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**WISWELL HALL, PENDLETON ROAD, WISWELL
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
FOR THE CREATION OF A NEW COUNTRY HOUSE**

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1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this design and access statement is to set out the rationale behind the creation of a new country house in Wiswell near Clitheroe.
- 1.2 The proposals are to demolish the existing dwelling 'The Eaves' on Pendleton Road to create a major new residence that incorporates a bed and breakfast business.
- 1.3 The scheme is considered to satisfy the provision of local and national planning policy. It represents the reuse of previously developed areas of the site in keeping with the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness, in accordance with PPS7 key principles 1 (v-vi).
- 1.4 The proposals represent a reduction in building footprint on the site and do not represent intensification in use. The impact upon the immediate site is constrained by the existing southern development boundary and agricultural land within the site boundary will remain largely unaffected.
- 1.5 The proposals represent a good long term use for an existing developed site to significantly enhance the immediate setting and that of the adjacent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Figure 1 –Aerial view of the site in relation to the adjacent properties

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The 5.1 acre site lies in the Ribble Valley just outside the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Situated on Pendleton Road, Pendle Hill rises steeply to the east and the land falls away gently towards the River Ribble to the west.
- 2.2 The existing house is an extensively altered post war prefab with accommodation over two floors faced with natural stone under a slate roof (See photographs included in Appendix I). The kennel buildings were developed from large poultry sheds over fifteen years ago. The present owners bought both the house and the kennels and have subsequently improved the kennels business. The owners now have a very young family and have aspirations to build a new family home and bed and breakfast business.
- 2.3 The surrounding properties are of a similar style to 'The Eaves' being extensively altered post war prefabs which are at odds with the nearby seventeenth to nineteenth century farms in a vernacular style.
- 2.4 The location plan below shows the site area outlined in red. The plan is not to scale (a scale copy is included in the supporting planning drawings)



Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

- 2.5 There is currently vehicular access into the site off Pendleton Road via driveways to both the house and the kennels.
- 2.6 The existing buildings are separated from the agricultural land to the north western end of the site by a hedge and timber panel fence. All development on the site is contained within this boundary and development on adjacent properties is similarly contained.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 National Planning Guidance – Main Relevant Policies

PPS1

Sets out the key principals for creating sustainable development in both urban and rural areas and ensures that planning policies should promote high quality design. Preservation of character and quality of the countryside are stressed.

PPS3

States how good design is essential for high quality housing and how new housing should have its “own distinctive identity and maintain and improve local character”.

PPS7

Reinforces PPS1 in relation to sustainable development in rural areas by, for example, utilising brownfield or previously developed sites. Also recognises that tourism and leisure activities are vital to rural economies.

A wide range of economic activities should be encouraged in rural areas and “a positive approach to planning proposals designed to improve the viability...of existing services and facilities” should be adopted.

Sets out how the exceptional quality of a new house may provide special justification for granting planning permission. “The value of such a building will be found in...the significant enhancement of its immediate setting and its sensitivity to the defining characteristics of the local area”.

3.2 Local Planning Policy – Main Relevant Policies

The Ribble Valley Local Development Framework and the Districtwide Local Plan do not have specific policies which deal with replacement large houses although there are policies which deal with conversions and new build houses on undeveloped sites.

Policy G1 (Development Control)

Sets out the criteria for determining planning applications including:

- Visual appearance and relationship to surroundings
- Materials should be sympathetic to character of the area

Policy G1 also requires all proposals to provide a high standard of design.

Policy ENV2 (Forest of Bowland)

Protects and seeks to enhance the landscape and character of those areas immediately adjacent to the Forest of Bowland AONB. Environmental effects of proposals such as design, materials, scale and landscaping will be a major consideration.

Policy H2 (Dwellings in the Open Countryside)

States that the impact of proposals will be a key consideration including issues such as scale, design and materials to reflect the character of the area.

