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**Planning Application for the Moorcock Inn, Slaidburn
Road, Waddington, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 3AA**

By Messrs S and A Thornber

To Ribble Valley Borough Council

**For the proposed demolition of the Moorcock Inn and the
erection of 4No. dwelling houses and associated drives,
gardens and external landscaping works.
Creation of work from home studio / office space**

Planning, Design and Access Statement

**REF. 4512
DATE: 13.06.2016
VERSION: 1 – 02**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement has been prepared to accompany an application for full planning permission to demolish the Moorcock Inn building and to erect 4No. detached dwelling houses with curtilages, drives and landscaping works. It also includes for creating work from home office/ studio space.

1.2 The drawings and information submitted with the application comprise:

4512-3-01D Proposed site plan

4512-3-02A Proposed plans and elevations for Plot 1

4512-3-03 Proposed plans and elevations for Plot 2

4512-3-04 Proposed plans and elevations for Plot 3

4512-3-05 Proposed plans and elevations for Plot 4

4512-3-07A Proposed site sectional elevations

4512-3-10 Existing site survey

4512-3-11 Existing building survey

Statement of Significance

Visual Impact Assessment and A3 visuals booklet

Building Condition Survey

Traffic Movement Assessment

Tree survey

Protected species survey

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application relates to the site of the former Moorcock Inn. The Moorcock Inn comprises an extensive array of buildings that have been much altered and developed over many years. In the mid-1970s the building was severely fire damaged and substantially rebuilt. The buildings are mainly white rendered with applied fake Tudor style boarding. The buildings, which are mainly of two-storey, housed a number of related uses, including a public house (5 rooms), hotel (11 bedrooms), restaurant (two rooms), function suite, self-contained manager's accommodation and storage / service areas.

Externally, there is a beer keg storage area and an extensive surfaced car park to the west of the buildings. The use of the site ceased with the closure of the Moorcock Inn in mid-2010. The site extends to approximately 0.7 hectares

- 2.2 The site is located on southern flank of Waddington Fell, approximately 3 km to the north of Waddington, between the villages of Waddington and Newton. The Moorcock Inn buildings are situated immediately adjacent to the road and run some 45 metres to the west of the road. The overall depth of the buildings is over 30 metres. Whilst the site is located in an open rural setting, there are two dwellings in close proximity to the site (Moorcock House to the west and Jolly Croft to the south west), with some other structures between the Moorcock Inn and Jolly Croft.
- 2.3 The site boundaries are generally defined by hedges, fences and walls. The land levels rise gently across the site from south to north, with a tree backdrop on the uphill side of the site. Access is off Slaidburn Road via a tarmacked roadway, which leads to the car park area.

3. SITE HISTORY

- 3.1 There is an extensive history of planning applications and permissions for extensions and alterations to the Moorcock Inn when it was functioning as a pub. Since its closure in the Summer of 2010 there have been the following planning applications made:
- 3/2012/0356 – Proposed conversion and redevelopment of a redundant Public House and Hotel with conference facilities, into three private residential properties. Planning permission granted August 2012
 - 3/2012/0819 – Proposed demolition of The Moorcock Inn and the erection of three detached dwellings, three detached garages with annex accommodation over and the creation of garden and landscaped areas. Refused planning permission November 2012
 - 3/2013/0394 - The demolition of The Moorcock Inn and the erection of three detached dwellings with three detached double garages with annex

accommodation over and the creation of garden and landscaped areas. Re-submission of 3/2012/0819. Application withdrawn February 2014.

- 3/2014/0592 – The demolition of The Moorcock Inn and the erection of 7No. dwelling houses including associated drives, gardens and external landscaping works. Refused planning permission October 2014 and subsequent Appeal dismissed April 2015.
- 3/2014/1119 – The demolition of The Moorcock Inn and the erection of 1No. dwelling house including associated drive, gardens and external landscaping works. Planning permission granted May 2015.

4. BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Applicant, Messrs S and A Thornber bought the Moorcock Inn with the intention of running this as a continuing commercial venture, but found that demand for this establishment significantly declined despite their best efforts and investing considerable personal monies to help to keep the business running. The Applicant's advertised the Moorcock Inn as a going concern but found that there was no interest in small hotels such as this were regrettably forced to close the business down and explore other avenues including residential development. Please refer to the letter from the Applicant's Bank Relationship Manager at Natwest Bank, dated 8th February 2016, which is included in Appendix A.
- 4.2 Having secured planning permission to demolish the Moorcock Inn and erect a large single dwelling, the Applicants instructed a reputable Chartered Surveyor/ Selling Agent, Savills (UK) Ltd, to advertise the site with benefit of the above approval from 2nd July 2015. Savills have not been above to sell the site having extensively marketed this and having promoted this opportunity to those on their client database. Savills have found that there is no demand for a large one-off dwelling in this instance and have set out their findings regarding this and their recommendations to obtain planning consent for four smaller dwellings for which there would be a market demand. Please refer to the letter from Savills to the Applicant, dated 29th April 2016, which is included in Appendix B.

4.3 Despite continual attempts by the Applicants' to keep the Moorcock Inn secure since the closure of the business and subsequent advertising of this site, there have been countless break-ins and acts of wide spread vandalism and theft which have left the building and parts of the site in extremely poor condition. A building condition survey was undertaken to assess the current state of the building (see report submitted with the application) and it concluded that the building is past the point of repair and that it would not be commercially viable for conversion, and recommends the demolition of the building as being the most appropriate solution as part of a site wide regeneration project.

5. EVALUATION

5.1 This section of the statement will justify the acceptability of the proposed development and demonstrate its accordance with the development plan and national planning policy. It will also review the reasons for refusal of the previous application for 7No. dwellings and also the subsequent appeal inspector's decision and reasoning for dismissing this in order to demonstrate that the new design and application for 4No. dwellings and creation of work from home office/ studio space will address the issues previously raised and will accord with the provisions of the NPPF and the Core Strategy.

Review of RVBC decision to refuse planning application (Ref. 3/2014/0592) for 7No. dwellings

5.2 The previous application to demolish the Moorcock Inn and to erect 7No. dwelling houses which was refused by Ribble Valley Borough Council on 17th October 2014 for two main reasons being:

1. The development is contrary to Key Statement DS1 and Policy DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy submission version as proposed to be modified as it would involve the construction of 7

dwellings in an isolated countryside location that do not meet an identified local need. As such, the proposal would cause harm to the Development Strategy for the Borough as set out in the emerging Core Strategy leading to unsustainable development.

2. Permission for the proposed development would create a harmful precedent for the acceptance of other similar proposals without sufficient justification which would have an adverse impact on the implementation of the emerging planning policies of the Council contrary to the interests of the proper planning of the area in accordance with the core principles and policies of the NPPF.

Review of the Appeal Inspector's decision letter in connection with the above application

- 5.3 An Appeal was lodged to the Secretary Of State Planning Inspectorate for this application and the Appeal Inspector stated in the decision letter of 13th May 2015 that the appeal would be considered on its individual merits and principally in relation to the first reason for refusal, and that the main issue was the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the open countryside bearing in mind the need to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is dominated in central upland areas by heather-clad gritstone fells and network of dry-stone walls; discrete woodlands; isolated farmsteads; and well defined settlements which contrast significantly with the dramatic open sweep of the gritstone heights that typify the grandeur and isolation of the protected landscape.
- 5.4 The Appeal Inspector accepted that the existing site and building are detrimental to the special characteristics of the AONB and that the proposal would be on previously developed land. The decision letter also noted that whilst the site is partially obscured to southbound road users, it is not the case for northbound road users who are able to clearly see the site from a

considerable distance of its elevated position. The proposed surrounding landscaping scheme was considered by the Inspector as not being an impermanent solution in the absence of a planning obligation, and would not mitigate views of the site from the surrounding fells and would lead to the erosion of the remoteness of the location.

