

<b>Agenda Item</b> A13	<b>Committee Date</b> 2 March 2015	<b>Application Number</b> 14/01122/CU
<b>Application Site</b> Mill House Formerly Moss House Farm Buildings Spout Lane Wennington	<b>Proposal</b> Change of use, conversion and extension of derelict farm buildings including mill, stables and ancillary accommodation into a residential dwelling (C3 Use) with stables and ancillary guest and staff accommodation with new access and alterations to existing access points, together with engineering and landscaping works to create a new ancillary subterranean leisure complex (swimming pool) and garaging.	
<b>Name of Applicant</b> Mr A Moores	<b>Name of Agent</b> Mr Joe Riley	
<b>Decision Target Date</b> 24 February 2015  An extension of time for determination has been formally agreed until the 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	<b>Reason For Delay</b>  Submission of revised heritage statement, revised arboricultural report and committee cycle	
<b>Case Officer</b>	Mrs Jennifer Rehman	
<b>Departure</b>	No	
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>	Approve	

## **1.0 The Site and its Surroundings**

- 1.1 The application site consists of a large complex of farm buildings located approximately 800m to the north west of Wennington, within the designated countryside area. The site comprises a large Mill building to the north, stables to the south side and three large Dutch-style hay-barns to the west which are situated on the opposite side of Spout Lane. Three residential properties lie to the south of the application site. With the exception of these neighbouring dwellings, the site is surrounded by open agricultural countryside with hedgerows and small groups of trees lining the boundaries.
- 1.2 Moss House Farm and ancillary buildings were built as a “model farm” complex in 1846 associated with Wennington Hall. The building received Grade II Listed status in 1990. Although the buildings appear to be structurally sound, aesthetically they are in a poor condition, some elements significantly more so than others.
- 1.3 The main Mill building is three storeys in height. It is constructed from dressed stone and has a slate roof. There are matching lean-to additions to both side elevations as well as across the entire rear elevation of the building. The Mill’s original stone-built chimney remains intact to the rear and provides a clear indication of its historical character and use. Large concrete silage pits, evidence of the sites more recent use, have been formed into the land as it falls away to the east side of the Mill. The existing stables and cattle pens are a series of linked single storey buildings to the front/south side of the Mill building which form a ‘U’ shape around a central courtyard. They too have dressed stone walls with slate pitched roofs which are in a better overall condition than that of the main Mill building.

- 1.4 The site can only be accessed via Spout Lane, a narrow single lane linking Wennington to the south and Tunstall to the north. Within 200m of each other there are two S-bends in the lane at both the north and south end of the site.
- 1.5 The application site is located outside of both the Wennington Conservation Area at the centre of the village and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which begins/ends at the south side of the village. The site is however identified as Countryside Area on the Lancaster District Local Plan Proposals Map.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1 The application proposes the change of use of the complex to form a single dwellinghouse and associated ancillary guest and staff accommodation – akin to a country estate. The development is broken down as follows:
- 2.2 **The former mill building** - This will be converted and extended to create the main 6-bedroomed single dwelling over three floors. The exterior and openings will be refurbished and renovated, existing lean-to's (to either side) will be re-built like-for-like and the rear lean-to removed and replaced with a modern, glazed orangery. A small glazed link extension is proposed to the east to link with the leisure complex (discussed below).
- 2.3 **Silage Pits** - To the east of the mill, a subterranean leisure complex is proposed in the location of the former silage pits. This shall be accessed via a fully-glazed link from the mill building. As the land falls away the leisure complex appears as an extension to the mill creating a linear pod-like pavilion. The podium of the pavilion and link wall will be in natural stone to match the existing building. The roof of the leisure complex shall be a grassed to fit in with the proposed landscaping around the estate with timber cladding and frameless glass forming the north and east elevations.
- 2.4 **Stable Buildings** - The stable block shall be converted into 3 residential apartments providing accommodation for staff and guests only. The remaining parts of the stable building shall be utilised for storage, utility space, laundry and stables (5 in total with a tack room). The stable courtyard shall be utilised as a kitchen garden and lunging yard.
- 2.5 **Access and Road Alignment Arrangements** - A 250m section of the highway is proposed to be realigned which, with additional landscaping, is proposed primarily to create more privacy to the proposed dwelling but also prevent the road from being used as a rat-run and assist visibility at the new and existing access points. The main access to the Mill House is proposed to be lengthened as a consequence of the realignment of the lane and an additional access will be created to the north of the site. Visibility splays of 33m x 2.4m are to be provided to the access points and any new hedgerow will be set-back to allow for visibility. All access points would be gated and allow for vehicles to safely pull off the highway. The access to the three hay barns to the west side of Spout Lane will be repositioned slightly. This will include the realignment of the hedgerow and installation of a wrought iron fence to allow for visibility splays of 19.7m to the south and 29m to the north of the exit point. The southern site access is proposed to provide access for the equestrian use to the stables as well as providing an alternative route to the subterranean garage at this side. The existing access to Moss House Close is to be retained but remodelled to provide a new private entrance to the neighbouring residential properties. Subterranean garages are proposed below the stable block to accommodate 13 vehicles. The garages will be accessed via the southern access point.

