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New Hall Barn, Blackburn Road, Ribchester

Proposed conversion of an existing barn to
provide 1 no. residential dwelling

PLANNING STATEMENT

August 2015

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Project: New Hall Barn, Blackburn Road, Ribchester

Client: Mr D Gaffing

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PWA Planning is retained by Mr and Mrs Gaffing to prepare and submit a full planning application for the proposed conversion of New Hall Barn into a residential dwelling, together with associated landscaping and general improvement works.

1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Planning Statement will consider the acceptability of the proposals, in terms of compliance with the provisions of the Development Plan, as well as other material considerations. Moreover, this Planning Statement, alongside a review of the site's history and relevant planning policies, provides a description of the proposed development together with an appraisal of the planning merits of the scheme, and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- 1APP form and Ownership Certificates;
- Design Statement;
- Drawings, which include:-
 - Location Plan ref. 14.71 / 00 Rev A;
 - Existing Plans ref. 1471 / EX02 Rev A;
 - Proposed Elevations ref. 1471 / PL01 Rev A;
 - Existing Site Plan ref. 1471 / EX01 Rev A;
 - Proposed Plans ref. 1471 / PL00 Rev A;
 - Existing Elevations ref. 1471 / EX03 Rev A;
 - Landscape Layout ref. 2337 01;
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment (including Daytime Bat Survey);
- Heritage Statement;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA);
- Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Site Assessment;
- Structural Survey and Report.

1.3 The aforementioned documents were agreed with officers at Ribble Valley Borough Council as those necessary to ensure the application's validation.

1.4 In summary, for reasons identified in this statement it is considered that the proposed development is entirely appropriate and consistent with national and local planning policy. It will be demonstrated

that the scheme represents sustainable development and that planning permission ought to be granted.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site which extends to approximately 0.25 hectares comprises a vacant, former agricultural building known as New Hall Barn, a modest sized, concrete outbuilding to the north and a dilapidated shed to the east, together with the remains of various other buildings which have recently been removed and areas of hardstanding.
- 2.2 The barn historically formed part of the farmstead associated with the adjacent grade II* listed New Hall and was previously used for housing cattle and storing agricultural feed and equipment, but has lain largely vacant in recent years. The barn is stone built with a rendered rubble exterior: the main barn is two-storey whilst its additional lean-to extensions (namely the former shippon to the rear) are of single storey. There are a number of existing openings (windows and doors), most of which are to be re-used and reinstated as part of the proposals.
- 2.3 The site sits within the Parish of Clayton-le-Dale, within a cluster of buildings associated with the original farmstead. Despite being located outside of the defined settlement boundary of Ribchester, the village lies just 1km to the east and is easily accessible on foot. The location plan (drawing ref. 14.71 / 00 Rev A) submitted with the drawn package of information, shows the site within its wider location.
- 2.4 Access to the site is currently taken directly off Blackburn Road (B6245) which runs parallel with the site's eastern boundary: this access point is to be utilised (with relevant improvement works) as part of the proposals. A low stone wall runs along the site's northern and eastern perimeter, together with a combination of hedging and mature tree planting, which help filter views from public vantage points along Blackburn Road. To the west is a dense area of grassland which acts as a river terrace to the River Ribble and to the south is predominantly grass land with areas of mature woodland beyond. The wider surrounding area consists largely of agricultural land and private dwellings, land use types synonymous with its semi-rural location.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 A search of Ribble Valley Borough Council's planning register has been carried out in order to understand the site's planning history. Prior approval was granted (ref. 3/2015/0321) by Ribble Valley Borough Council on 30th June 2015 under Class Q (Agricultural Buildings to Class C3 Dwellinghouses) Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (England) (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

3.2 In addition, a number of historic applications exist in the planning history relating to the locality such as neighbouring New Hall which is adjacent to the site (north) and New Hall Farm which is located opposite off Blackburn Road to the east, none of which are considered to be of particular relevance to the proposals now submitted for the Council's consideration

