

# **Thorneyholme Hall, Dunsop Bridge Lancashire, BB7 3BB.**

Proposed Change of Use from  
Private Dwelling (C3) to Cookery School  
with accommodation(C2).

## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

May 2017

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## Report Control

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Project: Thorneyholme Hall, Dunsop Bridge, Lancashire, BB7 3BB.

Client: Michael Reilly

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 PWA Planning is retained by Michael Reilly ('the Applicant') to progress a full planning application for the change of use of Thorneyholme Hall, last formal used as the residence of the Applicant. The change of use will see the dwelling (C3) become a Cookery School with associated accommodation (C2) (Proposed Development). The development is situated on land associated with Thorneyholme Hall, Dunsop Bridge, Lancashire, BB7 3BB. ('Application Site'). This Planning Statement's purpose is to assess and conclude on the acceptability of the proposal in terms of relevant national and local planning policy, along with any material considerations.
- 1.2 The planning application is made to Ribble Valley Borough Council (the Local Planning Authority) as a full detailed application and relates to the red edge application site shown in the provided Location Plan (drawing ref. 1178-PL-01A) The development will be contained within the existing curtilage of Thorneyholme Hall, with building work largely limited to the extension of the existing garage, works to the wider site will be limited to soft landscaping and the delivery of adequate parking provision.
- 1.3 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 demonstrate that the proposals accord with the provisions of the relevant policies of the Development Plan, and moreover that there are other significant material considerations which indicate that planning permission ought to be granted. In addition, the statement will seek to demonstrate that there are no technical reasons which could hinder the grant of planning permission.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement, alongside a review of the site history and relevant policies, provides a description of the Proposed Development together with an appraisal of the planning merits of the scheme as a whole.
- 1.5 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application package, which includes the following documents: -
- 1 APP form, relevant certificates and notices;
  - Drawn information: -
    - Location Plan (drawing no. 1178-PL-01A);
    - Existing Site (drawing no. 1178-PL-20);
    - Existing Garage (drawing no. 1178-PL-21);
    - Proposed Site Plan (drawing no. 1178-PL-22A);
    - Proposed Cookery School – Plans and Elevations (drawing no. 1178-PL-23A);
    - Context Elevations (drawing no 1178-PL-24);
  - Flood Risk Assessment;
  - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impacts Assessment;
  - Planning Statement (this document).
- 1.6 The aforementioned documentation reflects the validation requirements of Ribble Valley Borough Council.

1.7 The remainder of this report is structured as follows: -

- Section 2 - Site Description;
- Section 3 - Proposed Development;
- Section 4 - Planning History;
- Section 5 - Planning Policy Assessment;
- Section 6 - Material considerations;
- Section 7 - Conclusions.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The Application Site comprises of Thorneyholme Hall which was formerly a hotel premises offering accommodation for visitors to the area. This use was later changed to incorporate spa/leisure facilities before the subsequent conversion of the property to a private dwelling. The Application Site lies outside of the defined settlement of Dunsop Bridge, though is bound by further residential development to the east. Additionally, the site falls within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.2 This building is of stone construction with render cladding, exposed quoins and large chimney stacks and has been subject to a number of modifications since its initial construction. Originally there was additional built form off the western elevation which mirrored the taller portion of the dwelling to the east. A large extension to the rear was previously established and housed the swimming pool, this was later demolished by the current owner and replaced with a more modest conservatory type addition.
- 2.3 The Hall's associated curtilage is made up of a garden area which immediately adjoins the dwelling to the east and south. Beyond this is a grassed paddock, stabling and areas of hardstanding. The site is fairly flat and benefits from a number of mature trees on the edge of the curtilage, namely to the east, this will help filter views from public vantage points. The river Hodder is situated to the north, with the wider surrounding area consisting largely of agricultural land and private dwellings, land use types synonymous with its rural location. Despite not being currently occupied the building, and grounds have been kept in good condition and maintained to a high standard.
- 2.4 A location plan showing the site within its wider setting is provided with the supporting documents (drawing ref: 1178-PL-01A). Additionally, see Figure 1 below for an aerial image of the Site in its closer setting:



Figure 1: Aerial image showing the location of the site (not to scale)

