

# Design, Access and Planning Statement

Conversion of barn into two dwellings.

Barn at Barracks Farm, Chipping Road, Chaigley,  
Nr Clitheroe, BB7 3LX.

## Introduction

This proposal relates to the proposed conversion of a disused, stone built, agricultural barn into two residential dwellings. The building lies within the curtilage of Barracks Farm, more specifically to the front (north) of the existing property on the site, and within a cluster of buildings. The existing portal framed building on site will be demolished to make way for the development. Access to the site will be off the existing access road from Chipping Road that runs to the group of buildings. The site lies within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural, and in the Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley Parish.

A separate access from this will be formed to run into the residential curtilages created for the two new dwellings. This statement describes the design principles and concepts that have informed the preparation of this application.

## Context

The site lies approximately 0.5 miles north west of the hamlet of Chaigley, and approximately 3 miles south east of the village of Chipping. The site is one of a number of properties off this stretch of rural road between Clitheroe and Chipping, and whilst separated by fields, it is not considered to be in an isolated location. This point is supported by virtue of the fact that there is a bus stop in Walker Fold, approximately 0.5 miles from the site, served by the frequent Chipping to Clitheroe/Blackburn bus. This provides direct links to a number of amenities including amongst others schools, shops, a leisure centre and public houses.

The land surrounding this site is mainly used for agriculture and, due to the land falling away from the highway as you drive down the vehicular access into the site; the site is effectively sat within a small hollow that is partially screened by the existing trees and hedgerows that surround both the dwelling and the other buildings on site.

### Justification

The proposal for the conversion of the disused agricultural building will safeguard, sustain and enhance the non-designated heritage asset (building to be converted) in this location. It will also enhance and maintain the vitality of the rural communities in this location, by virtue of creating two family homes that could not only house children for that will attend the local schools but also bring new residents into the area that will shop at local shops in Chipping, Longridge or Clitheroe. The creation of two houses will also help towards the required five year supply of housing for the Ribble Valley.

In helping achieving sustainable development, the planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions. There is a need for the planning system to perform an economic, social and environmental role, and local circumstances need to be taken into account. There is ultimately a presumption in favour of sustainable development meaning that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. The development proposed is considered to be sustainable and permission should therefore be granted.

### Design Principles

The conversion of the building into two dwellings has been designed so that it does not impact directly on the residential amenity of the occupiers of Barracks Farm, and also so that it will have a minimal impact on the surrounding countryside. This is achieved by virtue of the internal design of the buildings to ensure that there are no habitable rooms facing towards the existing property on site, and that all the main living areas face northwards (maybe they will maybe they won't?) The use of materials is sympathetic to the surrounding area, and the applicant has sought to reflect the typical property type within the area in order to maintain the character of the area. The dwellings are also of a scale and size that is commensurate with the physical and functional restrictions of the site itself, both in terms of the available parking and garden curtilage areas and the general allowance for living space.

### Appearance, Scale and Materials for the Dwellings Proposed

The dwellings proposed have been designed in-line with the design principles highlighted. They are 3-4 bedroom properties with sufficient space for most families, however the internal layout can also be easily re-modified to create less bedrooms and open up the internal space if the owner so wished. However the internal layout is done, the minor alterations to the external shell of the building have been done so with the traditional character of building in mind.

### Creation of Residential Curtilage

The main curtilage for the two properties will extend to the side but mainly to the rear (north) of the existing building as the existing farmyard extends some 20-25 metres in this direction at present. Parking for either unit will be created to either side of the main building (on the east and west facing elevations); however the main garden areas will be to the rear. This area is partially hard-core and partially grassland, but is used by the current owner when accessing the buildings. The garden areas will be enclosed using a mixture of post and rail fencing and sympathetic native tree and hedgerow planting in order to ensure that the garden areas do not appear overly domesticated. The land is already clearly in a use that appears urbanised however, so this landscaping will improve the visual appearance of the site. As the site is already partially screened by existing native trees and hedgerows around the site and on the roadside, the site is not significantly visible anyway.

### National Policy Guidance

Guidance contained within the recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes within paragraph 14 that 'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

For decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:
  - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
  - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

To achieving sustainable development in decision making, there should be 12 principles which include supporting sustainable economic development and responding positively to wider opportunities for growth and the needs of the business community should be taken into account. A high quality of design and amenity are needed and growth should make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Section 4 of the NPPF (Promoting sustainable transport) notes that a balance in favour of sustainable transport modes is needed however government recognises that different policies will be needed in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.

Section 6 of the NPPF (Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes) advises that to boost significantly the supply of housing, local authorities should use their evidence base to meet the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. For market and affordable housing, a five year supply should be maintained and housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Section 7 of the NPPF (Requiring good design) notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and that high quality and inclusive design for all development is needed.

