

Agenda Item A6	Committee Date 12 December 2011	Application Number 11/00943/FUL
Application Site Land Opposite 19 - 25 Strands Farm Court Hornby Lancaster		Proposal Erection of 10 affordable dwellings and alteration of access to previously approved B1 units
Name of Applicant Mr Ian Beardsworth		Name of Agent Richard Wooldridge
Decision Target Date 9 January 2012		Reason For Delay N/A
Case Officer		Mr Andrew Drummond
Departure		No
Summary of Recommendation		Approval

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The 0.28 hectare application site is located at the southern end of the rural village of Hornby. The site falls on the western side of Strands Farm Court, the road from which the site is accessed.
- 1.2 This relatively flat site has a range of surfaces, including self-seeded plants, foundations for some of the previously approved the business units and overgrown broken hardcore. To the west and north is open countryside, albeit further approved business units are proposed to the adjacent land immediately to the north. The small residential development of Strands Farm is situated to the east. The now disused railway line and Hornby Station is to the south, which is now occupied by established business uses. It is separated by a c3.5m high stone wall from the application site.
- 1.3 The site is designated as part of the District's Countryside Area and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Lancaster District Local Plan. It falls just outside Hornby Conservation Area.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for 10 new affordable houses; four 2-bed houses and six 3-bed houses. It is proposed that the properties would be available for social rent. 2 short terraces of 4 properties each would be situated on the western side of the site with 2 semi-detached properties towards the south east corner.
- 2.2 The proposed palette of materials include off white rendered walls under an artificial slate roof, finished with painted timber windows (and French doors on the 3-bed units) and painted composite steel doors. The roof arrangement on the 4 unit terraces would be completed with gable fronted ends. The boundary treatment would be a mix of natural stone walls (to the Strands Farm Court frontage) and timber palisade fencing.
- 2.3 Access would be taken from Strands Farm Court in the north east corner of the site. The 10 properties would be served by a small cul-de-sac with 15 car parking spaces (including 2 mobility spaces) provided from this road. It is proposed to provide bike storage within the private garden

space of the 3-bed units, with bike storage provided for the 2-bed units off the central public area. A similar arrangement is proposed for the bin storage. The access to the approved B1 units (06/00770/FUL) would be amended from the previously approved arrangement to accommodate the residential development. Members should note that the planning status of this 2006 permission is currently being debated with the applicant. A verbal update will be provided to Members at the Planning Committee on this matter.

3.0 Site History

3.1 The site has a varied planning history, including:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
00/00055/OUT	Outline application for erection of six light industrial units and ten dwellings	Permitted
02/00676/FUL	Erection of 22 new dwellings, conversion of existing barns to form 4 dwellings, erection of a 2 storey office building, new vehicular access on to Lancaster Road and associated parking and landscaping	Permitted
02/00723/OUT	Outline application for the erection of offices	Permitted
04/00397/REM	Reserved matters application for the erection of a business unit for B1 use	Permitted
05/00733/FUL	Erection of 14 houses	Refused
06/00770/FUL	Construction of 11 B1 units	Permitted
11/00485/FUL	Erection of 10 affordable dwellings	Withdrawn

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and internal consultees:

Consultee	Response
County Highways	The layout drawing (No 1350-300 D) addresses the Highway Authority's original concern regarding manoeuvrability and is acceptable.
Environment Agency	No objection in principle to the proposed development subject to a condition requiring a surface water regulation system. The Agency also wishes to encourage the incorporation of water management measures, the use of sustainable forms of construction and the development of energy efficient buildings.
United Utilities	No objection to the proposal provided that the following conditions are met: This site must be drained on a separate system
Environmental Health	No objection subject to contamination, hours of construction (0800-1800 Mon to Fri and 0800-1400 Sat only) and dust control conditions.
Forest of Bowland AONB	No comments received during the statutory consultation period.
Conservation	No objection subject to external details (including render, natural slate sample, eaves, ridges and verges, windows and doors, and lintels) being conditioned.
Hornby with Farleton Parish Council	The Parish Council is in favour of planning application provided that the industrial units are built first, as they were supposed to have been on the original planning application, and provided that these industrial units are marketed appropriately. They do not believe that sufficient effort has been made by the developer to let these units, and no evidence is provided in the planning application to support this claim. They believe that the industrial units would be valuable to the village economy due to the employment opportunities they would bring.

