130. *Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.*
131. *In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
  - *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
  - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
132. *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*

*conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.*

135. *The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

The NPPF defines a Heritage Asset as follows :

*“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”*

Consistent with Government Guidance, Policy 16 of the Council’s adopted Core Strategy states, in short :

#### Policy 16 : Preserving and Enhancing Rossendale’s Built Environment

The Council will protect, conserve, preserve and enhance Rossendale’s historic built environment including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, archaeological sites, historic landscapes and locally identified buildings, sites and structures. These heritage assets all contribute to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. Their futures, including their settings will be safeguarded and secured by:

1. Promoting the positive management of the Borough’s heritage assets, avoiding unnecessary loss and requiring appropriate mitigation of any negative impacts.
2. Extending the heritage protection for areas and/or buildings worthy of retention, conservation and enhancement through the designation of appropriate additional Conservation Areas and Listing.
3. Enhancing the value of Rossendale’s historic built environment by carrying out Conservation Area Appraisals, implementing Conservation Area Management Plans and public access measures.
4. Protecting significant urban public realm (space) from development.
5. Ensuring that all development is:
  - a. Located in a way that respects the distinctive quality of the historic landscape and setting and retains or enhances the character and context.
  - b. Of a high standard of design, reinforcing the local distinctiveness of Rossendale
6. Encouraging innovative new design(s), where it responds to the character, scale and setting of historic buildings and areas.
7. Maximising the potential for the re-use of buildings of historic or local interest for appropriate uses to ensure their future longevity. However where this is not possible/appropriate, considerate and sensitive redevelopment will be supported, subject to advice from the Council’s Conservation Team and English Heritage.
8. The Council will support those schemes and proposals which contribute to conservation-led regeneration, particularly where they exploit the regeneration potential of the textile mill-towns and traditional architecture of rural villages within Rossendale.

Thus, Government guidance makes it clear that ‘a heritage asset’ is not limited to buildings which have been included on the national List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest or been designated as Ancient Monuments, but the more important the asset the greater the weight that should be given to avoiding its loss or the unsympathetic alteration of it or its setting.

In respect of this site, in 2008 English Heritage was asked to consider buildings on the hospital site for inclusion on the national List. It conducted an assessment of the Workhouse building (by way of internal & external inspection) and the adjacent Porter's Lodge & Boardroom and Infirmary (by way of external inspection, due to the unsafe nature of interiors). It concluded that none of the buildings were of sufficient special architectural or historic interest to merit inclusion on the national List. The reasons given were as follows :

- The former workhouse is a late example of a 'corridor type' workhouse and as such it does not display any innovation or historical developments in its construction.
- The original buildings have been substantially altered internally in order to adapt to the changing standards of treatment and care.
- The former workhouse building's original plan form has changed somewhat due to the construction of numerous additions particularly to the rear.
- Other significant external changes to the building have included the replacement of all original windows and the removal of all chimney stacks.

The Council does not possess a Local List, nevertheless the Inspector that considered the Core Strategy, and heard from both the Council and NHS, did not take exception to the Council's contention that the Workhouse building constituted 'a heritage asset' of local significance. The Core Strategy policies reflect this. Nor has the Applicant argued otherwise.

The earliest of the buildings are of stone and slate construction and include the Workhouse , a 3-storey building with an attractive symmetrical front elevation, with round-topped windows and incorporating a pair of towers that rise to a considerable height. Standing to each side of the rectangular area to the front of the Workhouse building are 2-storey buildings of similar age (originally the Porter's Lodge & Boardroom and Infirmary) and with front elevations that likewise make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the site. Although there are other buildings of stone/slate construction on the site, varying in bulk and height (between 1 and 3-storeys), they tend to be of later date and do not contribute to the same extent to the character and appearance of the site or so obviously form part of the setting of the Workhouse building, the principal building on the site. Accordingly, whilst there are 22 buildings on the site few of them can be said to be 'a heritage asset'.

