

<b>Item</b>	<b>06/00838/FUL</b>	<b>Refuse Full Planning Permission</b>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Mr David Stirzaker</b>	
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Wheelton And Withnell</b>	
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Proposed additional floor above existing ground floor building, with existing approval for office use</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Buildings At Base Of Chimney Withnell Fold Mill Withnell Fold Withnell PR6 8BA</b>	
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Primrose Holdings 1995 Ltd</b>	
<b>Background</b>	<p>This application relates to a small single storey building at the foot of a chimney. The application site is within the Withnell Fold Conservation Area adjacent to Withnell Fold Mill. The building and chimney is just south of the said Withnell Fold Mill and is on the Council's list of Locally Important Buildings.</p>	
<b>Proposal</b>	<p>This application proposes a first floor extension to the existing single storey building at the base of the chimney and the use of the resultant building as offices. The proposal involves lifting the eaves and ridge of the building by a height of 2.5m. A window is proposed in the gable end and the side elevation at first floor level and three rooflights are proposed in the rear roof plane. No car parking is proposed and the application forms state that parking is available within the Withnell Fold site adjacent to the application building.</p>	
<b>Policy</b>	<p>GN5: Design and Landscaping  DC1: Green Belts  DC7A: Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Green Belt  EM2: Industrial/Business Development  HT7: Conservation Areas  HT10: Locally Important Buildings  TR4: Highway Development Control Criteria  Policy 7 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan: Parking Standards  SPG: Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Countryside</p>	
<b>Planning History</b>	<p>Planning permission was granted in (02/00057/FUL) for the conversion of the single storey building at the base of the chimney to an office. Works to implement this permission, comprising of the refurbishment of the chimney, have commenced.</p>	
<b>Representations</b>	<p>Two letters have been received from the occupiers of the following properties, the contents of which can be summarised as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The re-use of the existing building as offices is welcomed as is the refurbishment of the chimney</li> <li>• Doubling the height of one of the oldest and most prominent buildings in the Conservation Area will impact on its nature and character</li> <li>• Scale of proposal not consistent with re-use of buildings in such areas and would set a precedent</li> </ul>	

- Chimney should not be brought back into use at any cost
- The chimney and building is how it was when built 150 years ago by Thomas Parke
- There is no provision for parking and the access road is very narrow
- The application is fully supported
- Current work on the chimney is looking good and offices at the base would make a fantastic gateway for the people who live, work and visit Withnell Fold, the canal and Conservation Area
- The applicants are well regarded for their superior build quality and sympathetic designs that blend well with existing structures
- Offices would not be out of place given it is adjacent the existing industrial operations carried out at the mill
- The extra traffic would not make any noticeable difference to the volume of vehicles
- Until the Mill can be fully converted into residential and/or industrial use, this application is one step closer to the regeneration Withnell Fold Mill deserves

## **Consultations**

British Waterways raise no objection to the proposal

LCC (Highways Area South) make no comments as the proposal is outside of the core area.

LCC (Highways) do not raise any objections to the proposal.

The Council's Conservation Officer raises an objection to the application citing the following reasons: -

- The proposal would be inappropriate within this attractive group of buildings, as well as Withnell Fold Village itself
- The chimney and adjoining building are likely to be listed some time in the future as they are of industrial archaeological value and the proposed scheme would severely reduce this value and would divorce the small building from its adjoining chimney in terms of historical context and relevance
- If the small building were to be altered it would come to dominate the immediate neighbours, when at present it is of a more ancillary status
- An alternative scheme would be to raise the eaves height by 1m – 1.5m so as a first floor office can be created between the two trusses although it may be necessary to excavate the floor to make up for the deficiency
- To favour the proposal would be contrary to the Council's duty to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area

## **Assessment**

The main issue is the impact of the extension on the character and appearance of the Withnell Fold Conservation Area, the openness of the Green Belt, Traffic and Parking and residential amenity.

Turning to the first issue, as detailed, the Council's Conservation Officer has objected to the proposal. It is considered that the

extension would be inappropriate within the attractive group of buildings as well as for Withnell Fold village itself. It is also stated that the chimney and adjoining building are likely to be listed in the future as they are of industrial archaeological value. The extension would severely reduce this value and would divorce the small building from its adjoining chimney in terms of historical context and relevance. The altered building would also dominate the adjacent buildings, when at present it is of a more ancillary status. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy Nos. HT7 and HT10 of the Local Plan Review.

An alternative has been offered to the applicant by the Council in that it was suggested the eaves and ridge height be increased by about 1m to 1.5m so as a first floor can be created between the two trusses. However, the applicant has explored this and has advised it is not feasible.

In terms of Green Belt impact, whilst there is an extant permission for the conversion of the building to an office, this does not propose any extensions to it. Whilst it is noted that the building is part of the Withnell Fold Mill built development, the applicant has not forwarded any very special circumstances as to why the first floor extension should be permitted as only very minor extensions are normally allowed to such buildings in the Green Belt as part of a conversion scheme. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy Nos. DC1 and DC7A along with the objectives of the Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Countryside SPG.

Turning to the matter of highway safety, LCC (Highways) do not raise any objections to the application. In terms of residential amenity, it is not considered that the development will harm the amenities of the occupiers of the adjacent properties.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of the above, it is recommended that planning permission be refused, as the proposed first floor extension would result in detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the Withnell Fold Conservation Area and the existing building and chimney hence would be contrary to Policy Nos. HT7 and HT10. The applicant has not forwarded any very special circumstances in support of the application setting out why planning permission should be granted for a development which is contrary to Green Belt policy hence the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy Nos. DC1, DC7A and the Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Countryside SPG document.

## **Recommendation: Refuse Full Planning Permission**

### **Reasons**

1. The proposed first floor extension by virtue of its design and scale would result in detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the Withnell Fold Conservation Area and that of the application building, which is Locally Listed. As such, the development is contrary to Policy Nos. HT7 and HT10 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

2. The application property is located in the Green Belt wherein new development is strictly controlled. The proposal involves a substantial extension to an existing building as part of a conversion scheme. No very special circumstances have been forwarded to justify such an extension hence the proposal is contrary to Policy Nos. DC1 and DC7A of

the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review and the Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document on the Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Countryside.

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