The Parish Council also believes that the industrial units should be located at the rear of the site, adjacent to the existing industrial units in Station Yard (their original location, where footings have already been laid), rather than at the front of the site as shown on the current plans. If they were to be built in the location indicated in this application, the Parish Council believes that this would have a detrimental effect on the aesthetics of the approach into the village and would not be a desirable view for those living in the new houses. Furthermore, the units and houses should be finished in stone, not off-white wet dash render, in keeping with the rest of the Strands Farm development, as was promised by the applicant when he attended the Parish Council meeting on 10 February 2011.

Furthermore, if this application for 10 affordable houses is to go ahead, the Parish Council believes that traffic-calming measures would be essential, such as an extension of the 30mph zone, and provision of a safe footpath along the A683 into the village.

Before the development goes ahead, the Parish Council would also like to see a firmer commitment from Adactus Housing Association, and clarification on the term “affordable” regarding the specific nature of the ownership/rental agreements.

Finally, the Parish Council has grave concerns that once planning permission is achieved on this site for affordable housing, at a later date the developer will try to have this changed to standard housing.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 5 items of correspondence have been received from local residents raising the following concerns / objections:

- Inappropriate location for the proposed use
- Contrary to planning policy
- Lack of evidence that the employment units have been adequately marketed (especially in light of the demand for similar small units in Claughton)
- Detrimental impact on the AONB / contrary to character of the area
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Overlooking/lack of privacy
- Poor choice of materials
- Removal of trees
- No demand for affordable or other new housing in Hornby
- Village is losing its key services (school, shop and post office)
- Increase in traffic
- Poor connectivity to cycle network
- No footpath from the access road to the village along A683
- Lack of parking facilities for existing and new residents, resulting in poor access arrangements
- Increase in noise
- Loss of Lune Valley views

6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies

6.1 Emerging National Planning Policy

The **Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** signals the Government’s intention to replace PPS and PPG Notes with a new framework which indicates a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF consultation period has concluded and Government will report shortly on the final document. Its formal introduction will be enacted under the provisions of the Localism Act (granted Royal Assent in November 2011). However, although the final content of the post-consultation NPPF is not yet known, the current Draft NPPF remains a material consideration in planning decisions. The extent of weight attributed to the draft document is a matter for the decision-maker – in this case the local planning authority. It is the view of Officers that the application as submitted is in general conformity with the provisions of the Draft NPPF.

In March 2011 Government advised all local planning authorities to plan positively for growth and economic development via their Ministerial Statement – ‘**Planning for Growth**’. Applications that secure sustainable growth should be treated favourably and appropriate weight given to the need to support the economic recovery. Reconsideration of previous planning contributions may also be required.

6.2 National Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Guidance Notes (PPG)

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) - provides generic advice for all new built development. Sites should be capable of optimising the full site boundary and should deliver an appropriate mix of uses, green and other public spaces, safe and accessible environments and visually pleasing architecture. The prudent use of natural resources and assets, and the encouragement of sustainable modes of transport are important components of this advice. This advice is echoed in PPG 13 - Transport. A high level of protection should be given to most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources, conserving and enhancing wildlife species and habitats and the promotion of biodiversity.

PPS3 (Housing) - illustrates the need for good quality residential development in sustainable locations which have good access to a range of services and facilities. The use of previously developed (brownfield) land is an explicit objective, as is the delivery of different types of affordable housing to meet local housing needs.

PPS 4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth) - All planning applications for economic development should be assessed against the following impact considerations:

- whether the proposal has been planned over the lifetime of the development to limit carbon dioxide emissions, and minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to, climate change;
- the accessibility of the proposal by a choice of means of transport including walking, cycling, public transport and the car, the effect on local traffic levels and congestion (especially to the trunk road network) after public transport and traffic management measures have been secured;
- whether the proposal secures a high quality and inclusive design which takes the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area and the way it functions;
- the impact on economic and physical regeneration in the area including the impact on deprived areas and social inclusion objectives; and
- the impact on local employment

PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment) - the Government’s overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations. In order to deliver sustainable development, PPS5 states that policies and decisions concerning the historic environment should:

- Recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource
- Take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation
- Recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained in the long term.

PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) - the Government’s overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all. All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness. Planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced. They should have particular regard to any areas that have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities where greater priority should be given to restraint of potentially damaging development. Nationally designated areas comprising National Parks, the Broads, the New Forest Heritage Area and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to

landscape and scenic beauty. Planning authorities should ensure that any planning permission granted for major developments in these designated areas should be carried out to high environmental standards through the application of appropriate conditions where necessary.

PPG13 (Transport) - encourages sustainable travel, ideally non-motorised forms of transport such as walking and cycling, but also other means like public transport. The use of the car should be minimised. This can be encouraged by the location, layout and design of new developments.

PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk) - recognises that though flooding cannot be wholly prevented, its impacts can be avoided and reduced through good planning and management. All forms of flooding and their impact on the natural and built environment are material planning considerations. Positive planning has an important role in helping deliver sustainable development and applying the Government's policy on flood risk management. It avoids, reduces and manages flood risk by taking full account in decisions on plans and applications of present and future flood risk, involving both the statistical probability of a flood occurring and the scale of its potential consequences, whether inland or on the coast, and the wider implications for flood risk of development located outside flood risk areas.

6.3 Regional Spatial Strategy (adopted September 2008)

Policy **DP2** (Promote Sustainable Communities) - fostering sustainable relationships between homes, workplaces and other concentrations of regularly used services and facilities, improving the built and natural environment, conserving the region's heritage, promoting community safety and security including flood risk, reviving local economies especially in areas in need of regeneration and housing restructuring such as Morecambe, promoting physical exercise through opportunities for sport and formal / informal recreation, walking and cycling.

Policy **DP4** (Make Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure) - proposals should build upon existing concentrations of activities and existing infrastructure (i.e. not require major investment in new infrastructure, including transport, water supply and sewerage). Development should accord with the sequential approach - use of previously developed land, then infill sites in existing settlements and lastly other sites which are well connected to houses, jobs and other infrastructure and facilities.

Policy **DP5** (Reduce the Need to Travel, Increase Accessibility) - development should be located so as to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and to enable people as far as possible to meet their needs locally. All new development should be genuinely accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, and priority will be given to locations where such access is already available.

Policy **DP7** (Promote Environmental Quality) - understanding and respecting the character and distinctiveness of places and landscapes, the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, promoting good quality design in new development and ensuring that development respects its setting, reclaiming derelict land and remediating contaminated land and use land resources efficiently, maximising opportunities for the regeneration of derelict or dilapidated areas, promoting green infrastructure and the greening of towns and cities.

Policy **RT2** (Managing Travel Demand) - measures to discourage car use (including the incorporation of maximum parking standards) should consider improvements to and promotion of public transport, walking and cycling. Major new developments should be located where there is good access to public transport backed by effective provision for pedestrians and cyclists to minimise the need to travel by private car.

Policy **EM16** (Energy Conservation & Efficiency) - ensure that the developer's approach to energy is based on minimising consumption and demand, promoting maximum efficiency and minimum waste in all aspects of development and energy consumption.

Policy **EM18** (Decentralised Energy Supply) - new non residential developments above a threshold of 1,000m² and all residential developments comprising 10 or more units should secure at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources.

6.4 Lancaster District Local Plan - adopted April 2004 (saved policies)

Policy **H12** (Layout, Design and Use of Materials) - new housing developments will only be permitted which exhibit a high quality of design and local distinctiveness.

Policy **H19** (Site Layout and Amenities) - in Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham and Carnforth, new residential development within existing housing areas will be permitted where there is no loss of open/green spaces, it does not adversely effect the amenities of nearby residents, it provides high standard of amenity, and it makes satisfactory provision for disposal of sewerage, waste water, servicing, access and car and cycle parking.

