

COUNCIL'S ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON FOLLOWING APPLICATION NO 3/01/0671

At the Planning Committee on 17 January 2002, the Council gave 'a minded to approve' decision on both the planning and listed building applications for development at the above site.

The lapse in time since this decision has been due to the desire of the applicant to overcome any remaining concerns and points of detail which the various amenity bodies had before proceeding further. The concluding correspondence on these issues are now included.

In view of the differing considerations to be made between the planning and listed building applications, it is felt appropriate to present the supporting considerations made on each application individually.

This application concerns the listed building submission, the application being made under the requirements of Section 13 of the above Act. In particular, this pertains to the demolition and rebuilding of the rear wing walls of the hall. Any listed building consent given will also cover the restoration of the main hall and the adjacent orangery where there is no appreciable demolition entailed.

With regard to the external wing walls which are to be rebuilt based on historical photos and research. What remained of them was taken down in 2000 for health and safety reasons in view of the very perilous condition and the danger of imminent collapse based on advice from the applicant's detailed structural assessment. The stone was taken down at the time and stacked on pallets in order ready for rebuilding on site. The reason for this work and in view of the submitted listed building application and plan application for proposed rebuilding was accepted as a justification for this action by the Council's legal department at the time (see attached documentation). Since this time the remaining main portion of the wall has been supported with metal props in order to stop any further deterioration. The main section of the hall still standing has been inspected by English Heritage's structural engineer recently in conjunction with the applicant's structural engineer. English Heritage's structural engineer's report is attached for information. Following this, it was agreed that only a small further portion of the front elevation would require rebuilding. (This is indicated again on the attached drawing.)

The proposed rebuilding details are indicated on the attached drawings, with an explanation in the Planning Committee report. Further working drawings prior to work commencing would be conditional on any forthcoming approval.

As can also be seen from the submitted documentation, the initial concerns of the main amenity and statutory bodies have now been essentially addressed (see attached letters). The applicant has also indicated that following any approval, there would be a willingness on his part to continue working in conjunction with the various groups in the final development of any working proposals. Ongoing maintenance plans for the hall, orangery and surrounding parkland will also be prepared and the applicant has again initiated studies ready for the preparation of these (please see attached). This maintenance programme together with a programme for rebuilding the hall would be made legally binding via a Section 106 Agreement.

Summary

As can be seen from the planning history, proposals to restore the hall extend back to 1987 with the building being described in a state of dereliction for a considerable time previous to this. The building is also one of the principal buildings on the Borough's buildings at list register.

This second submission by the applicant of a restoration scheme for the hall is this time based on more accurate historical research, together with a more effective main package of enabling development which has been considered independently by quantity surveyors and local chartered surveyors. Overall, the scheme is considered to now be acceptable by the Council and one which will restore the building and surrounding parkland to its former glory with access for the public via a sustainable approach which will ensure the restoration and continuing survival on this important building within the Borough.

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D APPLICATIONS UPON WHICH COMMITTEE DEFER THEIR APPROVAL SUBJECT TO WORK DELEGATED TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE BEING SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED

APPLICATION NO: 3/01/0672/P (GRID REF: SD 6375 2945)
PROPOSED CONVERSION OF WOODFOLD HALL TO RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS AND DWELLINGS, ERECT DWELLINGS ON FORMER BOILER HOUSE/WALLED GARDEN AREA. DEVELOP RACE HORSE TRAINING FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS, GALLOPS, HIGHWAY WORKS AND LANDSCAPING

APPLICATION NO: 3/01/0671/P (LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION)
PROPOSED RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF WOODFOLD HALL, INCLUDING THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE WINGS TO THE REAR, TO RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS AND DWELLINGS, ERECTION OF DWELLINGS ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER STABLE BLOCK, THE ERECTION OF GARAGES AND THE RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF THE ORANGERY TO A SINGLE DWELLING
AT WOODFOLD HALL PARK, MELLOR

FOR REILLY DEVELOPMENTS

PARISH COUNCIL:

The Council strongly objects to these two applications on the following grounds:

1. The developments will cause further traffic problems at the junction of Further Lane and the A677. The amount of development in this scheme equates to more than 100% of existing development on Further Lane and serious consideration must be given to improving the access.
2. The Council sees the scheme as the creation of a 'rich man's enclave' separated from the rest of the village. We would like to see some form of integration of the road system with the village via merger with Myre Ash Brow with some sort of road engineering.

Details of the proposed highway improvement works for Further Lane have been forwarded to the Parish Council and a further reply is awaited.

**ENVIRONMENT
DIRECTORATE
(COUNTY SURVEYOR):**

The applicant has indicated a willingness to improve the junction with the A677 and discuss other appropriate works along Further Lane. In the light of the additional data which has been forwarded to me (ie the traffic survey and details of the improvements proposed for Further Lane) it is considered that the previously agreed improvements are the minimum requirements for this development, these will reduce the risk of conflict arising and avoid long reversing movements along the highway where visibility is restricted.