- 5.5 The Appeal Inspector accepted that the proposed use of materials and design features are more sympathetic to the vernacular architecture of the local area and acknowledged that there would be some visual improvement, but felt that the benefits of this would be outweighed because of the increased extent of built form on the site and the additional visual impacts arising from the inevitable domestication of the associated curtilages.
- 5.6 The appeal decision letter also noted that the development is beyond any defined settlement boundaries and that development would be restricted unless it meets the criteria specified in DMG2 and DMH3 of the Core Strategy (CS) and that these policies are silent in relation to previously developed land and that paragraph 111 of the Framework advises that decisions should encourage reuse. The Inspector felt that the benefits from reuse of the land would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the AONB by the proposed scheme for 7No. dwelling houses.
- 5.7 The Inspector accepted that the proposal would make a contribution towards the supply of housing, use reclaimed local material; and may provide a limited number of local jobs during the construction work, but noted that paragraph 8 of the Framework indicates that sustainable development can only be achieved where economic, social and environmental aims are sought jointly and simultaneously. Paragraph 9 also seeks positive improvements to the quality of people's lives as well as the built, historic and natural environments.

- 5.8 The Inspector felt that further environmental harm would arise from the remoteness of the location because occupants would be entirely dependent on the use of private motor vehicles to access places of work and local services, and questioned whether the development would bring any significant long-term enhancement to the vitality of the local economy because services could equally be accessed near to places of work that lie beyond the local community.

Principle

- 5.10 There is no doubt that the existing land and buildings associated with the Moorcock Inn continue to be detrimental to the special characteristics of the AONB. It is also acknowledged by the Appeal Inspector that the site occupies previously developed land. This application aims to demonstrate to the Council that the proposed development will bring recognised regeneration benefits as set out in the Core Strategy Key Statement DS1: in terms of creating economic, social and environmental well-being and development for future generations.
- 5.11 Whilst the Moorcock Inn site is not located within a defined settlement boundary in Tier 1 or 2 village settlements, the potential positive regeneration benefits that will be achieved by implementation of this development will outweigh the negative impact that this site continues to have on an important part of the Forest of Bowland AONB. The scheme incorporates provision for separate work from home office / studio space to encourage and facilitate small scale tourism or recreational development appropriate to a rural area, which is supported by Policy DMG2 and NPPF target to promote sustainable development providing economic and social benefits. The work space would provide approximately 40 square metres of gross internal floor area and this has been designed to give flexibility for a variety of uses including arts and craft activities (requiring north light and tall space), which could attract visitors to the area who will bring money into the local economy through spending in local businesses, hospitality venues

and local attractions. The work space would also provide employment generating opportunities for the resident and local people.

- 5.12 The proposed scheme will bring significant environmental improvements through the removal of the negative effects which the existing building and site have and are having on the AONB, as acknowledged by the Appeal Inspector. The visual impact assessment (provided as part of this application) shows photographs taken from around the site and how the proposed design would enhance the character and appearance of the area, in terms of opening up the site to allow views through towards the heather clad upland fells and grit stone out crops, which was specifically referred to as an important consideration by the Appeal Inspector. The design and access statement submitted with this application explains how these enhancements would be made possible through careful site appraisal and appreciation of the landscape character, followed by sympathetic choices over size, use of materials, landscaping and siting to meet the criteria of Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations.
- 5.13 The accompanying Transport Movement Assessment compares the character and volume of average weekly vehicular movements to and from the Moorcock Inn when it was operating as a hotel, restaurant and function venue with that associated with the previous scheme for 7No. dwellings and this application for 4No. dwellings and work from home office/ studio space. This assessment concludes that this application for the demolition of the Moorcock Inn and erection of 4No. dwelling houses and work from home office/ studio space will provide significant long term environmental and economic improvements associated with the reduction of vehicular movements to and from the site, supporting the NPPF goal to promote sustainable development.
- 5.14 It is also worthy to note that there is likely to be at least 14 to 20 car visits per week and numerous delivery and maintenance van visits each week to service the extant planning consent to erect a large single dwelling, which

would have a gross floor area in excess of 10,000 square feet (the size of four typical 5 bedroom dwellings) and a large curtilage. This application seeks approval for a further three significantly smaller dwellings but in reality the likely difference in vehicular movements between the extant approval and this application is relatively nominal and arguably insignificant when considering the whole picture and traffic movements associated with the existing use and potential change in traffic movements.