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The application proposes to convert a disused agricultural building into a four bedroom, detached dwelling, together with associated landscaping and general site improvement works.
- 4.2 The proposed physical works include the complete conversion of the main parts of the barn with part demolition of the later, rather unsightly additions (lean to extension – used as a shippon) to the north and west of the main structure. The former shippon is to be replaced with a largely new single storey extension in place of the original. The proposed extension will reflect the footprint of the existing extension, but will include a slight increase in height to the roofline in order to ensure the building is of adequate dimensions to provide a useable residential living space. The proposals also include the demolition of the existing concrete outbuilding and replacement with a single-storey double garage, including space for a workshop / general storage.
- 4.3 The submitted scheme involves the restoration of all existing openings (windows and doors) whilst introducing additional openings, such as roof-lights, two rectangular ‘slot’ windows to the eastern (principal) elevation and areas of glazing to the new single-storey extension to the rear and to the northern elevation.
- 4.4 Materials have been chosen carefully, so as to respect the local character and are distinctive of the vernacular: the roof is to comprise natural slate; the walls will be a combination of neutral render and its original stonework (restored); whilst the windows (existing and proposed) are to be polyester coated aluminium. Samples of the proposed materials will be available on request.
- 4.5 Vehicular and pedestrian access will be via the established access point off Blackburn Road to the north-east. The existing concrete outbuilding, which lies to the north-east of the application site, is to be demolished and replaced by a double garage which will provide covered parking for two cars together with extra ancillary space for general storage / workshop. The siting of the garage is similar to that of the existing outbuilding and is to remain single storey, and the design is to match that of the main barn so as to create a sense of continuity across the development.
- 4.6 The proposals include an element of strategic landscaping, as can be seen from the submitted LVIA and Landscape Layout (drawing ref. 2337 01), in the form of areas of amenity grass and a combination of tree planting and a proposed low formal hedge. The perimeter of the site will retain any existing shrub / hedge / tree planting where it is practical to do so, with additional planting of shrub varieties proposed to the eastern boundary so as to help filter views from Blackburn Road. The existing low

stone wall which runs along the site's eastern perimeter is to be restored, repointed and generally enhanced through exposing the natural stone. An area of paving is proposed for the area immediately surrounding the proposed dwelling, garage and parking area and albeit the exact specification has not been chosen at this stage, it will be of a material which will tie in with the wider landscaping masterplan. In addition to soft and hard landscaping, the applicant intends to incorporate a post and rail fence so as to define the residential curtilage.

4.7 For a more detailed assessment of the proposals and the design process, please refer to the submitted Design Statement which has been prepared by Stanton Andrews Architects.

Pre-application Advice

4.8 PWA Planning submitted a formal pre-application request to Ribble Valley Borough Council on 25th February 2015 via email. The submitted scheme takes on board written pre-application advice received from planning advice officer Rachel Horton on 21st May 2015, namely to justify the site's location in terms of sustainability and to submit a scheme which is not only in keeping with local form and design, but which reduces the apparent extent of rebuilding of the existing structure.

5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 In assessing the planning merits and acceptability of any particular, it is necessary to consider the relevant policies of the Development Plan together with other material considerations, which include national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other supplementary planning guidance.

Development Plan

5.2 The statutory development plan for the application site comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2008-2028) (adopted December 2014), which sets planning policy for the borough at a strategic level, and the Local Plan (1998) proposals map, which although dated will remain in place until a revised set of plans are produced as part of the Housing and Economic Development DPD.

