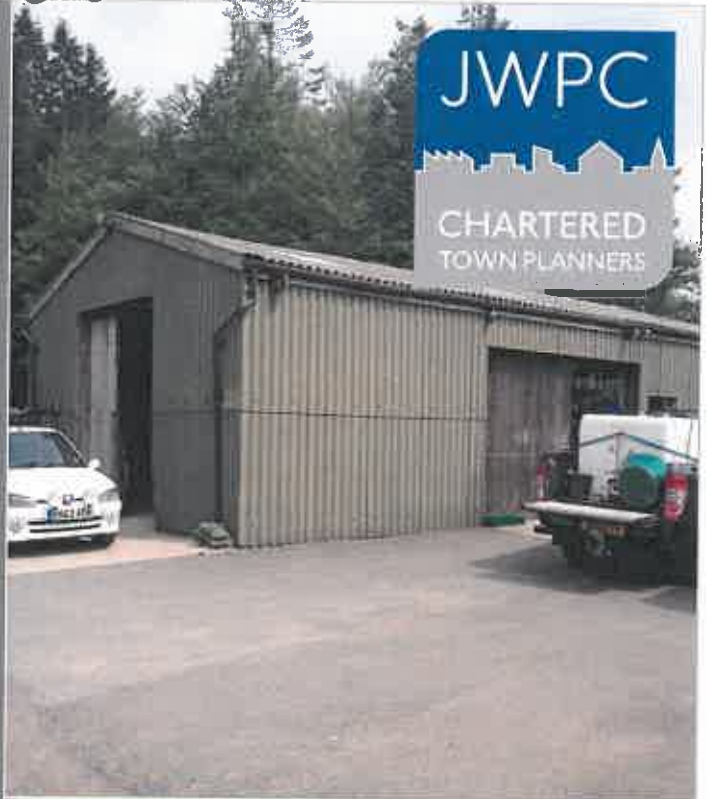


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Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm

Erection of Rural Workers Dwelling

Client:
Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm



Planning,

Design &

Access

Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application to establish a permanent rural workers dwelling at Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm, Dunsop Bridge. It follows a formal pre-application enquiry with the Council's Pre-Planning Advice Officer (LPA Ref: RV/2014/ENQ/00135), under which a meeting was held on-site to discuss the business, the existing form of accommodation provided by a caravan on the site and initial sketch plans of the rural workers dwelling.
- 1.2** Having regard to the site context, prevailing planning policies and the information requested by the Pre-Planning Officer, this Statement addresses the pertinent material considerations surrounding the proposal. In addition to the submitted Planning Application forms and the OS Site Location Plan, it should be read carefully in conjunction with the:
- Existing and Proposed Plans and Materials by Sunderland Peacock & Associates Ltd;
 - Bat Survey by Sunderland Peacock & Associates Ltd;
 - Flood Risk Assessment by LK Consult Ltd;
 - Rural Business Appraisal by JWPC Ltd; and
 - Minerals Resource Assessment by JWPC Ltd
- 1.3** Additionally, an Economic Viability Appraisal has been prepared which reviews the business accounts from the past 3 years. It is hoped that Ribble Valley Borough Council will agree to keep the specifics of this information confidential, which will be forwarded to the Planning Officer following validation.
- 1.4** Given the nature of the proposal, it is asked that Local Planning Authority specifically requests for any further information it may need to determine the application. This should be made in writing, well in advance of the target date for determination (allowing time to prepare a formal response).

2. Site Characteristics

Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm is an established rural business, situated adjacent to the banks of the Langden Brook, towards the south-west of Dunsop Bridge. The site falls within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.2 The business focuses on the spawning, rearing and sale of fish for the re-stock of rivers and reservoirs, owned by private landowners and fisheries. Five full-time members of staff work at the Trout Farm including the Manager.