- 2.5 The site lies within a rural location but does benefit from direct access to the local road network which links the site to Dunsop Bridge and wider transport routes and other larger settlements. Clitheroe is the closest larger settlement and is less than 10 miles away.
- 2.6 From the site, access can be gained to a number of Public Rights of Way allowing for access to the wider area. Footpaths 3-8-FP 20, 3-9-FP 2 and 3-29-FP 29 provide access to the wider landscape in southern and easterly directions, whilst from the centre of Dunsop Bridge bridleways 3-8-BW 8 and 3-8-BW 15 permit for walks north of the Application Site.
- 2.7 Whilst as previously stated, Dunsop Bridge is a rural village a number of local service are available. A filling station/garage is located centrally within the village and there is a car park and public toilets for those visiting. The village also benefits from a small church and combined post office, country store and tea room. A dedicated bus route also travels through the area to provide children access to local schools. The closest bus stop is 240m from the site.
- 2.8 The site is within an area identified by the Environment Agency's flood risk map as being subject to flooding. The majority of the site falls within Flood Zone 3 with a minor portion being detailed as flood zone 2. However, as part of a previous application submitted to the Council, it was successfully demonstrated that the entire site is in fact flood zone 2.
- 2.9 The online record suggests there are 2 known Tree Preservation Orders (references 124 and 77) within close proximity to Thorneyholme Hall, the site also lies within the Forest of Bowland AONB.

### 3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 It is proposed to change the use of the dwelling known as Thorneyholme Hall and its associated curtilage to facilitate the formation of a Cookery School with accommodation. In this respect please refer to the Proposed Site Plan (drawing no. 1178-PL-22A) which forms part of the supporting documents provided as part of this application. A full planning application is submitted to the Council, the description of development as stated within the application form is as follows:

*“Proposed change of use from Dwellinghouse (C3) to a Cookery School (C2).”*

3.2 It is relevant to note at this point that formal pre-application discussions have been undertaken regarding development in this location and this has been taken into consideration in finalising the proposals which are now the subject of this application (pre-application reference 3/2016/ENQ/00111). However, this pre-app related to providing additional bedroom accommodation with a view to reverting back to the buildings previous use as a hotel. Numerous options were discussed, including extending the main dwelling and providing a number of structures within the curtilage. After providing additional information Rachel Horton of Ribble Valley Borough Council, confirmed in an email dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 that the principle of a single storey extension to the garage was considered acceptable.

3.3 In addition to the formal pre-app works, the prospect of erecting a large outbuilding to the rear of the property under residential permitted development rights was discussed and remains an alternative to that proposed as part of this application. Though such alternative works would look to establish an ancillary building to the dwellings as opposed to a Cookery School.

3.4 The works required as part of the proposal are largely limited to the extension of the existing garage which will allow for the formation of the cookery school. The extension to the garage extends to the south and as such is of limited impact on the primary elevation of Thorneyholme Hall. In addition to this, the area to the south-west of the site was previously used as a menage and a tennis court, but has since become disused and overgrown and will be utilised to form parking spaces to serve the development. It is the applicant’s intention to deliver a scheme which respects the vernacular and enhances the local sense of character, therefore the proposed will seek to fit well alongside the adjacent development and essentially establish a sustainable use for the site. In addition, any final scheme will also seek to ensure that the amenities of existing and future residents will not be compromised by the proposals.

3.5 Thorneyholme Hall will not be subject to substantial change as part of the development. The external elevations will be unaffected, whilst internally only minor modifications will be required to facilitate the change of use. The dwelling already boasts 8 bedrooms making it able to serve those attending the cookery school, and the large dining and living areas lend themselves well to such a use, as they did previously when the building operated as a hotel.

## 4 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 A search of the Ribble Valley Borough Council's planning register has been carried out to understand the site's planning history. The following applications are noted:

- **Planning Application 3/1990/0097** – This was an application for full consent that sought permission to change the use of the then Thorneyholme Hotel to a use falling within Class C2. Little more is known of the application, as the Council's online database provides no application documentation. However, the application was approved on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1990 which, although some time ago, arguably sets a precedent that such a use at the Application Site is permissible in principle.
- **Planning Application 3/1997/0427** – This change of use application signifies when Thorneyholme Hall formerly became a residential dwelling as opposed to the hotel/spa/nursery. The application was granted consent on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1997.
- **Planning Application 3/2002/0491** – Full planning application for the erection of timber framed garages. This structure, which was consented on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2002, is that which is proposed for remodelling/extension as part of this application.
- **Planning Application 3/2015/0914** – This is the most recent application associated with the site and looked to gain outline consent for six holiday cottages within the southern curtilage of Thorneyholme Hall. The application was refused at committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2016. Whilst this represents the most recent comparison to the Proposed Development, it's quite evident the scheme submitted is of a smaller scale and of a more appropriate/considered design than that refused as part of this application.