The Applicant contends that the Workhouse building cannot be retained and brought back into use viably when looked at alone or as part of a scheme entailing erection of new houses on the rest of the site. Also that if the Workhouse building is not to be retained the adjacent 2-storey buildings are not of sufficient merit to warrant retention in their own right.

Officers challenged the adequacy of the originally submitted condition report on the Workhouse building, costings for its refurbishment and the receipts that would come from the sale of the apartments created. On the basis of additional survey work the scale of works said to be necessary has been reduced, with consequent reduction in the cost of refurbishment, and advice obtained from additional estate agents upon the sale prices likely to be achieved for apartments. Nevertheless, the Applicant still contends that for reasons of viability the Workhouse building cannot be retained and to demonstrate this has submitted a Financial Appraisal for a scheme entailing conversion of the Workhouse building to apartments and erection of 69 houses on the remainder of the site : *"In doing this there is the potential of a limited profit of between £1,548,131 using the lower Knight Frank revenue and £2,773,080 using the higher Weale and Hitchen revenue. However these returns equate to a profit on GDV of 9.88% and 16.44% respectively, both of which are likely to be too low to attract a developer given the inherent risk involved with a conversion scheme and*

*given that overheads would need to be included within this profit. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise again that these appraisals assume a nil land value with the land gifted to the developer and that limited S.106 financial obligations are imposed, this is a situation that would be untenable to the NHS Trust and would be likely to be untenable to the Council”.*

The Council has employed the Valuation Office to audit the latest information which has been submitted in relation to viability of retaining and refurbishing the Workhouse building as apartments. It advises :

*“The recommended approach to undertaking development assessments is provided in a number of guides. These include the National Planning Policy Framework, RICS Valuation Information Paper “Valuation of Development land” and RICS Guidance Note “Financial Viability in Planning”.*

*The approach recommended is to assess viability based on a ‘residual valuation’ basis. This means assessing the development value of the scheme and deducting from this the costs of the development to leave a gross residual sum representing the site value and planning policy requirements.*

*This residual site value is then compared to a Benchmark site value. This is based on Market Value, and assumes that the value has regard to development plan policies and all other material planning considerations and disregards that which is contrary to the development plan. This Benchmark site value takes in to account the value of the existing use of the property and appropriate alternative uses, and a competitive return to a willing landowner.*

*If the residual site value is in excess of the Benchmark site value the scheme is viable and should be planning policy compliant. If it falls below the Benchmark site value it may not be viable, and may require a reduction in delivery of planning policy requirements.*

**Review of Applicant Appraisal:**

- a) *Construction Costs - in our view, these are overstated for the Workhouse conversion. Whilst we appreciate the difficulties of estimating costs for a building of this type, in our opinion the figure adopted of £5,695,363 is too high. In our view a more reasonable figure to adopt for these works is £5,201,371.*
- b) *On prospective sales revenue (Gross Development Value – GDV), we again consider that the figures adopted are conservative. In our opinion, the Gross Development Value for the proposed apartments should be a figure of £5,160,000 and for the new build dwellings £12,404,000. These give a total GDV of £17,564,000 compared to the appraisals provided which range from a GDV of £15,667,000 up to the most optimistic figure of £16,871,000.*

*Our Residual Land Value for the appraised scheme (with the variations set out above) is £553,000. This assumes an overall profit of approximately 18% on GDV.*

**Benchmark Land Value :**

*This assessment of viability has been undertaken on the premise that 139 new build dwellings will be suitable on this site, in principle.*

*On the assumption of a full new build scheme; demolition of the existing buildings; allowing for 20% affordable housing contribution; with all other factors broadly in line with the figures provided above; and after making an allowance for Planning 'risk' and uncertainty; in our opinion an appropriate Benchmark land value is in the order of £2.1m.*

*Assessment of Viability :*

***In my opinion the scheme as appraised is not 'viable' as the resultant land value is significantly below the Benchmark figure, against which the various Guidance states it should be measured.***

*If there were no alternative scheme possible on the site whereby the building can be demolished and the site developed 100% new build housing, then the conclusion would be different, ie if the building had to be retained because it were Listed or protected from demolition in some other way."*

I have no reason to believe that the Workhouse is now suitable for inclusion on the national List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Consequently, I see no means by which the Council can require the landowner to undertake works of repair or to prevent further deterioration of this or the adjacent buildings to the point of collapse.