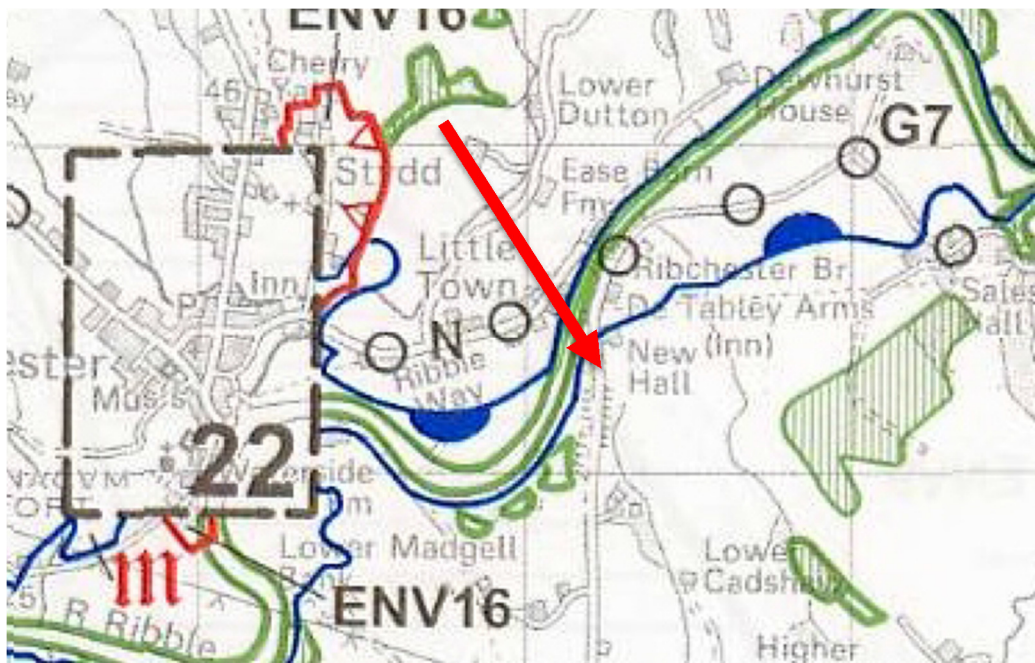


Figure 1: Extract from the Ribble Valley Borough Council proposals map

5.3 The site lies within an area identified as Open Countryside (ENV3) in the Ribble Valley Borough Council District Wide Local Plan (1998) proposals map, see Figure 1 above. However as stated above, although the proposals map from the Local Plan has been retained, due to its age and given the recent adoption of The Core Strategy (2008 – 2028), the policies within this document now supersedes many of the policies within the Local Plan and the proposals map associated with it.

5.4 Those policies of the Core Strategy of most relevance to the proposals include:-

- Policy DS2 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'
- Policy DMG1 'General Considerations'

- Policy DMH3 'Dwellings in the Open Countryside & the AONB'
- Policy DMH4 'The Conversion of Barns and Other Buildings to Dwellings'
- Policy DME4 'Protecting Heritage Assets'
- Key Statement EN5 'Heritage Assets'
- Key Statement EN2 'Landscape'

Dwellings in the Countryside

5.5 Policy DMH3 concerns dwellings in the open countryside and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty:

"WITHIN AREAS DEFINED AS OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR AONB ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE LIMITED TO:

1. *DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIAL FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE OR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH MEETS AN IDENTIFIED LOCAL NEED.*
2. *THE APPROPRIATE CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS TO DWELLINGS PROVIDING THEY ARE SUITABLY LOCATED AND THEIR FORM AND GENERAL DESIGN ARE IN KEEPING WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS. BUILDINGS MUST BE STRUCTURALLY SOUND AND CAPABLE OF CONVERSION WITHOUT THE NEED FOR COMPLETE OR SUBSTANTIAL RECONSTRUCTION.*
3. *THE REBUILDING OR REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING DWELLINGS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:*
 - *THE RESIDENTIAL USE OF THE PROPERTY SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABANDONED.*
 - *THERE BEING NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE IN RELATION TO THE NEW DWELLING.*
 - *THE NEED TO EXTEND AN EXISTING CURTILAGE.*

THE CREATION OF A PERMANENT DWELLING BY THE REMOVAL OF ANY CONDITION THAT RESTRICTS THE OCCUPATION OF DWELLINGS TO TOURISM/VISITOR USE OR FOR HOLIDAY USE WILL BE REFUSED ON THE BASIS OF UNSUSTAINABILITY."

5.6 Policy DMH4 concerns the conversion of barns and other buildings to residential dwellings, it states that:

"PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS TO DWELLINGS WHERE

1. *THE BUILDING IS NOT ISOLATED IN THE LANDSCAPE, IS WITHIN A DEFINED SETTLEMENT OR FORMS PART OF AN ALREADY DEFINED GROUP OF BUILDINGS, AND*
2. *THERE NEED BE NO UNNECESSARY EXPENDITURE BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND UTILITIES ON THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, AND*
3. *THERE WOULD BE NO MATERIALLY DAMAGING EFFECT ON THE LANDSCAPE QUALITIES OF THE AREA OR HARM TO NATURE CONSERVATIONS INTERESTS, AND*
4. *THERE WOULD BE NO DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE RURAL ECONOMY, AND*
5. *THE PROPOSALS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE AREA.*