Figure 1: Aerial Photograph of Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm

- 2.3 As seen from the above aerial photograph, the business land comprises a grouping of large ponds, containing the fish and associated buildings. Two bungalows exist outside of the ownership boundary, adjacent to the Trout Farm, which are unavailable for purchase. Another storage building shown to the north-east of the planning application site was demolished some time ago.

Manager Accommodation

- 2.4 Due to the demands of the business which requires a 24 hour functional presence, the Manager of the Trout Farm presently lives with his wife (and frequently their son when not working at another farm) in a caravan on the site. This is located towards the east of the site, near the access from the highway.
- 2.5 It is understood that a caravan supporting a permanent full-time worker has been on the site since the 1960's. Although it is difficult to specifically identify this on more historic aerial photographs, a caravan can be clearly seen on the below photograph taken in June 1994.



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph taken in June 1994, showing the Presence of a Caravan

- 2.6 The caravan, its size and its position within the site has changed over time. However it is understood that the current Manager was verbally informed by Planning Staff at Ribble Valley Borough Council in 2011 that consent was not needed for its replacement (of a similar size and in its current position).
- 2.7 Claims are raised within the pre-application response letter that the existing caravan is being occupied unlawfully. However, bearing in mind the site history and the functional need established within the Rural Business Appraisal, we are confident that an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness would be supported. Indeed, the Local Planning Authority has clearly considered that the matter would not be

expedient to pursue towards enforcement and the applicant has not been made aware of any potential enforcement proceedings.

- 2.8 Having now lived in the on-site caravan since 2011, the Manager is keen to establish a more suitable and permanent form of accommodation for his family, that can be formally tied to the business.

Flood Risk

- 2.9 The planning application site is identified within Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps to fall within Flood Zone 3. However as part of the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), a more detailed map was obtained from Lancashire County Council which confirms that site is partially within Flood Zone 2.

3. Design & Access Statement

Use

- 3.1 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a single, two-storey dwelling within the business area of Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm. The proposal will involve the demolition of the existing storage / workshop building and the removal of the existing caravan on site.

Amount

- 3.2 The dwelling will have an internal floor area of 159m², although the building should be perceived as three specific parts. These include the:
- Private living area for the Site Manager and family (99m²)
 - Corridor, office, bedroom for a member of staff and utility (38m²)
 - Garage and staff toilet facilities (22m²)

Scale

- 3.3 The main part of the dwelling, which provides private accommodation for the Site Manager, maintains the original footprint of the building it is intended to replace. The home is 1.5 storeys, providing accommodation within the roofspace (with a ridge height of 6.8m above the finished floor level). The height of the roof steps down above the single-storey elements (including the office, utility and garage).
- 3.4 The proposed height has been increased above plans originally submitted as part of the pre-application enquiry, as a result of recommendations within the Flood Risk Assessment to provide minimum finished floor level of 117.2m.

Layout

- 3.5 The layout of the proposed dwelling has been designed from a functional perspective, so that it can provide private accommodation for the Manager (and his family), as well as enabling a member of staff to stay over (when the Manager is away) and perform regular business duties. Accommodation will be accessed via a main corridor from the west.

3.6 The main accommodation provides two en-suite bedrooms to the roof space, a kitchen / diner and a living room. It is intended that this accommodation can be locked off from the corridor, which will continue to provide staff with access to the ground floor bedroom, utility, office and garage (enabling the continued running of the business on a 24 hour basis).

Appearance

3.7 In considering the design of the proposed dwelling, the project architect has chosen a sympathetic approach to its character and appearance, which it is hoped will complement the Forest of Bowland AONB, which is acknowledged as an important material consideration. The original design has been amended to reflect advice within the pre-application response letter from Ribble Valley Borough Council (including the use of piked dormers).

3.8 Whilst it has been necessary to increase the height to meet the recommended finished floor levels specified within the Flood Risk Assessment; it is considered that in this particular location, the proposed dwelling will not be readily visible from surrounding highways or footpaths. As such, the proposed dwelling will have a minimal impact on the rural / AONB setting.