This being the case, I am lead to the conclusion that the case has been made that the Workhouse building cannot be retained for viability reasons.

The Applicant contends that if the Workhouse building is not to be retained the adjacent 2-storey buildings are not of sufficient merit to warrant retention in their own right. Whilst it is undoubtedly the case that the Workhouse building is the principal building on the site and has the greatest local significance in terms of heritage value and as a local landmark, the retention of the original Porter's Lodge & Boardroom and Infirmary should not be dismissed so quickly. Whilst neither is in the best of condition, they are 2-storey buildings that could more easily be restored as family dwellinghouses and provide significant features as part of place-making, alongside information boards in locations which provide detail of the development of the hospital. This would better deliver heritage benefits than would be delivered by the applicants proposed scheme, which entails facsimile domed towers near the site entrance, the incorporation of recovered materials into the public realm, alongside information boards (making a Heritage Trail) in locations which provide detail of the development of the hospital.

### **Design/Visual Amenity**

For Site A it is proposed that two short terraces, containing 3 and 4 houses respectively, are erected that face the terraced houses at Egypt Mount. Each is to have a front garden of 4m in length and rear garden of 10+m in length. The parking to serve them is tucked to their rear. Subject to construction of these units with natural local stone/slate, so as to match the houses on the opposite side of Union Road, and having a frontage wall of natural stone, I consider what is proposed to be satisfactory in street-scene terms.

For Site B the sweeping away of all of the existing buildings, and so many of the existing trees within the site is of concern, but does not leave an entirely blank canvass for a design of the all new-build development; most particularly the north-eastern part of the site is elevated significantly higher than the main estate road running into the site at the south-eastern corner, and the trees on the eastern boundary and bounding the open space towards the north-western corner need/are to be retained.

The resultant layout is one which is linear in character and seeks to maximise the number of homes with views across the valley. The area towards the north-east characterised by short cul-de-sacs and the area towards the north-west characterised by houses that face towards a loop-road. Woodland to the south of this site will limit views of the adjacent properties from beyond the boundaries of the site. The area of housing towards the north-east will be little seen from Union Road until beyond its junction with Lower Cribden Avenue due to the boundary trees, but will be open to public view from the rising land to the north (as too are the present hospital buildings). With respect to the area of housing towards the north-west trees to the north side will largely screen it from public view, but it will be greatly visible from the rising land to the west (as too are the present hospital buildings). Public views from the west of the existing hospital buildings are not presently broken by trees. However, public views from the north of the existing hospital buildings are presently broken to a limited extent by trees; while not the best of specimens it is to be regretted that they are not proposed for retention or the space left in layout for new tree planting that will effectively break views across the site. This will make it all the more important that the intended facing materials with which the houses are to be constructed - artificial stone and artificial slate - closely match in colour those of the existing stone/slate buildings.

When within the site the differences in level, and incorporation of round-topped windows and artstone details in some of the proposed houses, will be more apparent. However, not least because of the failure to retain more of the existing trees dispersed around the site (or provide spaces for their replacement with species that will grow to a similar size), means the estate will appear somewhat car-dominated and not as distinctive as it could/should be if existing were retained or their materials used on-site. The open space tucked in the NW corner of the site provides a useful link with footpaths beyond the site/ informal recreation, but will form an obvious attraction/feature in the street-scene. The open space to the south of the main estate road, being nearer to the site entrance could form a obvious attraction/feature in the street-scene, but what is presently proposed for it is not considered to contribute the 'heritage benefits' the applicant has suggested. Nevertheless, these deficiencies will not be evident to a significant extent from beyond the boundaries of the site and, consequently, cannot be said to cause significant harm to the amenities of neighbours. Concerns expressed by neighbours in relation to traffic and parking issues are addressed in the section of the report below.