6. *THAT ANY EXISTING NATURE CONSERVATION ASPECTS OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE ARE PROPERLY SURVEYED AND WHERE JUDGED TO BE SIGNIFICANT PRESERVED OR, IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THEN ANY LOSS ADEQUATELY MITIGATED.*
7. *THE BUILDING TO BE CONVERTED MUST:*
 1. *BE STRUCTURALLY SOUND AND CAPABLE OF CONVERSION FOR THE PROPOSED USE WITHOUT THE NEED FOR EXTENSIVE BUILDING OR MAJOR ALTERATION, WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING. THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE A STRUCTURAL SURVEY TO BE SUBMITTED WITH ALL PLANNING APPLICATION OF THIS NATURE. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE PLANS OF ANY REBUILDING THAT IS PROPOSED;*
 2. *BE OF A SUFFICIENT SIZE TO PROVIDE NECESSARY LIVING ACCOMMODATION WITHOUT THE NEED FOR FURTHER EXTENSIONS WHICH WOULD HARM THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF HE BUILDING, AND*
 3. *THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING AND ITS MATERIALS ARE APPROPRIATE TO ITS SURROUNDINGS AND THE BUILDING AND ITS MATERIALS ARE WORTHY OF RETENTION BECAUSE OF ITS INTRINSIC INTEREST OR POTENTIAL OR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ITS SETTING, AND*
 4. *THE BUILDING HAS A GENUINE HISTORY OF USE FOR AGRICULTURE OR ANOTHER RURAL ENTERPRISE."*

5.7 In principle the conversion of buildings in the open countryside to dwellings is acceptable under the terms of Policy DMH3, provided that the building is suitably located; it is in keeping with its surroundings; and it is structurally sound and capable of conversion without complete or substantial reconstruction. It is considered that New Hall Barn is capable of conversion in compliance with these requirements. Each of the requirements is considered in more detail in the context of Policy DMH4 below.

5.8 It is worth referring here to the site's recent planning history: Ribble Valley Borough Council granted prior approval on 30th June 2015 under Class Q (Agricultural Buildings to Class C3 Dwellinghouses) Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (England) (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, which clearly establishes the principle of residential development on the site as acceptable and it is clear that in the absence of planning permission being granted for the proposed development, the scheme granted under the GPDO will be implemented. Of course it is the applicants' strong preference to implement the scheme being promoted through this application, which will allow full and proper consideration of the site as a whole and which will result in a more 'liveable' and hence more sustainable proposal, avoiding the need for further interventions in the future to address limitations apparent with the GPDO scheme. The opportunity to work with the applicants to ensure a scheme which can be an asset to the local area, is strongly promoted through national guidance and it is hoped that this will be embraced by the planning authority in its determination of the application.

5.9 It is clear that the proposed conversion of New Hall Barn is compliant with DMH3 and criteria 1 and 2 of policy DMH4, which requires that the building be capable of conversion ‘as is’, without the need for further extensions which would harm the character or appearance of the building. In this case, whilst some small elements of the existing building require rebuilding (as shown in the submitted structural opinion) these are limited in extent and certainly could not be said to involve ‘*substantial reconstruction*’ in the context of Policy DMH4. Whilst the proposal does also involve the removal and replacement of the former shippon (lean-to) structure, this later addition to the main barn is of very poor design quality and its replacement with a new more contemporary ‘extension’ to the main barn is a strong design feature of the proposals. In this regard the intention is to replace a poor quality part of the existing building, which can then be rebuilt using modern techniques and which can then incorporate design elements (substantial glazed areas) which enable the main barn to function well without more significant intervention. Whilst therefore it would be possible to re-use the existing shippon, it has been the choice of the architects and their clients to look to a more holistic design approach and one which more closely accords with adopted development plan policy – which explicitly excludes extensions which would harm the character and appearance of the building. The reverse of this is that well designed extensions which can enhance the character of the building should be supported. The end result will be a considerable enhancement to the building as a whole and as such this would not conflict with criteria 1 or 2 of DMH4, each of which is squarely aimed at protecting the character and appearance of the building.