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HIGHWAYS AGENCY:

The results of the review indicate that the total traffic contribution to any element of the trunk road network would be very small and it is concluded that there would be no material impact on the trunk road network as a result of the proposed development.

I therefore confirm that the Highways Agency has no objections to the above proposed development.

**ENVIRONMENT
DIRECTORATE (COUNTY
PLANNING):**

Following the submission of additional information the County Council wishes to amend the strategic comments made to the proposed development which was set out in their letter dated 5 November 2001. The basis of the new comments made are expanded considerably in the report but the main points can be summarised as follows.

The County Council maintains a strategic objection to:

- The proposed extension to Woodfold Park Farm for residential use, as it would constitute inappropriate development, adversely affecting the openness of the Green Belt.

The County Council raises no strategic objection to:

- The proposed redevelopment of Woodfold Hall and the former stables and coach house block or for the proposed conversion of the Deerhouse, the Orangery and the site of the former boiler house in the walled garden into residential use.

With regard to the proposed racing stables, the Borough Council will need to be satisfied that the development of the stables and the siting of the stable block would represent (very special circumstances) within the Green Belt if permission is to be granted and regarding the race horse training facility generally, the Borough Council will need to be satisfied that the design of the proposed racing stables, together with the location of the drives, gallops and tracks are acceptable on visual amenity grounds within the historic park and garden.

Woodfold Hall

The proposed redevelopment of Woodfold Hall incorporating 15 residential units together with the former stables and coach house block site incorporating 10 residential units, utilising dressed stone walls and natural slate covered roofs, would require major rebuilding works. Nevertheless, it is considered that the proposed development is appropriate, and would comply with PPG2, together with Policy 4(b)(ii, iii and v) of the Lancashire Structure Plan.

The District Council needs to be satisfied that the location of the four associated garage blocks west of the Hall will not adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt.

The Deerhouse, the Orangery and Walled Garden

The proposed conversion of the Deerhouse and the Orangery on the site of the former boiler house in the Walled Garden into residential dwellings, utilising matching building materials, is considered to be appropriate and in compliance with paragraph 3.4 and 3.6 of PPG2 together with Policy 4(b)(ii, iii, iv and v) of the Lancashire Structure Plan. Furthermore, the environmental impact and the redevelopment of the three structures to residential uses would not be greater than the existing development. It is considered that neither the residential conversions nor the garages would adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt.

Woodfold Park Farm

It is considered that the proposed redevelopment of Woodfold Park Farm, which includes a substantial new build along the west wing (albeit following the removal of a silage tank and barn), would constitute a major extension, contrary to policy for the Lancashire Structure Plan. Furthermore, the proposed change of use of Woodfold Park Farm to a residential complex could have an adverse impact on the rural economy, contrary to Policy 4(b)(v) together with the National Planning Policy Context for Agricultural Diversification set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7.

Racehorse Training Facility

The County Council initially raised strategic objections to the racehorse training facility in the letter dated 5 November 2001 as it was considered that the size and scale of the proposed racing stables would constitute inappropriate development and adversely affect the openness and no very special circumstances had been provided to justify the facility within the Green Belt.

However, during the consultation process for the current planning application, additional supporting information was made available to the County Council. The applicant argued that the proposed racehorse training facility would constitute "enabling development" required to restore Woodfold Hall and the associated historic structures and features within the parkland, together with ensuring a viable use for the park and garden. Presumably, the residential conversions alone would not provide sufficient enablement.

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It could be argued that the principle of developing a race horse training facility within the grounds of an historic park and garden could be acceptable in land use and heritage terms as the equine development could be in keeping with the character with an 18th Century country house estate. It is recognised that the development of racing stables at Woodfold Park would constitute enabling development which, it is claimed, would be necessary to restore the buildings and associated historic features within the park.

Traffic Generation

You will have received a separate response on highway/traffic access matters from the Environment Directorate and it is important to take account of the views expressed.

Development and Nature Conservation

The development proposal does not lie within a site protected by Policy 19 of the adopted Lancashire Structure Plan. The nearest protected sites which should be taken into account include Woodfold and Jeffrey Wood Biological Heritage Site. Consideration should be given to legally protected species and their habitat that may occur within or in the vicinity of the site of the proposed development.

Heritage

Woodfold Hall is a Grade II listed structure and dates from the 1790s. The Hall has been allowed to fall into a state of decay even though its setting is of importance, particularly the views across its parkland. The structure should be recorded prior to or during the early stages of restoration. The archaeology within application site area has been commented on separately by the County Archaeologist who has requested that a standard condition be added to any approval.

Landscape

The use of stone and slate in the conversions and new build at Woodfold Hall and the associated historic structures is welcomed. However, the car parking and the four associated garage blocks serving the Hall could have an adverse impact on the woodland pleasure gardens and require further thought.