## **3.0 Site History**

- 3.1 The complex has had the benefit of planning permission and listed building consent for practically the same development back in 2010. These permissions have expired but the applicant still wishes to pursue the proposals with some minor changes to the design of the development.

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
09/00706/CU	Change of use and conversion of derelict farm buildings and mill to a single dwellinghouse with stables and	Withdrawn

	ancillary guest and staff accommodation	
<b>09/00723/LB</b>	Listed building consent for change of use and conversion of derelict farm buildings and mill to a single dwellinghouse with stables and ancillary guest and staff accommodation	Withdrawn
<b>10/00643/LB</b>	Listed building application for change of use and conversion of derelict farm buildings and mill to a single dwellinghouse with stables and ancillary guest and staff accommodation	Approved
<b>10/00642/CU</b>	Change of use and conversion of derelict farm buildings and mill to a single dwellinghouse with stables and ancillary guest and staff accommodation	Approved
<b>14/01123/LB</b>	Listed building application for external and internal works to convert and extend derelict farm buildings, including mill, stables and ancillary accommodation into a residential dwelling with stables and ancillary accommodation	Pending Consideration

#### **4.0 Consultation Responses**

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

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>English Heritage</b>	Raised concerns over lack of detail in respect of internal fixtures and fittings and compliance with local and national planning policy.
<b>Victorian Society</b>	Object on the grounds of lack of information and assessment of the proposals impacts on the significance of the heritage asset, particularly in relation to the Mill Building.
<b>County Archaeology</b>	No objection subject to a condition requiring an archaeological building recording
<b>County Highways</b>	No objection subject to conditions in relation to the off-site highway works and access points.
<b>Tree Protection Officer</b>	Objection. A detailed and up-to-date Arboricultural Implications Assessment is required.
<b>Environmental Health</b>	No objection or recommendations required
<b>Parish Council</b>	Supportive of the proposal
<b>National Grid</b>	No comments provided.
<b>Natural England</b>	No detailed comments provided other than standing advice for protected species.

#### **5.0 Neighbour Representations**

5.1 At the time of compiling this report no representations have been made to the application.

#### **6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies**

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework  
 Paragraphs 7, 12, 14, 17 - Sustainable Development and Core Principles  
 Paragraph 32 – Transport  
 Paragraphs 49, 50 and 55 – Housing  
 Paragraphs 56-64 – Good Design  
 Paragraphs 109, 111, 118 – Conserving the Natural Environment  
 Paragraphs 131-134 and 141 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment  
 Paragraphs 186 - 187 – Decision Taking

6.2 Lancaster District Development Management DPD  
 Policy DM7 – Economic Development in Rural Areas  
 Policy DM8 – Re-use and Conversion of Rural Buildings  
 Policy DM10 – Equine Development  
 Policy DM20 - Enhancing Accessibility and Transport Linkages

Policy DM29 – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
Policy DM30 – Development affecting Listed Buildings  
Policy DM32 – The Setting of Designated heritage Assets  
Policy DM35 – Key Design Principles  
Policy DM42 – Managing Rural Housing Growth

6.3 Lancaster District Core Strategy  
Policy SC1 - Sustainable Development

6.4 Lancaster District Local Plan  
Saved Policy E4 - Countryside Area

6.5 Other relevant information  
Aside from the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the Draft Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2026 (2013 Interim 5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement) is relevant - This document sets out the current published position in relation to housing land supply in the District related to the NPPF requirement for five years supply of specific deliverable sites.

