

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

SITE: LITTLE DUDLANDS FARM, RIMINGTON LANE, RIMINGTON BB7 4EA

PROPOSAL: CONVERSION OF TWO BARNS TO TWO DWELLINGS, CREATION OF CURTILAGES INSTALLATION OF NEW PACKAGE TREATMENT PLANT AND ERECTION OF NEW DOMESTIC GARAGE FOR FARMHOUSE.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This design and access statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for the conversion of the barns into two dwellings. A separate Heritage Statement, Structural Survey and Protected Species Survey have been submitted with the application. The application seeks permission to convert two traditional stone barns into two dwellings creating gardens and garaging for the new dwellings and providing a replacement garage for the existing farmhouse. As part of the development the modern farm buildings on the western side of the group will be demolished and all farming activities from the buildings will cease.

1.1 The drawings submitted with the application comprise:

4580-00 Location plans/site plan

4580-01A Existing Site Plan

4580-02 Existing Floor Plans

4580-03 Existing Elevations

4580-04A Proposed demolition site plan

4580-05B Proposed Site Plan

4580-06B Proposed ground floor plan

4580-07A Proposed First Floor

4580-08B Proposed Elevations

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Little Dudlands Farm is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the village of Rimington. It comprises a stone farmhouse with two detached stone barns to the north separated by the original farm yard. To the west of the group are modern portal frame farm buildings and various timber and stone outbuildings. Around the farm house garden there are a variety of stone walls some topped with flat stones and those at the front topped with half round copings. The other stone walls near the

farm yard are of the traditional dry stone construction. The farmyard between the farmhouse and the stone barn has the remains of cobbles beneath concrete and tarmac.

2.2 Vehicle access to the site is along a surfaced track from Rimington Lane. A public footpath number 13 also follows the track from Rimington Lane and continues north beyond the farm. Another footpath number 19 approaches the farm from the west running through the farm yard and then heading north east.

2.3 The Farmhouse is of a traditional construction and layout and is built out of painted stone and render under a blue slate roof with the main elevation facing south. The house appears to have been extended on its western gable in the past. The rear elevation of the house faces the farm yard. This elevation has seven windows within it. All the first floor windows light bedrooms. There is also a traditional arched topped stairs window. On the ground floor from left to right the window light a pantry, living room and utility.

2.4 The barns are substantial buildings built of random natural stone with stone detailing. The barn on the north side of the farmhouse barn 2 has a blue slate roof and appears to have been built in two sections. Both sections have 'cat slide' roofs on the northern side and there is a break in the ridge line between the two sections. This barn has a square topped wagon entrance on the southern side facing the farm yard with a corresponding entrance on the northern side. The majority of the openings in this barn are at the ground level although there is a forking hole in the east gable. The barn to the north west of the farmhouse (barn 1) has a stone slate roof over the main roof with blue slate on the single storey brick lean to on the northern gable. It has a covered wagon entrance on the main east elevation facing the farm yard and a corresponding opening on the western elevation. The ridge line of barn 1 is at right angles to barn 2 and the farm house. The rear of this barn faces the newer yard area and modern farm buildings. The curtilage of the farm group is denoted by traditional stone wall and post and wire stock fencing.

2.5 The farmhouse and barns are set on the hillside within a group of buildings which includes a smithy which it in separate ownership. Little Dudlands also forms a group with other nearby dwellings which are all served by the same track. These include Holme End, Rimington Bridge End, and Bridge End Cottage. This area is designated as open countryside in the adopted Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan.

3 INVOLVEMENT

3.1 Pre-application advice was sought from the Council a written response was received on the 10th October see Appendix.

4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 The following saved policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan are relevant to the proposal:

Policy G1- expect high standards of design quality.

Policy G5-outside main settlements/villages boundaries planning permission will only be granted for small-scale developments.

Policy ENV3-in the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape.

Policy ENV7 – development having an adverse effect on protected wildlife species will not be granted planning permission.

Policy H2-dwellings in the open countryside.

Policy H15 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to external impacts.

Policy H16 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to the building.

Policy H17 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to the scheme design.

Emerging Core Strategy

The Policies in the Core Strategy which are relevant to this application in the main reassert the policies of the local plan these are DMG1, DS1, DMG2, EN2, DME2, EN4, DME3, DMH3 and DMH4.