Policy **E3** (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) - Development within and adjacent to the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which would either directly or indirectly have a significant adverse effect upon the character or harm the landscape quality, nature conservation interests, or features of geological importance will not be permitted. Any development must be of an appropriate scale and use materials appropriate to the area.

Policy **E4** (Countryside Area) - development will only be permitted where it is in scale and keeping with the character and natural beauty of the landscape, is appropriate to its surroundings in terms of siting, scale, design, materials, external appearance and landscaping, would not result in a significant adverse effect on nature conservation or geological interest, and makes satisfactory arrangements for access, servicing, cycle and car parking.

Policy **EC16** (Non-Employment Development on Rural Employment Sites) - seeks to retain existing rural employment sites where they make a positive contribution to the rural economy and thus the survival of sustainable rural communities. Policy EC16 identifies some key rural employment sites where non-employment development is simply not permitted. Elsewhere in the district, non-employment development will only be permitted where it can be shown that there is no demand for employment development or the sites location or surroundings are unsuited to employment use and the proposal would bring about clear environmental benefits; or the proposal is part of a mixed use scheme.

6.5 Lancaster District Core Strategy - adopted July 2008

Policy **SC1** (Sustainable Development) - development should be located in an area where it is convenient to walk, cycle or travel by public transport between homes, workplaces, shops and other facilities, must not result in unacceptable flood risk or drainage problems, does not have a significant adverse impact on a site of nature conservation or archaeological importance, uses energy efficient design and construction practices, incorporates renewable energy technologies, creates publicly accessible open space, and is compatible with the character of the surrounding landscape.

Policy **SC2** (Urban Concentration) - 90% of new dwellings to be provided in the urban areas of Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham and Carnforth.

Policy **SC3** (Rural Communities) - identifies 8 villages where an allowance of 10% of new homes is accepted in order to meet local needs in villages.

Policy **SC4** (Meeting the District's Housing Requirements) - the Council will aim to maximise the opportunities offered by the development of new dwellings to redress imbalances in the local housing market, achieve housing that genuinely addresses identified local housing need and secure units of affordable housing in perpetuity.

Policy **SC5** (Achieving Quality in Design) - new development must reflect and enhance the positive characteristics of its surroundings, creating landmark buildings of genuine and lasting architectural merit.

Policy **SC7** (Development and the Risk of Flooding) - Development must not expose workplaces, homes and public areas to unacceptable levels of flooding.

Policy **ER3** (Employment Land Allocations) - to promote regeneration by ensuring that the right amount of employment land is provided in the right place to meet needs generated by existing businesses, new businesses and inward investment.

Policy **ER7** (Renewable Energy) - to maximise the proportion of energy generated in the District from renewable sources where compatible with other sustainability objectives, including the use of energy efficient design, materials and construction methods.

Policy **E1** (Environmental Capital) - development should protect and enhance nature conservation sites and greenspaces, minimise the use of land and non-renewable energy, properly manage environmental risks such as flooding, make places safer, protect habitats and the diversity of wildlife species, conserve and enhance landscapes, and be directed to previously developed land where dereliction can be cleared and contamination remediated.

Policy **E2** (Transportation Measures) - this policy seeks to reduce the need to travel by car whilst improving walking and cycling networks and providing better public transport services.

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 Principle of Development

A mixed use scheme was previously granted planning permission for Strands Farm. Whilst the residential element was developed, the commercial buildings were only commenced and were not built beyond their concrete footprints. Despite the site being marketed for 5 years by HWM Surveyors, including site signage from 2003 to 2007/8 and 16 newspaper advertisements from 2003 to 2004, the approved premises only gained the interest of 3 parties – one who is now in new premises in Lancaster, one who unfortunately has become a victim of the recession and no longer trades and one from a party who only requires about 25% of the total approved space and who are potentially still interested. In other words, the business premises have been adequately marketed and therefore the loss of approved (but not operational) employment space is acknowledged in planning policy terms (Local Plan policy EC16).