4.2 Whilst other applications exist locally, there are no other applications evident from the planning register which are deemed relevant to the current proposals to which this planning application relates. However, should the more minor applications related to the site be of interest to the Council, the following application references may prove helpful:

- 3/1990/0217;
- 3/1991/0668;
- 3/1991/0745; and
- 3/1991/0746.



## 5 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that:

*“where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise”.*

5.2 In this instance, the Development Plan for the Application Site comprises of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 (2014). Additionally, key policy documents that comprise ‘material considerations’ include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and any local supplementary planning guidance documents considered relevant to the proposal. These material considerations are set out at Section 6 of this statement.

5.3 Currently the proposal maps published within the now replaced Districtwide Local Plan remains adopted, until the revised set of plans that are being produced as part of the Housing and Economic Development - Development Plan Document (DPD) become adopted. An extract from the Districtwide Local Plan Proposals Map (1998) is provided at Figure 2, the site is located on the periphery of the settlement of Dunsop Bridge within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

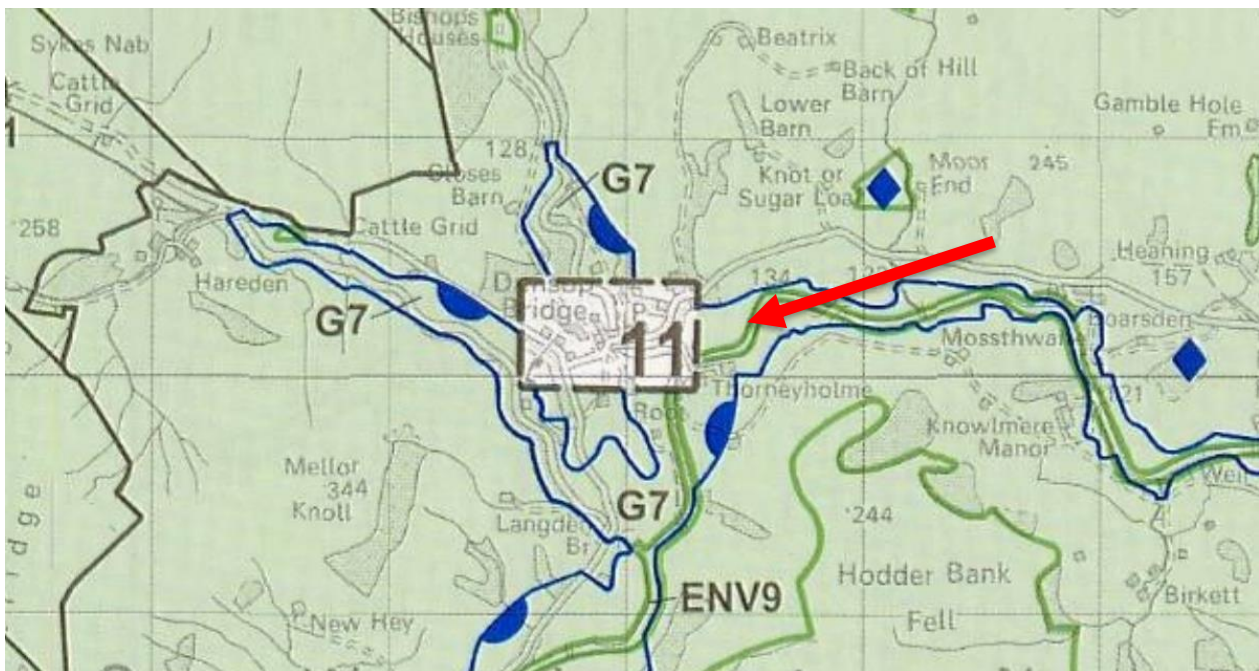


Figure 2: Extract from the Districtwide Local Plan (1998)

### **Ribble Valley Borough Council - Core Strategy 2008 – 2028**

5.4 The Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 was adopted in December 2014 and therefore can broadly be regarded as containing relevant and up to date policies in the consideration of this application. Furthermore, the following policies are considered to be relevant to the determination of the application, however they will be afforded weight in accordance with their consistency with the NPPF and this is discussed further in the Material Considerations section of the statement: -