## **7.0 Comment and Analysis**

7.1 The main planning considerations are as follows:

- Principle of residential use
- Heritage considerations
- Access and traffic considerations
- Amenity considerations

### **7.2 Principle of residential use**

Mill House, formerly known as Moss House Farm, is positioned 800m north of the small village of Wennington. Wennington is not identified in the Development Plan as one of the district's sustainable rural settlements. There is a general presumption against new residential development located outside of those rural settlements identified in the Development Management DPD. Proposals for new homes in isolated locations will not be supported unless there are clear and demonstrable benefits in favour of the development that would outweigh the dis-benefits of its isolated location. This is set out in policy DM42 of the DM DPD which reflects the guidance set out in the NPPF. Of particular relevance to this case is paragraph 55, which states that "*isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances, such as: where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset; or where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting*".

7.3 The former mill and farmstead are Grade II listed and ceased being used for agricultural purposes in 2007. The complex is of significant historic and architectural value, previously considered (at a local level) to be potentially 'at risk' due to its poor condition. Given the listed status of the complex, its important historic value, the fact the buildings are disused and that the proposal would re-use previously-developed land, Officers consider that its renovation and re-development to provide a country home with ancillary accommodation would satisfy the tests set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF and DM DPD Policy DM42. On this basis, the principle of redevelopment is acceptable. Whilst policy has changed since the last approval (2010), the conclusion that the principle of development is acceptable remains consistent with the previous consent.

### **7.4 Heritage Considerations**

The NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designed heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation. Similarly, the local planning authority in exercising its planning function should have regard to Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which states "*In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*". Paragraph 132 of the NPPF seeks to express the statutory presumption set out in s66(1) of the 1990 Act. How the presumption is applied is covered in the following paragraphs of the NPPF, though it is clear that the presumption is to avoid harm. The exercise is still one of planning judgment but it must be informed by the need to give

special weight to the desirability to preserve the heritage asset.

- 7.5 The proposal is coherent and well-presented and contains sufficiently detailed assessment of significance of the heritage asset and the impacts of the proposal upon that significance. Additional supporting information has been provided to address concerns of English Heritage and the Victorian Society. The scheme remains largely the same as the 2010 development that was approved in Spring 2011. The main differences relate to the design of the subterranean leisure complex building and the omission of a new basement level under the main mill building. Neither English Heritage nor the Council's Conservation Officer raised objections to the previous consented proposals subject to conditions. The current, revised scheme is considered an improvement to the previous scheme on two grounds. Firstly, the omission of the new basement negates the need to underpin the historic mill building therefore reducing the risk of damage. Secondly, the revised design of the leisure complex still represents a modern extension but has a more pleasing solid and linear composition rather than the approved circular glass structure. This better reflects the former farmstead's character. Whilst the local planning authority are supportive, the same cannot be said for the Victorian Society, who whilst being supportive of the re-use of the buildings, have objected to the scheme primarily due to the lack of consideration to the internal fabric of the mill building and the implications of the proposed demolition of an original lean-to and a replacement extension wrapping the chimney. The Victorian Society have been re-consulted on the additional information and any comments received will be provided to Committee verbally.
- 7.6 The scheme involves the restoration and conversion of the listed buildings with a schedule of works to ensure the special architectural and historic features are preserved or enhanced. Due to the condition of the building some re-building is required, but this is proposed to match existing materials and can be controlled by condition. As the report already indicates, new extensions are proposed. Extensions to listed buildings should only be supported where there can demonstrate that the development would not harm the significance of the heritage asset. In this case, the extensions are modern, subservient and complimentary to the existing historic buildings. The most significant addition to the complex is that of the leisure complex and garaging, but with these located below-ground level there is no significant harm to the listed building complex or its setting.
- 7.7 In accordance with Policy DM30 of the DM DPD and Section 12 of the NPPF and despite the concerns raised by the Victorian Society, it is contended that approving the application, in a location where residential development would generally be discouraged, will secure the long term future of this significant heritage asset. This carries significant weight in the determination of the application. In addition, it is also acknowledged that the proposal for a single dwellinghouse with associated guest and staff accommodation is not as intensive as other development that may have come forward, such as a scheme for a number of dwellings (given the scale of the site and buildings). The proposal will also generate a modest level of employment, thus supporting the local rural economy as advocated by policy DM7 of the DM DPD and paragraph 28 of the NPPF.
- 7.8 **Access and traffic considerations**  
The plans suggest that approximately 20 car parking spaces will be provided, 13 of which would be within the subterranean garage. A significant proportion of these will likely be utilised by those residing in the main house. Those remaining will be utilised by the staff and those residing in the ancillary guest/staff accommodation. A larger space is provided adjacent to the stables for the parking and turning of a horse box or horse wagon and even delivery goods.
- It is inevitable that the proposal will result in an increase in vehicle movements to and from the site and along Spout Lane. The highway movements are not considered to be substantial and are unlikely to lead to severe highway impacts (NPPF test, paragraph 32). Spout Lane has a carriageway width generally around 3.5 to 4m. The horizontal alignment of the road includes several small radius bends with two reverse bends in the vicinity of the site. The proposal includes alterations to the road alignment between these two bends widening the road to 5.4 to 6m. This improves visibility at the access points with the road and provides more privacy to the proposed Mill House. This situation was reported in the 2009 Road Safety Audit and previously accepted by County Highways. County Highways have no objection to the realignment of Spout Lane subject to conditions controlling the details and implementation of off-site highway works and access points. The applicant will also be required to enter into a legal agreement with the County Highway Authority.
- 7.9 **Amenity Considerations**