The proposal is seeking to deliver 10 new affordable housing units on the edge of an existing rural settlement. Hornby is one of the 8 identified rural villages where new housing is acceptable (Policy SC3 of the Core Strategy). Whilst a scheme for open market housing would be inappropriate in this location on the outside edge of the village, an exception can be made for affordable housing which seeks to meet a specific need. 6 of the houses will have 3 bedrooms, and are therefore usable as family houses. Even the 2-bed houses can be used by a small family. The rural area, especially an expensive area such as the Lune Valley, has a lack of affordable family homes, and therefore this is a welcome addition to the housing stock in this area.

7.2 Design and Heritage

The housing scheme has been designed around a small access road, effectively creating an intimate courtyard feel. Unfortunately this intimacy is a reflection of the site's size, which confines the layout. As a result some of the gardens fall well below the Council's minimum 50 sq.m standard for private amenity space. However, on balance the scheme is acceptable as it seeks to deliver appropriately designed affordable homes whilst protecting the amenity of the existing and future residents of Strands Farm and preserving the views across and out of the adjacent Conservation Area. The exception to this last comment is the proposed elevational treatment of an off-white render. Reconstituted stone elevations would be a more appropriate finish in this sensitive rural location, which would help the development sit more comfortably with the neighbouring properties. It is also good practice not to differentiate between social and open market housing. The use of the proposed render is a very contentious point with the local residents, though one supported (subject to colour) by the Conservation Officers. Given the points already raised, on balance it is recommended that a high quality reconstituted stone is used to all external elevations. This has been agreed with the applicant.

7.3 Landscape

The site is located within the District's Countryside Area and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The scheme therefore needs to be sympathetic to these designations. As described above in 7.2, the character of the proposal needs to be carefully assessed. The site is situated on the edge of the existing settlement and as such is relatively prominent on the approach into Hornby along the A683. Whilst it does not form a gateway into the village, it does form a new edge to Hornby and therefore the transition from the natural rural landscape into the built-up area of

the settlement should be subtle rather than introducing a stark change. The retention of some of the larger self-seeded trees within the site will help soften the hard surface and elevation treatments, whilst the planting of a native hedgerow along the western boundary rather than a domestic timber fence would be more in keeping with the site's location. The off-white render that is proposed for the houses' elevations would be in stark contrast to the rolling green fields and the stone houses of the existing Strands Farm development. Therefore the stone finish to the houses (referred to in the previous paragraph) would be more appropriate given the site's position. Lastly it is appropriate to remove permitted development rights from the properties to ensure that their character is maintained in the future. For example, the introduction of a uPVC, white framed conservatory on the rear of one of these properties would undermine the efforts of the Local Planning Authority and the developer in ensuring the approved scheme is maintained in character within the specific rural designations previously identified.

7.4 Environmental Issues

The houses are designed to meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The scheme will also need to generate at least 10% of its ongoing energy requirements from on-site renewable technologies. Solar photovoltaic panels are proposed in this regard. These are measures are encouraged by the Environment Agency, who also require a condition to regulate surface water run-off to reduce flood risk.

Conditions are requested by Environmental Health to protect the amenities of the local residents on matters of contamination, noise and dust. These are incorporated into the recommendation below.

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 The proposal is for 100% affordable housing. To deliver this, a s106 agreement is required. The agreement should detail the proportion of provision, tenure and occupancy criteria.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 For the reasons set out above, the application can be recommended for approval.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the signing and completion of a s106 agreement covering:

- 100% affordable housing provision (including tenure and occupancy criteria)

and the following conditions:

1. Standard 3 year timescale
2. Development to accord with approved plans
3. Adoptable highway details required
4. Visibility splays
5. Parking provision
6. Wheel cleaning facilities during construction
7. Landscaping scheme
8. Notwithstanding plans, external and surface materials - details required (including finishes and colours) - reconstituted stone, natural slate, eaves, ridges and verges, rainwater goods, windows and doors, lintels, porches
9. Notwithstanding plans, site and plot boundary treatments, including a native hedgerow to the western site boundary
10. 10% on site renewables
11. At least Code level 3
12. Hours of construction (0800-1800 Mon to Fri and 0800-1400 Sat only)
13. Dust control
- 14-17. Contamination conditions
18. Refuse storage details
19. Separate drainage system
20. Surface water management system
21. Removal of PD rights

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

Background Papers

None.