

**PLANNING APPLICATION
BY
MESSRS S AND A THORNER**

**TO
RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**FOR
DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF
SEVEN DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND
EXTERNAL WORKS**

**AT
LAND AT MOORCOCK INN, SLAIDBURN ROAD, WADDINGTON**

PLANNING STATEMENT

June 2014



**Mike Gee BA(Hons) MRTPI
Janet Dixon Town Planners Ltd.
144 Woone Lane
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 1BN**

01200 425051

320140592P

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is in support of a full planning application submitted by Messrs S and A Thornber for a residential development of seven dwellings by way of the redevelopment of the site of the Moorcock Inn, Slaidburn Road, Waddington.

2. THE APPLICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 2.1 This is a full application, with detailed layout and elevation plans / drawings.
- 2.2 The plans / drawings show the proposal to comprise:
- two detached dwellings with integral garages and independent accesses;
 - one detached dwelling with parking provided off a shared courtyard;
 - two semi-detached dwellings with parking provided off a shared courtyard;
 - retention of the treed backdrop to the north side of the site; and
 - an indicative landscaping scheme.
- 2.3 The proposal is more fully described in the Design and Access Statement also submitted in support of this planning application.
- 2.4 In addition to this Statement, and the layout and elevation plans / drawings already referred to, the application is accompanied by:
- Design and Access Statement;
 - Tree Survey;
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
 - Heritage Statement;
 - Bat Survey; and
 - Topographical Survey.

3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application relates to the site of the former Moorcock Inn. The Moorcock Inn comprises an extensive array of buildings that have been much altered and developed over many years. In the mid-1970s the building was severely fire damaged and substantially rebuilt. The buildings are mainly white rendered with applied fake Tudor style boarding. The buildings, which are mainly of two-storey, housed a number of related uses, including a public house (5 rooms), hotel (11

bedrooms), restaurant (two rooms), function suite, self-contained manager's accommodation and storage / service areas. Externally, there is a beer keg storage area and an extensive surfaced car park to the west of the buildings. The use of the site ceased with the closure of the Moorcock Inn in mid-2010. The site extends to approximately 0.7 hectares

3.2 The site is located on the southern flank of Waddington Fell, approximately 3 km to the north of Waddington, between the villages of Waddington and Newton. The Moorcock Inn buildings are situated immediately adjacent to the road and run some 45 metres to the west of the road. The overall depth of the buildings is over 30 metres. Whilst the site is located in an open rural setting, there are two dwellings in close proximity to the site (Moorcock House to the west and Jolly Croft to the south west), with some other structures between the Moorcock Inn and Jolly Croft.

3.3 The site boundaries are generally defined by hedges, fences and walls. The land levels rise gently across the site from south to north, with a treed backdrop on the uphill side of the site. Access is off Slaidburn Road via a tarmacked roadway, which leads to the car park area.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There is an extensive history of planning applications and permissions for extensions and alterations to the Moorcock Inn when it was functioning as a pub etc. Since its closure in 2010, there have been the following planning applications:

- 3/2012/0356 – Proposed conversion and redevelopment of a redundant Public House and Hotel with conference facilities, into three private residential properties. Planning permission granted August 2012;
- 3/2012/0819 – Proposed demolition of The Moorcock Inn and the erection of three detached dwellings, three detached garages with annex accommodation over and the creation of garden and landscaped areas. Refused planning permission November 2012;
- 3/2013/0394 - The demolition of The Moorcock Inn and the erection of three detached dwellings with three detached double garages with annex accommodation over and the creation of garden and landscaped areas. Re-submission of 3/2012/0819. Application withdrawn February 2014.

5. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 The relevant part of the Development Plan for the purposes of this application is the Ribble Valley Local Plan (adopted in June 1998).

