

**Item 4g**                    **13/00265/FUL**

**Case Officer**            **Ian Heywood**

**Ward**                        **Wheelton And Withnell**

**Proposal**                 **Renovation of existing farmhouse and cottage with conversion of barn to form four family homes**

**Location**                **Wheelton House Brinscall Mill Road Wheelton**

**Applicant**                **Primrose Holdings Ltd**

**Consultation expiry:** **24 April 2013**

**Application expiry:** **17 May 2013**

### **Proposal**

1. The renovation of the existing farmhouse and cottage with conversion to four family homes.

### **Site Description**

2. The site is located within the rural part of the Parish of Wheelton, where it adjoins Heapey within the Green Belt. It is located at the eastern end of the former BAe Systems Heapey Depot, a former ammunition storage site that was created prior to WWII and in which four extremely secure subterranean bunkers or magazines were constructed into the hillside. The application site is located approximately 150 metres to the east of the nearest bunker. The magazines are currently still used for the storage of explosive materials by a private company.
3. When the site was acquired by the then Ministry of Works in the 1930s it included a number of farms, of which Wheelton House was one, the only one to retain its buildings after the creation of the magazines. These buildings were effectively mothballed from then until the present time, with the result that they have become severely degraded and derelict. Despite this the farm house, attached cottage and barn were all individually listed, grade II, in 1987 by English Heritage. The buildings are 'designated heritage assets' as defined in Annex 2 to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The buildings are included within the Council's list of Heritage at Risk.
4. The farm buildings include the original farmhouse, attached 'cottage' and a separate stone barn that all date from the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century – a date stone on the barn quotes 1727. All the buildings are constructed of local sandstone with a slate roof, although much of the roof structure is now missing.
5. Whilst the original access track has long disappeared under vegetation, its position is still, just, discernible on the ground.
6. The topography of the area rises sharply to the north eastern end of the site which, together with the relatively isolated location, means that the site has no immediate neighbours save for the operators of the secure storage facility to the west.

### **Recommendation**

7. It is recommended that these applications are approved, subject to a S.106 Agreement.

### **Main Issues**

8. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
  - Background Information
  - Principle of the development

- Impact upon designated heritage assets
- Impact on the neighbours
- S.106 Agreement

### **Representations**

9. No letters of objection have been received

### **Response to objections**

10. N/A

11. No letters of support have been received

12. Wheelton Parish Council has objected to the proposal on the grounds of inadequate access.

### **Consultations**

13. **Lancashire County Council (Ecology)** No objection, subject to conditions

14. **United Utilities** No objections

15. **Lancashire County Council (Highways)** No objection, subject to conditions

16. **Chorley's Waste & Contaminated Land Officer** No observations

17. **The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** No objections

### **Applicants Case**

18. The applicant is proposing to create four dwellings, whereas the previous permissions (see below) only proposed two, on the grounds that the resultant smaller units will be more saleable and attractive to the market in the current economic climate. In his opinion the prospective price of the properties will be more realistic and achievable than that which would be economically necessary for two dwellings.

### **Assessment**

#### Background Information

19. Permission/consent was previously granted in January 2011 for the restoration and conversion of these buildings to form two dwellings. This included the reinstatement of the original access road and the creation of parking areas and a domestic garage, the latter based on the footprint of an earlier building.

#### Principle of the development

20. The Framework refers in paragraphs 79 to 92 to the Green Belt. Paragraph 89 states that '*A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are (third bullet point) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building*'.

21. The Framework also refers, in Section 12, to *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*. Paragraph 131 therein states that: *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.*

22. Policy 16 of the Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy refers to Heritage Assets. Amongst other things this aims to: *Protect and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting by: Supporting development or other initiatives where they protect and enhance local character, setting, management and historic significance of heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that will improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition, or at risk.*

23. In terms of the Green Belt, the principle of restoration and conversion of these buildings has

already been established by permission granted in January 2011 under application reference numbers 10/00763/FUL and 10/00764/LBC. The question for this application is whether the changes to those previous permissions still meet the requirements given in the Framework. The most visible difference, apart from detail changes to a limited number of areas, is the erection of additional garages. These have, following pre-application discussion and revision, been clustered in groups within the least visible areas of the site and have adopted a sympathetic and subservient design approach. As a result it is considered that the proposed development does not have any greater material impact upon the Green Belt than either the existing buildings or the previously approved scheme.

24. In terms of heritage assets it is recognised that allowing conversion and alteration would facilitate saving these listed buildings from a very precarious and uncertain future and bring them back into a sustainable, economic use. The future of these designated heritage assets will thus be secured and will enable removal from the Council's Heritage at Risk register.
25. The proposed development is therefore considered to conform with the Framework and the Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012).