3.3 Additional relevant Local Planning Policy

Policy G5 (Development Outside the Main settlements)

Policy ENV3 (Open Countryside)

Policy H15 (Conversions – Location)

Policy H16 (Conversions – Building)

Policy H17 (Conversions – Design)

Policy H23 (Removal of Holiday Let Conditions)

4.0 SITE INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 Our client has commissioned a number of surveys of the site to inform the design of the building and to ensure that any special interest on the site is not adversely affected. Copies of all the surveys and reports are included with the application documents.
- 4.2 A topographical survey has been prepared by Survey Operations to give a clear indication of the size and physical characteristics of the site.
- 4.3 An arboricultural survey has been undertaken by GM Tree Consultants. The survey has informed the location of the proposed building on the site to minimise any effect on the existing trees and retain all those of high value. As a result of the tree survey the proposed garaging was moved under the north eastern wing of the house to ensure that the vehicle access did not affect existing trees.
- 4.4 An ecological survey was carried out by Simply Ecology and comprises of a Phase 1 habitat survey. The report concludes that “the loss of small areas of garden planting will be compensated by the reversion of areas which are currently kennels and hardstanding into garden” and that “No additional evidence for the presence of protected, rare or notable species was found”.
- 4.5 A bat survey has been undertaken by Earthworks Environmental Design and concludes that “There is no evidence of bat roosting activity associated with this property”.

5.0 DESIGN RATIONALE

- 5.1 The Ribble Valley around Clitheroe is home to a series of major country houses and the proposal to create a new 'Wiswell Hall' is conceived as a continuation of this long tradition.
- 1.2 The creation of a new hall or manor house seemed the most appropriate approach to creating a large house of some eight bedrooms. Other approaches were explored with the Local Planning Authority including a farmstead design. This was discarded as these buildings evolve over hundreds of years adapting to climate, context and commercial needs and the creation of an 'instant farmstead' would be incongruous and inappropriate given the lack of historical agricultural use.
- 1.3 The decision to create a traditional country house seemed the most logical and appropriate solution to the context and hierarchy of the local buildings. The creation of a 'great house' harking back to the prodigy houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a continuation of the arts and crafts movement in its many architectural guises which uses the simple, stark but elegant forms of the Jacobean house to good effect. Houses such as 'Blackwell House' by Baillie Scott and Webb's 'Four Gables' in Cumbria, and Norman Shaw and E.S. Prior's Carr Manor in Leeds all use the local vernacular as a pastiche to create a more simplified, austere interpretation. There are countless other examples across the country by architects such as Edwin Lutyens, Ernest Grimson and Ernest and Sidney Barnsley.
- 1.4 In order for this approach to be successful, it is important that the context is traditional and that the detailing relates to the region. Choice of materials should also be closely tied to the locality.
- 1.5 There are many good examples of the local vernacular to take inspiration from such as Mitton Hall – a Victorianised mansion, now a hotel. Stirk House – a good seventeenth century manor now also a hotel. Slightly further away Browsholme Hall is a quirky but grand seventeenth century hall of character and Hammerton Hall in Slaidburn is a complete seventeenth century manor in the stark character of the region. Photographs of these houses can be found in Appendix II.
- 1.6 Other houses of note in the region are Clegg Hall in Rochdale – a fine seventeenth century merchants hall - and Gawthorpe Hall is a fine example of an Elizabethan prodigy house associated with the architect Robert Smythson. Houghton Manor further down the Ribble Valley near Preston is also a fine seventeenth century country manor house of very similar proportions to the proposed Wiswell Hall.
- 1.7 Stylistically, there is a clear language of 'E' form or variant plan arrangements, raised plinths, string coursing, corniced eaves and gables with finial details. Using this local language and continuing the tradition of the 'great house' results in a proposal which is rooted in and appropriate to the local landscape character.

6.0 LAYOUT & USE

- 6.1 The proposal is to create a fine country residence with guest accommodation and ancillary facilities by replacing the existing house and kennels.
- 6.2 The house is designed around a compact 'E' plan (see figure 3) over four levels with the basement level sunk fully into the ground and the top floor being contained within the roofspace.
- 6.3 The building is entered into a central hall with a grand staircase giving access to the upper floors. The formal reception rooms are contained within the northern wing whilst the family areas including sitting room, kitchen and ancillary spaces are located in the southern wing. A secondary staircase links the family areas to the basement leisure facilities and first floor family bedrooms.
- 6.4 Guest accommodation is located at the second floor level within the northern wing. There are eight ensuite bedrooms in total arranged over the upper floors.
- 6.5 The basement level is accessed primarily from the secondary staircase within the southern wing which gives access to the swimming pool, cinema and garaging.
- 6.6 The swimming pool sits outside the main building line albeit below ground level to minimise its impact upon the landscape.
- 6.7 This arrangement of space is typical of a modern country estate whereby the family areas can function equally well on their own for small gathering of friends or family, or as part of a larger more formal event where the whole of the ground floor can be used. The secondary staircase is vital to this arrangement linking all the informal, family areas.