Ribble Valley Local Plan

- 5.2 The following saved policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan (which was written to cover the period 1991-2006) are relevant to the proposal.
- 5.3 Policy G1: Development Control – all development proposals will be expected to provide a high standard of building design and landscape quality. The various detailed criteria to be applied in deciding planning applications are set out in the policy.
- 5.4 Policy G5: Settlement Strategy – outside of the main settlement boundaries and the village boundaries planning consent will only be granted for small scale developments.
- 5.5 Policy ENV1: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the policy seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland AONB. The policy goes on to state that the environmental effects of proposals will be a major consideration and the design, materials, scale, massing and landscaping of development will be important factors in deciding planning applications.
- 5.6 ENV7: Species Protection – development proposals which would have an adverse effect on wildlife species protected by law will not be granted planning permission.
- 5.7 EMP11: Loss of Employment Land – proposals for redevelopment of employment generating sites will be assessed against a number of criteria set out in the policy, including the environmental gains to the community.
- 5.8 Policy H2: Dwellings in the Open Countryside – outside the settlement boundaries residential development will be limited to specific categories including agricultural workers' dwellings, conversion of existing buildings and that intended to meet a

proven local need. The impact of proposals on the countryside is stated to be an important consideration in determining planning applications.

- 5.9 Policy T1: Transport – in deciding planning applications the Council will attach considerable weight to various criteria. The criteria include the availability and adequacy of public transport and the location of development in areas which maintain and improve choice to walk, cycle or catch public transport rather than drive between homes and facilities.
- 5.10 Policy T7: Parking Provision – all development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space.
- 5.11 The Local Plan Proposals Map identifies the application site as land within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Policy ENV1) and outside of a settlement boundary (Policy G5).

6. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.1 The relevant policies and provisions of the national Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, are identified below.
- 6.2 The NPPF clearly states *'that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'* (paragraph 6). Paragraph 197 confirms that *'in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development'*. Paragraph 14 states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. It goes on to say that *'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 planning permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole; or*

- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted*.

- 6.3 At paragraph 7, the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are outlined. An elaboration of the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system is detailed later in the NPPF. Relevant parts are referred to at paragraph 6.7 below.
- 6.4 The NPPF (paragraphs 2, 11, 12 and 196) confirms that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, ie the development plan is the starting point for decision making.
- 6.5 The NPPF, published in March 2012, highlights the importance of development plans being kept up to date (paragraph 12). Decision taking in the absence of an up to date development plan is addressed at paragraph 14 (see 6.2 above). At paragraph 214 it is confirmed that *'for 12 months from the day of publication, decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a degree of conflict with this Framework'*. Paragraph 215 continues by stating that *'in other cases and following this 12-month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to the degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater weight that may be given)'*. Paragraph 49 provides further guidance on the matter. It states *'housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.'*
- 6.6 Paragraphs 2, 8, 13, 196 and 212 confirm that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 6.7 The main body of the NPPF addresses the components of sustainable development. Those most relevant to the application are:
- 'promoting sustainable transport' – decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and

development should only be refused where the residual impacts of development are severe (paragraph 32);

- ‘delivering a wide choice of high quality homes’ – local planning authorities are expected to boost the supply of housing (paragraph 47);
- ‘requiring good design’ – developments should add to the quality of the area, and reinforce local distinctiveness;
- ‘conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ – in deciding planning applications local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying various principles including resisting development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (paragraph 118);
- ‘conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ – the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset (paragraph 128).

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 6.8 The NPPG was published in 2014 to replace a myriad of previous guidance and to supplement the policy advice contained in the NPPF.
- 6.9 The most relevant aspects of the NPPG to the application, additional to that referred to above in relation to the NPPF, are:
- ‘conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ – the NPPG states that local authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets. The NPPG goes on to state that a substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process. Local lists incorporated into Local Plans are cited as a positive way for the local planning authority to identify non-designated heritage assets against consistent criteria, so as to improve the predictability of the potential for sustainable development;

- 'natural environment: landscape' – the NPPG states that one of the core principles in the NPPF is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. This includes designated landscapes (such as AONB), but also the wider countryside;
- 'natural environment: biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure' – the NPPG states that an ecological survey will be necessary in advance of a planning application if the type and location of development are such that the impact on biodiversity may be significant and existing information is lacking or inadequate.

7. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

Ribble Valley Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment

- 7.1 The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published in December 2008. It concluded that Ribble Valley has high levels of owner-occupation, with considerable numbers of large detached houses and a relatively small social housing stock. The Borough's population is growing and average household sizes continue to shrink. It concluded that more housing needs to be constructed.
- 7.2 A housing requirement update report was prepared in May 2013 and published for consultation as part of the Core Strategy evidence base in August / September 2013. The report assesses new evidence, including the 2011 Census and ONS population projections. It identified an increased housing need within the Borough.

8. EMERGING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

- 8.1 In summary, the Core Strategy is currently at the submission stage. A public examination hearing has been held. The Inspector in a letter to the Council following the public examination advised that he would be unable to find the Core Strategy sound as it stood and recommended that it be further modified. The Council is currently consulting on a number of main modifications, including an increase in housing numbers to reflect an objective assessment of housing requirements.

- 8.2 With the exception of the Standen site at Clitheroe, no site allocations are made by the Core Strategy. These are to follow in a Site Allocations DPD. The Council has not published a consultation draft Site Allocations DPD.
- 8.3 The following policies of the submitted Core Strategy are relevant to consideration of the proposal.
- 8.4 Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy - provides for the majority of new housing development to be concentrated at the Standen strategic site and the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.
- 8.5 Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development - reflects the central theme of sustainable development within the NPPF.
- 8.6 Key Statement EN2: Landscape – seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland AONB. As a principle, the Council expects development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.
- 8.7 Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity – seeks to conserve and enhance the area's biodiversity, with negative impacts on biodiversity being avoided.
- 8.8 Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets – sets out a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings.
- 8.9 Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations – states that development should be located to minimise the need for travel.
- 8.10 Policy DMG1: General Considerations - all development proposals will be expected to provide a high standard of building design and landscape quality. The various detailed criteria to be applied in deciding planning applications are set out in the policy.

- 8.11 Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations – expects development to accord with the Core Strategy development strategy. Development outside settlements is expected to be restricted and small scale. Development in the countryside is expected to be in keeping with the character of the landscape.
- 8.12 Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility – refers to various criteria to be used in assessing planning applications, including accessibility and new developments will be required to provide adequate car parking.
- 8.13 Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection – development proposals which significantly harm landscape will be refused.
- 8.14 Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation – development proposals likely to adversely affect wildlife species protected by law will not be granted planning permission.
- 8.15 Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets – there will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings.
- 8.16 Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB – within AONB residential development will be limited to specific categories of development.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The applicant's architect has consulted with Council officers during the formulation of proposals for the site. In particular, the discussions have sought to overcome concerns expressed by officers in relation to the previous (withdrawn) scheme for three dwellings. The results of those discussions are briefly summarised below.
- 9.2 The Planning Officers have advised that the proposal for seven units is at the upper limit of what might be acceptable, but understand the reasoning behind this number. Consideration would have to be made at application stage as to whether the benefits of the scheme to environmental sustainability outweighed the negative effects on sustainability caused by an increased number of dwellings in an isolated

location. Detailed design comments have also been provided, referred to in more detail in the Design and Access Statement. These have been helpful in developing a scheme which the Planning Officers have now advised is satisfactory in terms of design and layout.

10. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

10.1 Having regard to the nature of the proposal, its context, the planning history, relevant national and local planning policies, the main planning issues for consideration, are as follows:

- the general principles of sustainability;
- the settlement strategy;
- landscape and visual impact;
- transport;
- heritage;
- trees and ecology;
- neighbour amenity; and
- other considerations.

10.1 Each of these issues is addressed in turn below.

General principles of sustainability

10.2 The NPPF emphasises the presumption in favour of sustainable development as, indeed, does the submitted Core Strategy. In short, it is the 'golden thread' that now runs through planning policy.

10.3 As noted above, planning permission 3/2012/0356 has been granted for the conversion / reconfiguration of the Moorcock Inn to form three dwellings. The officer's report recommending approval for that proposal clearly states that "purely in relation to the consideration of sustainability, the application is considered to satisfy the overriding requirement of NPPF". It is, thus, clear that the Council accepts that some residential development at the site is considered sustainable.

10.4 The NPPF sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – along with more detailed aspects of sustainability that

merit consideration in assessing planning applications. All of the relevant aspects of sustainability will be considered in the following sections, along with an assessment of the benefits of the scheme and relevant local and national policy. A conclusion / planning balance may then be reached on the relative merits or otherwise of the proposal.