Design Process

- 5.15 The proposed scheme is materially different from the design approach taken with the previously refused and appealed application to erect 7 No. dwellings for reasons which will be explained in more detail below. The design submitted with this application addresses the issues set out by the Appeal Inspector in the decision letter which is referred to earlier in this statement.

Landscape Impact

- 5.16 The focus of the design approach has been to enhance the character and appearance of this site in the open countryside by allowing the existing intrinsic characteristics of the area to be shown off, rather than relying on a new landscaping scheme to enhance the site which the appeal inspector felt would not be a permanent solution in the absence of a planning obligation. In order to do this a Visual Impact Assessment was undertaken and regularly reviewed during the design process and this involved site visits to capture photos of key visual vantage points looking into and out of the site, which highlighted main views of central upland areas dominated by open sweep of heather-clad gritstone fells, dry stone walls and discrete woodlands to which the appeal inspector makes particular reference. The concept sketch views below show this important part of the design process and the effect of the proposed scheme on the character and appearance of the open countryside.



Pl. 1 Sketch showing the view from the south aspect of the site and how the siting of the buildings would allow views through the large gaps in between these and avoid blocking any important views out of the site of the distant fells.



PI. 2 Sketch view of the site from the south east aspect showing how the demolition of the existing building and proposed scale and siting of new buildings would significantly open up views through the site.



Pl. 3 Sketch view taken from the north east aspect showing significant potential enhancements that could be achieved looking southbound down the valley

Design Layout, Massing & Scale

- 5.17 The scale and layout of the new dwelling houses has been a key consideration to maximise the openness and views through the site, as explained above. The buildings on Plots 1 and 4 have been orientated on a north to south axis to help reduce the visual massing perceived from the main south aspect, and also to respect the frontage of the site in relation to the main road which also runs on this axis. This has also allowed large gaps to be left between the buildings to maximise the visual permeability through the site and to add interest.
- 5.18 The final design shows two storey dwellings with dual pitched roofs and rectangular plan forms which are typical of the surrounding area, but all ancillary buildings for garaging of cars and garden storage have been treated differently and these have been re-located further into the site to open up space between each of the dwellings. This has also presented the

opportunity to set the garage/ stores into the topography site and to extend surrounding grassed areas over as the roof finish to maximise the openness of the site.

Amount

- 5.19 The existing Moorcock Inn building occupies a gross external footprint of approximately 980 sq. metres and previous scheme for 7 No. dwellings occupied approx. 944 sq. metres. The extant approval to erect a large single dwelling would have an approx. gross external footprint of 576 sq. metres which is not significantly different (approx. 18% less) than the total 698 sq. metre combined footprint of the four two storey proposed dwellings.
- 5.20 The design process also compared the built to void relationships (as percentages) across the east to west length of the site. This study found that the proposed scheme accompanying this application would result in marginally more (approximately 8%) built form from than associated with the extant approval for a large single dwelling house (discounting the garages which would be set back into the banking). It also established that the proposed scheme is materially different to the previously refused application for 7No. dwelling houses, which would have resulted in approximately 16% more built form across the east/ west length of the site. Furthermore, the proposed scheme splits the built form across the site with large gaps between in comparison with the extant approval where all of the buildings are concentrated around a central courtyard and this scheme (if implemented) would be significantly more visually obtrusive than this application.

Landscaping

- 5.21 As previously explained in this statement, the design intention has been to enhance this site by removal of an existing building which is an eyesore, and to regenerate the site by conserving the special features and views through the site, rather than relying on a landscaping scheme to enhance the development as a whole.