3.9 A break-down of the proposed materials has been provided by Sunderland Peacock & Associates Ltd, which contains photographs of its use on similar schemes. The materials include:

- Natural stone to the building walls
- Horizontal cedar cladding
- Reclaimed natural blue slate to the roof
- Hardwood timber windows, doors soffit and fascia boards, painted cream; and
- Black aluminium rainwater goods

Landscaping

3.10 The proposed dwelling will benefit from a small grass and stone flag private amenity space to the west. This will also be accessible via the French doors to the ground floor living room. A gravel drive will be created outside the main access point and garage.

Access

3.11 Access to the property will remain via the existing business entrance.

4. Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.1 Planning decisions relating to businesses within the countryside should be consistent with the positive approach set out within Chapter 3 of the NPPF. In particular, this states at Paragraph 28 that:

"Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;

Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses".

- 4.2 Whilst Paragraph 55 of the NPPF therefore normally discourages isolated new homes, it also recognises the potential for special circumstances to apply, where the proposal relates to:

"The essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside".

- 4.3 The requirement for development proposals to have a good design is promoted through Chapter 7 of the NPPF. Bearing in mind that Chapter 11 (Paragraph 155) also provides Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with *"the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty"*; it is considered appropriate for the rural workers dwelling to benefit from a design which suits the rural setting.

Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028

- 4.4 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy was adopted in December 2014, replacing a number of the former 'Saved' Policies of the Local Plan. Key Statements and Policies relevant to the determination of the proposal are outlined below.

4.5 Key Statement EN2 (Landscape) furthers much of the Chapter 11 within the NPPF, emphasising that the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland AONB will be protected, conserved and enhanced. It states that:

“As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials”.

4.6 Through Key Statement EC1 (Business and Employment Development), it is set out that developments that contribute to the strengthening of the wider rural economy will be supported in principle.

4.7 Policy DMG1 (General Considerations) provides a list of specific design considerations, which should be recognised as part of all new development. In particular, proposals should be sympathetic to local character, provide a safe means of access and ensure that a good level of amenity is provided for occupants.

4.8 Policy DMH3 (Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB) is more focused to the current proposal. This clarifies that within the AONB, residential development will (amongst others considerations) be limited to *“development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified need”*. It also states that in assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwelling, a functional and financial test will be applied.

4.9 Through Policy DMB1 (Supporting Business Growth and The Local Economy), the Council recognises the need to support business growth. It states that:

“The expansion of established firms on land outside settlement will be allowed provided it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated within the local landscape”.

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (Annex A)

4.10 Both the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy DMH3 provide limited detail in terms of how to justify the need for rural workers accommodation. Case law has established however that Annex A of the former PPS7 may continue to be utilised in the assessment of such proposals.

4.11 Under Paragraph 3 of Annex A, the guidance states that new permanent dwellings should only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural units, providing:

- There is a clearly established existing functional need;
- The need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part-time requirement;
- The unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so;
- The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and
- Other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside, are satisfied.

5. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.1 Planning consent is sought for the erection of a single dwelling within the business land. Whilst it is noted that new isolated dwellings within the Open Countryside are normally discouraged, Paragraph 55 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy DMH3 recognise that rural workers accommodation can be considered to form a special exception.
- 5.2 The submitted Rural Business Appraisal and Economic Viability Assessment demonstrate how the proposed development satisfies both the functional and financial tests recognised under Core Strategy Policy DMH3. In particular, these documents draw upon best available guidance contained within Annex A of the former PPS7 and provide information on each of the queries raised by the Local Authority within the pre-application response letter.
- 5.3 Whilst there may not be any formal planning records relating to the on-site caravan (as detailed within the pre-application response from the Council), Chapter 2 of this Statement clarifies how there has been a caravan on-site since at least the 1960s. Having formed the main residence of previous owners (and now the current owner), this further demonstrates how the need for a full-time presence has always existed.
- 5.4 The Rural Business Appraisal also details how the current Manager of Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm has significantly increased the level of turnover in recent years (as well as the number full-time employees). With long-term plans to continue developing and growing the business (as well as its contribution towards rural employment), support for the proposed dwelling is ultimately consistent with Chapter 3 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy DMB1. The contribution of the business to the rural economy is a significant material consideration in favour of the proposed development.