5.10 Precedent for this type of modern intervention (contemporary extension) to support the creation of high quality living space which reduces the need for more significant interventions within the main structure is provided by the scheme approved by the authority at Bay Gate Barn, Bolton by Bowland, where an application which was for the ‘*conversion of existing barn to residential use and construction of linked single storey outbuilding to provide kitchen and family room with works ancillary thereto*’ was approved in late 2013 (application 3/2013/0887 refers). In granting approval for this scheme, the LPA accepted that the creation of an adjoining outbuilding to sit alongside and to be entirely subservient to the main barn would function as an effective extension to the converted barn but which would stand clear of the traditional building. The replacement of the shippon with the proposed single-storey extension is intended to be a similar design response to that evident at Bay Gate Barn, in that the space will provide a significant improvement to the proposed living accommodation by an order of magnitude by offering a light and spacious kitchen / dining / family room which will benefit from views on to the River Ribble. At the same time the single storey extension will complement the existing barn, and ensure that the main original parts of the barn remain largely unchanged and remain the dominant feature within the development.

5.11 Considering other aspects of the policy, it is clear that the proposal is indeed suitably located and is designed in such a manner that respects the barn's original historic significance and is entirely in keeping with the character of this rural location on the outskirts of the village of Ribchester. In particular the application site comprises a historic farm building which has lain vacant for many years; it sits within a group of existing buildings of varying size and appearance, namely New Hall to the north and the more modern New Hall Farm across Blackburn Road to the east. In this respect the proposal site forms part of an established cluster of buildings, in accordance with criterion 1 of Policy DMH4. In all other respects the proposed development appears to comply with the relevant criteria as set out within Policy DMH4. Criterion 7 of the policy concerns the physical works associated with the conversion of barns to dwellings and it is considered that the original main barn is structurally sound and capable of conversion (please refer to the submitted Structural Survey and Report for further details). Albeit the proposals involve the demolition of the shippon and subsequent erection of a single-storey extension, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with criterion 7.2 as the proposed extension will not only act as a replacement extension (within the same footprint), but will provide a functional living space, reducing the need for further interventions into the main building and without causing harm to the character and appearance of the existing building.

5.12 The intended materials palette and elevation treatment for the eventual residential dwelling respects and reflects the site's rural location and the character of adjacent buildings, directly responding to the requirements of criterion 7.3 of DMH4.

5.13 In addition to Policies DMH3 and DMH4, the proposals also accord with Policy DMG1 'General Considerations', namely with respect to design. As can be seen from the submitted Design Statement, a great amount of care and attention has been paid to the proposed development to ensure that it is in keeping with its rural setting and reflects local vernacular, whilst preserving the barn's original aesthetic and architectural and historical significance. The proposals seek to retain the barn's existing features, involving the restoration of the original stone wall, roof and existing openings. Great care has been given to the placing and design of new openings and areas of glazing, window sizes have been sensitively chosen so as to allow sufficient levels of light into the building thus creating a functional, liveable space but which do not detract from the barn's original non-domestic appearance. It is worth noting that the architects, in preparing the final scheme, have made informed decisions on design with respect to space, curtilage, access, visual impact and enclosure, as well as detail of materials, surfaces, boundary treatments and landscaping, whilst paying close attention to the design principles as set out in English Heritage's 'The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice'.

5.14 In terms of the proposed development and its relationship with the environment, the proposals comply with Policy DMG1 and the Council's Key Statement EN2 'Landscape'. The proposed works will significantly enhance the site's overall appearance, whilst the design clearly respects the barn's original exterior, therefore together with the proposed landscaping measures (see TPM Landscape's LVIA and Landscape Layout drawing ref. 2337 01), it is considered that the proposals will help soften and significantly enhance the site's relationship with the adjacent heritage asset (New Hall to the north) and the surrounding open countryside. The proposals represent an effective use of an existing historic building and one which has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset and whose conversion would result in no loss of amenity and privacy to existing and future residents.