The following elements of national policy are also relevant to the proposal.

4.2 Nation Planning Policy Framework, Section-“Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes” paragraph 55 promotes sustainable development in rural areas. Development for new dwellings in the countryside is acceptable in limited circumstances including where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and would lead to an enhancement to the immediate siting or the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset.

4.3 NPPF section-“Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” paragraph 128 requires applicants to provide information to describe the significance of any heritage assets including any contribution made by their setting. A separate Heritage Statement has been prepared. In making

planning decision the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and putting it to a viable use consistent with their conservation is to be taken into account.

5 EVALUATION

5.1 The main planning issues relating to this proposal are:

- the principle of the development;
- the suitability of the buildings for conversion;
- the landscape impact;
- the design of the scheme;
- impact on neighbours
- highway safety; and
- nature conservation interest.
- Permitted Development
- Public footpaths

Each of these issues is assessed in turn below.

Principle

5.2 Policy G5 and CS policy DMG2 are the starting point for consideration of this proposal. The policies allows for small-scale development, including “other small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area which would conform to the policies of this Plan”. The policy does not define what may be regarded as small-scale uses. However, the object of the policy is to protect the countryside from inappropriate development. The proposal is for the conversion of existing buildings within an established group of buildings, it does not introduce new built development into an area of open countryside. Thus, the nature of the proposal is considered to be appropriate to a rural area. This is borne out and amplified by reference to other policies that specifically refer to residential development and conversion of buildings in the countryside. This policy is broadly in line with the NPPF paragraph 55 which allows for the re-use of buildings in the countryside.

5.3 There are policies in the Local Plan which specifically relate to proposals for the conversion of barns to dwellings. Policies H2, H15 and CS policies DMH3, and DMH4 refer to whether the building is one that is suitably located for conversion. The building is not an isolated building in the landscape where problems of ‘urbanisation’, with which policy is primarily concerned, might arise. This is not likely to occur since the conversion relates to an existing building, the proposed garages and garden areas are within the existing curtilage of the farm and farm buildings.

5.4 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states new isolated homes in the countryside (i.e. in unsustainable locations) should be avoided except in special circumstances including where:

“where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or

“where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.”

The Council confirmed in their pre-application advice that the barns are non-designated heritage assets (page 2 under the section entitled principle). The stone barns are no longer required for agricultural purposes and their conversion to dwellings represent the optimal viable use for the buildings. Their conversion to a commercial use has been discounted because of the close proximity of the stone barns to the existing residential use of the farmhouse and the potential for the loss of residential amenity to that property if a new commercial use was introduced to the site. The proposal meets the special circumstances of paragraph 55 in relation to the optimal viable use of a heritage asset.

5.5 The proposal meets a second special circumstance in that the stone barns are redundant. The applicant is in the process of transferring all farming activity to his main farm Wood Farm Rimington. The granting of planning permission for the conversion of the stone barns to dwellings will fund the demolition and relocation of the modern farm buildings together with the remaining farming activities carried out in those buildings at Little Dudlands to Wood Farm. The proposal re-uses the redundant stone buildings and enhances the immediate setting by removing all the modern farm buildings which are of no architectural merit, outdoor storage and areas of hard standing. In meeting the special circumstances referred to in paragraph 55 of the NPPF there is no requirements that the buildings to be converted should be in a sustainable location.

Building Suitability

5.6 The barns are regarded as being suitable for conversion with regards to criteria in Policies H15, H16 and CS policy DMH4. In particular:

- the barns are within a group of buildings which includes a dwelling (which are also reasonably close to other residential properties) where services and utilities are already provided so that no additional expenditure by public authorities on the provision of infrastructure would be required;
- a structural survey is submitted with the application. It confirms that the buildings are structurally sound and capable of conversion without needing major rebuilding;
- the buildings are of sufficient size to provide suitable living accommodation without extension; and

- being of traditional form and materials, the character of the buildings and the materials they are constructed of are appropriate to their surroundings. The buildings are worthy of retention.
- The buildings are no longer required for agricultural purposes. The use of the farm buildings has been run down gradually with all activities ultimately transferring to Wood Farm.