The proposed racing stables would form a new development within the historic parkland and, apart from impacting on the openness could change the character of the north eastern part of the park. If very special circumstances are accepted and the permission granted the use of render and reconstituted slate is considered to be acceptable, although a combination of stone and render would be more appropriate.

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The racing stables are located well away from the Hall and would not interfere with major views within the park. The siting of the stables in the north east area of the park is considered to be the least damaging in landscape terms. The eastern section of the gallops would be located on the line of the historical drive which is considered to be acceptable in landscape terms, however the southern section would cut across open parkland, impinging on views of the Hall. The southern section of the gallop would have less impact on the park if it were relocated close to the fringes of the woodland to the east, this would also reduce the impact on the ponds.

It is considered that a landscape master plan should be submitted showing new work and restoration intentions with regard to the pleasure gardens, woodland, parkland, trees, ponds, drives, fencing and walls.

Conclusion

The County Council raises no strategic objection to the proposed development of Woodfold Hall and the former stables and coach house block to residential use, or for the proposed conversion of the Deerhouse, the Orangery and the site of the former boiler house in the Walled Garden into residential dwellings.

The County Council maintains its strategic objection to the proposed extension to Woodfold Park Farm for residential use. The proposed extension would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would not represent enabling development for the redevelopment of Woodfold Hall. The County Council would not object on strategic grounds to the proposed racing stables, providing the Borough Council were satisfied that very special circumstances exist to outweigh the Green Belt Policy and that the proposed siting of the stables, drives, gallops and tracks are acceptable.

ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE (COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST):

The County Archaeologist has commented on this application and requested that prior to determination of the application a rapid identification survey of the area be carried out. Since this request a landscape history assessment has been commissioned by the applicant and undertaken by a local landscape history consultant.

The County Archaeologist has also requested that a condition be added to any approval for a detailed record of the building to be made prior to works commencing.

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL:

For the portion of the site within South Ribble Borough Council area, approximately all the parkland immediately south of the Hall, a separate application has been submitted by the applicant to them. South Ribble Borough Council has consulted us on this submission and we requested any reciprocal comments accordingly.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN:

No comments following consultation.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY:

The Environment Agency has been consulted on these proposals and have asked that a number of standard conditions be added to any approval.

ENGLISH NATURE:

As you will be aware the proposed development lies adjacent to Jeffrey Wood which is a large biological heritage site within the Pleasington District of considerable natural conservation importance. As such you are advised to consult the Lancashire County Council and/or the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire. Nevertheless, with careful design, planning and implementation it seems unlikely that such a site of wildlife interest would be affected by the proposed development. However, we are unable to comment on the possible effect of the various development proposals associated with the application and other features of wildlife interest, notably ponds and grassland habitats which may be present including European protected species such as great crested newts and/or bats which may or may not be present.

It is, therefore, English Nature's recommendation that appropriate survey works should be carried out by the developer before your District Council makes a decision on whether or not to grant planning permission for the development.

**COUNCIL FOR BRITISH
ARCHAEOLOGY:**

No further comments following consultation.

GEORGIAN GROUP:

The above Group has been consulted on the submitted application and replied at length. Their reply can, therefore, be summarised as follows:

1. At this stage it is considered that insufficient information has been provided to form an opinion.

HALL

1. No details of any further demolition which may be required have been given.
2. No working details or details of craftsmanship have been provided.
3. The designs of the outer elevations now appear to reflect the original.
4. Concern is expressed over the size of the proposed replacement stables to the rear of the Hall.
5. Full impact of new garage court difficult to visualise - not fully illustrated. Any proposal will need to address long term management and restoration of the pleasure ground surrounding the Hall.

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ORANGERY:

1. Concern on position of proposed garage and access from park side.
2. Existing roof is of Victorian origin but not known what original Georgian was.
3. The Group is concerned over the proposal to partly glaze and partly cover by metal sheeting.
4. We would urge a scholarly reconstruction of the late Georgian version.

FARM BUILDINGS:

1. Welcome proposal to reinstate the missing pavilion of the main elevation.
2. Proposed design felt to be over domestic.
3. Important that any additions respect the restrained architecture of the original Georgian design.

STABLES AND GALLERIES:

1. The siting of the stables at one of the highest and most visible parts of the design landscape would make their impact particularly noticeable over a wide area.

WALLED GARDEN:

1. The walled garden is not an enclosed space; any new building and domestic curtilage would be highly visible.
2. Enabling development not applicable on scale proposed.

The landscape history undertaken by Doctor Crosby which has considered the parking detail has now been forwarded to the Georgian Society for their comments in light of the concerns they originally expressed.

GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY: Have expressed concerns over how the landscape historical assessment has been assessed and presented, ie no plan based information.

1. No assessment of the likely impact of the proposed development.
2. The proposed stable block would be highly visible.