Figure 3 – 'E' shaped plan form, with equally dimensioned wings.

7.0 SCALE & APPEARANCE

- 7.1 The site lies on ground falling from south east to north west and the position of the proposed building on the site makes use of this fall to mitigate the height of the building.
- 7.2 The building was originally positioned on the site to mitigate or improve views across the site from adjoining properties. During the design process, the swimming pool was moved into a basement to reduce the impact of the building on the landscape and the adjoining properties. The proposed building was also moved slightly to the north east at this time to reduce the impact on long distance views across the site from buildings opposite.
- 7.3 Since the refusal of planning permission by Ribble Valley Borough Council planning committee on 8th December 2011 the building has been repositioned to increase amenity space. The Building has been moved South within the site by 10m and West by 8.5m, these changes increase the amount of garden between Pendleton road and the house, increase distances to adjacent properties to 50m and reducing the impact of the ridge line.
- 7.4 All areas of the new building sit behind the established development boundary line. The proposals represent a reduction in developed site coverage and built footprint. Existing developed site area is 3,610m² and the proposed figure is 3,073m². Existing built footprint is 621m² whilst the proposed figure is 423m².
- 7.5 The proposed house sits well away from any boundary in terms of amenity distance to neighbouring properties with the minimum distance to the northern boundary being over 27m.
- 7.6 The proposed building has been designed in a style consistent with other local grand houses as described in Section 5 of this report and including such design features as plinths, mullioned windows and string courses.
- 7.7 It is proposed to construct the building from local materials as far as possible including local stone walling and a slate roof.
- 7.8 The house is conceived as being part of the local landscape as well as sitting proudly on the hillside and will enhance local distinctiveness and the character of the adjacent Forest of Bowland AONB.



Figure 4 – Proposed view from Pendleton Road, (note: the wings are now of equal length, the shorter wing.)

8.0 LANDSCAPING & ACCESS

- 8.1 Proposed landscaping will be contained within the established development boundaries with the remainder of the site being retained as semi-improved grassland as noted in the ecology report to maintain the local landscape character.
- 8.2 The area of land between the proposed building and Pendleton Road will be planted as a formal garden, retaining existing trees and including the planting of new.
- 8.3 Two vehicle access points into the site will be maintained allowing for a one-way drive across the front of the building. This will involve the widening of the gap in the hedge of the existing vehicle access to allow for visibility splays. The southern access requires the hedge to be cut back by 6m and by 3m to the northern access. New gateposts will be constructed set back from the road allowing vehicles to pull off the highway before stopping at the gates.
- 8.4 There are 3no. garage spaces included within the basement garage for family use and an additional 6no. spaces provided off the driveway adjacent to the south entrance.



Figure 5 – Proposed aerial view showing formal planting, (note: the wings are now of equal length, the shorter wing.)

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The landscape and local distinctiveness of the Ribble Valley have informed the design of the proposed house.
- 9.2 The use of previously developed land represents a viable and sustainable new use for the site.
- 9.3 The proposals comply with local and national planning policy.
- 9.4 The proposals will not affect any important ecological features.
- 9.5 The creation of a new country house on this site will continue a strong tradition of grand country residences dating back hundreds of years that will benefit the local community and enhance the landscape character for many years to come.

14.0 APPENDIX I – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1 – View of existing house from the south east.



Photograph 2 – View of existing house from the north west.



Photograph 3 – View of existing house looking north east from kennel driveway.



Photograph 4 – View of existing house looking west from house driveway.



Photograph 5 – View looking south east from rear of site towards house and kennels with fence on development boundary in front.



Photograph 6 – View from driveway looking south west towards kennels.

15.0 APPENDIX II – HISTORICAL PRECEDENT



Photo A – Blackwell House, Cumbria



Photo B – Four Gables, Cumbria



Photo C – Carr Manor, Leeds



Photo D – Milton Hall, Clitheroe



Photo E – Stirk House, Gisburn



Photo F – Browsholme Hall, Forest of Bowland



Photo G – Hammerton Hall, Slaidburn



Photo H – Clegg Hall, Rochdale



Photo J – Gawthorpe Hall, Burnley



Photo K – Haighton Manor, Preston

16.0 APPENDIX III – PHOTOMONTAGES



Photomontage 1 (See key plan on next page for viewpoint locations)




Photomontage 2 (See key plan on next page for viewpoint locations)



Figure 6 – Key to viewpoints for photomontages

APPENDIX IV – PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION



RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Dear Mr Shaw

RE: PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY – THE EAVES, PENDLETON ROAD, WISWELL

I write with regard to the above following the latest set of drawings you sent through to me via e-mail on 14 March 2011.

