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reflect the original layout of the Orangery with a spiral staircase leading upstairs. It is considered that the current proposals matching modern innovation with preservation of the overall historic character will restore and preserve the Orangery in a unique manner. The access to the Orangery has now been altered and it is proposed to be taken from the rear to protect the setting of the building in relation to the parkland. The detailed design of the proposed adjacent garage will be required in order to ensure that it does not detract from the overall setting.

Walled Garden

The Walled Garden area incorporating a range of derelict brick buildings which once also housed the boiler house is located to the north west of the main hall. The main features remaining on site are the two outer walls which it is proposed should be restored and retained. It is proposed to construct a terrace of five new houses within this area, while laying out the surrounding area based on the recommendations of the landscape historian. In order to reflect the existing single storey buildings which still remain in a derelict state on the site the proposed dwellings will be in a split level form.

Besides restoration of the two outer walls, the lower terrace will be laid out to lawn, to provide the sharp visual contrast with the grass land of the park. These are to be kept, by agreement, free from any garden features.

The private gardens will be separated by red brick walls. The buildings will be placed centrally and the garages kept to the rear to protect the view from the parkland.

Parkland

New horse racing stables:

This new facility is to be located on the north eastern edge of the parkland and will be accessed via a new track leading from adjacent to the main entrance on Further Lane. The entrance to the facility will be through a gap in the existing mature tree belt which runs along this section of the park. This area of the park is screened, almost completely on all sides, and is only visible at a great distance from the far side of the valley.

From the main area of the park the ground rises up with a mature belt of trees on the high ground. The land then falls back and it is at this point that the new facility will be sited. In view of its proposed location it is not considered that it would be visible from the main parkland area. The stables, the majority of which will be single storey, is to be constructed to a traditional design, incorporating render, stone details and timber windows. The facility will accommodate up to 78 horses with two incorporated dwellings for on-site staff.

It is anticipated that the facility will employ some 15 plus staff. To the side of the new block and backing onto the adjacent woodland it is proposed to erect an agricultural style hay barn some 6m to the eaves.

This construction will represent a change in character of this section of the park but in view of its proposed location it is not considered that it will have a detrimental affect outside of the immediate area.

In relation to the principle of this development it is also felt that a structure such as this would be appropriate in a parkland of a country house estate, there having been stables at the rear of the main house originally.

Gallops

Leading from the race horse stables will be two new tracks connecting to the gallops which have been designed, in the main, to follow the existing original tracks (from Middle Lodge to the Hall). The length of the original gallops has been reduced and will now terminate some 270m from the Hall near an area of existing ponds. In detail the gallops will include for a 4m wide strip surfaced with bark chippings for the outward leg with the return utilising a 4m wide mown strip of grass. From the original proposal the route of the gallops has been realigned to follow, more effectively, the contours of the existing landscape and miss mature trees and areas of ponds.

It is considered that the use of bark and mown grass will help minimise the visual impact of the gallops.

Woodfold Park Farm

This group of stone buildings lies some 200m to the north of the main Hall and appears on an 1831 plan of Mellor. The plan indicates a 'U' shaped layout of buildings within the present curtilage. In more recent times the western wing of the group was removed and replaced with a relatively modern agricultural building in blockwork with an asbestos cement roof. This structure has since been removed for health and safety reasons.

The proposal is to convert the remaining two stone buildings on site and replace the west wing to reinstate the previous 'U' shaped layout. It is proposed that the new buildings will echo the style and mass of the existing, stone for walls and details with the roof in slate to match the existing. Although this additional structure would undoubtedly be classed as new development in the Green Belt they would be on the footprint of the previous structures and recreate the courtyard design. It is therefore considered the impact on the Green Belt would be no greater than the existing or the previous asbestos cement buildings which were on the site. Allowing this development should also be seen as part of the overall development package for the park and the contribution it will make towards "enabling development" to assist funding of the restoration of the Hall, Orangery and other historical features within the park.