Heritage

5.15 Policy DME4 which relates to the protection of heritage assets, is also relevant to the application proposals given the proximity of New Hall Barn to the adjacent grade II* listed New Hall. The policy states that:

*"LISTED BUILDINGS AND OTHER BUILDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE INTEREST
ALTERATIONS OR EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS OF LOCAL HERITAGE INTEREST,
OR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ON SITES WITHIN THEIR SETTING WHICH CAUSE HARM TO THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET WILL NOT BE SUPPORTED.*

*ANY PROPOSALS INVOLVING THE DEMOLITION OR LOSS OF IMPORTANT HISTORIC FABRIC FROM
LISTED BUILDINGS WILL BE REFUSED UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT EXCEPTIONAL
CIRCUMSTANCES EXIST."*

5.16 Policy DME4 should be read in conjunction with Key Statement EN5 'Heritage Assets', which sets out the Council's desire to protect, conserve and enhance the borough's natural and built environment, thus mirroring Section 12 of the NPPF. The Statement reads:

"There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.

This will be achieved through:

- *Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.*
- *Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.*
- *Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.*

- *Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.*
- *The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment."*

5.17 The submitted Heritage Statement states that *'the barn makes a limited contribution to a rich and varied historic environment in the Ribble Valley characterised by scattered farmsteads and villages such as nearby Ribchester'*, however New Hall Barn is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset as, by the Council's own admission in their written pre-application advice dated 21st May 2015, *'possesses a degree of heritage significance in its own right.'*

5.18 The proposals involve the removal of the existing visually obtrusive and unsightly lean-to extensions, which will enhance considerably the barn's role as a locally significant building / non-designated heritage asset and its relationship and setting with the adjacent grade II* listed New Hall. The reinstatement and restoration of the main barn is sympathetic in design and the materials have been chosen to reflect the barn's original appearance whilst creating a sense of place and bolstering the relationship with New Hall. The Heritage Statement submitted with the application explores these issues, particularly in relation to the methodology stipulated within Section 12 of the NPPF, and provides a thorough, evidence based, appraisal of the merits of the proposals relative to relevant planning policy and guidance. It provides an overview of the design process, a process which has been guided by an understanding of heritage significance and values, the need to conserve and where possible enhance significance through the intelligent management of change. The Statement states that *'securing sustainable development is the primary driver, and in the heritage context this relies on maintaining active use (long term) in a manner that seeks to limit potential harm to significance'* and in the context of the proposals for New Hall Barn, *'through renovation and conversion of the barn will help bring to the fore what is currently a somewhat neglected and unattractive historic building'*: the proposals will secure a sustainable future which eliminates the risk of the building falling into a state of complete neglect and ultimately from being lost forever.

5.19 The approach to the proposed development presented with this application demonstrates how the site will not only resist decline but will also encourage revival, conversion and renovation. Therefore, in light of the submitted Heritage Statement and package of drawn information, it is considered that the proposed development is entirely consistent with Policy DME4 and Key Statement EN5.

Summary

In summary, the redevelopment of this vacant building will ensure a much improved visual appearance at this disused site which has lain an eyesore for many years, whilst securing a sustainable future for a building of local historic significance, which is currently falling into a state of complete neglect. The proposed restoration represents an environmentally benign and sustainable form of rural development, and follows the principles as set out by English Heritage and the NPPF: to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment. The proposed alterations are minimal in terms of their footprint and the overall scheme represents a slight reduction to the existing floorspace by 45 sq.m. The proposals represents the most sustainable form of development by way of converting an existing structure, but which will also help vastly improve the overall visual appearance of the site, which the existing building(s) currently lacks.

- 5.20 As can be seen from the submitted plans, the proposed design respects the barn's character and sense of local distinctiveness and through minimising loss and intervention in the barn's significant historic fabric, the development will enhance the site's setting and in the context of the adjacent grade II* listed New Hall.

6 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.1 The NPPF was adopted in March 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As per Chapter 2 of the Framework and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it is to form a material consideration in planning decisions.

6.2 Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 7 of the Framework as having three dimensions; namely economic, social and environmental. The golden thread running throughout the NPPF is the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 14) whereby proposed developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social and environmental issues should be granted permission unless there are overriding reasons that would suggest that permission should be withheld. Paragraph 14 states 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 permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

6.3 It has been demonstrated that the proposed development is consistent with relevant Development Plan policy and would be clearly consistent with the thrust of the NPPF policy, particularly in terms of sustainable development and representing an effective use of a redundant barn within an existing cluster of buildings. In terms of economic benefits, the proposals would make a positive contribution to the local economy during the construction phase. From a social dimension, the proposals would result in a contribution to the borough's future housing stock and in terms of the environmental aspect, the proposals seek to develop a vacant site and re-use an existing building, thus ensuring the future productive use of the land.