Settlement strategy

- 10.5 The site lies in a countryside location beyond any settlement boundary. As such, the proposal is subject to consideration in relation to the criteria of Local Plan Policy G5 and H2 and the submitted Core Strategy Statements / Policies DS1, DMH2 and DMH3. The policies adopt a restrictive approach to development, in general, and housing, in particular. In essence, new housing is limited to that which would meet specific local needs. It is no part of the applicant's case that the proposal would satisfy other than a general need for housing in the Borough. As such, a conflict with the above policies is acknowledged. That said, it should be noted that the approved scheme for three dwellings did not seek to meet any specific local housing need either, but was considered acceptable.
- 10.6 The aims and purposes of the above policies should be examined in consideration of harm arising from any conflict with policy. In particular, it is clear from the supporting text to the Plans and policies that the key purposes are to protect the countryside from inappropriate or visually harmful development and to deliver sustainable patterns of development. The supporting text also refers to the countryside being subject to change but, if properly managed, this can be accommodated without harming the basic character of the area. These are fundamental considerations that have to be balanced against any conflict with the settlement strategy and will be assessed further in the following sections.

Landscape and visual impact

- 10.7 The site lies within the Forest of Bowland AONB. Accordingly, a key consideration is whether the development accords with Local Plan Policy ENV1 and Core Strategy Statements / Policies EN2 and DME2. Essentially, the policies seek to protect, conserve and enhance the AONB and to ensure that development contributes to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. This is affirmed by

the NPPF, which refers to conferring great weight on conserving landscapes and scenic beauty within AONBs. So, in short, the purpose of policy is to retain the sense of local distinctiveness of the AONB including the pattern of villages, hamlets and farmsteads. It is important to note that AONB policy does not seek to prevent development in principle. Rather, it is policy designed to manage development to ensure that it is in character with the landscape.

10.8 The Moorcock Inn is, of course, an already developed site. Whilst there has been some development at the site for many years, the original building has been much altered and vastly extended over the years. There was much fire damage and substantial rebuilding in the 1970s. The various developments at the site have progressively increased the visual impact of the buildings within the landscape. The development has none of the attributes or features that that would normally be associated with traditional farmstead developments (or, indeed, any other developments) in the AONB. Its materials, form, design and bulk are all materially different from traditional forms of development in the area. The proposal would involve the complete demolition of the existing bulky and incongruous buildings presently at the site. The rationale for and design of the proposal is described in detail in the Design and Access Statement also submitted in support of the application. In summary, the scale and appearance of each of the proposed buildings has been designed to create a visually cohesive scheme that draws on the local vernacular in terms of both style, layout and materials. The result is a considered, pleasing, and well-mannered design with an order and visual legibility to the scheme that reflects the form of local farmsteads and ranges of buildings found in the AONB. These design features coupled with appropriate landscaping would result in a development having a reduced landscape and visual impact, and would enhance the character and appearance of the AONB. The conclusion is verified by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment also submitted in support of the planning application.

10.9 The overall conclusion is that the proposed development would be of a positive benefit to the visual appearance of the AONB. This is a matter of very significant weight to be assessed in the overall planning balance, especially given that the designation is of national importance and the NPPF policy in this respect.

Transport

- 10.10 The thrust of policy at the local level (Local Plan Policies G1, T1 and T7 and Core Strategy Policy DMG1) and in the NPPF, is to reduce the need to travel / reliance on the private car and associated CO2 emissions, ensure safe access and adequate parking space.
- 10.11 The Moorcock Inn, as described earlier, combines a number of leisure uses at the site – restaurant, public house, function suite and bedrooms. The function suite alone accommodates 150 people and the pub and restaurant at least a similar number. The effect of this combination of uses, which operated over a full day from lunchtime to night-time in a location away from any settlement and public transport services, was a heavy reliance on the private car and frequent journeys to / from the site by staff and patrons.
- 10.12 It is acknowledged that the development now proposed would continue to be reliant on the private car, given its location. However, with a TRICS based average of 6 in and out car daily trips per household, the overall vehicular movements associated with the development would be well below the historic rates. The object of policy is to locate developments generating high levels of movement in the most accessible locations. The Moorcock Inn leisure use was a high generator of traffic movements, the location of which does not accord with policy. To secure its removal and its replacement with a lesser generator of traffic movements would constitute a significant benefit of the development and accord with the aim of planning policy.
- 10.13 The proposal would utilise the existing access onto Slaidburn Road. With the reduction in traffic movements associated with the development, and scope to improve visibility with the removal of the existing roadside building, the development would result in a benefit to highway safety.
- 10.14 Ample parking would be available off the highway and within the site to cater for both residents' and visitors' vehicles.

