

Application No: 2005/285		Application Type: Full	
Proposal:	Conversion & alteration of former farm buildings to form 9 dwellings	Location:	Greensnook Farm Greensnook Lane, Bacup
Report of:	Development Control Team Manager	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Development Control Committee	Date:	19 October 2006
Applicant:	Greensnook Developments Ltd	Determination Expiry Date: 5 July 2005	
Agent:	RGP Architects		

REASON FOR REPORTING

Tick Box

Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation

Member Call-In

Name of Member:
Reason for Call-In:

Cllr J Eaton

The proposals would save and restore what is left of one of the oldest buildings in Bacup, built in the 1700's. Whilst some new build is proposed, this is in keeping with the original buildings on the site and the character of the locality. The site is within the Bacup, Stacksteads and Britannia area, where housing development is deemed to be acceptable. This is a brownfield site and the proposal would make efficient use of land in accordance with national planning policy. This is an acceptable site within walking distance of Bacup Town Centre which is in need of investment and regeneration. There is overwhelming support for this proposal from the local community.

3 or more objections received

Other (please state) DEPARTURE

HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Article 8

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

Article 1 of Protocol 1

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

APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 The Site

Greensnook Farm is situated within the Urban Boundary of Bacup, approximately half a mile from its Town Centre. It is no longer a working-farm. Although the land on the opposite side of Greensnook Lane to the site remains open, it is otherwise within an essentially residential area.

The application site is broadly rectangular, having a 57m long frontage to Greensnook Lane and a plot depth of approximately 20m.

The buildings on the site comprises of :

- A 2-storey stone-built farmhouse/barn running along the western boundary of the site. The farmhouse has its gable abutting Greensnook Lane and its front elevation facing to the west, bearing a datestone from 1704. Its external walls and roof-structure are in reasonably good condition. However, the same cannot be said of the attached barn, which has been modified to a greater degree during its working-life. Sections of its roof have sagged as a result of the failure of certain roof-timbers, cracks/broken lintels in the west and south elevations evidence (historic) movement, and the upper-part of the exposed section of its east elevation requiring re-build. (Building A on the following Plan)
- A further 2-storey stone building, added to the rear of the farmhouse, and running along the back edge of the footway to Greensnook Lane. It too appears to have had residential origins, presents a gable to Greensnook Lane and is in reasonably good condition. However, the upper part of its east elevation would require re-build. (Building B)
- Further to the east are a couple of 1-storey stone outbuildings/agricultural buildings, sited near to the vehicular access-point serving the site, the roof of one of profiled-sheeting and the other without a roof-covering. The intervening wall of approximately 2m in height and 14m in length once supported other (brick) buildings, but they have now gone. (Buildings C)
- To the rear of the attached barn referred to above is a 2-storey stone building of agricultural origin, with 1-storey blockwork lean-to. It extends southwards, beyond the boundary of the application site/the applicants land-ownership. This building has a lower ridge and gutter-height than the farmhouse/attached barn, the upper part of its gable requiring re-build. The part of this building lying beyond the boundary of the application site/the applicants land-ownership was converted to residential use many years ago, leaving an unsightly gap in the stonework rising from ground to gutter-height on the east elevation. (Building D)
- Facing the 1-storey outbuildings/agricultural buildings and vehicular access-point referred to above is a further line of 1-storey outbuildings/agricultural

buildings, varying in age, the stonework in their rear elevations in places tumbled-down and the elevations of them visible from the yard to the front/from Greensnook Lane mostly of brick-construction. (Buildings E)

The vehicular access to the yard at Greensnook Farm also gives access to land lying between the yard and the back-gardens of a terrace of 5 houses fronting Greensnook Lane, used by these residents for parking.