#### Impact upon designated heritage assets

26. As has already been stated, above, both the Framework and Policy 16 of the Adopted Core Strategy include sections on heritage assets. As has also been already mentioned, these assets are in a very poor, even perilous condition and are included on the Council's Heritage at Risk register. They are at very high risk of complete loss in the near future if the degradation of their condition remains un-arrested.
27. Proposals to reuse, restore and convert the buildings to a sustainable, economic use are therefore to be welcomed. The proposed development is considered to be sympathetic to the significance of these buildings, which is described and recorded in the accompanying Archaeological Building Survey report.
28. The proposed development can therefore be seen to accord with the Framework and the Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy.

#### Impact on the neighbours

29. The nearest residential neighbour is at Higher Garstang, which is a property located approximately 400 metres to the south west of the site. Given this it is considered that there will be no material impact as a result of the proposed development upon the amenity currently enjoyed by this property.

#### Section 106 Agreement

30. A S.106 Agreement has been drafted and agreed with the applicant with the following heads of terms. These comprise financial contributions towards various forms of public open space as follows:  
Amenity Green Space £340 in Wheelton & Withnell Ward (£85 per dwelling)  
Equipped Play Areas £1704 in Wheelton & Withnell Ward (£426 per dwelling)  
Playing Pitches £3472 within the Borough (£868 per dwelling)  
TOTAL £ 5516

#### **Overall Conclusion**

31. The proposed development can be seen to accord with the Framework, Sections 9 and 12, and with the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, Policy 16. It will also facilitate the provision of a sustainable economic use for a number of designated heritage assets and will potentially save them from complete loss, such is the poor state of their condition. These applications are therefore recommended for approval.

#### **Planning Policies**

##### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Section 9, Green Belt, Section 12, Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## Planning History

**Ref:** 10/00763/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 5 January 2011

**Description:** Full planning application for the renovation and restoration of Wheelton House and Wheelton Barn to form two dwellings

**Ref:** 10/00764/LBC **Decision:** PERLBC **Decision Date:** 5 January 2011

**Description:** Listed building consent for the renovation and restoration of Wheelton House and Wheelton Barn to form two dwellings.

## Recommendation: Permit (Subject to Legal Agreement) Conditions

1. Prior to the commencement of development a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This statement should set out how the structural integrity of both buildings shall be maintained throughout the construction phase and include specific details on any temporary structural works required as part of any rebuilding/refurbishment.  
*Reason: To ensure and safeguard the historic importance associated with both buildings and in accordance with PPS5.*
2. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.  
*Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*
3. The hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Title	Plot	Drawing Reference	Received date
Site Layout		1301/01/A	20/03/2013
Barn Floor Layouts		1301/02	20/03/2013
Barn Elevations		1301/03	20/03/2013
Farm House Floor Layouts		1301/04	20/03/2013
Farm House Elevations		1301/05	20/03/2013

*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning*

4. Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced, full details of the position, height and appearance of all fences and walls to be erected (notwithstanding any such detail shown on previously submitted plan(s)) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until all fences and walls shown in the approved details to bound its plot have been erected in conformity with the approved details. Other fences and walls shown in the approved details shall have been erected in conformity with the approved details prior to substantial completion of the development.  
*Reason: To ensure a visually satisfactory form of development, to provide reasonable standards of privacy to residents.*
5. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until that part of the service road which provides access to it from the public highway has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.  
*Reason: In the interests of highway safety.*

6. Prior to the commencement of development samples of all external facing and roofing materials (notwithstanding any details shown on previously submitted plan(s) and specification) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be undertaken strictly in accordance with the details as approved.  
*Reason: To ensure that the materials used are visually appropriate to the locality.*
7. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of any buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.  
*Reason: In the interest of the appearance of the locality.*
8. Before any tree felling is carried out full details (including species, number, stature and location) of the replacement tree planting shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The replacement tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details within nine months of the tree felling.  
*Reason: To safeguard the visual amenity of the area.*
9. A landscaping (habitat creation) scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The scheme shall demonstrate compensation for the loss of habitat and enhancement of biodiversity incorporating the recommendations of paragraphs 4.6 and 4.9 of the submitted 'Bowland Ecology Report' and the approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to occupation of either dwelling unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
*Reason: To ensure the protection of wildlife habitats.*
10. Any tree felling, vegetation clearance works, demolition or any other works that may affect nesting birds shall not be carried out between March and August inclusive (the bird nesting season). If it is necessary to clear vegetation during the nesting season a pre-clearance nesting bird survey carried out by qualified ecologist shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning. If nesting birds are found to be present, an exclusion zone will not be cleared until nesting is complete (as determined by the ecologist).  
*Reason: To ensure that the development does not adversely affect any nesting birds.*
11. No site clearance, site preparation or development work shall take place until a precautionary method statement for the protection of bats has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority with the approved method statement to be implemented in full.  
*Reason: To ensure the protection of bats and other wildlife within the application site.*
12. No development shall take place until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, notwithstanding any such detail which may have previously been submitted. The scheme shall indicate all existing trees and hedgerows on the land; detail any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; indicate the types and numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted, their distribution on site, those areas to be seeded, paved or hard landscaped; and detail any changes of ground level or landform.  
*Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area.*