

The Civic Trust and Lostock Residents Group both welcome in principle any scheme which seeks to retain Hollywood Lodge. We are bitterly disappointed that, while claiming to preserve Hollywood Lodge, this current proposal for the site significantly damages it.

It does this in three major ways; it replaces the stone roof with slate, it removes the gables and it compromises the view of the diagonal lounge window for those approaching the Lodge from Horwich by siting the garage extension forward of this distinctive feature. A very attractive street scene is diminished. This positioning is due to the attempt to squeeze two properties, one very large, onto the small island plot.

This arrangement results in a very high percentage of the site being either built upon or covered in hardstanding. To be covered in concrete is a sad fate for what was a gardener's garden. Of course the density is totally outside that set for West Bolton in the recently-adopted Local Development Framework.

In July this year, after an outcry at proposals (PA86142/11) to demolish Hollywood Lodge, a scheme to replace it with three linked town houses was thrown out by councillors. The agent promptly applied to demolish the Lodge, a proposal which could have been defeated by the Council invoking Article 4. It chose not to do so and the threat of demolition hangs over the charming building, recognised nationally as of local historical significance.

In addition to very strong local opposition to the demolition of this acknowledged heritage asset, the campaign to save the Lodge was joined by the Victorian Society and SAVE Britain's Heritage, with further support from Lord Taylor, a relative of the former owners of Hollywood (now Beaumont Hospital) and the Roberts family, relatives of Fred Roberts, the gardener who lived in Hollywood Lodge until his death in 2007.

This current proposal (PA 87044/11) to extend the Lodge is less attractive than the extension proposed in 2008. That scheme (PA79611/08) was rejected by the Council's planners on the recommendation of the Council's Conservation Officers. In that earlier proposal the extension was deemed to be too dominant, a criticism which could apply here. But this scheme is worse. That proposal was for a single dwelling on this site. Unlike this, it barely changed the Lodge. The extension did not intrude on the street scene. It also left the bulk of the garden intact and it did not breach the stone retaining wall. With this current offering we seem to have moved backwards.

Furthermore, this proposal manages to contravene all three grounds on which the earlier scheme for three town houses failed. This is because it does not conform to the very recently adopted Council Policies CG3, CG4 and OA4, which relate to size, massing, building density, character and street scene. The proposal also fails the test on grounds of road and pedestrian safety, in contravention of the Council's Policy P5. Ironically, the 2008 proposal for an extension would not breach any of these Policies.

It is difficult to see how the Council can accept a scheme which has the same defects on policy grounds as the one refused on these grounds just 4 months ago. The four Policies are there, clearly quoted in the Council's own Decision Notice of 25 July 2011 as justification for refusal.

The Council is being invited to perform a spectacular U-turn, damaging Hollywood Lodge in the process.

The committees of both the Civic Trust and Lostock Residents Group have now assessed the current proposal. Neither of us can, in conscience, do other than object to this proposal.

But, in view of the changed circumstances of the threat of demolition, we would support a repeat application for the 2008 proposal for a single extended dwelling on this site, provided that it left the original building largely untouched, and did not result in damage to the perimeter stone wall.

It is possible to create a single residence of character on this site, incorporating an unaltered and extended Hollywood Lodge and retaining its own walled garden, an unusual and attractive feature. Ironically, the humble former gatekeeper's cottage has the potential to become a desirable and distinctive residence, in contrast to the fate of the home it served, Hollywood, now no longer viable as a family home, but retained in its new function as part of Beaumont Hospital.

Both the Civic Trust and Lostock Residents Group urge the Developer and the Council to consider this single dwelling option as the best means of both complying with Council Policy and retaining a much-loved heritage asset which makes an important contribution to the street scene of Chorley New Road.

We feel that it is possible for everyone to win here.