Landscape Impact

5.7 The scheme will improve the character of the landscape through the removal of the modern farm buildings. This will have no damaging impact on the character or appearance of the landscape within which it sits as these buildings are of no architectural merit and, thus, the proposal complies with the relevant criteria of Policies ENV3, H15, H17 and CS policies EN2, DME2, DMH3 and DMH4. The applicant also owns and farms Wood Farm, Rimington Lane, Rimington which has an extensive range of large modern farm buildings. The farming activities which were carried out at Little Dudlands are being transferred to Wood Farm.

5.8 The proposed garden curtilages for the barn conversions are within an area close to the barns which is already part of the curtilage of the farm. A substantial amount of modern farm buildings will be demolished. The total extent of the farm buildings and the associated curtilage will be substantially reduced. The net effect of the loss of these buildings and their replacement with the proposed garages and gardens together with the return of developed land to field is positive and will have less impact on the landscape than the modern buildings they replace.

5.9 The Planning Officer in the pre-application advice comments that the introduction of new areas of hard standing for parking and turning and the provision of garaging would create an overly domestic appearance. The creation of garages for the barn conversions provides cover for vehicles which would otherwise be parked outside and provides space for gardening equipment, storage of bicycles, garden furniture and outdoor toys etc. thereby reducing the amount of domestic paraphernalia visible within the garden areas.

5.10 The garage to barn 1 has been sited close to the North West side of barn 1 in an area which has been built upon in the twentieth century. As such it will not extend the built form of the group beyond an area already containing buildings. As the land rises in a northerly direction the garage will be built into the ground making it inconspicuous when viewed from the north and subordinate when viewed from the west. The ridge of the roof of the garage is parallel to the ridge of the roof of the barn. The garage is near to the proposed kitchen and main entrance. The internal layout of the barn is the best arrangement for using existing openings and spaces. The access drive provides a new edge to the farm group significantly shrinking the built form in this area.

5.11 The garden areas on the northern side of the barns have been designed to accommodate the sloping ground. It will include a hard surfaced area close to the building with a retaining wall to hold the rising land towards the boundary fence which is to be used as garden. The garage to barn 2 is in line with the rear wall of barn 2 with the ridge parallel to the ridge of the barn so that it appears in the form of a small agricultural outbuilding.

5.12 The farmhouse has two garages/outbuilding one of unsightly render and corrugated sheet and a long timber garage both on the east side of the house. These presently stands at the entrance to the farm yard and detract from the group. It is proposed to replace it with a simple stone built garage which is considerably smaller in size. Around the garden of the farmhouse is a well-built garden wall which appears to be of the same date as the house. The proposed garage is positioned just outside this wall in a similar position to the existing buildings but much reduced in size. The replacement of the two buildings with the garage and hard standing in front will have a much improved appearance in terms of materials size and position than the existing and allow more of the structure of the farmhouse to be seen.

5.13 The vehicle access to the site will continue to be the private track which approaches from the south. Two new passing places are to be provided within areas which are under the applicant's control. The hard standings for vehicle parking and turning for the conversions will have very little impact on the visual amenities of the landscape because they are within areas which are already developed with farm buildings.

5.14 This complies with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 55 which requires the re-use of redundant or disused buildings also to include an enhancement to the immediate setting and paragraph 115 in that the re-use of this traditional farm building preserves the building for the future and its contribution to the cultural heritage of the area.

Design

5.15 The proposed design of the conversions is of a high standard and complies with the various criteria and Policies G1, H17 and CS policies DMG1 and DMH4. The barns are constructed out of random stone the barn 1 has a stone flag roof and barn 2 a blue slate roof. The original openings in the barns are generally surrounded by natural stone jambs heads and sills. There is also evidence of breathing holes and earlier opening that have been in-filled.

5.16 The layout of the rooms within the barns have been informed by the position of the existing door and window openings to take best advantage of these and to ensure that the number of new openings is kept to a minimum. Please refer to drawings existing and proposed. On drawing 08B the new dwellings are denoted barn 1, and barn 2. The scheme has resulted in a modest level of new openings within the barn walls and roof. The large areas of unbroken walls and roof slopes have

been retained which preserves the character of the buildings. In addition modern extensions have either been rebuilt or removed. These include the rebuilding of the larger brick and render lean to on the north side of barn 1. This is to be re-built leaving the existing quoin stones intact. This will improve the appearance of the building by being rebuilt in stone. The smaller red brick and render lean to on the southern side of barn 2 is to be removed. This presently interrupts the single plane of the front elevation of the north barn and intrudes into the farm yard area. Similarly the metal hopper attached to the west barn which is unsightly is to be removed and the unsympathetic modern garage to the farmhouse is to be demolished and replaced next to the house thereby better revealing the original open area of the farm yard. The single storey structure which link the barns together is not thought to be an original structure (see Heritage Statement) its removal will better reveal the historic structure of the barns.