The Deerhouse

This stone structure, like the Hall and farm complex, also appeared on the 1831 plan for Mellor and, therefore, is seen as part of the history of the estate. At the moment four stone walls remain with the roof supported by two timber trusses. The roof now has a modern covering. The proposal for this building is to convert it to a single dwelling unit working within the existing walls with a replacement slate roof, stone surrounds and timber windows. As this is an existing structure within the Green Belt the County Council has raised no strategic objections to its conversion. The location within the park is well screened with existing vegetation, particularly at the rear, and thus it is not considered that the proposal would unduly detract from the character of the parkland.

Allowing this development should also be seen as part of the overall development package and a contribution towards the "enabling development". Also it will retain one of the original features as detailed on the early plans of the area.

Ecological considerations

On possible ecological implications resulting from these proposals, English Nature and the Environment Agency have been consulted. They have noted that the development lies adjacent to Jeffrey Wood which is a large biological heritage site. They have also commented that, with careful design, planning and implementation it seems unlikely that such a site of wildlife interest will be affected by the proposed development. However, they are unable to comment on the possible effect of the various development proposals associated with the application as regards other features of wildlife interest, notably ponds and

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grass land habitats, that may also be present including European protected species such as great crested newts and/or bats which may or may not be present.

With regard to the other surveys noted, when the previous application for the golf course was being considered a full ecological study was undertaken for the site including the ponds. A survey was also undertaken for bats and for any badgers which may have been on site, none of which, at the time, were noted.

This information is therefore available to assist in the development of a landscape management plan for the site. On this it is intended that the remainder of the land will be grazed, with a strategy for major upgrading and restoration of the woodlands and replacement of lost park trees, together with an on-going woodland management and upkeep of the ancillary structures such as walls and railings.

Highway considerations

In order to predict the anticipated traffic generation resulting from this development, the applicant has commissioned a new traffic report. In brief, this has indicated that the anticipated generation would be as follows.

From 44 dwellings (actually 42 new proposed) would be generated some 400 vehicle trips (200 out, 200 in), and from the new race horse stables based on comparison with others in the country the vehicle movements generated would be 138 per day (69 in and 69 out).

It is noted that the stables traffic would be reasonably well distributed throughout the working day with no significant peaks. The generated traffic will include some large horse transporters and feed lorries but the number involved will be small. A traffic survey on Further Lane over seven days in September 2001 showed the existing average daily traffic flow to be 315 vehicle movements.

As the site is located between the towns of Blackburn and Preston it is reasonable to assume that residential traffic generation will be distributed, predominantly, to and from these two areas. All traffic travelling to and from the Blackburn direction is likely to use the section of Further Lane to the north east of Woodfold Hall. Traffic to and from Preston and the M6, however, has a choice of two routes between the site and the A677 Preston New Road. Vehicles could either travel via the north east section of Further Lane and then along the A677 (Route A) or via the western section of Further Lane and then via Nabs Head Lane to the junction with the A677 (Route B).

In reality the choice between the two routes will largely be a matter of individual preference of drivers.

A reasonable assumption would, therefore, be that car traffic to and from Preston/M6 will split approximately equally between the two routes whilst the small number of heavy goods vehicles are all likely to use the shorter route to the A677. On this basis, therefore, about 75% of traffic to and from the development will use Route A to the north east of the site and 25% will use Route B.

In summary, the traffic generated by the development is not expected to exceed 550 two way trips per day on a typical week day and 500 on a Sunday. About three quarters of this traffic is likely to use the stretch of Further Lane to the north west of the site. This represents an increase of about 130% on week days and 115% on Sundays.

In order to accommodate this projected increase detailed in the traffic report the County Surveyor has indicated that the previously agreed scheme of improvements to Further Lane, including modification to the junction with Preston New Road, the A677, will be required.