1.2 The Proposal

As amended, permission is sought to :

- Convert the farmhouse/attached barn (Building A) to four houses. This will entail extensive internal works, but externally will not entail re-build beyond the roof and a section of the upper-part of its east elevation. As the cracks in the west and south elevations show no evidence of recent movement they are to be addressed without the need for re-build, and will not be evident following re-pointing which is generally required. In re-laying the roof-covering rooflights are to be incorporated, with limited new door and window openings to be formed in the external walls.
- To construct to the east of Building B a 2-storey extension of comparable gutter and ridge-height, adding to its footprint by a third to create an additional dwelling, and incorporating part of the 2m high yard wall.
- To construct to the east side of the above 2-storey extension a 3-storey building that will accommodate three houses, incorporating part of the 2m high yard wall and the 1-storey stone outbuildings/agricultural buildings (Buildings C).
- To rebuild the upper part of the north gable of Building D and replace the 1-storey blockwork lean-to to its east side with stone-built extension of similar footprint but with 1m greater height and 2 dormers on its roof, thereby creating a further house.
- To demolish the other block of 1-storey outbuildings/agricultural buildings (Buildings E) to create a larger yard in which to accommodate 12 car parking spaces for residents/visitors of the proposed houses, 4 car parking spaces for existing residents and bin-stores.

1.3 Policy Context

Rossendale District Local Plan (Adopted 1995)

DS1	-	Urban Boundary
E4	-	Tree Preservation
E7	-	Contaminated Land
HP4	-	New Uses for Old Buildings
DC1	-	Development Criteria
DC2	-	Landscaping
DC4	-	Materials

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (Adopted 2005)

Policy 1	-	General Policy
Policy 2	-	Main Development Locations

- Policy 7 - Parking
- Policy 12 - Housing Provision
- Policy 20 - Lancashire's Landscapes
- Policy 21 - Lancashire's Natural & Manmade Heritage

Other Material Planning Considerations

PPS1
PPG3
PPG13
PPG23
RPG13

Draft RSS
LCC Parking Standards
RBC Housing Position Statement (Aug 2005)
RBC Housing Land Position Monitoring Report (May 2006)
RBC Housing Needs & Market Assessment 2004/2005
RBC Bacup, Stacksteads & Britannia Emerging AAP

2. CONSULTATIONS

LCC(Planning) advises that the proposed development is contrary to Policy 12 of the Structure Plan and will contribute unacceptably to housing oversupply.

It further advises that the site has good accessibility by means other than the private car and the scheme accords with the adopted Parking Standards.

LCC(Archaeology) advises that the complex of buildings as a whole is of some historical interest and, from an archaeological point of view, it does not have objection to the principle of conversion to residential use. However, it would prefer to see a less intensive development, indicating that "*the development proposed will have a significant impact on the historical character and appearance of the buildings*". It expresses particular concerns about the obliteration of indicators of the original agricultural and domestic functions of the group of buildings, and changes over time, as a result of the introduction of regularly spaced identical windows and doors, the addition of dormers and chimneys and excessive use of rooflights.

LCC(Highways) has no objection in principle to the proposed development, but recommends conditions to secure improved visibility at the vehicular access-point to the site.

The Environment Agency and United Utilities raise no objection in principle.

3. REPRESENTATIONS

Letters have been received from the occupiers of the two properties having gardens on the south side of Buildings E.

One of the residents is generally supportive of the principle of the development, but expresses concern that if the high wall screening their garden is not rebuilt they will experience a loss of privacy and the lean-to building in their garden will lose its means of support.

The other resident objects to the proposal for the following reasons :

- a. The developers have allowed the property to become derelict/parts of the boundary wall to collapse.
- b. The demolition of the boundary wall will result in loss of privacy/security and spoil the charm/character of the area and habitat of birds.
- c. The creation of 9 dwellings on the site is overcrowding and the intended level of parking inadequate.

4. THE APPLICANTS CASE

In support of the application the Applicant says :

1. The scheme proposes affordable 3-bedroomed family housing for which there is local demand.
2. The local community support the proposal as the site presently blights this otherwise attractive residential area.
3. Although one of the oldest buildings in Bacup, it is structurally sound and capable of conversion without significant re-build or alteration.
4. In conservation and architectural terms this is an important and prominent building that is worthy of retention, the costs of doing so justifying the new-build element.
5. The site is within convenient walking distance of Bacup Town Centre, with ready access to public transport.
6. The site lies within Bacup, Stacksteads & Britannia Area Action Plan, wherein regeneration activity (including housing) is being encouraged.
7. There is no reason to refuse this application on housing oversupply grounds, having regard to the historic housing completion rates in the borough.
8. The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West proposes an increase in the housing allocation for Rossendale set out in the Structure Plan, and it seeks to increase the proportion of new houses built on brownfield sites

5. ASSESSMENT

In dealing with this application the main issues to consider are :

- 1) principle of the development
- 2) housing policy
- 3) heritage interest/townscape impact
- 4) residential amenity
- 5) highway/transport issues

Principle

The application site lies within the Urban Boundary of Bacup and, in my view, is not unduly inaccessible by means of travel other than the private car. To this extent the re-development of the site is appropriate in principle.