6.4 Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), considers proposed new dwellings in the countryside and states that:

"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- *the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or*
- *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; or*
- *the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should:*
 - *be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;*
 - *reflect the highest standards in architecture;*
 - *significantly enhance its immediate setting; and*
 - *be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”*

6.5 The sentiment of National Policy in respect of development of the type proposed is for the main part reflected in the recently adopted Ribble Valley Core Strategy and as such compliance with policies DMH3 and DMH4 as discussed above is also relevant to the consideration of Para 55 of the NPPF. As set out earlier in this statement New Hall Barn comprises one of a cluster of outbuildings associated with the former farmstead which have now become vacant and redundant, having been replaced with modern and more suitable buildings for this purpose. Being no longer suitable to meet the needs of their original purpose the proposed sensitive conversion of this barn to provide a residential dwelling is considered entirely consistent with the third criteria of Para 55 in facilitating the re-use of this redundant building in a manner which promotes a significant improvement to the appearance of this site. The improvements to the immediate setting are illustrated in the submitted drawings and the supporting Design and Access Statement.

6.6 In terms of Section 7 of the NPPF ‘Requiring good design’, great care and sensitivity has been given to the context of the site within its immediate setting, resulting in a high quality design which accords with the design principles at a national level but also with Policy DMG1 and DMH4 of the adopted Development Plan. For a more detailed account on the decisions taken during the design process, please refer to the submitted Design and Access Statement.

6.7 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out national guidance for ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’. The Heritage Statement submitted as part of the planning applications demonstrates the Proposed Development’s compliance with this aspect of the NPPF.

English Heritage’s ‘The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice’

6.8 The above document states on Page 29 that ‘*a sensitive conversion respects the ties the building has with its landscape setting and avoids imposing alien features...this often requires a light touch and an understanding of what features characterise the setting and their relationship to the landscape*’. The

proposed conversion of New Hall Barn comprises a tasteful design resulting in a scheme which does not detract from its original architectural, aesthetical and historical values, but rather enhances them and secures a sustainable future for the building. The wider scheme respects the site's rural surrounding landscape by way of incorporating strategic landscape features along the site's boundaries and within the development, but does not seek to over 'domesticate' the site.

7 OTHER TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 It is not considered that the proposed development raises any other material considerations which would have any adverse impacts on interests of acknowledged importance and would therefore influence the determination of the application. The application is supported by an ecological assessment, geo-technical assessment, heritage statement and structural survey which all confirm the same. Moreover, despite falling within the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed New Hall, the site does not contain any listed buildings nor does it fall within a conservation area, in addition according to the Environment Agency's flood risk map (and as confirmed in the preliminary risk assessment), the site does not fall within an area subject to flooding. There are no trees which are likely to be affected by the development. Moreover it is also apparent that the site can be accessed in a safe and convenient manner and can be adequately drained and serviced.

Land Contamination

7.2 *A Phase 1 Geo Environment Site Assessment has been prepared by E3P and is submitted with this application. The Assessment demonstrates that there are no significant issues relating to ground contamination and also includes that the site is not subject to flooding (the site lies within Flood Risk Zone 1). At Paragraph 5.1, the report states that E3P await a response from Ribble Valley Borough Council with respect to any potential contaminated land issues but caveat this by saying that it is not considered that this will identify any further environmentally pertinent information. The report concludes by recommending that 'a detailed Phase II intrusive Geo-Environmental Ground Investigation should be undertaken in order to confirm the findings of the initial conceptual site model and determine an economic enabling works' and should planning permission be granted, we would expect a condition attached to the consent in this regard.*

Ecology

7.3 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment, including a bat survey, has been undertaken by EED Surveys, and concludes that conservation significance with respect to ecology on the site is minimal, but suggests several mitigation measures to be adhered to during and after the construction phase (should consent be granted), such as roofing works to the main barn, building works to the main barn and appropriate compensation measures for each specified species. Moreover, the proposed development can be delivered on site without any detrimental ecological impact.