Heritage

- 10.15 Core Strategy Policy / Statements EN5 and DME4 seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets. NPPF refers to the significance of any heritage asset being identified and assessed. The NPPG refers more particularly to non-designated heritage assets and their identification.
- 10.16 The Moorcock Inn is not a listed building, nor is it within a Conservation Area or have any other formal heritage designation. As such, it is not a designated heritage asset.
- 10.17 The Council has no published list of non-designated heritage assets; nor, has it published any criteria for identifying non-designated heritage assets; nor, have non-designated heritage assets been identified through any Local Plan (which the NPPG points to as good practice).
- 10.18 A Heritage Statement has been submitted in support of the planning application. It reviews the three ranges of development evident at the site. The oldest pre-1847 section of the building was almost entirely lost to fire in the 1970s. The historic form occupies no more than a third of the ground floor and these remnants are much altered. The Statement concludes that the architectural, evidential and historic value of the building is much corrupted by modern accretions. The early 20th century period development is considered to be plain and, again, much altered. The post war development is of no historic or architectural interest. The overall conclusion reached is that the building has no value as a heritage asset and the appropriate course of action would be to record the building prior to demolition. That is, there are no grounds upon which to consider that the building is worthy of conservation or retention. As such, its demolition would accord with policy.

Trees and ecology

- 10.19 Local Plan Policy ENV7 and Core Strategy Statement / Policy EN4 and DME3, along with the NPPF, seek to conserve biodiversity and, in particular, protected species.

10.20 The building has been surveyed for protected species. A survey report is provided in support of the planning application. It advises that there are no records of bats or barn owls in the vicinity of the application site; no evidence of roosting bats was found nor of historic use of the building by bats. Indeed, it was considered that the building is unlikely to be used by bats. Likewise, there was no evidence found of the building's use by barn owls.

10.21 Having regard to the results of the survey, the development would result in no harm to biodiversity.

10.22 A tree survey report is also submitted in support of the planning application. It identifies the main range of trees to be along the north (uphill) side of the site. Most trees of value would be retained as part of the development. These trees would form a mature and natural backdrop to the development (from viewpoints to the south) and an effective screen (from viewpoints to the north), thereby assisting in absorbing the development into the landscape without visual intrusion or harm. The beneficial effect of these retained trees would be supplemented by a larger group of trees off site, but immediately to the north of the site. Extensive landscaping proposed as part of the development would have a further beneficial effect. Accordingly, the proposal would be compliant with planning policy.

Neighbour amenity

10.23 Whilst the proposal would bring new built development somewhat closer to nearby dwellings than the existing, it would stand at a distance in excess of 50 metres. At such a distance, there would be no adverse impact on the daylight, sunlight or other amenities presently enjoyed by the local residents. Indeed, the proposal would generate far fewer traffic movements, noise and disturbance than the past uses, to the benefit of the neighbours. In addition, new landscaping would assist in screening the new development from the occupiers of the nearby dwellings.

Other considerations

10.24 The proposal would to economic growth and employment in the area during the construction / development phase, through the additional work for local building companies. Likewise, in the longer term through the introduction of new households

to the area and their future spend, which will help to support local trades and businesses. The proposal would contribute to the provision of additional market housing in the area, for which there is an identified need. Indeed, one of the NPPF's central themes is to deliver a wider choice of quality homes, which this proposal would assist in delivering.

10.25 Local Plan Policy EMP11 expects an assessment of proposals involving the loss of employment land to be assessed against a number of criteria. As reported above, planning permission has already been granted for the conversion of the Moorcock Inn to residential use. The Policy EMP11 was considered at that stage and the principle of the loss of the employment opportunity provided by the historic use has already been accepted.