The application site is located in designated 'countryside area', approximately 770m north of the Forest of Bowland AONB boundary. New development in open countryside should be in scale and keeping with the character and natural beauty of the landscape (Policy E4 of the Saved LDLP, paragraph 17, NPPF). This proposal is well-thought out and sensitively designed to ensure that the listed building and its setting is preserved and that the wider landscape impacts are minimal. This has been cleverly achieved by developing into the site contours and creating the new additions predominately below the ground level of the existing buildings with the roofs of these structures planted/seeded to create soft landscaping. These combine to enhance the setting of the listed building without appearing incongruous within the open and rural setting of the site.

- 7.10 The proposal does not involve significant tree removal but there is a requirement to remove significant lengths of hedgerows to deal with the proposed road re-alignment. The plans indicate replacement hedgerows will be planted alongside the re-aligned roads. The tree survey is required to be updated to account to the revised British Standard and a tree protection plan would resolve the Council's Tree Protection Officer's objection. Once this is received, and its contents are satisfactory, the precise details of tree/hedgerow protection and new landscaping can be controlled by condition. A verbal update will be provided on this matter. The development will replace significant areas of hard-standing with soft landscaping thereby enhancing the appearance of the site as a whole and providing some biodiversity gain. An ecology survey and report has been provided setting out a number of mitigation measures in relation to protected species (mainly bats).
- 7.11 In terms of residential amenity, the proposed development lies adjacent to three dwellinghouses, located to the south of the complex. They are sufficient distance away from the new residential development and thus avoid any justifiable residential amenity concerns. Inevitably neighbouring residents will experience some additional noise from the increased level of activity (compared with what currently exists) but not such that it would lead to harmful effects upon their private amenity.

## **8.0 Planning Obligations**

- 8.1 None.

## **9.0 Conclusions**

- 9.1 In conclusion, whilst the scheme is small scale it still contributes to the districts housing need; it provides a good opportunity to restore and bring back into use an important, listed rural farm complex, and; offers a unique form of rural employment. The exceptional circumstances presented and discussed above represent an acceptable form of development in this location. The proposal is considered compliant with local and national planning policy and so Members are recommended to support the application.

## **Recommendation**

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard 3-year time limit.
2. In accordance with approved plans
3. Details of windows/doors/flues/roofing/glazing to extensions, materials and finishes
4. Boundary details/gates to be provided, retained at all times as approved
5. Use condition and guest/staff accommodation to be ancillary
6. Private Stable use only
7. Garage Use
8. Off-site highway works and timetable for implementation
9. Visibility splays
10. Garages/parking to be available prior to occupation
11. Hours of construction
12. Work to be carried out in accordance with Tree Report/AMS (TBC)
13. Landscaping details to be provided
14. Bat mitigation to be implemented in full
15. Standard contaminated land condition
16. No importation of soil materials unless otherwise agreed
17. Measures to survey and remove asbestos
18. Bunding of tanks

19. Drainage condition
20. Archaeology/building programme of recording and analysis
21. Removal of PD rights (class E)

### **Article 31, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010**

In accordance with the above legislation, the City Council can confirm the following:

The proposal complies with the relevant policies and provisions of the Development Plan and on consideration of the merits of this particular case, as presented in full in this report, there are no material considerations which otherwise outweigh these findings.

The local planning authority has proactively worked with the applicant/agent in negotiating amendments which have now positively influenced the proposal and have secured a development that now accords with the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **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.