### **Access/Parking**

Objection has been received in relation to the adequacy of the local highway network to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed development without exacerbating existing problems on Union Road and around its junction with Haslingden Road. It is already said to be unsatisfactory in terms of inconvenience arising from congestion and child safety associated with nearby schools. Local residents have raised a particular concern about loss of the facility to park cars on Site A and the occurrence of on-street parking at the bottom end of Union Road and around its junction with Haslingden Road in icy weather. The local Ramblers group also wishes connections from the site on foot to be improved.

The Applicant contends that the traffic likely to be generated by the proposal will be lower than with the previous use of the site and can be accommodated on the existing highway network without unacceptable inconvenience for other road users or detriment to safety. LCC (Highways) does not accept that it is appropriate to compare the generation of traffic movements from the proposed development with modern hospital with the floor area of the existing building floor area, as car ownership/use were lower when the existing buildings were fully in use. However, based on the existing traffic flows on the highway network and the addition of traffic likely to be generated by the 139 houses proposed, it does not have



objection to permission being granted subject to various off-site works and provision of the parking area proposed on Site A with spaces for existing residents of Union Road without off-street parking of their own. The most significant off-site works it considers necessary are as follows :

- The signalisation of the junction of Union Road and Haslingden Road
- The provision of a pedestrian refuge on Haslingden Road close to the secondary access road
- A scheme to either widen the footway on Union Road or to remove the highway trees

It also recommends a S.106 Obligation to ensure the provision of a pedestrian and cycle link from Union Road on the unmade section up to Haslingden Old Road and the upgrade of definitive footpaths 321, 322, 341 and 340 to a shared pedestrian and cycle way from the development to Sandown Close.

The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the road layout or parking arrangements proposed within Site B, but does consider the following works are required :

- An adopted link from the development through the public open space onto the definitive footpath 322
- An adopted link from between plots 64 and 66 to the access road
- A scheme for the restriction of vehicles on the existing secondary access road, information signage and improvement to the footway by either widening or complete removal
- The improvement of visibility at the access road onto Union Road.

I concur with the view of the Highway Authority about the need for a S.106 Obligation/ Conditions to address these points.

### **Contributions**

The Applicant has agreed to provide :

- 20% of the proposed dwellings as Affordable Housing (ie 28 dwellings), which accords with the requirements of Policy 4 of the Core Strategy
- the £23,271 is sought by LCC Education to add to primary school capacity in the local area
- £97,161 for off-site provision & maintenance for Outdoor Sport, which accords with the Council's Open Spaces & Play Equipment Contributions SPD, intending to provide the Play Space on-site.

These contributions are considered appropriate. A S.106 Obligation is required to secure their delivery.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Core Strategy sets out a preference for the application site to be redeveloped for mixed-use and in a manner retaining the Workhouse building as it is a local heritage asset. However, on the basis of the information submitted by the Applicant / independent audit of viability / consultee & neighbours responses, I am drawn to the conclusion that a refusal of the application on the basis that the scheme proposes demolition of all the buildings on the site / 100% new build market and affordable housing could not be sustained on appeal.

Likewise, whilst I am critical of certain aspects of the layout/design of the proposed development and the 'heritage benefits' it is said to incorporate, their outward impact is not such that I can recommend refusal of the scheme on the basis of 'poor design' and be confident that the Council could defend its position on appeal.

