
Report of the Head of Strategic Investment

HUDDERSFIELD PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 11-January 2018

Subject: Pre-application for mixed use residential and commercial development

Washpit Mills, Choppards Lane, Cartworth Moor, Holmfirth, HD9 2RD

APPLICANT

Roger Lee

DATE VALID

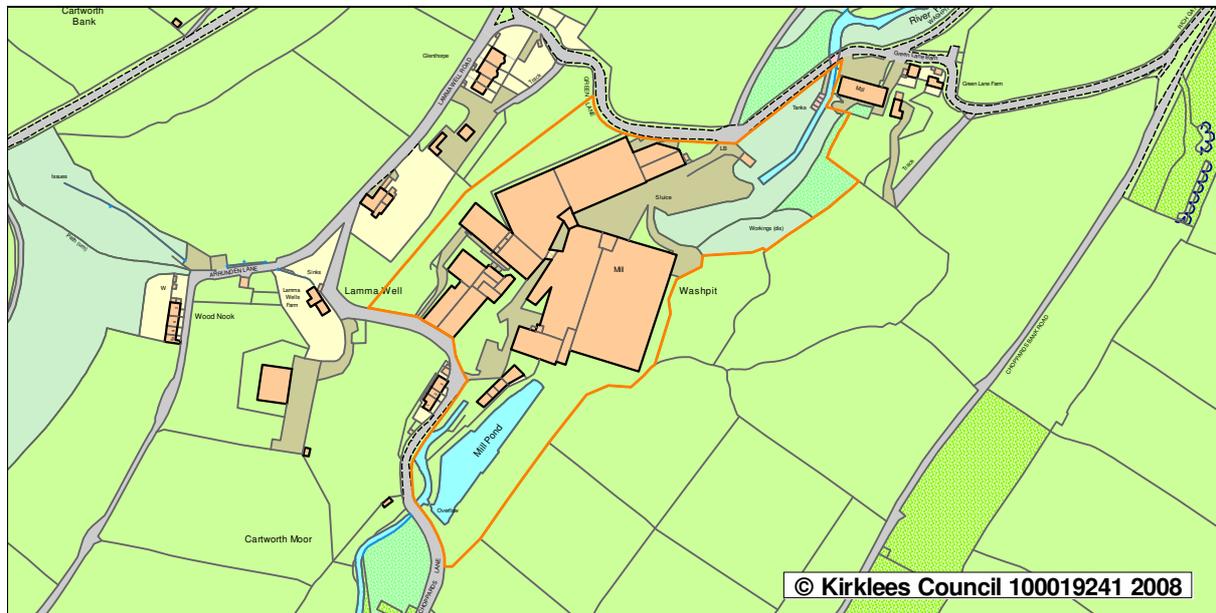
08-Nov-2017

TARGET DATE

05-Dec-2017

EXTENSION EXPIRY DATE

LOCATION PLAN



Map not to scale – for identification purposes only

Electoral Wards Affected:

Holme Valley South

Yes

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 This pre-application enquiry is brought to the Strategic Planning Committee to provide members with an update with regards to the potential redevelopment of the Washpit Mills site in Holmfirth.
- 1.2 An application for the mixed use redevelopment of the site was refused by the Planning Inspectorate in September this year following an appeal against the non-determination of planning application 2016/93428.
- 1.3 The original application was for the part demolition of existing mills and erection of 45 dwellings and 16 apartments; Re-use of existing mill building and alterations to form workshop, car storage, restaurant, function suite and ancillary office space and formation of car park; Conversion of mills to hotel and offices.
- 1.4 The planning application had been brought before the Strategic Planning Committee in April 2017 to obtain a resolution from the committee as to what decision it would have made had the determination of the application remained within its remit. The committee resolved that it would have refused the application on the following grounds:

Connections between the application site and the nearest settlement of Holmfirth are considered to be extremely limited for pedestrians and users of public transport. Improvements in these connections is considered to be essential for ensuring the development is sustainable for the life time of the development so that occupants of the proposed residential units and employees and visitors of the non-residential elements of the development are not isolated from facilities and services of Holmfirth or over dependent upon motor vehicles. The mitigation measures proposed by the applicant amount to highway improvements on Green Lane/Washpit New Road. Such measures are considered to be insufficient and fail to improve the connectivity of the site and the development proposed therefore failing to comply with policies T16 and BE1 of the Kirklees UDP and section 4 (Promoting Sustainable Transport) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 1.5 The applicant has subsequently submitted a pre-application enquiry for a revised scheme on the site. This enquiry has been subject to discussions between the applicant, officers and ward members including a meeting between all these parties on 7th December 2017. As a result of these discussions the pre-application scheme was amended and a revised site plan submitted.
- 1.6 The applicant has now lodged a planning application with the council. The proposal reflects the amended pre-application proposal. The application is currently awaiting validation.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site comprises of approximately 3.5 hectares of land located within the cleft of a steep sided valley with significant changes in levels across the site.
- 2.2 The site is a former textile mill which ceased operating in December 2015 and comprises a range of buildings and hardstanding areas. There is a mixture of building styles and scales on the site, including a grade II listed building, stone mill buildings and warehouse type buildings.
- 2.3 There is a culverted section of the River Ribble running through the site, a mill pond in the south west part of the site and an area of trees to the north east.
- 2.4 The site is bounded to the north by Green Lane which links to Washpit New Road. To the south is Choppards Lane. To the south east are fields which slope up the valley side to Choppards Bank Road. To the northwest are a variety of properties along Lamma Well Road with sloping fields beyond
- 2.5 The site lies within the Green Belt.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 3.1 The initial pre-application proposal was for 77 residential units comprising 49 houses and 28 apartments and the re-use of an existing industrial building for car storage and workshop with ancillary café, retail and office space. This proposal differed from the original planning application in that the amount of residential development had been increased from 61 units (comprising 45 houses and 16 apartments) to 77 units; a 23 bed hotel within the listed building was no longer part of the scheme and was to be converted to 16 apartments instead and; an existing mill building was to be converted into 4 townhouses instead of offices. The proposal also did not include a function room and restaurant (as per the proposal considered at the appeal hearing).
- 3.2 Following the meeting with the applicant, officers and ward members on 7th December the pre-application scheme was amended in response to concerns raised by ward members in terms of the quantum of residential development. The main concern was that the revised scheme represented an increase on the amount of residential development under the refused development and it was therefore considered that the proposal would still have a detrimental impact on the local highway network and could not therefore address the Planning Inspector's concerns in this regard.

- 3.3 The amended pre-application enquiry has removed all of the apartments (28 no.). One of the mill buildings is to be demolished and two dwellings erected in its place. This means that the total number of residential units is now 51.
- 3.4 In terms of the listed building it is proposed that this would become a private gym for use by residents of the Washpit Mills site only.
- 3.5 The recently submitted planning application reflects the scheme as proposed within the amended pre-application enquiry.

4.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

- 4.1 As part of the pre-application enquiry process a number of key consultees within the Council have been contacted to seek their advice on the potential implications of such development in this location and the measures required to mitigate the associated impacts.

KC Highways – Initial comments provided regarding the scope of the proposed Transport Assessment. Detailed comments would be made upon receiving and assessing a Transport Assessment.

Public Health – Recommend that the developer submits a Rapid Health Impact Assessment with a future application.

KC Conservation & Design – The pre-application scheme involves the loss of an additional building in comparison to the original planning application. The loss of this building will require Listed Building Consent and would be subject to consultation with Historic England and the amenity societies. The complete loss of this building is considered to represent substantial harm as defined by the NPPF and so its loss must be wholly exceptional or substantial public benefits afforded. There are tests to be complied with under paragraph 133 of the NPPF.

In terms of the change of use of the principal listed building into a private gymnasium no objections are raised.

Ward Members (Cllr Patrick and Cllr Sims) – Not against the redevelopment of the site but initial concerns raised with the quantum of residential development.

5.0 MAIN ISSUES:

- 5.1 In this instance it is considered that the main issues which would need to be fully addressed by the applicant in any subsequent planning application principally relate to those matters identified by the Planning Inspector in his decision. These are:

- the effect of the proposal on the safe and efficient operation of the highway;

- the availability of alternative modes of transport; and
- whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, Washpit Mill, and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