- 5.22 Landscaping is still an important consideration and the design takes into account the point made by the appeal inspector previously regarding an important visual feature of the area being gritstone dry stone walling. Dry stone walls have been incorporated into the design as principal boundary treatments supplemented by Lancashire native species hedges. 1.2M high dry stone walls would run across the rear of the site to retain earth behind the dwellings with openings forming entrances to garages and stores. The new dry stone walls form a subtle visual link to help integrate the plots as a whole.
- 5.23 The scheme would require some of the existing trees on site to be removed as per scheme associated with the extant approval. The application includes for new native trees to be planted to mitigate this and to add some natural structure to define boundaries and entrances, but without compromising the overriding design goal to enhance the site by respecting the need to keep the site as open as possible and allow views through to the central upland fells and down the valley.

Appearance

- 5.24 All new buildings would be constructed from local reclaimed natural stone walls and chimneys with dressed stone window and door surrounds. Natural slate roof finishes and metal rainwater goods would be used for the houses and green roofs over the garage/ store buildings that would be set back into the ground. Timber and metal framed windows, doors and entrance gates would be used. Drives would be finished in gravel with stone sett edgings and paths and patios would be finished in natural stone flags – all as per the extant approval for the single dwelling.

Access

- 5.25 The development would continue to be served by the access track off Slaidburn Road and each plot would have its own access drive with double garaging and ample off street parking and turning space.
- 5.26 The development would be built in accordance with current Building Regulations and would comply with accessibility requirements.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed demolition of the Moorcock Inn and erection of 4 No. detached dwellings and work from home office/ studio space will eradicate the ongoing problems which have resulted in this site been a blot on the important landscape in the Forest of Bowland AONB, by securing planning permission for a use for which there is a demand to finally find a solution to this ongoing problem.
- 6.2 The application and accompanying documents show that there are many advantages that can be achieved through the implementation of this considered and sympathetic regeneration scheme, which is supported by the aims of the Core Strategy Key Statement DS1 considering the potential economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 6.3 The proposed scheme will significantly enhance the site character and appearance of the AONB by opening up partially obscured views to both northbound and southbound road users, as well as improving long distance views of the site from because of its elevated position and removal of the existing large stark white mock Tudor building.
- 6.4 The proposed regeneration of the Moorcock Inn site would enhance the character and appearance of the open countryside and is in line with Key Statement DS1 and Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Core Strategy. The special circumstances associated with this site and the visual

enhancements that this development would bring to the open countryside combined with the economic, social and environmental benefits through regeneration outweigh any concerns over the general sustainability credentials of this development.

- 6.5 For the above reasons and having regard to all other information submitted, this application on balance meets with the provisions of the NPPF and the Core Strategy and be supported.

APPENDIX B – Letter from Savills (UK) Ltd referred to

29 April 2016

Mr S Thomber
Templewood
Pendle Road
Clitheroe
BB7 1JH

The Savills logo consists of a yellow square with the word "savills" written in a lowercase, sans-serif font in red.

Justin Swingler
E: jswingler@savills.com
DL: 01200 411048
F: 01200 411059

8 Church Street, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 2DD
T: 01200 411543
savills.com

Dear Mr Thomber:

I wanted to update you on the situation and marketing of The Moorcock. We have had the property on the market since 2 July 2015 and after extensive marketing and speaking to numerous applicants on our database we have been unable to find a buyer. The main reason for this, is that the majority of buyers are not looking to build such a substantial property and are concerned that once developed, the completed value will not reflect the build cost.

With the above in mind, I wonder whether it is time that we look at going back to the Ribbles Valley planners to see if we can get the planning permission altered to allow four plots over the site, with the idea that four detached houses (approximately 3000-3500 sq ft) could be built, all with their own gardens and driveways. The site would lend itself well to this design and in essence, would create a nice hamlet. The market for this type of building plot is much greater as it will open itself up to end users who are looking to build a house for themselves as a normal family home, rather than developers who aren't interested in building a 10,000 square foot mansion with only a small market to resell it back to.

Let me know your thoughts and if this is something you think might be a consideration for you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Justin Swingler", written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Justin Swingler
Head of Office

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