## **10. SUMMARY REASON FOR APPROVAL**

The proposed development for new-build market and affordable housing is appropriate in principle for a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt, for which it has been demonstrated that refurbishment of the buildings that are of local heritage significance is unviable and there is no reasonable prospect in the short and medium term for mixed use containing an element of employment being secured. Subject to the accompanying S.106 Obligation and Conditions, it will not cause greater impact to the essentially open and rural character of the Countryside/Green Belt, unacceptable harm visual and neighbour amenity or highway safety, or unduly affect flood risk, public health or ecology. The development has been considered most particularly in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), Policies DP1-9 / RDF2 / RDF4 / W1 / L1 / L4 / L5 / RT2 / RT4 / RT9 / EM1 / EM2 / EM3 / EM5 / EM18 of the Regional Spatial Strategy (2008) and Policies AVP4 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 8 / 9 / 16 / 17 / 18 / 19 / 22 / 23 / 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011).

## **11. RECOMMENDATION**

That Permission be granted, subject to:

- a) Completion of a S.106 Obligation to secure :
  - i) 20% of the proposed dwellings as Affordable Housing
  - ii) payment to the Council of £23,271 to add to primary school capacity in the local area
  - iii) payment to the Council of £97,161 for off-site provision & maintenance for Outdoor Sport
  - iv) upgrading of definitive footpaths numbered 321, 322, 340 and 341, links thereto and of Union Road on the unmade section to Haslingden Old Road as a pedestrian and cycle link
  - v) provision of a scheme for restricting vehicles entering/exiting the site
  
- b) The following Conditions.

## **CONDITIONS**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
*Reason: To accord with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*
  
2. Prior to the commencement of construction :
  - a. Details of the Phase II investigation to be carried out shall be agreed with Local Planning Authority and the results submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
  - b. Should the Phase II investigations indicate that remediation is necessary then a Remediation Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.
  - c. The remedial scheme in the approved Remediation Statement shall then be carried out in accordance with approved details; if during any works on site other contamination is found or suspected the Local Planning Authority shall be notified immediately and, where required, a suitable risk assessment and

remediation works carried out in accordance with a scheme and timetable agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

- d. Should remediation be required a Verification Report detailing the conclusions and actions taken at each stage of the works, including validation works, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to the first occupation of the buildings hereby permitted. The Verification Report shall also include any plan (a “long-term monitoring and maintenance plan”) for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan. The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

*Reason : To ensure the site is properly remediated and any risk to human health and controlled waters is minimised, in accordance with the recommendations of the submitted Ground Condition Report and Policy 24 of the RBC Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a scheme to regulate surface water run-off in accordance with the FRA by Ironside Farrar (3841/SRG) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

*Reason : To reduce the risk of flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water from the site, in accordance with Policy 24 of the RBC Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

4. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a condition report has been undertaken into the culverted surface water receptor has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The report shall identify any remedial works necessary to the culvert to ensure a design life consistent with the development. The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

*Reason : To reduce the risk of flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water from the site, in accordance with Policy 24 of the RBC Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

5. No works shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, comprising both building recording & analysis and below-ground archaeological investigation. This must be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological/building recording consultant or organization in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, an inventory shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority of all date stones/foundation stones, natural stone, slates, stone flags, setts & cobbles capable of re-use in the permitted development. This information/inventory shall be used to inform decisions upon selection of materials for construction of the dwellings on the site opposite Egypt Mount and external works generally.

*Reason : To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological/historic importance associated with the buildings and identification of traditional materials capable of re-use in the development hereby permitted, in*

*accordance with NPPF, Policy EM1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Policies 16 / 24 of the RBC Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

6. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the proposed ground/slab levels indicated on the submitted drawings, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
*Reason: To ensure that the development will be of satisfactory appearance, in accordance with Policy 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011).*
7. Prior to the commencement of construction samples of facing materials to be used in the external walls and roofs of the proposed buildings, and any retaining walls, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Notwithstanding what is shown on the submitted drawings, the dwellings on the site opposite Egypt Mount (and any associated boundary walls) and any retaining walls on the other site shall be of natural local stone/natural slate, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved materials.  
*Reason: To ensure that the development will be of satisfactory appearance, in accordance with Policy 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011).*
8. Development shall not commence until details of have been provided as to how the development will meet code level 3 and the code for sustainable homes. The details shall include the timing of the provision of these measures. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.  
*Reason : In order to encourage the use of renewable energy sources, in accordance with the NPPF, and Policy 19 / 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011) and to meet current national regulation.*
9. Prior to the commencement of development details shall be submitted for the approval in writing of the of the Local Planning Authority in respect of the following schedule of works and of the means/timetable for their completion :
  - a. The signalisation of the junction of Union Road and Haslingden Road, including the removal of the existing zebra crossing.
  - b. The provision of a pedestrian refuge on Haslingden Road close to the secondary access road
  - c. A scheme to either widen the footway on Union Road or to remove the highway trees
  - d. The provision of a pedestrian and cycle link from Union Road on the unmade section up to Haslingden Old Road
  - e. The upgrade of definitive footpaths 321, 322, 341 and 340 to a shared pedestrian and cycle way from the development to Sandown Close.
  - f. An adopted link from the development through the public open space onto the definitive footpath 322 to improve accessibility and sustainability.
  - g. An adopted link from between plots 64 and 66 to the access road to improve accessibility and sustainability.
  - h. A scheme for the restriction of vehicles, information signage and improvement to the footway by either widening or complete removal to improve accessibility and sustainability.
  - i. The improvement of visibility at the access road onto Union Road and maintenance thereof.

The approved schedule of works shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed means/timetable, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: In the interests of highway/pedestrian safety and use of sustainable transport modes, in accordance with Policies RT4 / RT9 of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Policies 8 / 9 / 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

- 10 Prior to first occupation of any of the dwellings on the site opposite Egypt Mount the associated area for parking/manoeuvring of cars shall be hard-surfaced, drained and delineated and thereafter kept freely available for use as such, with one space per dwelling being allocated for use by residents of Egypt Mount, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to first occupation of any of the dwellings on the other site the vehicular access to that dwelling from the adopted highway and its associated garage/parking/manoeuvring space shall be provided and the parking/manoeuvring space shall thereafter be kept freely available for use as such; the parking/manoeuvring space shall be provided with a hard, permeable surface, avoiding run-off of surface-water on to the highway.

*Reason : In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy 24 of the RBC Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

- 11 No development shall take place until a scheme of landscaping/boundary treatment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, notwithstanding any such detail which may have previously been submitted. The submitted scheme shall provide details of :

- a. the boundary walls/features within the land and the trees/planting/wildlife assets on/adjacent to the land which are to be retained, and the protection to be afforded to them during demolition/remediation/construction works;
- b. the types and numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted, and their size and distribution;
- c. the information boards and other elements of the Heritage Trail to be provided and the layout/facilities of the open spaces proposed to provide sufficient play value to accord with the Council's approved Open Spaces & Play Equipment Contributions SPD (2008); &
- d. the proposed walls/fences/gates/hard-surfaced areas.
- e. any associated changes of ground level or landform.

*Reason : To mitigate the impact of the proposal upon the Countryside/Green Belt and in the interests of visual and neighbour amenity, ecology and accessibility, in accordance with Policies 1 / 9 / 17 / 18 / 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

- 12 All hard-surfaced areas/walls/fences/gates forming part of the approved scheme of landscaping/boundary treatment shall be completed prior to occupation of the building to which they relate, with any new planting, seeding or turfing forming part of the approved scheme to be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any works forming part of the approved scheme of landscaping/boundary treatment for other areas shall be implemented in accordance with a timetable that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants in the approved scheme which within a period of 5 years from the completion

of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

*Reason : To mitigate the impact of the proposal upon the Countryside/Green Belt and in the interests of visual and neighbour amenity, ecology and accessibility, in accordance with Policies 1 / 9 / 17 / 18 / 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011).*

- 13 The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the Recommendations of the submitted Ecology Reports of James Blake Associates, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason : In the interests of preserving and enhancing the ecological value of the site, in accordance with Policies 18 / 24 of the Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011).*