The effect of the proposal on the safe and efficient operation of the highway

- 5.2 The Inspector held that, notwithstanding the established industrial use of the site, there would be an increase in traffic movements on Washpit New Road (which was generally accepted as the main route to the site) with resultant impacts on the wider road network. There was uncertainty as to the degree to which this increase in movement would lead to a severe, cumulative impact on the wider road network because there had been no direct quantification of the effect of the predicted movements on existing road conditions at key locations where congestion occurs.
- 5.3 The proposals represent ten fewer residential units than that proposed within the original planning application. The residential development is now also exclusively houses (2-5 bed properties) and does not include any apartments.
- 5.5 The listed building would be used as a private gymnasium available to the residents of the Washpit Mills site only. This would not therefore generate any additional vehicular trips.
- 5.6 The Carding Shed business is proposed as a workshop, car storage, and associated ancillary facilities including café, shop and office space. Officers have been advised that the proposal represents a reduced scale of development in comparison to the Carding Shed's existing premises at Dobroyd Mills in Hepworth.
- 5.7 The overall size of the proposed café is slightly less than the size of the restaurant proposed within the original planning application although the floor space of the customer area is around a third larger. The proposal does not however include a function suite or a separate bar area as was proposed within the original application. It is to be noted that at the appeal the restaurant and function suite were omitted from the scheme and so these elements would not have been taken into account by the Inspector when considering traffic movements.
- 5.8 A robust Transport Assessment which reflects predicted traffic movements and their impact on the wider road network (particularly at key junctions) will be necessary in order to support the new application. Discussions have already been held with Highways and consultation carried out with ward members to identify the key junctions which will need to be assessed. These include the main junction with Dunford Road, junctions within Holmfirth centre and junctions that would be used by future residents travelling to local primary schools.

- 5.9 The proposals represent a less intensive form of development in comparison to the original planning application and officers are satisfied that a revised Transport Assessment should provide much greater certainty as to the degree to which vehicle trips associated with the development would impact on the wider road network. Subject to the assessment of a revised Transport Assessment it may be necessary for the developer to provide mitigation measures on the wider highway network.

Sustainable travel

- 5.10 The appeal decision identifies limitations with the connectivity of the site for pedestrians and access to public transport links. The decision also raised issues with a proposed scheme intended to improve access along Washpit New Road that involved extending the metalled surface into the soft verges and creating a continuous white line on one side to provide a defined pedestrian area with the capacity for overrun by larger passing vehicles. The Inspector considered that the absence of any physical structure, such as a kerbstone, to stop vehicles crossing into the pedestrian zone would pose a disincentive to its widespread use. It is to be noted as well that the applicant was only providing a financial contribution (of £50,000) towards such works and the council's position was that it was unable to determine the adequacy of this contribution because there was not a detailed design that was able to be fully costed.
- 5.11 A future application will need to better address the limitations of the site's connectivity for pedestrians as identified within the appeal decision.
- 5.12 The pre-application enquiry is accompanied by a plan which shows a footway along the full length of Washpit New Road from the site entrance up to Dunford Road. The footway is located on the southern flank of the highway and varies in width; the footway is either 900mm wide or 1200mm wide depending on the width of the road. The plan also identifies two areas along Washpit New Road where the road width is sufficient to allow two HGV vehicles to pass one another whilst also accommodating the proposed footway.
- 5.13 It is considered that the footway achieves the minimum acceptable width and would help to provide a safe route to Dunford Road and the nearest bus stop. Its location on the southern flank of the road would minimise disruption to existing drainage systems.
- 5.14 The applicant would need to provide a detailed design in order for these works to be fully costed and thereby establish the contribution that would be required.

- 5.15 Under the original planning application the Council's PROW section recommended that the developer provided a financial contribution towards improvement of the local PROW network in order to enhance non-motorised transport connections towards Holmfirth and the wider locality. Such improvements would also enhance access to the countryside by future residents for recreation purposes. Improvements could include surfacing and drainage for example. These comments are relevant to the revised proposals.

Listed building

- 5.16 It was previously considered that a hotel represented a viable use for the listed building. A new use is now proposed in the form of a private gym. This is considered to be a less viable use because it would not generate a significant income, especially in comparison to a 23 bed hotel. The proposed use would nevertheless help to ensure that the building is maintained whilst responding to local concerns in terms of highway impacts. The proposal falls short of the optimum viable use for the building but on balance it is an acceptable use that would help to sustain the building's significance in the future.
- 5.17 The scheme involves further demolition of the listed mill complex because a stone mill building that was to be converted is now proposed to be demolished and replaced with two dwellings. The applicant will need to justify the loss of this heritage asset in the context of paragraph 133 of the NPPF.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 6.1 That members note the contents of this report for information.