As with the proposals for the golf course development the idea behind the current proposals is to limit the visual impact on the Green Belt and to maintain the character of the lane without increasing the width significantly, which would lead to increases in speed. It is anticipated that the improved sightlines will increase the safety of the road, not only for new but for all existing road users, including cyclists who use this route, the lane being part of the Lancashire Cycleway.

Financial Assessment and "Enabling Development"

As with the previous golf course proposal, additional new development required to support restoration of the Hall, Orangery and other historic features on the site, is seen as 'enabling development'. This being the 'minimum' required to secure the site's and buildings' future, together with being an acceptable and sustainable form which minimises disbenefits, particularly as the site lies within the Green Belt.

The criteria to assess "enabling development" with regard to historic buildings is defined by English Heritage and is as follows.

- The "enabling development" will not materially detract from the archaeological, architectural, historic, landscape or bio diversity interest of the asset, or materially harm its setting.
- The proposal avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the heritage asset.
- The "enabling development" will secure the long term future of the heritage asset and, where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose.
- The problem arises from the inherent needs of the heritage asset, rather than the circumstances of the present owner or the purchase price paid.
- Sufficient financial assistance is not available from any other source.
- It is demonstrated that the amount of "enabling development" is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the heritage asset and that its form minimises disbenefits.
- The value or benefit of the survival or enhancement of the heritage asset outweighs the long term cost to the community, (ie the disbenefits) of providing the "enabling development".

Considering each point in turn.

Criterion 1:

All of the "enabling development" is to be located on areas of the site that are well related to existing buildings and are on sites that are either semi enclosed, in the case of the walled garden, and/or more importantly on land previously occupied by buildings based on historical evidence, as in the case of the extension to Woodfold Park Farm. In view of this it is not considered that the proposals will have any significant impact upon the historic asset or its setting. The new build to the rear of the Hall and stables are also in areas of the site that are well screened or divorced from the principal buildings or views. The material impact upon the cultural heritage of the site as a whole will therefore be minimal. All of the proposed development is also well away from any biological heritage site and the management plan for the park take into account the findings of the previous ecological survey.

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Criterion 2:

All of the development proposal is financially independent. It is not viable for the applicant to retain areas of the site or only part develop it. If planning permission and listed building consent is granted, all elements of the proposal will be completed to effectively use the benefits of the "enabling development". The intention will be that the dwellings are sold off individually, but in view of the nature of the building and the surrounding amenity space, will be managed collectively in conjunction with the rest of the park. The remainder of the park within the site will be sold off as a complete package along with the stables and gallops. In order to prevent any adverse impacts from the residential dwellings, permitted development rights for the domestic dwellings would be withdrawn by condition. This will ensure that no future action by residents affected the overall character of the park.

Criterion 3:

The enabling development will ensure that all the heritage assets within the applicant's control will be secured. All the residential units will be operated by a management agreement: the horse racing stables managing the use of the remaining land.

Without the 'enabling development' it would not be possible for this restoration or long term maintenance to take place.

Criterion 4:

The Hall and the Orangery has been neglected for over 50 years. The historic park has been utilised for agricultural purposes but no long-term proposals to maintain it are in place. This neglect has occurred due to the lack of a viable use for the Hall being found and site and the inability of the respective organisations to progress any rescue packages for the site. This was the situation when the applicant acquired the site and, therefore, the present condition is due to the inherent needs of the assets rather than the circumstances of the present owner or the purchase price paid.

Criterion 5:

The previous owners sought financial assistance from the Borough Council and English Heritage in order to secure the restoration of the Hall. However, no funding was available, and in the latter case, because the Hall is Grade II not Grade II* or I. The current applicant has investigated other sources of funding but has found none available to either private individuals or commercial organisations that would provide the requisite restoration and future maintenance required for the Hall site.

Criterion 6:

A confidential financial appraisal has been submitted under separate cover. This demonstrates that the scheme constitutes the 'minimum' necessary to secure the future of the Hall, the Orangery and the historic features of the park. This appraisal has been scrutinised by an independent firm of quantity surveyors commissioned by the Borough Council and will be available for consideration by members.