Housing Policy

The main issue which needs to be considered in relation to Housing Policy is that of housing over-supply.

Consistent with housing policy contained in national and regional guidance, Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (adopted March 2005) has resulted in a housing allocation requiring a reduced rate of provision for several Lancashire Districts over the period 2001-2016, including Rossendale. Policy 12 states that 1,920 dwellings are

required to be built within the Borough between 2001 and 2016 in order to adequately house the Borough's population. It further states that these are to be provided at the rate of 200 dwellings per year until 2006 and 80 per year thereafter. Having regard to the number of dwellings which have been built since 2001, and to the number for which permission exists, LCC (Planning) is of the view that this Council should rigorously enforce a policy of restraint on proposals coming forward that will create additional dwelling units.

In the supporting statement following Policy 12 of the Structure Plan it states that :
"Where there is a significant oversupply of housing permissions, planning applications for further residential development may not be approved unless they make an essential contribution to the supply of affordable or special needs housing or form a key element within a mixed use regeneration project".

The Council's Housing Position Statement (August 2005) accepted the contention that the Council would over-shoot its housing allocation and the permissions now granted should be limited to those it set out :

"Applications for residential development in Rossendale will be refused, on housing land supply grounds, in all but the following limited circumstances:

- a) In any location where the proposal is a like for like replacement of an existing residential dwelling resulting in no net gain in dwelling numbers and which conforms to relevant policies of the development plan and other material considerations; or*
- b) The proposal will positively contribute to the urban regeneration of the Bacup, Stacksteads and Britannia Housing Market Renewal Initiative areas or the Rawtenstall Town Centre Masterplan (Area Action Plan); and*
- c) The proposal will not harm the character of the adjoining areas such as conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings; and*
- d) The proposal will assist the regeneration of the site; and*
- e) The proposal meets an identified local housing need."*

At its meeting in June 2006 Cabinet received a Housing Land Monitoring Report, setting out the latest position in relation to provision of housing. The report to Cabinet says of the Monitoring Report : *"It shows that the number of dwellings which have a valid planning approval exceed the requirements of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (JLSP). Anticipated completions have also been considered and this will significantly exceed the provision of just 80 that the JLSP requires on an annual basis for the period 2006 to 2016. The situation has not changed since the Housing Policy Position Statement, approved in August 2005."* Nor has the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy progressed to the stage that its contents can have greater weight than Policy 12 of the adopted Structure Plan and the Regional Guidance it was founded upon.

Accordingly, it is appropriate to consider the application in relation to the criteria of the Housing Position Statement.

The application proposal :

- Does result in an increase in number of dwellings on the site - from 1 to 9.
- Does lie within the boundary of the emerging Bacup, Stacksteads & Britannia AAP. However, this particular site is not identified as a Key Site for

regeneration, nor within the boundary of a Cluster Area for such sites; it is within a Non-Intervention Area identified in the Issues & Options Report (July 2005).

- Will not harm the character of any Listed Building or Conservation Area, etc.
- The “regeneration” credentials of the proposal will be dealt with separately below.
- The Applicant has not shown how the provision of these additional dwellings meets an identified local housing need. Nor has the applicant given any indication that the intended dwellings will be provided/retained as affordable or special needs housing (as defined in PPG3 and as referred to in the supporting text to Policy 12 of the Structure Plan).

Thus, the proposal is contrary to certain of the criteria of the Housing Position Statement.

Heritage Interest/Townscape Impact

Policy HP4 of the adopted Local Plan reads as follows :

The Council will actively encourage new uses of old buildings or groups of buildings which are of architectural or historic interest and also encourage private sector conservation initiatives provided that the change of use and alterations would be sympathetic to the character of the buildings and the proposed use does not detract significantly from the quality of the surrounding area.

