

Application Number:	2015/0085	Application Type:	Full
Proposal:	Conversion of former Conservative Club to 4 apartments	Location:	Bacup Conservative Club, Irwell Terrace, Bacup
Report of:	Planning Unit Manager	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Development Control Committee	Date:	16 June 2015
Applicant:	Mr O Chadwick	Determination Expiry Date:	20 May 2015
Agent:	Mr R Booth		

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REASON FOR REPORTING	Tick Box
Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation	
Member Call-In Name of Member: Reason for Call-In:	
3 or more objections received	Yes
Other (please state):	

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 the Conditions set out in Section 11.

2. SITE

The application relates to an end-terraced building on the east side of St James Street that is presently vacant. It is a 2-storey stone building, and makes a significant contribution to the character of the town centre with its imposing double frontage and fine detailing. The front elevation and tarmacked area immediately fronting it is open to public view from St James Street and the bus stops fronting it.

Attached to its north gable is a terrace of houses of less height/simple design (some now converted to business use), continuing to have their front gardens bounded by a low railing). The southern gable is of poor appearance, the removal of the neighbouring building having exposed to view a white-coloured brick wall with many openings in-filled in an unsympathetic manner. Public view of the rear of the building is limited as the land behind it rises up quite steeply and trees/shrubs are growing on this bank.

The site lies within Bacup Town Centre and its Conservation Area. The building is identified in the Character Appraisal for the Conservation Area as a 'Positive Unlisted Building of High Quality', whilst the attached terrace and premises on the opposite side of St James Street are identified as 'Positive Unlisted Building of Medium Quality'. The nearby Library building is a Grade II listed building.

3. **PROPOSAL**

As first submitted the application sought permission to convert the building into 5 units of residential accommodation (a bedsit and the 4 2-bedroomed flats).

Having advised the Agent that the bedsit did not comply with the minimum size referred to in the 'Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards' recently issued by the Government the scheme has been amended.

Permission is now sought to convert the building into 4 2-bedroomed flats; the space previously to become the bedsit is now to be sub-divided in order to provide the 2 first-floor apartments with storage space. The submitted drawings show that no alteration to the front elevation is proposed beyond replacement of existing doors and window-frames. For the southern gable it is intended that it be rendered and painted in a manner hiding all of the white-coloured brickwork and in-filled openings. For the rear elevation it is intended that the existing air-conditioning units are removed and the existing door and window-frames are replaced.

As first submitted the application proposed that the tarmacked area immediately fronting the building remain open to public view and made available for the parking of 6 vehicles of future residents and their visitors. At my request, an amended drawing has been received which continues to show parking in this area for 6 vehicles but with a degree of enclosure intended to reflect the boundary treatment around the front gardens of the attached terraced properties and makes it more likely these spaces are available for parking of vehicles of residents/their visitors and less likely their vehicles are vandalised.

4. **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

None.

5. **POLICY CONTEXT**

National

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 1 Building a Strong, Competitive Economy
- Section 2 Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres
- Section 4 Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 6 Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes
- Section 7 Requiring Good Design
- Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Development Plan

Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011)

AVP2	Area Vision for Bacup, Stacksteads, Britannia & Weir
Policy 1	General Development Locations and Principles
Policy 2	Meeting Rossendale's Housing Requirement
Policy 3	Distribution of Additional Housing
Policy 7	Social Infrastructure
Policy 8	Transport
Policy 9	Accessibility
Policy 11	Retail and Other Town Centre Uses
Policy 16	Preserving & Enhancing the Built Environment
Policy 23	Promoting High Quality Design & Spaces
Policy 24	Planning Application Requirements

Other Material Planning Considerations

DCLG Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)
RBC Bacup Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2011)

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

LCC Highways

No objection.

The site is located within Bacup Town Centre and is within close walking distance of bus services, shops and other facilities. Irwell Terrace is adopted highway and is subject to an 'Prohibition of Driving' order, except for access and a 'No waiting at any time' parking restriction.

There are 6 off street spaces proposed, which is sufficient to serve the proposed flats when taking into account the highly accessible position of the development. A residential use within this building is likely to generate fewer vehicle movements than its former use.