Criterion 7:

The value to the community as a whole is the restoration of the Hall and the Orangery and the securing of the long-term future of the historic park. Furthermore the creation of new footpaths will provide public access from where the restored Hall and its landscaped setting can be viewed. Wider benefits include the creation of a major asset in terms of the horse racing stables and the employment, an estimated 15 jobs, together with the economic benefits that this will bring for the local community.

Departure

Contained within the proposals are a number of considered "departures" from the Local Plan Policies relating to Policy ENV4 Greenbelt, together with some aspects of the proposals which the County Council has strategic objections to. These relate principally to the development of new buildings within the Greenbelt.

In Summary

The main justification for proposing this departure from the Council's perspective is the restoration of these important historic buildings and the restoration of the parkland landscape. The use of the site for a horse racing stables is considered acceptable visually in a Greenbelt and an applicable use in the 'setting' of an historic building such as Woodfold Hall. The stable has been sited to minimise any impact on the parkland and the use will help maintain the parkland in a sustainable form for the foreseeable future. The other uses and the setting up of the management company will help maintain the other buildings in the landscaped settings together with access for the public.

Overall, therefore, it is considered that sufficient information has now been provided by the applicant and consultees to enable the scheme to be presented to Committee. Based on the issues discussed above and after careful consideration it is felt that the proposals for the restoration of the Hall and its outbuildings, the retention of the Orangery, the provision of a horse racing stables and the improved road access are now acceptable subject to submission of detailed working drawings and the imposition of a Section 106 Agreement covering the following:

1. Detailed phasing of the proposal including building and highway works.
2. Details of the restoration and future management plan for the landscape and the parks built features.
3. Increase public access to the site via provision of some new footpath routes.

In view of the above, it is recommended that the application be given favourable consideration and the Planning and Development Committee are "minded to approve" the application subject to the following.

RECOMMENDATION: That permission and listed building consent be DEFERRED and DELEGATED to the Chief Executive subject to consultation with the Secretary of State on the departure issues from the Districtwide Local Plan and strategic objections from the County Council. If approved by the Secretary of State the development will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Agreement covering detailed phasing of the proposal including building and highway works, details of the restoration of future management of the residential apartments together with the landscape and its built historic features, increased public access and also the following conditions:

1. This permission shall be implemented in accordance with the proposal as amended by letter and plan received 3 December 2001.
2. Prior to commencement of new construction work for the restoration of the Hall, precise specifications and working drawings shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority and agreed in writing. These shall include for details of all walling, stone, natural roofing slates, timber windows and door details, rainwater goods, flooring and surrounding surfacing materials.
3. Prior to restoration work to the Orangery, precise specifications and working drawings shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority and agreed in writing. These shall include for details of all

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glazing, bairdoor, roof covering, rainwater goods, flooring and surrounding surfacing materials and detailed design of the adjacent garage.

4. Following making safe the Hall, Orangery and other historical features within the application site, the applicant or their agent or successors in title has secured the making of a detailed record of the buildings. This must be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological/building recording consultant or organisation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
5. Any external stonework removed from the Hall to make it safe shall be set aside and kept in a secure area for re-use in the restoration works.
6. All trees, woodland areas and hedgerows must be protected with Ribble Valley Borough Council's guidelines for the protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows together with British Standard 5837 and the National Joint Utility Group's guidelines for planning, installation and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees.
7. All protection zones around trees and woodlands must be agreed in writing and implemented prior to commencement of any site works.
8. Any treework proposals must be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and must conform to BS3998 for treework and be carried out by an approved contractor.
9. The development hereby approved shall not commence until details of the landscaping of the site, including wherever possible the retention of existing trees have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme submitted shall indicate as appropriate the types and numbers of trees and shrubs, their distribution on site, those areas to be seeded, turfed, paved or hard landscaped including details of any changes of level or landform and types and detailing of all fencing and screening. The programme of implementation of this work shall be detailed in the management plan for the site.