Section 11 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) seeks to encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided it is not of high environmental value.

Section 12 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) advises that Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

The proposed scheme is considered to be in accordance with the above guidance, but the proposal must also be considered in line with the local plan policy guidance.

### Local Plan Policies

Specific guidance on proposals to convert buildings to dwellings is provided within Policy H2 of the Local Plan, which notes “Outside the settlement boundaries, residential development will be limited to the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings, provided they are suitably located and their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Also, that they are structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction”.

Additional advice is also provided by Policies H15, H16 and H17 of the Local Plan, which note that, amongst other things,

- The conversion of appropriate buildings within settlements or which form part of already defined groups is acceptable,
- The building must be structurally sound and capable of conversion, without the need for extensive or major alterations which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building,
- The character of the building and its materials are appropriate to its surroundings and the building is worthy of retention, and that
- If a building is to be converted this should be done with minimal changes to the roof slope or amendments to the eaves line.

Given the sites location within the Forest of Bowland AONB, Policy ENV1 must also be considered which states, “the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland AONB will be protected, conserved and enhanced. In addition development will also need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.

### Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies

The Ribble Valley Core Strategy is currently under an Examination in Public (EIP). It therefore presently forms a material consideration of some weight in the consideration of planning applications in accordance with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012). Relevant policies in the emerging Core Strategy include:

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations.

Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection.

Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation.

Policy DMH3 – Dwellings in the open countryside and AONB.

Policy DMH4 –The conversion of barns and other buildings to dwellings

The weight to be attached to these policies will increase as the Core Strategy is progressed towards adoption. As indicated earlier, at this stage, these policies can only be given limited weight.

### Appraisal

In terms of five-year land supply, the most recent published position at the time of writing is the Council’s Housing Land Availability Schedule dated October 2013. This indicates a position of a 4.34 year supply, employing the Sedgfield approach which

is the method Members confirmed to use at the 10th of October Meeting. In line with paragraph 49 of the NPPF, this application for housing should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

### *Suitability of Site*

This proposal seeks the conversion of a disused, stone built, agricultural barn into two residential dwellings. The building lies within the curtilage of Barracks Farm and within a cluster of buildings and access to the site will be off the existing access road from Chipping Road that runs to the group of buildings.

Paragraphs 49 and 131 of the NPPF are perhaps the most important considerations as they advise that 'housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development' and that local planning authorities should take account of,

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The scheme proposed will retain, sustain and enhance the heritage assets in question, and by creating two new properties in this locality they will also support the local economy and amenities in nearby Chipping.

### *Access*

The access to and from the site is considered acceptable in highway terms. The existing access has good visibility and as the applicant owns land either side this could be improved further if required. The site has sufficient space for parking and turning areas allowing vehicles to exit the new property in a forward gear.

### *Scale, layout and impact on the character of the area*

The development consists of the conversion of an existing former agricultural building, and it is considered that the scale and layout of the dwelling will fit appropriately into the local surroundings. The conversion scheme is considered to fit well within the landscape and it is considered to sustain and enhance the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

The existing trees and hedgerows along the boundaries are to be retained and due to this it is considered that the proposed development should integrate into the area and contribute to the existing character of the AONB.

The orientation/relationship between the existing and proposed dwelling is considered acceptable and meets the spacing guidance in terms of gardens and orientation between each other.

In terms of meeting the requirements of current Local Plan Policies, it can be clearly demonstrated that such development would not have any detrimental effect on the character of that group or on the locality, and that in terms of impact on amenity, scale, design and materials proposed, the scheme is not considered to prejudice the provisions of other policies of the plan. Where developments are deemed to be acceptable in principle, this policy and other more detailed policies of the plan endeavour to ensure that the impact of such development would not threaten or harm those intrinsic qualities of the countryside which the policy has set out to protect. On this basis, there would seem to be no other planning constraints or objections to the proposed dwellings.

### Conclusion

When considering the planning balance for the proposal, the retention and re-use of a disused, non-designated heritage asset in a sustainable location is considered to outweigh any minor visual impact upon the locality. The proposed development submitted is considered to promote and reinforce the local distinctiveness of the building and the area, it will sustain and enhance the existing non-designated heritage asset on the site, it will not significantly alter the character of the existing building or its setting, and the proposal will now create two new dwellings in keeping with the current landscape character of this area. The scheme is considered to comply with current local and national planning guidance, and when assessing the proposal against the NPPF and the 'golden thread' of sustainability running through it, the development should be approved without delay as it accords with the development plan and there are no adverse impacts of doing so that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.