I would recommend that the parking spaces are marked out on the ground and with signage to maximise the number of spaces and to minimise any conflicts with non-residential users visiting the town centre and looking for an opportunity to park.

The provision of 4 cycle spaces is essential.

RBC Housing

As amended, No objection.

RBC Conservation

The former Conservative Club is a substantial two-storey building of stone, with ornate stonework and windows, in a distinct late 19th century design. It is sited on Irwell Terrace, set back from the main road and forming a continuous building line with numbers 3 to 11 Irwell Terrace, which are also of stone, of earlier construction and of minimal design, highlighting the decorative character of the Conservative Club. A sense of enclosure is created by the front gardens along 3-11 Irwell Terrace, adding interest to the street scene. To the southeast of the site is a gap site, with a large car park, which has a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area, as the sense of enclosure here is lost.

The proposal for conversion to flats appears to have minimal impact on the principal elevation. The proposal includes insertion of timber mock sashes into the rear elevation. Although this elevation is not highly visible, the plane of the building will be broken up by any window protruding forward when in an open position. Therefore, it is suggested to install a mechanism that allows the windows only to open to a certain degree, so that the

window does not protrude forwards. However, an authentic, vertically sliding sash would be preferable. It may be possible to achieve the appearance of an authentic sash with plastic, providing the design is of a high quality.

The south elevation is proposed as rendered with openings blocked. This is currently a white glazed brick, which although historic (late 19th-early 20th century) is in poor condition, and is not a traditional feature or readily repairable, so render in this location may be acceptable, providing the render is an appropriate material, colour and finish. It would be preferable to retain the openings on this elevation, with vertically sliding sash windows, to minimise impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a blank gable in this location may appear rather stark, especially in contrast to the ornate frontage. The windows to the principal elevation should incorporate a pivoting top casement, and the larger panes should not open.

The existing parking area in front of the principal façade has a negative impact on the Conservation Area and contributes to the loss of enclosure. Provision of a boundary to the front of the club will help enclose this parking area and also limit views into the neighbouring car park. A stone boundary wall, as at 3-11 Irwell Terrace, would be appropriate, and a hedge of quick growing holly or hawthorn or another native species may be appropriate. Access should be central to retain the symmetry of the principal façade.

These changes will ensure that the application is in accordance with section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas). The changes will also ensure the proposal is in accordance with paragraph 131 of the NPPF and Policy 16 (Preserving and Enhancing Rossendale's Built Environment) of the Council's Core Strategy.

Lancashire Constabulary.

Within the last 12 months there have been 36 reported burglary offences in the area surrounding this site, 27 auto-crimes and 36 criminal damage offences.

These crimes include the following MO's;

- Offenders smash glazing in rear door to gain entry to dwelling,
- Offenders use wheelie bins to block views from street and kick in rear door panel to gain entry,
- Offender threw brick at side window of dwelling causing the window to smash and then ran off.

The crime levels and types indicate that the residential flats would be likely to be affected by crime.

In order to reduce the risk of crime affecting the residents, visitors and immediate locality, should planning permission be granted, I make the following recommendations;

- Front doors to apartments should be certified to PAS 24:2012 or an alternative accepted security standard as they are hidden from the general street view and should access to the building be gained, all would be vulnerable to burglary. These doors should have spyholes fitted.
- Rear ground floor windows should be certified to PAS 24:2012 to protect against burglary. These windows should have restrictors fitted as the design would allow intruder access should restrictors not be fitted. The positioning should not allow the restrictor to be accessed from outside.

- Access to the amenity space at the side and rear should be restricted by a 1.8m lockable gate. Most burglaries target the side and rear of premises so it is essential this area is protected.
- Security lighting should illuminate the side and rear of the building to enhance natural surveillance in this area from neighbouring properties and deter crime.
- Mail delivery provision should be available for each individual flat as mail often gets stolen from communal facilities.