10. Any landscaping scheme submitted shall indicate the measures to be taken to safeguard protected flora/fauna and habitats from soil excavations, gradients, changes in level, removal of existing vegetation, construction of surfaces and structures as well as storage of materials/spoil, timber treatments and conversion of buildings.
11. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme for the conveyance of foul drainage to a private treatment plant has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. No part of the development shall be brought into use until such treatment plant has been constructed and completed in accordance with approved plans.
12. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order) the building(s) shall not be altered by the insertion of any window or doorway without the formal written permission of the Local Planning Authority.
13. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order) any future additional structures, hard standing or fences as defined in Schedule 2 Part I Classes E, F and G, and Part II Class A, shall not be carried out without the formal written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

14. No works can begin until the survey has been conducted by a person, the identity of whom has been previously agreed in writing by the English Nature species protection officer and the Local Planning Authority, to investigate whether the barn is utilised by bats or other protected species and the survey results passed to English Nature and the Local Planning Authority. If such a use is established, a scheme for the protection of the species/habitat shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by English Nature and the Local Planning Authority before any work commences on site.
15. The new estate road/access between the site and Further Lane shall be constructed in accordance with the Lancashire County Council's specification for construction of estate roads to at least base course level before any development takes place within the site.
16. No part of the development, hereby approved, shall commence until a scheme for the construction of the site access and the off-site works of highway improvements has been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.
17. Prior to any further development works being carried out, the developer shall carry out a joint survey of the condition of Further Lane with the Area Surveyor of Lancashire County Council.

REASON(S):

1. For the avoidance of doubt since the proposal was the subject of agreed amendments.
- 2-3 In order to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the building and to protect the appearance of the area and the setting of the listed buildings within the landscape.
4. To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological/historical importance associated with the building.
5. In order to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the building and to protect the appearance of the area and the setting of adjacent buildings in the conservation area.
- 6-8 To ensure the existing tree cover is maintained.
- 9-10 In the interest of maintaining the amenity of the parkland and to protect the existing flora/fauna on the site.
11. To prevent pollution of the water environment.
- 12&13 In order to safeguard residential amenity and the parkland setting.
14. To ensure that no species/habitat protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are destroyed.
15. To ensure that satisfactory access is provided to the site before the development hereby permitted becomes operative.
- 16&17 In order to satisfy the Local Planning Authority and the Highway Authority that the final details of the highway scheme/works are acceptable before work commences on site.

3. No detail of the proposed gallops, concerns over damage to archaeological fabric of the original main approach.
4. Concern over future management of park and "horticulture".
5. As regards the walled garden, development here would have a visual impact for the park.
6. A domestic conversion of the Orangery will necessitate a range of developments not subject to control

ENGLISH HERITAGE:

A summary of comments to date.

1. The amended plans address some of the concerns set out in my previous letters in relation to the access and the setting of the Grade II Orangery. Also in relation to the recommendations made by Doctor Crosby in his report on behalf of the Developer.
2. There are some outstanding matters, for example the impact of the racing stables and the new garages on the landscape on which I would strongly recommend that your Authority considers the advice from the Garden History Society.
3. A proper historical analysis of the site is essential and this should include some map based assessment of the site.
4. I am pleased that arrangements are now being made for English Heritage's Structural Engineer to visit the site. This should clarify outstanding concerns about the condition of the shell of the Hall and enable an agreement to be reached on appropriate options for any remedial work.
5. In relation to English Heritage advice on enabling development your Authority will need to be satisfied that all the 7 criteria in the Guidance is met. The independent financial assessment that your Authority is seeking will be essential. I assume all the information will be forwarded to the Government Office at the referral stage including a draft 106 Agreement to cover the restoration of the landscape and its long term management.
6. The current approach for rebuilding to the rear of the Hall is more sympathetic to the architecture of the Hall. Suggest full set of working details of stone, coursing, roofing etc.
7. There is a need to obtain details of the horse exercise tracks and more details on development proposals in the historic landscape.