Barn 1

5.17 Barn 1 is to be converted to one dwelling. This barn has a covered wagon entrance facing the original farm yard. This opening is to be fully glazed to let the maximum amount of light into the main living area. This glazed screen is set back from the outer face of the barn to retain the hood effect over the entrance area and the shadowing effect it creates. It also allows the original exterior opening to the harness room above the stables to be retained. The ground floor rooms of barn one are to be lit by using the existing openings in the building. There are very few first floor windows in this building except for the harness room. The first floor bedrooms are to be lit by a combination of a modest number new window openings and roof lights. Bed 1 is lit by a skylight. Bed 2 (the harness room) is lit by an existing openings which will be at floor level. At the present time this part of the building is obscured from view by a substantial freestanding feed hopper which is to be removed. Bed 3 and bed 4 have a single new window in the walls. On the north side of barn one there is an existing red brick single storey lean-to which is in a poor condition. It is proposed to rebuild this part of the barn in natural stone to the same proportions and repeat the original window opening except for the centre window which will be replaced by double glass doors. This is on the northern side of the building which is the least visible in the landscape so introduction of the glass door will not be particularly visible and the replacement of the brick lean to with a stone lean to will improve the visual appearance of the building.

Barn 2

5.18 Similarly the main living area of barn two is to be lit by existing openings. The existing wagon entrance on the south elevation of the barn will light the stairs thereby avoiding a strong horizontal division. A single new window is proposed on the ground floor to light the dining area. This window is opposite the utility room in the farm house and bedroom above and is proposed to be obscure glazed to avoid a loss of privacy to the occupiers of the farm house. The remainder of this elevation

of the barn directly faces the rear of the farmhouse at a distance of 10m which has the potential to create a loss of privacy to the occupiers of the farmhouse unless the windows positions are carefully considered. Drawing 08B shows the position of the windows in the farmhouse and notes that there is only one habitable room window on the ground floor but all the first floor windows light bedrooms. We have indicated therefore that all the ground floor windows on the southern elevation of barn 2 directly opposite to the farmhouse are to be obscure glazed.

5.19 The existing forking hole in the eastern gable of the barn is used to light bedroom five. On the southern elevation a first floor window is proposed to light bedroom two. This overlooks the yard area and therefore does not affect privacy. Bedrooms 3, 4 and 5 and the bathroom are each to have a single roof light. One new first floor window is proposed on the west elevation at first floor and this lights bedroom 1. The two roof lights on the upper part of the north roof slope light the stairs and the bathroom with a roof light on the lower slope to supplement light to the kitchen. Three roof lights are proposed on the south roof slope to avoid opening in the walls at first floor level. This roof slope faces the courtyard so that from wider views the roof slopes is obscured from view by the farmhouse. On the southern elevation there is a small single storey rendered brick lean-to. It is of a later construction to the main barn and it is proposed to remove it to better reveal the historic appearance of the barn.

Curtilage creation

5.20 The garden areas for barn 2 will be on the north side of the barn with vehicle access off the eastern end of the farm group. The gardens to barn 1 be on the north side of the barn and on the west and south. The gardens on the north side are to be separated from the field beyond by a 1m high post and wire fence and each other by a dry stone wall. Barn 1 has vehicle access from the existing farm track which runs to the south of the farmhouse and through the existing modern farmyard area. The land to the west of this access presently occupied by modern farm buildings will be returned to field. The farmhouse has a series of stone walls around its garden area of varying heights and styles. It is appropriate to delineate the new gardens and vehicle access by using stone walls.

5.21 The cobbled area of the farm yard is to be renovated and kept open. No new boundary walls are proposed in the farm yard area.