Size of the Dwelling

- 5.5 Chapter 3 of this Statement details how the proposed dwelling has been designed from a functional perspective, to provide private accommodation for the Manager, as well as overnight accommodation for a member of staff and the office. These are crucial to the successful running of the business.
- 5.6 The size of the proposed dwelling (which provides an internal floor area of 159m²) is appropriate to the needs of the Manager and their family. It will form the main residence for the occupants as well

as performing a functional role (with the single storey element with office, garage etc. partially compensating for the loss of the building it is set to replace).

5.7 Whilst the size of the dwelling has therefore previously been questioned by the Local Authority within the pre-application response letter. It is clear that it the ability to provide office space, storage and an additional bedroom for a member of staff would greatly assist with the running of the business. Matters which should be supported bearing in mind the aims and intentions of Core Strategy Policy DMB1.

5.8 Were the size of the proposed dwelling reduced to exclude the more functional elements, then it is likely that follow-up applications would be needed to establish further detached buildings within the business land. Although the existing caravan will be removed, the need to avoid further buildings is clearly discouraged within the pre-application letter.

Design and Appearance

5.9 The main 1.5 storey element of the proposed dwelling maintains the footprint of the existing storage building that it is set to replace. Whilst the building will largely be hidden from public rights of way and highways the materials used and the architectural style is intended to maintain and enhance the AONB setting. This is a considerable improvement over the existing building on-site.

5.10 The removal of the existing caravan (which is presently situated close to the entrance to the business land and visible from the highway), will contribute towards the enhancement of the AONB.

5.11 The accommodation has been designed to maintain a good level of amenity for occupants of the adjacent bungalows, which are in separate ownership from Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm. Whilst the height has needed to be increased to adhere to recommendations within the Flood Risk Assessment, a distance of 6.5m will be maintained between the single storey garage element and the nearest bungalow. This ensures that the building does not lead to overbearingness. The position of the proposed dwelling to the north of the existing homes also ensures that occupants maintain a good level of light. Windows have been located to the proposed dwelling so that existing occupants will not feel overlooked.

5.12 In consideration of Chapter 7 of the NPPF, as well as Core Strategy Policies DMG1 and DMH3, the proposed development is considered good design. This will maintain and enhance the qualities of the AONB and should be supported.

Flood Risk

- 5.13 A site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared which takes into account the NPPF, the Technical Guidance to the NPPF and also Core Strategy Policy DME6 (Water Management). As part of the preparation of the FRA, a more detailed map was provided by Lancashire County Council which confirms that the site is partially within Flood Zone 2. This includes the area where the rural workers dwelling is proposed.
- 5.14 Whilst the FRA should be examined in full, it argues that because of the Trout Farm's dependence upon a non-treated fresh water supply, it should be categorised as a "Water Compatible" land use. Consequently, proposed accommodation which is essential to maintain the day-to-day running of the site should be classified similarly.
- 5.15 It is not considered that any land falling outside of the business ownership would be appropriate for the proposed dwelling, as this would fail to meet the essential needs of the Trout Farm. Notwithstanding the sensitivity of the proposed dwelling to flooding (as the business is completely within the Flood Risk Zone) there are no sites which are sequentially preferable. The Sequential Test is detailed further within the FRA document.
- 5.16 There is no history of flooding in this area. However, with the above in mind, the proposed accommodation is as distant as it can be from the river whilst still remaining within the Trout Farm. It is both sensibly located and designed to be resilient to flood events.
- 5.17 Based on the findings of the FRA then an Exceptions Test is not required for the proposed development. Although as discussed above, the development clearly offers much wider benefits to employment and rural economic growth, which represent a significant material consideration in favour of the development.