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8. I agree that some progress has been made and I recognise that there is a willingness on the part of the Developer to provide the required information. There is potential for this scheme to be successful provided that the outstanding matters can be addressed.

NATIONAL TRUST:

We wish to register a strong objection to this application. Were not consulted at outset (was done 15 October by letter) and personally by applicant's representative. A summary of their initial objections are as follows:

1. The intensity of the development is more than the minimum needed to restore the Hall.
2. The proposed development does not, in reality, involve any restoration of the Hall in spite of the description on the application. What is proposed is a rebuilding. Nor is there any restoration to the park.
3. No surveys have been undertaken of the Hall or the park on which the proposals are based.
4. The quality and details of the drawings and proposed works are inadequate to allow proper consideration of the proposals.
5. The proposed houses within the lower garden, the new stables and exercise track would all be very intrusive in the landscape.
6. The proposals do not provide any public benefit, there is no provision for access to the Hall or park.
7. The proposals, if implemented, and given the intention of the developer the sell off individual elements would result in loss of integrity of the Hall and park as a unit.
8. No provision is made in the proposals for long term restoration and maintenance of the Listed park or for long term maintenance of the Listed Hall.

With regard to the above points raised by the National Trust a copy of the landscape history assessment has been forwarded to them in consideration of the concerns they raised.

CPRE - RIBBLE VALLEY
DISTRICT GROUP

Our District Group have been following the debate regarding proposed development at Woodfold Farm, Mellor and although we do not wish to oppose the development of this site, we are very concerned that any approval given does not become the doorway for further development and modifications. We believe that rigid conditions should be applied and enforced and wondered what assurances you can give in this matter.

NEARBY RESIDENTS:

Eight letters of objection have been received expressing concerns, these can be summarised as follows:

1. The revised plans indicate an excessive increase in the amount of residential development.
2. Together with the above the racehorse facility will generate an excessive amount of traffic.
3. Entrance to Preston New Road will be made worse even with proposed modifications.
4. Further Lane at the moment is full of natural interest and is used by local people and farm vehicles.
5. Proposals will make safety hazards worse, not better.
6. Scheme will have a detrimental impact on the local environment.
7. The proposal will, in effect, be housing development in the Green Belt.
8. Even with proposed improvement to lane they will still not be able to handle large vehicles associated with horse transportation.
9. Concern that the racehorse training facility does not, in the future, develop into a large project such as a gymkhana facility. Suggest condition restricting future use.
10. Objection to conversion of Orangery to residential purposes. Such a conversion will spoil the ambience and completeness of the garden.
11. An equestrian centre will bring disturbance and traffic at unsocial hours, ie early mornings/weekends.
12. Further Lane is a dangerous, unsuitable and narrow road.
13. The access road which passes the Huntsman's Cottages is totally unsuitable for the necessary construction traffic, equestrian vehicles and the resulting cars from 40 plus housing units in Woodfold Park.
14. All three cottages have young children under the age of 10 and the risk of accident/serious injury would be considerably increased.
15. Alternative access to the above site/development and construction vehicles must be a priority.

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Proposal

The above application incorporates a "package" of proposals which include the following:

- Restoration/conversion of Woodfold Hall, a Grade II Listed Building dating from 1798 for residential use; this includes for the rebuilding of the rear wings.
- Rebuilding of the old stable block to the rear of Woodfold Hall.
- Associated garaging.
- Restoration and conversion of the Orangery to a single residential unit.
- Restoration and conversion of the Old Deerhouse to a single residential unit.
- Restoration and conversion, plus five new units, at Woodfold Hall Farm.
- Five new residential units within walled garden/old boiler house site.
- Development of a new horse racing stables and gallops within the parkland.
- In total there will be 42 new residential units.
- The scheme also incorporates some associated off-site highway improvements including modification to the junction with Preston New Road.