Neighbour Amenity

5.22 The change of use of the barns to dwellings is compatible with the existing residential use of the farmhouse. Each property will have its own garden area and parking area. The use of obscure glazing ensures that there will be no loss of privacy.

5.23 As all the farming activities in the buildings will cease and the modern farm buildings will be demolished there will be no conflict between the occupiers of the barn conversion and the use of the farm buildings to house animals.

5.24 To the east of the farm group is a building used for light industry. The building is owned and operated by Mr David Seed who is a sole trader. His use of this building is very low key. His main business is in repairing and servicing farm machinery which generally takes place where the machinery is rather than from the building at Little Dudlands. He carries out some manufacturing of farm equipment within the buildings. He has no employees. He works from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and trades as Seed Agricultural Engineering Ltd. The work he carries out at Little Dudlands is conducted inside the building. The machinery he uses produces low levels of noise intermittently. The business has operated next to the farmhouse at Little Dudlands since 1990 without complaint. The low level of operation of this business which is a light industrial use is compatible with the occupation of the barns as dwellings.

Highway Safety

5.25 The existing vehicle access serves Bridge End Cottage, Rimington Bridge End, Holme End, Meadowside, Seed Agricultural Engineering, Little Dudlands Farmhouse and Farm. The proposal will exchange the traffic associated with the farming activities at Little Dudlands with traffic to two new dwellings.

5.26 The existing vehicle access onto to Rimington Lane is 5m wide and remains approximately 5m wide for 10m to allow vehicle to pass. In pre-application discussions with Highway Engineer Trevor Lewis it was confirmed that this arrangement is satisfactory for the existing access to serve two additional dwellings. This passing place was required to be provided when planning permission was granted for the conversion of Bridge End Barn to a dwelling in 2001. As the access serves several dwellings and the agricultural land close to Rimington Lane, each of which benefits from using the passing place, it is in the interests of all the current users of the access track that the passing place remains. We have also proposed a passing place beyond the cattle grid at Holme End (within land under the applicant's control) so that vehicles travelling from Little Dudlands towards Rimington Lane can pass vehicles approaching from Rimington Lane without vehicles needing to reverse towards Rimington Lane. There is similarly a passing place proposed towards Little Dudlands.

Nature Conservation

5.27 A protected species survey is submitted with the application. The report states at section D.5 that building 1 (barn 1) has features that range from having low to moderate-high potential value for roosting bats and low-moderate potential value for hibernating bats. Building 2 (barn 2) also has low

to moderate-high potential value for roosting bats and low-moderate potential value for hibernating bats. Building 3 the timber store has negligible potential value for roosting or hibernating bats and building 4 the modern agricultural building has low potential value.

5.28 The report suggests that mitigation and compensation measures for bats and birds will be required. The applicant is content to provide these in accordance with the recommendations in the report, the details of which can be agreed by condition. The proposal complies with Policy ENV7 and CS Policy EN4 and DME3.

Permitted development

5.29 Recent changes to the General Permitted Development Order 1995 allows the change of use of agricultural building such as these to dwellings. It is reasonable to say that the applicant could exercise these permitted development right should this planning application not be granted planning permission and convert these two barns to two dwellings. Only slight alterations to the scheme would be required (a reduction in the extent of the curtilages) in order for the scheme to meet the requirements of the GPDO.

Public Footpaths

5.30 A public footpath runs through the site. It appears that the official line of the footpath has been built over in the past (modern agricultural buildings on the western side of the group see drawing 4580-01A), so the proposal provides for the reinstatement of the original line of the path see drawing 4580-05B. The applicant intends if planning permission is granted to apply to re-route the public footpath to the south of the group which is the route which walkers currently take even though this is not the official route. He would also wish to re-route the public footpath to the south of the buildings during construction if the route of the footpath has not been officially diverted when development begins.

CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed conversion of these two barns to two dwellings will secure the future of these barns which are considered to be non-designated heritage assets. Their conversion to dwellings would be the optimal viable use for these buildings and the sensitive design of the scheme ensures that their significance is not diminished. The proposal will re-use redundant buildings and would lead to an enhancement of the site and the landscape generally. The proposals fully accords with the provisions of the NPPF the Local Plan and the emerging Core Strategy.

Appendix

Pre-application advice from Ribble Valley Borough Council dated 10th October 2014.

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