
Little Dudlands
Farm,
Rimington
Lane,
Rimington BB7
4EA

Conversion of two
barns to two
dwellings

Planning Statement

February 2016

Judith Douglas

TOWN PLANNING LTD

PLANNING STATEMENT

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

PROPOSAL: CONVERSION OF TWO BARNES 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 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.

1.2 The drawings and information 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
- 4580-05E Proposed Site Plan
- 4580-06D Proposed ground floor plan
- 4580-07B Proposed First Floor
- 4580-08C Proposed Elevations
- Conversion assessment
- Protected species survey
- Heritage assessment
- Package treatment details

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 farmhouse 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.

- 2.6 In the main the proposed development is identical to a previous scheme which was submitted to the Council and was refused planning permission in 2015. The Council refused the application on the basis of the location and the extent of the residential curtilage. The applicant appealed against the decision. Whilst the appeal was dismissed, the elements that prevented the Inspector from granting planning permission related solely to the extent of the proposed garden area to barn no. 1 and the design on the proposed garages. We have considered the shortcomings identified by the Planning Inspector and have amended the scheme accordingly in relation to those element. The Inspector found no fault with the principle of the development or the design of the conversion of the buildings. In this respect the drawings have not been amended.

3 INVOLVEMENT

- 3.1 The applicant has been in discussions with the Local Planning Authority for a considerable time. There have been two previous planning application applications at the site, formal pre-application advice has been sought and there has been a planning appeal. We have carefully considered all the advice we have received and this has been applied to this latest scheme.

4 ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The following policies of the Core Strategy are relevant to this application are:
- Key Statement DS1 (Development Strategy) – seeks to direct the majority of new housing development to the strategic (Standen) site and the main urban areas of the Borough. Development within Tier 2 village settlements will need to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits.
 - Key Statement DS2 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) – the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework
 - Key Statement EN5 (Heritage Assets) – expects there will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings.
 - Policy DMG1 (General Considerations) – sets out various criteria to be considered in assessing planning applications, including a high standard of building design, proposed development being sympathetic to existing land uses, highway safety and not adversely affecting the amenities of the area.
 - Policy DMG2 (Strategic Considerations) – expects development to be in accordance with the Development Strategy and that development proposals in defined settlements should consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely

related to the main built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement. The policy goes on to indicate that within the open countryside, development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. It also indicates that where possible, new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.

- Policy DME4 (Protecting Heritage Assets) – Seeks positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment.
- Policy DMH3 (Dwellings in the Open Countryside and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) – Within areas defined as open countryside or AONB, residential development will be limited to, amongst other things, the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located.
- Policy DMH4 (The Conversion of Barns and other buildings to dwellings) – Permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where the building is not isolated in the landscape i.e. forms part of an already group of buildings and there need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure.

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 paragraph 131.

5 SITE HISTORY

- 5.1 3/2014/0174: Conversion of barns to three dwellings with detached garages, creation of garden areas, replacement garage for farmhouse and installation of package treatment plant. (Withdrawn)
- 5.2 3/2014/1090 APP/T2350/W/15/3128758 Conversion of barns to two dwellings with garages, creation of garden areas, replacement garage for farmhouse and

installation of package treatment plant. Permission refused, appeal dismissed 25 August 2015. An award of costs was granted against the Council.

6 EVALUATION

- 6.1 The main planning issue relating to this proposal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. All other matters including the principle of the development were considered by the Inspector and found to be acceptable.

Principle

- 6.2 The site is within open countryside outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy DMG2 states that new housing development provided through the re-use of existing buildings is acceptable in such areas. Policy DMH3 limits new residential development in the open countryside to the appropriate conversion of buildings providing they are suitably located and in keeping with their surroundings. Part of the criteria of policy DMH4 is that the buildings to be converted should “not be isolated in the landscape, i.e. it is within a defined settlement or forms part of an already group of buildings...” The Inspector considering the 2015 appeal concluded that the proposed development was suitably located and is compliant with policies DMG2, DMH3 and DMH4 in this respect as well as the development strategy policies DS1 and DS2¹.
- 6.3 Neither the Council in its previous decision, nor the Inspector in considering the appeal, found any fault with the design of the conversion. We accordingly conclude that this is acceptable. Similarly no concern was raised by the Council or the Inspector regarding vehicle access to the site².
- 6.4 The only matters left to be considered in this application are the extent of the residential curtilage, the design of the garages and conditions to be imposed if permission is granted.