Site Location

Woodfold Hall, which is a Grade 2 Listed Building, is located in the far southwest corner of the Borough. The site is reached from an existing access off Further Lane, which leads from the A677 in Mellor. Further Lane also passes through Nabs Head Village and rejoins the A677 opposite Samlesbury Hall. Almost all the site appears on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens as compiled by English Heritage. The landscape is described as improved grassland and abuts a Lancashire County Biological Heritage Site (Woodfold and Jeffrey Wood).

Relevant History

3/87/0607/P – Proposed creation of golf club facilities using the existing remains of the Hall.

3/87/0808/P – Proposed golf course and ancillary facilities.

Planning Committee on 17 March 1989 (resolved to approve these applications subject to satisfactory conditions and the resolution of a Section 52 Agreement [now Section 106] to secure highway improvements and the restoration of Woodfold Hall).

3/00/0159/P – Woodfold Hall Farm – extend complex to provide nine units and garaging. Planning Committee minded to approve application called in by Secretary of State. Withdrawn 17 September 2001.

3/00/0186/P – The Deerhouse, Woodfold Hall Park – restoration of building to two residential units. Withdrawn 12 September 2001.

3/00/0187/P & 3/00/0188 (Listed Building Consent) – Proposed refurbishment of existing partly derelict structure to form a new golf club house, residences and 18 hole golf course and alterations to existing access road at Woodfold Hall, Woodfold Park, Further Lane, Mellor.

Committee minded to approve application, called in by Secretary of State. Withdrawn 17 September 2001.

Relevant Policies

Policy G1 - Development Control.

Policy ENV4 - Green Belt.

Policy ENV21 - Historic Parks and Gardens.

Policy ENV19 - Listed Buildings.

Policy H15 - Building Conversions - Location.

Policy 4 – Development in Green Belt – Lancashire Structure Plan 1991 – 2006 “Greening the Red Rose County”.

Environmental, Human Rights and Other Issues

In relation to this application there are a number of issues to be considered, principally these are as follows.

The general policy implications raised by Lancashire County Council, are the proposed renovation of the Listed buildings and the impact of the proposals on the historic garden and landscaping, the ecological implications and safeguards, the highway issues raised by the County Surveyor and the residents living along Further Lane. Some of these issues are, of course, inter-connected and overlap each other.

Historical Planning Context

The history of this site extends back to the late 1980s when a scheme for the restoration of the Hall and provision of a golf course with associated residential development was approved subject to a Section 106 Agreement being entered into. A further scheme for a golf course and associated residential development was again submitted in 2000 when the Planning and Development Committee was minded to approve. Following a “calling” by the Secretary of State the application was subsequently withdrawn.

The form of this current submission has been changed and is now for the restoration/conversion of the historic buildings on site within the existing footprints and the development of a racehorse training facility with gallops through the parkland, together with associated off-site highway works.

Alterations to proposal following submission of current applications.

Following consultation with the requisite statutory bodies the application has been amended to take account of the observations made to date. In particular the applicant has commissioned a “landscape history assessment” which has looked at the application site and based on the findings has recommended a number of amendments to the proposals and detailed the principal historic features which should be taken account of.

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In brief, the main amendments which are detailed on the amended plans are as follows:

- a plan detailing the findings of the 'landscape history assessments';
- changes to the architectural detailing on Woodfold Hall Farm;
- repositioning of the five residential units in the walled garden;
- repositioning of the garage and access to the rear of the Orangery to protect its open aspect to the parkland;
- restoration of the formal estate fencing to the front of the Hall;
- realignment of the proposed gallops and addition of a 'return' mown grass track;
- the historical report also details the proposed restorations that will be needed for the pathways, walls, railings and steps within the park area. These it is proposed would be detailed in any management plan for the site and be incorporated in a Section 106 Agreement.