It is appropriate to consider the application for compliance with this policy in itself and also in respect of the extent to which compliance with this policy helps make the case for permitting the scheme as an exception to Policy 12 of the Structure Plan by reason of its ‘regeneration’ credentials.

The first thing that needs to be said is that none of the buildings at Greensnook Farm are of such special architectural or historic interest that they have been included on the national list of Listed Buildings. However, I concur with the view of LCC(Archaeology) that the complex of buildings is undoubtedly of some local historical interest, particularly the farmhouse/barn (Building A). That its physical condition has been allowed to deteriorate to the extent it has is, to say the least, regrettable. There is no prospect of the agricultural use resuming, nor would such a use generate the income to fund the works of repair/restoration the building would require. Consequently, there is a need for a new use to be found for this element of the building in order to fund its repair/restoration.

Its conversion for residential purposes is, in principle, considered the most appropriate use having regard to the form of the building itself, its location and the nature of the surrounding uses. While I can appreciate the concern expressed by LCC(Archaeology) about the introduction of rooflights on this building, I do not consider this would in itself warrant refusal of the application on the basis that the scheme does not provide for its sympathetic conversion. Of far greater concern to me is the scale and form of the new-build which is being proposed. As viewed from the highway, the 3-storey block of dwellings being proposed on the frontage to Greensnook Lane will dwarf the existing farmhouse/barn and will be so ‘domestic’ in character that the complex of buildings as a whole will cease to read as a farmstead, fundamental to its character. That the lean-to towards the back of the site is to be rebuilt with dormers on the roof, to help create the space for another dwelling, further

erodes the intrinsic character of the complex, as too does effective loss of all of 1-storey outbuildings/agricultural buildings (Buildings C & E).

Accordingly, I conclude that the submitted scheme will serve to do away with appearance of dilapidation evident when the yard is viewed from Greensnook Lane, but the scale/form of the new-build is such that the scheme (looked at as a whole) will cause significant harm to the historical character and appearance of the buildings.

Residential Amenity

I am satisfied that the proposed development will not detract to an unacceptable extent from the amenities of any neighbours except in respect of the dormers proposed in relation with the dwelling to be created within/by extension of Building D. They will serve bedrooms and will give oblique outlook over one of the gardens of the neighbours to have commented on the application, sited only 2m from the party boundary.

Highway/Transport Issues

I am satisfied that the local road network could satisfactorily accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the number of dwellings proposed. However, I concur with the Highway Authority that if permission were going to be granted to the scheme it would be necessary to attach conditions to secure improvement of visibility to each side of the vehicular access-point. To that end, and in the interests of pedestrian safety, the footway to the east side of the access should be widened.

5. CONCLUSION

While the application was submitted to the Council on the basis that 9 dwellings would be created by the sympathetic conversion of buildings of historical interest, 5 of the dwelling units will to a significant degree, if not completely, be the product of new-build.

Furthermore, the scheme will cause such significant harm to the historical character and appearance of the buildings it cannot be said to comply with Policy HP4 of the Local Plan or provide the 'regeneration' credentials to warrant granting a permission contrary to Policy 12 of the Structure Plan or the Council's own Housing Position Statement.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That the application be refused for the following reasons :

1. The proposed development would contribute towards an inappropriate excess in housing-supply provision, contrary to Policy 12 of the adopted Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the Rossendale BC Housing Position Statement (August 2005). In this instance the case has not been advanced to warrant an exception to policy being made.
2. The proposed development will cause such significant harm to the historical character and appearance of the buildings, and by reason of the dormers proposed over the re-built lean-to to the east side of the principal building within the site will cause an unacceptable loss of amenity for a residential

neighbour, contrary to Policy HP4 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.

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



Playing Fields

GREYSTOCK LANE

GREYSTOCK VIEW

CHURCH STREET

GREYSTOCK LANE

Greystock Farm

Crist Church

Greys lones

Four Winks

Greystock Cottages

Greystock View

CHURCH STREET

CHURCH STREET

Christ Church Vicarage

Greystock House

Beech Wood

Beech House

Oak House

CHURCH STREET

The Old Coach House

Oak House

Close Hill

GREYSTOCK LANE

275.0m

283.0m

284.1m

276.50m