Minerals Safeguarding

- 5.18 It has been identified that the planning application site forms part of a Minerals Safeguarding Zone. As such, a specific Minerals Resource Assessment has been prepared and submitted together with the planning application.

5.19 The document clarifies that the delivery of a single home to the business land would not prejudice the delivery mineral resources on a County level. Also, given the essential need for the proposed dwelling to support the business, it is considered that there is clear justification to set aside Policy M2 of the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Local Plan.

Ecology

5.20 A Bat Survey has been carried out by Sunderland Peacock & Associates Ltd, to investigate the ecological impact of the proposed demolition of the existing workshop building. It concludes that the workshop provides very low level roosting potential, with a higher level of habitat provided within adjacent buildings. The removal of this building will not result in any loss of habitat and the scale of the proposal will not impact on the local bat population.

6. Summary

- 6.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application to establish a rural workers dwelling at Dunsop Bridge Trout Farm. The business was purchased by the current Owners in 2011, whom due to the essential need to respond to emergencies and perform regular business related duties, currently live in a caravan on the site. Having run the business successfully since this time, they are in need of permanent accommodation that suits both the needs of their family and enables them to maintain a 24 hours presence at the Trout Farm.
- 6.2 A rural workers dwelling is proposed towards the north-east corner of the business land, which replaces an existing storage and office building. The main private areas for the Manager and family provides an internal floor area of 99m², with the 1.5 storey building maintaining the footprint of the building it is set to replace. Functional areas have also been incorporated, which include a garage, staff toilet, office, utility and additional bedroom. These elements partially compensate for the loss of the storage building but more importantly, will enable a staff member to stay at the site if the Manager is away. It is clear from the proposed layout that level of floorspace is commensurate with the functional need. As such, the size of the dwelling must be considered acceptable.
- 6.3 The proposed design is also intended to respect the AONB setting and whilst it is well hidden from public view, the dwelling promotes an appropriate rural character and use of materials. Design advice provided within the formal pre-application response letter from Ribble Valley Council has been incorporated. Although on recommendation from the Flood Risk Assessment, it has been necessary to increase the building height to provide specific finished floor levels. The location of openings and the massing of the building has been designed so that there is no loss of amenity for the occupants of neighbouring bungalows. In consideration of Chapter 7 of the NPPF, as well as Core Strategy Policies DMG1 and DMH3, the proposed development is considered to promote good design.
- 6.4 The Flood Risk Assessment clarifies that upon further research the site is considered to fall within Flood Risk Zone 2 (not Flood Risk Zone 3, as originally identified within the pre-application response letter). It sets out that the development should be categorised as a "Water Compatible" land use, due to the essential need to maintain the day-to-day presence on site. Due to the need to respond quickly to emergencies, a sequential search can only be limited to the business land.
- 6.5 A Minerals Resource Assessment and Bat Survey have been undertaken and submitted. These demonstrate that the proposed development complies with Policy M2 of the Lancashire Minerals and

Waste Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Local Plan, and also that the building to be demolished carries very limited roosting potential.

6.6 The submitted Rural Business Appraisal and Economic Viability Assessment have been prepared to adhere to guidance within Annex A of PPS7 and also the pre-application response letter from Ribble Valley Borough Council. These demonstrate that both the functional and financial tests referred to within Core Strategy Policy DMH3 are satisfied. As such, the development should be perceived as an exception to Paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

6.7 The proposed development should importantly, also be considered in light of Chapter 3 of the NPPF, Core Strategy Key Statement EC1 and Core Strategy Policy DMB1, which encourages the growth of rural businesses. In particular, the submitted Rural Business Appraisal details how the Trout Farm has contributed to rural employment and if supported, maintains an excellent prospect of continuing to grow. It is clearly an asset to Dunsop Bridge and the wider long-term resulting benefits of the proposed dwelling should be afforded considerable weight in favour of the development.

JWPC Limited

March 2015