¹ Appendix Appeal decision APP/T2350/W/15/3128758 paragraphs 5-11

² Appendix paragraph 20

Extent of curtilage

- 6.5 Having carefully considered the Inspectors comment we find that his concern relating to the extent of the curtilage relates only to barn no.1
- 6.6 The Inspector did not criticise the size and extent of the curtilage to barn 2 so we conclude that a curtilage of a similar size for barn 1 will be appropriate and acceptable. With this in mind we have considerably reduced the extent of the curtilage to on the northern and western sides so that the extent of the curtilage to barn no.1 is now similar to barn no.2. We have looked at those features that will remain after the modern farm structures have been removed and on the south side it is evident that the farmhouse garden, outbuildings and the field access track provide a fixed and permanent boundary. It is reasonable and logical then, to place the majority of the domestic curtilage for barn 1 on its southern side between the barn and the track.
- 6.7 The existing stoned track to the south of the group will continue to be used to provide access to the surrounding fields. This track is used to provide access to the proposed garage to barn 1 and is significantly shorter in length than the previously submitted scheme. The driveway is within the significantly reduce curtilage area of barn 1 and within an area currently occupied by agricultural buildings and hardstanding. The garage has been orientated so that the ridge is parallel to the ridge of the barn and is close to the existing outbuildings of the farm house immediately to the east. These alterations overcome the shortcomings identified by the Inspector.
- 6.8 The proposed garages are now well grouped with the existing buildings. The design of the garages has been altered to provide a more agricultural appearance. The design has been confirmed as acceptable in pre-application discussions with Planning Officer Stephen Kilmartin.

Landscape Impact

- 6.9 The proposed development removes all the modern farm buildings from the site and replaces dilapidated out buildings belonging to the farmhouse. The extent of the residential curtilage to barn 1 has been reduced and the garages are brought close into the group. These measures together greatly enhance the historic character of this traditional farm group. The development as a whole is now acceptable and enhances the landscape.

Highway Safety

- 6.10 In the previous application the Highway Authority raised no objection to the proposal. Response dated 30 December 2014 There are no alterations to the design of the scheme that would result in this response being altered. Each property still retains garaging for two cars and within curtilage parking for a third vehicle which is the required standard. The Planning Inspector in considering the appeal did not raise any concerns in this respect

Structural survey

- 6.11 A structural survey is submitted with the application. It confirms that the buildings are structurally sound and capable of conversion without needing major rebuilding.

Nature Conservation

- 6.12 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.
- 6.13 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 CS Policy EN4 and DME3.

Public Footpaths

- 6.14 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 4580-05E. 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

- 7.1 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 and the Core Strategy.
- 7.2 The appeal decision has confirmed that the principle of the development is acceptable in terms of the location of the buildings to be converted. The design of the conversion was also found to be acceptable. The only matters which prevented the Inspector from granting planning permission were the extent of the curtilage to barn1 and the design of the double garages³. These matters have now been addressed.