Historical Significance

The Hall and Orangery at Woodfold are Grade II Listed. They have considerable historical significance within the area. The park and area in which they stand are now on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, Grade II Listed. The Hall itself dates from 1798 with the Orangery and surrounding pleasure gardens a few years later. It was originally built by Henry Sudell, a cotton manufacturer from Blackburn, who occupied the dwelling until 1827. The architect was a Charles McNiven from Manchester. Throughout its history it has had numerous owners, perhaps the most notable being Robert Daniel Thwaites, brewer from Blackburn who took over ownership in 1877. From this time the building has been occupied by relatives and descendants of this family until the end of the 1930s. The Hall was last occupied in the Second World War by elderly women evacuees from Liverpool.

The house is an example of a Georgian Mansion built in stone with the main elevations in ashlar, little altered from its original design. Testament to its quality is that following some 40 years plus without a roof on the main house is still standing as is the front portico with the four stone columns. Some examples of the original joinery remain, notably the window frames. Records of the original building survive which was surveyed by the National Building Record in 1957.

Murray's Lancashire Architectural Guide 1955 describes the Hall and grounds as follows:

"An Adamesque" house of stone with a pedimented portico stands on high ground facing south over undulating plantations, house and park together forming a perfect example of late 18th Century landscape design, probably the best and largest now surviving in Lancashire."

Detailed photographic records exist for the exterior elevations of the Hall which will provide a basis for its restoration.

Structural Condition

As part of the original submission for the previous golf course development the applicant had commissioned a structural survey of the Hall.

In summary this concluded that:

"The majority of the external and internal walls to the main house structure are considered to be in a reasonably sound structural condition and we believe that they are capable of refurbishment and utilisation within the remodernised property.

With the lapse of time since this initial survey was undertaken, English Heritage has now suggested that their structural engineer should inspect the site to give an opinion on the current situation.

A report following this site visit is awaited.

The Hall, Orangery, walled garden and parkland – historical background and proposed restoration

The Hall

On the restoration of the Hall it is proposed that the main front section of the house will be restored with the rear area being rebuilt on the original footprint based on the historical research, utilising the original stonework where possible.

The wings will be restored to match the original form as built in the 18th Century, using the same materials as the main hall. The replication will incorporate the important features of the original building. These include differing fenestration on the external elevations of the east and west wings.

Internally the proposals will seek to retain the general layout of the accommodation. The entrance corridor will open out into a grand hall from which individual residences can be accessed. The previous pattern of rooms will largely be replicated with the majority of internal walls being rebuilt in their original locations and the former yards being laid out with a courtyard appearance.

To the rear of the Hall originally stood a coach house and stable block. Although there is documented evidence that this was still standing in 1951, it was completely demolished some time later.

The proposed design for this building draws strongly upon the original block which has now been demolished. The development will follow the footprint of the original building and replicate its turret and porthole windows. Although the centre of this building respects its original coach house appearance the design for it is drawn from elements of the main Hall itself.

The final aspect of development in this part of the overall site is the provision of garages to service the 25 dwellings in the main hall and coach house/stable block. One garage per dwelling will be provided, and these will be located in four small blocks to the west of the coach house/stable block. Although close to the main Hall, the garages will be interspaced between a number of existing specimen trees and it is felt, therefore, that they will not have a significant impact on the setting of the Listed building. The garages will be constructed of dressed stone with natural slate roofs.

The Orangery

The Orangery was originally stone built with iron framing to the glass roof complete with a lantern detail. The proposals to restore this building on its original site involve the retention of its footprint of seven bays long by four wide, with the three centre bays being bowed forward in a curve. Although the form and design will match the original, the proposed use of the Orangery will be as a dwelling. Although observations have been made by the Georgian Society as to what may have been the original design for the roof, photographic evidence exists as to the present profile and this would appear to be the most reliable design to follow. It is therefore proposed to provide a profile copper roof to the structure, to the same design as the original glazed panels. Internally, the ground floor of the building will be open plan to