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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2015

**by Louise Nurser BA (Hons) Dip UP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 9 December 2015**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/15/3124801**

**Curtis House, Longridge Road, Longridge, Lancs PR3 2NB.**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by NRS Contracts Ltd against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 3/2015/0272, dated 6 March 2015, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2015.
  - The development proposed is erection of detached double garage.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural matters

2. It had been arranged that I would undertake the visit with representatives of both the Local Planning Authority and the appellant present. The Local Planning Authority representative did not attend. Therefore, following discussion with the appellant's agent who had contacted the Council and ascertained that the Council's representative would be unable to attend, I undertook the site visit as an Access Required Site Visit. This meant I was able to access the site on my own with the permission of the appellant. This has not prejudiced the Council in my determination of the appeal.
3. The description refers to the proposed development as a detached double garage. However, it is clear from the plans before me that the proposed development also includes a wall. I have therefore determined the appeal on that basis.
4. The appeal site has been referred to as falling within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). From my consideration of the Council's questionnaire and Officer Report it is apparent that this is not the case.

### Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider landscape.

## Reasons

### *Character and appearance*

6. The appeal site lies around 360 metres away from the boundary of the AONB, in an area of open countryside, characterised by traditional boundary treatments of hedging or stone walls set within a gently undulating landscape of open views.
7. The proposed development would provide new build garaging for a dwelling which is to be formed from a converted single storey agricultural building which sits within a small paddock associated with Curtis House. As part of the planning permission Reference 3/2014/0425/P, to convert the shippon to a dwelling, detailed conditions were imposed to ensure that the rural character of the simple modest single storey linear brick built shippon, which is set back a considerable distance from the road within the grass paddock, was not lost through insensitive alterations, including the construction of outbuildings.
8. Paragraph 115 of the Framework makes it clear that the Government places great weight on the importance of conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Ribble Valley Core Strategy, (CS) adopted 2014, takes the approach that areas outside of the AONB which contribute to its setting will be protected, conserved and, where possible, enhanced.
9. The proposed garaging would be joined to the host building at its southernmost end by a rendered breeze block wall of around 1.8 metres high which would extend for around 6 metres. Together, the rear of the wall and the side elevations of the garage and shippon would run almost the whole depth of the paddock.
10. Consequently, the open rural aspect of the site and its setting would be compromised as a result of the introduction of a tall wall and a double garage whose ridge line would dominate, partially obscure, and alter the rural appearance of the former shippon.
11. The existing hawthorn hedging which forms the boundary to the road is of modest height. Consequently, there are open views into the site. When viewed from the public footpath to the south of the appeal site the proposed development would be less visible. This would be as a result of the partial screening by the Pumping Station and in the summer, the tall thick hawthorn hedge. In the winter this would be less effective. However, the rendered wall, juxtaposed with the brick garages and shippon would be most visible when viewed from Longridge Road travelling towards Chipping and the AONB and would be seen as a large obtrusive feature in the landscape.
12. The appellant has referred me to an area between the Alston Arms and the Derby Arms which I was able to consider as part of my site visit. This area is characterised by limited sporadic development. The built development within the open countryside does not consistently follow a particular style or type of development and I was aware of a number of buildings which were set at a 90 degree angle to the road such as the detached garaging to the north of Curtis House, the rendered electricity building at the corner of Lord's Lane and a large modern steel profile sheet building on the other side of Lord's Lane. However, these do not appear to be in keeping with the predominantly stone vernacular

buildings which front the road such as Curtis House and which, on the whole, form a linear pattern.

13. I understand that the appellant wishes to provide garaging on the site and that as a result of allowing the conversion of the agricultural building that the nature of the appeal site will inevitably change. However, the wall, together with the marked driveway, coloured gravel, and the construction of a large double garage would introduce a suburban ambience into an important landscape and impact on the setting of the AONB.
14. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably impact on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider landscape. This would not preserve, conserve nor enhance the quality of the rural farmland landscape as promoted within Key Statement EN2 of the CS. Nor would it accord with the objectives of Policies DMG1 and DMH4 of the CS which require developments to be sensitive to their context and not harm the character and appearance of the area, or the host property.

*Other matters*

15. I understand that there are discrepancies between the access details set out in the application which is the subject of this appeal and the previously approved application. However, there is no evidence before me to suggest that it would not be possible to provide for safe access and egress to the site to reflect that agreed within the previous approval. Indeed, reference is made within a note to Plan 0454/93 Drawing no 02 for the access arrangements to align with approval 3/2014/0425. Consequently, I conclude that were I to have approved this proposed development that matters of highway safety could have been overcome by condition.

**Conclusion**

16. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*L. Nurser*

INSPECTOR