Should planning permission be granted, I ask that the above recommendations be made a security condition, utilising your powers under Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998, in order to reduce the risk of crime affecting the future visitors, staff, businesses and local area, thereby promoting safer communities and reducing avoidable demand on policing resources.

7. **NOTIFICATION RESPONSES**

The application has been publicised by way of a press notice and a site notice and neighbours were notified by letter on 25/3/15.

The following comments have been received :

5 St James Street

Having been a neighbouring business owner for 24 years, I wish to object strongly to the conversion of these premises into residential accommodation for a variety of reasons :

- Lack of Parking,
- Conservation & the quality of the work on the conversion
- Already lots of new homes in the town centre area
- Adverse effects on the community & local events in the town.

But mainly that once this building has been converted it will be lost to retail forever, which would be a terrible shame, especially given its central location. There are lots of options for this wonderful buildings' use but I feel that making it into residential accommodation is to Bacup & the buildings' serious detriment. The building in question has been registered as a Community Asset by the charity, CAST (Community Assets Standing Tall). To change the use into residential will be of no value to our community at all. In fact if the proposed flats remain empty it could have a detrimental effect on the community.

This building is hugely important because its central location & its size make it a real focal point in the town, I have concerns over the future conservation & heritage of this building under the proposed plans. Currently the building is not well maintained under the same ownership. Broken windows, peeling paintwork etc that have been unattended for quite some time - why will flats be any different? I ask that Rossendale Borough Council refuse this Planning Application & encourage its use for community projects to benefit Bacup generally.

The outside space in front of the property is currently used as a 'community space' & events are often held there. For instance the Coconutters' Boundary dance, Christmas markets & 60s' festival, craft markets & exhibitions to name a few. The new plans make it unsuitable for potential residents' privacy & access to the property during these events or even creating a need for all of these events to move to a new less central site & affecting community events in a bad way.

There is insufficient parking allocated for potential residents, in a town where parking is already a huge concern. Residents & their visitors would then take spaces needed by

shoppers which could impact on the local shops' trade in general. Too many new homes in the town. There are already plenty of flats in the town & many are unoccupied suggesting that there is no demand.

16 Industrial Street

Object

It would be a tragedy to turn it into flats - it could be used for a lot of different businesses or something more beneficial to Bacup town centre. There are a lot of plans at the moment for Bacup centre - I don't think turning this iconic building into flats will do the centre of Bacup any good if the wrong people were to be placed in them

14 Yorkshire Street

Object

I thought we were trying to make Bacup a better place, not have more flats right in the town. I run a local shop and I know many shop keepers are against this - it's a beautiful building, not to be spoilt. Also how do we know what kind of people would live in them. We have enough trouble with some of the flats already in the town.

22 Peel Street

Object

Bacup doesn't need any more flats. Bacup is a beautiful town and if it's looked after and loved how it should be, it will eventually be the place to be. Not more flats for the druggies. We need to eradicate all the one bedroom flats, and make them into family houses. There needs to be more things for kids to do like youth clubs or similar.

37 Peel Street

Object

My concerns are that outside Irwell Terrace is a public area where Bacup events are held. The Coconutters dancing especially draw a huge amount of local and international visitors. This would infringe on other local events too, like the classic car show and the 60s weekend as this would interfere with the resident's parking and access. In addition to this, the building is an amazing example of fantastic architecture and heritage and we cannot afford to lose another beautiful building to developers. Lots of local pubs have already closed down, the Travellers at Britannia being an example.

24 Earnshaw Road

Object

200 Burnley Road

Object

This is a beautiful building that should be brought back to its former glory. It would make a lovely restaurant/cafe. How will more flats help Bacup?

? Hazel Grove

Object

I totally object to this building being turned into flats. You have already given away the only bit of green belt land next to the leisure hall to built more social housing. Are they going to

be for private rental or again for social housing/benefit folks? It needs something that the people of BACUP can use, a nice restaurant perhaps. Surely someone can come up with something other than flats!!!