11. THE PLANNING BALANCE / CONCLUSION

11.1 The applicant's architect has actively engaged with the Council's officers to formulate the scheme now proposed, which addresses the officers' concerns in relation to an earlier submission.

11.2 The proposal is to be assessed in relation to the overriding presumption in favour of sustainable development, unless there adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

11.3 It is acknowledged that there is a tension with the settlement strategy for the Borough, which seeks to focus new development in established centres. However, the proposal is for the development of a previously developed brownfield site which contains a bulky and visually incongruous building and an intensive historic use. It is submitted that there are considerable benefits associated with the proposed redevelopment of the site with seven dwellings. The benefits of the development have been identified for each of the assessment criteria reviewed in section 10, which derive from an examination of local and national policy. The identified benefits are briefly summarised below in relation to each of the dimensions of sustainable development identified in the NPPF.

Economic

- 11.4 The proposal would contribute to economic growth and employment in the area during the construction / development phase, through the additional work for local building companies. Likewise, in the longer term through the introduction of new households to the area and their future spend, which will help to support local trades and businesses.

Social

- 11.5 The proposal would contribute to the provision of additional market housing in the area, for which there is an identified need. Indeed, one of the NPPF's central themes is to deliver a wider choice of quality homes, which this proposal would assist in doing. The existing pub etc use has no particular beneficial or valued social role or function, unlike that which a village pub might have. As such, there would be no social dis-benefit associated with the redevelopment. In any event, the principle of the conversion of the building to a residential use has already been accepted by the Council.

Environmental

- 11.6 The protection of the open countryside and designated landscape areas, such as AONB, from sporadic or visually harmful development is a high planning policy priority for the Council and is necessary to deliver a sustainable patterns of development. In this instance, the proposal is for the redevelopment of a previously developed brownfield site, which planning policy generally favours. The key is in managing any development such that it conserves and enhances the landscape quality, especially within the AONB. It is demonstrated that the proposed development would be far more in keeping with, and would have a lesser visual impact upon, the character and appearance of the AONB than the existing development. In short, a positive benefit to the AONB would be delivered by this development. As for achieving a sustainable pattern of development, the transport movements associated with the proposed development would be demonstrably less than that for the historic development. Thereby satisfying the aim of planning policy to reduce the overall need for travel.

11.7 Consideration has also been given to whether there are any dis-benefits associated with the proposed development. The present development has been shown to have no heritage value. It is not identified as, and does not warrant identification as, a non-designated heritage asset. Accordingly, no harm would arise from the development in this respect. No harm to biodiversity or the landscape benefit of existing trees would be caused by the development.

Conclusion

- 11.8 Housing developments should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposed development would:
- involve the development of a previously developed site;
 - considerably improve the character and appearance of the AONB, through the removal of the existing building (which would not be achieved by the extant planning permission);
 - secure investment at the site, which would have wider economic benefits and ensure that the existing development does not (in the longer-term) deteriorate and add to the building's present negative impact upon the character and appearance of the AONB;
 - contribute to meeting the housing requirements of the Borough; and
 - achieve a more sustainable pattern of development, having a lesser demand for transport movements (with a consequent reduction in CO2 emissions) than the historic use.
- 11.9 It is demonstrated that there are considerable benefits associated with the proposed development and no identified dis-benefits / adverse impacts, other than the potential tension associated with the settlement strategy. It has been shown that the key purposes of the settlement strategy (to protect the countryside from visually harmful development and to deliver sustainable patterns of development) would be fully achieved by the proposed development. In short, the material planning considerations indicate that the proposal should be decided other than in accord with a strict interpretation of the settlement strategy policies. As such, there is no demonstrable planning harm caused by the development. In any event, it is a single consideration that has to be weighed in the balance with the many other considerations identified. In this respect, it should be noted that there are no other

adverse impacts identified with the development. Indeed, the positive / beneficial aspects of the development (as set out above) and the overall presumption in favour of sustainable development indicate that the planning balance decidedly favours the development.

11.10 The Council is, for the reasons set out above, respectfully invited to grant planning permission for the proposed development.