Your initial enquiry to us put forward two options for development of the site and my previous letter dated 27 September 2010 outlined that in principle a country house with tourism accommodation would fit with planning policy. The key issue was outlined as the potential visual impact of the works and you provided me with a comprehensive set of feasibility drawings in November 2010. That submission put forward two design options namely a country house design or farmhouse design and provided information on design influences and a set of photomontages from various vantage points along the A59. The information was not only considered by myself and David Hewitt who is this Council's Countryside Officer, but also the AONB Manager from Lancashire County Council, Don McKay. We received his comments in February this year and I understand that David Hewitt discussed this with you which resulted in revised drawings being submitted for consideration in March. It is those drawings I shall now pass comment on.

The style you have now settled on is the bolder country house style which the AONB officer commented would be more appropriate for the large scale of the proposal. You have revised the design in order to reduce the length of the building and now show the garage and swimming pool extension potentially buried in the ground. This is beneficial in order to reduce the massing of the building in long-range views. You have also moved the proposed building closer to the roadside.

I have spoken to the County Surveyor about the latest design to see if the repositioning of the building further towards the roadside would raise any issues with him. The entry and exit points are still roughly in the same position and I note that you have not specifically annotated on the plans any sightline requirements. I reiterate my previous comments to you that should the development require the removal or setting back of the hedgerows that bound Pendleton Road, such details would need to be clearly marked on any plans. The only comment that Martin Nugent has made at this point in time is that he questioned the parking arrangements. I calculate that the scheme shows some 14 bedrooms but there is no indication of how many of these are for private family accommodation and the number for commercial use. Without such information he is unable to properly assess the parking requirement but it is unlikely that a 4-car garage

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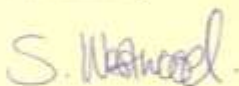
would suffice. I note you have shown areas of formal garden to either side of the proposed building and wonder whether the area adjacent to the exit point could be utilised for such a purpose.

The AONB Officer has commented that the visual impact of a new structure when viewed from the northwest would require to be moderated by a strong landscaping scheme. He made this in relation to the initial design making reference to the substantial length of the elevation which conflicted with the scale of surrounding smaller structures and the distinctive pattern of narrow fields lined with hedgerows and hedgerow trees. I accept that you have since reduced the length of the building but consider that appropriate landscaping of the grounds in which it is to be set is still a prerequisite. The area is undulating lowland fringe farmland and is characterised by mixed farm woodland, copses and hedgerows. Any landscaping proposals must reflect very strongly this landscape type and consist of appropriate tree types and species mix. There are some mature trees fronting the existing dwelling and these should be retained. We would also require a phase 1 habitat survey to be carried out and submitted in support of the application, together with an arboricultural/tree constraint plan.

Turning to the actual design of the building put forward, your submission contains a section on design influences making reference to development at Barrowford, Higham, Colne, Hapton and more locally the Stirk House at Gisburn, Osbaldeston Hall and Milton Hall. There is no doubt that this will be an imposing structure and be of such a scale that it will have a significant impact on the setting of the AONB. All development within or affecting the setting of the AONB must be considered from the point view of its adverse or beneficial impact of the qualities of the AONB. All development is expected to be of a very high standard of design, be in keeping with local distinctiveness and should seek to conserve and enhance the AONB's natural beauty. The proposal clearly involves large-scale investment in the area and the elevational designs reflect a wish to find an appropriate style for the locality adjoining the protected landscape. Having carefully considered the design in the context of your supporting information/design rationale, I am of the opinion that should an application come forward based on the latest set of submitted drawings, the scheme, whilst substantial nature, would not prove so significantly detrimental to the visual amenities of the area as to warrant an unfavourable recommendation purely on that ground.

I trust you find the above information of use and stress that it represents an officer opinion only, given without prejudice to the final determination of any planning application which may be submitted.

Yours sincerely



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