³ Appendix Paragraph 18

APPENDIX



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 August 2015

by Matthew Birkinshaw BA(Hons) Msc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 19 October 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/15/3128758

Little Dudlands Farm, Rimington Lane, Rimington, Clitheroe, BB7 4EA

- 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 Mr John Lund against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2014/1090, dated 26 November 2014, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2015.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of barns to two dwellings with garages, creation of garden areas, replacement garage for farmhouse and installation of package treatment plant.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr John Lund against Ribble Valley Borough Council. This application will be the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether or not the barns would be suitable for conversion, having particular regard to their location and the development strategy for the area; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Location of Development

4. Little Dudlands Farm consists of the main farmhouse, two traditional stone barns, a large modern agricultural building and a collection of smaller outbuildings and extensions. To the east of the farmyard, but visually and physically associated with it, is a small workshop and yard. As part of the proposal the modern outbuildings and extensions would be demolished and the traditional stone barns converted into two dwellings with associated garden areas and garages.
5. Situated roughly 600m from the nearest settlement of Rimington the appeal site is located in the open countryside. Within the open countryside *Ribble*

www.planningportal.gov.uk/planninginspectorate

Appeal Decision APP/T2350/W/15/3128758

Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG2 states that, amongst other things, where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings. Core Strategy Policy DMH3 also limits new residential development in the open countryside to the appropriate conversion of buildings providing that they are suitably located and in keeping with their surroundings. This reflects the development strategy for the area, which seeks to focus the majority of new housing to principal settlements and villages. It is also broadly consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework').

6. In establishing whether or not the proposed development would be suitably located it is necessary to consider the requirements of Core Strategy Policy DMH4. Despite not being referred to in the Council's reasons for refusal this specifically relates to the conversion of barns and other buildings to dwellings. Criterion 1 confirms that planning permission will be granted for such works where *"the building is not isolated in the landscape, i.e. it is within a defined settlement or forms part of an already group of buildings..."*
7. Although Little Dudlands Farm is outside of Rimington and detached from any neighbouring development, the traditional stone barns proposed for conversion form part of an existing group of buildings. Even with the demolition of modern structures and extensions the barns would sit alongside the existing farmhouse and adjacent workshop. As a result, they would not be isolated in the landscape and the proposal accords with Policy DMH4(1).
8. In refusing planning permission the Council assert that the location of the appeal site would place reliance upon the private car, and is thus unsuitable by reason of its accessibility to local shops and services. Based on observations at my site visit I agree that the nearest facilities would be beyond a reasonable walking distance away. Core Strategy Policy DMG3 directs that considerable weight will be attached to the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure to serve those moving to and from a development.
9. However, paragraph 55 of the Framework permits new isolated homes in the countryside where development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting. This is reflected in Core Strategy Policy DMH3 which allows for the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings in the countryside. Policy DMH4 also permits the residential conversions of barns, which, by their very nature are likely to be in rural areas.
10. It is also pertinent to consider the Examining Inspector's report into the *Ribble Valley Core Strategy*, dated 25 November 2014. This found that *"As submitted, Policy DMH4 appears to suggest that barn conversions will only be allowed where the building is in a defined settlement. This is not the Council's intention."* The remedy suggested, and taken forward in the adopted Core Strategy was the requirement that buildings are not isolated in the *landscape*. Despite attaching considerable weight to the availability and adequacy of public transport nearby, the proposal therefore accords with development plan policy concerning barn conversions and would not undermine the development strategy for the area.
11. I therefore conclude that having regard to their location and the development strategy for the area the barns would be suitable for conversion. As a result, there is no conflict with Core Strategy Policies DMG2, DMH3, DMH4 or the aims and objectives of Policy DS1. In this regard there is also no conflict with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Core Strategy Policy DS2.