Community Assets Standing Tall

Object

The building is registered with Rossendale Borough Council as a Community Asset and as such is on the register for 5 years. As the nominating organisation of this asset it would be useful to understand the council's definition of a registered community asset, which we ourselves believe is an asset open to the public for their enjoyment in whatever community guise that is, which clearly a conversion to flats does not achieve.

It holds a prominent position in Bacup centre within the boundary of the THI and the Bacup conservation area. The Heritage of the building with its date stones also has to be taken into account when considering any type of conversion.

It has the potential, in the right hands, to be an excellent community building, hosting any number of events, workshops etc. creating a hive of activity and bringing the people of Bacup and Rossendale together socially.

CAST are looking to secure grant funding to purchase the property for community use but obviously this takes time. To turn this lovely building, which has been a centre piece of social activity for over 120 years, into flats and take it away from its community would be a disaster.

PRPB Tourism Communication Group/THI Comms Group/Rossendale 60's Festival Organising Group

Object

No objection to the planning application per say, but would like to point out one issue that may arise if planning is approved.

As you will be aware, Bacup is about to go through a significant regeneration, and as is agreed by most, the regeneration alone will not put Bacup back on the map. What is having a significant effect on visitor numbers are the events that are being staged on the market and in particular on Irwell Terrace. If this application is approved, and parking to the front of the Owd Con Club is part of that approval, I fear that this may potentially stifle any event development on Irwell Terrace.

I would like to suggest that all parties are made aware that limited access to parking at the front of the Owd Con Club may occur on days when events are programmed currently this would account for three Saturdays per year but this may increase.

Rossendale Civic Trust

This historical and imposing building, known locally as "Th' Owd Conservative Club", occupies a predominant position in the centre of Bacup and the town's Conservation Area, where it fronts directly onto the paved area of Irwell Terrace, which serves as Bacup's main public and events space. Bacup is currently benefiting from a significant investment from the Townscape Heritage Initiative and it is important that decisions are taken within this context of regenerating Bacup centre in the foreseeable future.

RCT believes therefore that it is important that every possibility has been explored to retain this building as a public use building, before permission for change of use to apartments is considered.

RCT have no objections in principle to its conversion to other uses, if this preserves it for future generations and their needs. If Officers advise and Members decide that conversion to apartments is the best way to secure this buildings future, then we request that the following comments are taken into consideration :

Parking

The forecourt is plain black bitumen macadam with space proposed for 6 cars. RCT do not see it as appropriate for the principle frontages of buildings in a Conservation Area to be treated as just a car park. In other Rossendale Conservation Areas conversions have been accepted with less than 1 space per dwelling. Therefore some of this forecourt should have a more distinctive surfacing to its entrance, and with means of preventing this pedestrian area's use for parking, such as bollards, railings, plantings and stone walls.

Windows

All windows, back and front must be wood and there should be full details of these and their supplier provided as part of this application.

Gable

It's proposed to render over this quite distinctive example of white glazed brickwork, with an overall render. RCT consider that this glazed brick gable MUST stay as a readable feature in the development of the block; a period solution to increasing light in a narrow passageway. RCT would suggest a light clean of the glazed surfaces and stone features, with colour or textured features made of the blocked up windows. Would a blank boring surfacing of this gable "enhance" Bacup Conservation Area?

8. ASSESSMENT

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- 1) Principle
- 2) Housing
- 3) Heritage Issues/Visual Amenity
- 4) Neighbour Amenity
- 5) Access/Parking

Principle

Objectors consider that this application should be refused as the building has been included on the Register of Community Assets and should be brought back into use for a purpose more beneficial to the community than will result from its conversion to residential use.

It is indeed the case that this building has been included on the Register of Community Assets and could be brought back into use for its previous use without the need for planning permission to be obtained or could be converted to a number of other uses besides residential use. However, Planning Permission cannot be refused to this application because of Community Assets legislation any more than it could refused Planning Permission because it appeared to be contrary the Building Regulations or other legislation. The application must be determined on its planning merits; the grant of Planning

Permission for the proposed development would not override or dispense with the need for other legislation to be complied with.