Heritage

7.4 A Heritage Statement has been prepared by C. J. O'Flaherty to assess and inform the proposals. In particular it assesses the significance of converting the barn as a non-designated heritage asset: whilst

the barn itself is not listed it *‘possesses heritage values worthy of conservation’* and how the proposals will impact the site’s setting within the grade II* listed New Hall. The Statement concludes that the conversion will actually enhance the wider site’s aesthetic and visual impact, that the development which is *‘proposed to convert the barn to residential use secure a sustainable future for the building... They also succeed in conserving and enhancing the setting of New Hall, whilst simultaneously conserving and enhancing the heritage values of the barn’* through careful repair and renovation. The Statement concludes that *‘in essence the proposals will enhance the setting of the grade II* listed building by reversing the negative visual impact currently asserted by the vacant barn’*.

Structural Condition

7.5 A Structural Inspection has been undertaken by Reid Jones Partnership to determine the extent to which the existing structure is suitable for conversion. The report concludes that the main barn is generally fit for conversion but recommends various works to ensure the future structural integrity of the building and in particular the roof structure - which will be incorporated into the development proposals.

Mineral Safeguarding Area

7.6 The application site falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area, as designated under Policy M2 of the Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, however a minerals resource assessment has not been carried due to the fact that :-

- a) it would be wholly impractical to extract any minerals given the site’s surrounding land uses; and
- b) given that the proposal involves the re-use of an existing building, the effect of the current proposal on the mineral resource would be no greater than at present.

7.7 Expanding briefly on these matters, the site lies in a semi-rural location, with residential dwellings within close proximity: the grade II* listed New Hall lies to the north and New Hall Farm sits across Blackburn Road to the east. Given these short distances, it is considered highly likely that the level of noise impacts associated with mineral extraction at the site would contravene the policies detailed in the NPPF and Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE – March 2010). What is more, any emissions from extraction activities occurring on site are likely to impact on nearby residential receptors to an unacceptable degree. It is considered that the most significant potential air quality impact would be associated with dust emissions from mineral extraction works. In summary therefore, given the potential significant risk of impacts, the application site is unlikely to be considered a suitable location for mineral extraction.

7.8 Based on the sensitive (residential) nature of the adjacent land uses and the geology of the site it is considered that it would be commercially unviable and environmentally unacceptable to extract minerals from the site.

7.9 It is also worth highlighting the fact there is an existing building on the site and that the proposed development seeks only to convert this existing building, such that the impact of the proposed development in terms of the mineral resource, will be no greater than the existing situation.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 PWA Planning is instructed by Mr and Mrs Gaffing to prepare and submit this planning application for the conversion of New Hall Barn into one residential dwelling, together with access and other general improvement works.
- 8.2 The application proposals are for the conversion (including part demolition, extension and restoration) of New Hall Barn to provide a 4 bedroom detached dwelling, the erection of a double garage (including ancillary space for a workshop / general storage) and improvements to the overall appearance of the site. The proposals are considered consistent with the Development Plan and guidance as set out in the NPPF, as they respond to a challenge faced by so many redundant farm building in the countryside: through conservation and enhancement the development will secure a sustainable future for the site whilst at the same time providing a home which is an accessible and therefore sustainable location.
- 8.3 The scheme will bring considerable positive benefits by way of; contributing sustainably to the supply of Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing stock; securing growth in a sustainable manner; maximising the use of a vacant and derelict brownfield site; enhancing the local sense of distinctiveness and character through appropriate design and effective landscaping, whilst meeting the needs of current and future generations.
- 8.4 The proposals were the subject of pre-application advice from the LPA and this advice has been considered and amendments to the layout and scale of the development have been incorporated into the submitted scheme. Given that the scheme is consistent with relevant development plan policies and with the concept of sustainable development as set out within the NPPF, and has carefully addressed the points raised at pre-application stage, it is considered that the scheme should benefit from the presumption in favour of such development as set out at Paragraph 14 of the NPPF.
- 8.5 Furthermore, there are no material or technical reasons that would indicate that planning permission ought not to be granted.
- 8.6 The application is therefore commended to the Council.