Character and Appearance

12. However, the supporting text to Core Strategy Policy DMH3 establishes that the protection of the open countryside from visually harmful development is seen as a high priority by the Council and is necessary to deliver sustainable patterns of development and the overarching Core Strategy vision. Similarly, the text associated with Policy DMH4 emphasises that conversions should be of a high standard of design and in keeping with local tradition. This includes recognising the importance of ensuring that garden areas and car parking facilities do not harm the appearance or function of the area.
13. With this in mind the curtilage associated with barn no.1 would be substantial, stretching from the northern site boundary to a point roughly level with the existing track to the south. Given the size of the dwelling proposed it is also likely to provide family accommodation, with glazed doors leading out from the dining room and living room into a large area of garden. Although the garage would provide some space for storage, I share the Council's concerns that the extent of curtilage would lead to a proliferation of domestic paraphernalia such as outdoor seating, washing lines and children's play equipment which could not be controlled by the removal of permitted development rights. Due to the footpaths which run through the site the excessive curtilage would be clearly visible, and lead to an overtly domestic, unsympathetic urban appearance.
14. This would also be exacerbated by the provision of a separate gravel track leading to the proposed double garage, which would be visually divorced from the main cobbled courtyard. Furthermore, whilst the proposed garages would be subservient additions and incorporate local materials, based on the plans provided they would be relatively unimaginative, domestic additions. Despite the natural fall of the site they would also be visible from public footpaths.
15. In the context of such a traditional, agricultural setting the area around barn no.1 would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the farmstead. With such a large, domestic curtilage this aspect of the proposal would fail to respect the rural appearance of the farm which forms part of the intrinsic character of the countryside. Rather than better revealing the historic significance of the original existing buildings, when read as a whole the alterations proposed would cause demonstrable harm to their traditional, functional setting.
16. In reaching this view I appreciate that various modern agricultural buildings and alterations would be demolished, some of which are in a state of disrepair. The converted barns, garden areas and garages would also be limited to the existing footprint of built development, and new areas of grassland would be formed. However, whilst the modern buildings have a utilitarian, functional appearance, they are nonetheless synonymous with their rural, agricultural surroundings. As a consequence, their removal does not justify granting planning permission for such an unsympathetic, overtly residential conversion.
17. Although not suggested by the appellant the possibility of granting planning permission subject to the use of conditions has also been considered. However, no evidence has been provided to indicate how the size of the curtilage associated with barn no.1 and its parking requirements could be amended in a way so as not to undermine the traditional farmyard setting. In the absence of any information it would therefore not be appropriate to rely on planning conditions, which may also materially alter the nature of the scheme.

Appeal Decision APP/T2350/W/15/3128758

18. I therefore conclude that due to the size of the curtilage associated with barn no.1, combined with the design and siting of double garages, the proposal would not be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. As a result, it conflicts with Core Strategy Policy DMH3 which states that the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings will be permitted providing that, amongst other things, their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. For the same reasons it also conflicts with Core Strategy Policy DMG1 which requires development to be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses, with particular emphasis placed on the visual appearance of buildings and the relationship to their surroundings. Finally, by failing to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside the scheme is contrary to one of the Framework's core planning principles.

Other Matters

19. In reaching my conclusions against the main issues I have taken into account whether or not the barns could be converted into dwellinghouses under Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Whilst the appellant confirms that a scheme *could* be designed so as to meet the requirements of the GPDO, the proposal before me does not. The potential fallback position therefore does not justify granting planning permission for the appeal scheme.

20. It is also noted that the Council has not raised any concerns regarding access to the site, the effect of the proposal on the local public right of way network, the living conditions of local residents or ecology. Nevertheless, these are only neutral factors in the overall planning balance and do not overcome the harm that has been identified. Moreover, in the absence of any supporting evidence I have not given any significant weight to comments that the proposal would provide a viable use to secure the future of the buildings.

21. Finally, in refusing planning permission the Council has also raised concerns that the scheme would set an undesirable precedent for allowing further dwellings in unsustainable locations, to the detriment of the development strategy for the area. However, each case must be assessed on its merits. Whilst finding in favour of the principle of development in this instance, I find no evidence to suggest that it would undermine the development strategy for the area which focuses the majority of new housing towards principal settlements and villages.

Conclusion

22. The proposed conversions would be suitable having regard to their location and the local development strategy. However, the scheme would be unacceptable due to its adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area.

23. For this reason, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Birkinshaw

INSPECTOR

Prepared by:

Judith Douglas Bsc Hons Dip TP MRTPI

Judith Douglas Town Planning Ltd

90 Pimlico Road

Clitheroe, BB7 2AH

Tel. 01200 425051

Ref. JDTP L 002

February 2016