Both national and local policies promote economic growth and seek to bring vacant buildings back into use, whilst seeking to maintain a balance of uses in town centres to ensure their vitality and viability. Whilst this building is within Bacup Town Centre it does not form part of the Primary Shopping Area. Its conversion to residential use is appropriate in principle.

Heritage Issues/ Visual Amenity

S.72 (1) of the T&CP (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, states that :

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of [the Act], special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

Under paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 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.

Policy 24 of the Core Strategy indicates that the Council will seek to ensure that each proposal positively contributes to the townscape, historic environment and local distinctiveness of Rossendale. Policy 16 (5b) states that the Council will seek to ensure that heritage assets (in this case the conservation area) will be safeguarded and secured by ensuring development is of a high standard of design, reinforcing the local distinctiveness of Rossendale.

In the interests of preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Bacup Town Centre Conservation Area it is important to secure re-use of buildings. This building forms a prominent feature in the street scene, has been vacant for quite some time and its re-use and refurbishment in a sympathetic manner should be supported. The submitted scheme, as amended, provides for conversion of the building to 4 flats with limited alterations to the front and rear elevations and improvement to the appearance of the southern gable. Furthermore, the intention to give a degree of enclosure to the existing parking area to the front of the building will also improve the appearance of the Conservation Area, ensuring this area has a boundary treatment that better reflects that of the front gardens of the attached terraced properties.

Conditions are recommended to ensure that alterations to the exterior of the building and its grounds are done to a high standard of design. On this basis, it is considered that the proposed external alterations to the building and its grounds would enhance the character and appearance of the building itself and the Conservation Area.

Neighbour Amenity

I am satisfied that the proposed development will not unduly detract from the amenities neighbours could reasonably expect to enjoy by reason of the intended change in use and associated works.

Access/Parking

The Highway Authority has not objected to the proposal, there being sufficient off-street parking to the front of the building to meet the needs of its occupiers and visitors.

10. SUMMARY REASON FOR APPROVAL

The proposed use is appropriate in principle within a Town Centre and, subject to the conditions, it and the associated works will serve to preserve and enhance the character & appearance of the Bacup Town Centre Conservation Area, without significant detriment to neighbour amenity or highway safety. The proposal has been considered with particular regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and Policies AVP2 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 11 / 16 / 23 / 24 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy DPD (2011).

11. RECOMMENDATION

That Permission be granted.

CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason : Required by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 Act.
- 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings listed, unless otherwise required by the conditions below or otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Location Plan	1510-SLP
Proposed Site Plan	1510/CC/04 rev B
Proposed Floor Plans	1510/CC/02 rev A
Proposed Elevations	1510/CC/03 rev B

Reason : For the avoidance of doubt.
- 3) Prior to the commencement of development a specification shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for :
 - a) the new external doors and windows;
 - b) repair/refurbishment/replacement of stonework, roof, rainwater goods & balustrade; &
 - c) rendering of the gable.The approved scheme of works shall be implemented prior to first use of the premises as hereby permitted.
Reason : In order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of premises located on a prominent main road frontage within a Conservation Area, in accordance with Policies 1 / 16 / 24 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy.
- 4) Prior to the commencement of development full details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for the parking area to be provided to the front of the building and its means of enclosure. The approved scheme of works shall be implemented prior to first use of the premises as hereby permitted. The parking area shall thereafter be kept freely available for use as such.
Reason : In the interests of highway safety and in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of premises located within a Conservation Area, in accordance with Policies 1 / 8 / 16 / 24 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy.

Informative

- 1) The Local Planning Authority has a Core Strategy (adopted in November 2011) and a series of Supplementary Planning Documents, which can be viewed at http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/a_to_z/service/309/core_strategy, and operates a pre-application planning advice service. All applicants are encouraged to engage with the Local Planning Authority at the pre-application stage. As part of the determination of this planning application the Local Planning Authority has worked pro-actively and positively with the applicant. In this case the applicant did not engage in pre-application discussions. The Local Planning Authority has considered the application and where necessary considered either the imposition of planning conditions and/or sought reasonable amendments to the application in order to deliver a sustainable form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the local planning policy context.