- *Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy;*
- *Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development;*
- *Key Statement EN2: Landscape;*
- *Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets*
- *Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development;*
- *Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy;*
- *Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations;*
- *Policy DMG1: General Considerations;*
- *Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations;*
- *Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility;*
- *Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands;*
- *Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection;*
- *Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy;*
- *Policy DMB3: Recreation and Tourism Development.*

5.5 **Key Statement DS1** seeks to outline briefly the locations in which growth will be focused. Whilst the policy doesn't specifically refer to educational or C2 use class development it does infer that development will be focused around the identified strategic sites and Tier 1 Villages. Dunsop Bridge is mentioned as a settlement where development could be acceptable, however it would have to be focused on local need or deliver regeneration benefits.

5.6 Whilst the Application Site is located outside of the established settlement boundary of Dunsop Bridge it does have a clear and functional relationship with the settlement, with Thorneyholme Hall representing one of the feature buildings of the Dunsop Bridge. The facilities needed to serve the proposed use are fairly minor (limited to the detailed garage extension and the additional parking), and accommodated on site. Consequently, it is not thought that the scale of the development would be out of context with the settlement or be unsuitable within the AONB. Thorneyholme Hall has proven hard to maintain as either a residential home or a hotel and currently is not used as a residence. This application offers the opportunity to fully utilise and regenerate the site to provide a sustainable use that won't undermine or detract from the existing settlement area. Moreover, the increased use of the site would likely be of socio-economic benefit to existing village facilities.

5.7 **Key Statement DS2:** Sustainable Development looks to mirror Paragraph 14 of the NPPF which details the sustainable development principle that seeks to guide both authorities and developers. The Statement details that:

*"When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Framework. The Council will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.*

*Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and where relevant, policies in the neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

- 5.8 In this instance, it is considered this statement alongside the supporting evidence has shown the proposals to be broadly compliant with the adopted Development Plan. Moreover, the scheme makes use of an existing attractive building which at present is largely under-utilised.
- 5.9 The site benefits from mature vegetation along its boundaries, all of which will be unaffected by the proposal. This screening significantly limits any visual impact generated and coupled with the minor scale of the proposals, it has been concluded the impacts are largely insignificant. Moreover, as the intention is to provide on-site accommodation for those undertaking courses, the number of vehicles movements associated with the usage would be limited and not represent a severe impact, which would be the only situation whereby development should be refused on transport grounds. Additionally, as noted when addressing Key Statement DS1, there are obvious regeneration benefits with utilising the existing site to its full potential whilst delivering a desirable development for which there is significant demand for. On this basis, the application can be considered acceptable in the terms of this policy.
- 5.10 **Key Statement EN2:** Landscape, focuses on protecting the character of the Forest of Bowland AONB. It places a requirement for development to be in-keeping with the character of landscape and local area. Additionally, in the Council's justification for the policy they state that:
- “Developers should adopt a non-standardised approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquility.”*
- 5.11 As previously outlined the proposals would not seek to introduce any new elements to the existing Thorneyholme Hall, which ensures there will be no material impact to the valuable built fabric located on site. Whilst the proposed extension is significant in terms of the existing structure, in the context of the site it remains of an appropriate scale which when considered alongside the proposed usage is both acceptable and preferable to making significant alterations to Thorneyholme Hall. Moreover, the use of the area to the south-west to accommodate additional car-parking is both logical and will also result in the enhancement and landscaping to a section of the site which has become overgrown and disused. In summary, whilst the development does involve additional built form being established on site, it has been proposed in a manner which protects the existing built fabric without compromising the openness and character of surrounding land.
- 5.12 Whilst Thorneyholme Hall is not a listed structure or detailed as a local listed heritage asset, it is accepted that the building is of historic architectural merit and as such **Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets** is relevant to the application. The policy is generally supportive of the type of the development proposed in that it acknowledges that the best way of guaranteeing heritage assets remain protected is to ensure a viable use is permitted. It also states that proposals should seek to avoid harming any such assets, which is precisely why the decision was made to extend the garage as oppose to modifying the main dwelling. On this basis, it can be concluded the aforementioned policy generally supports the principle of the Proposed Development.
- 5.13 Section 7 of the Core Strategy relates to economy, this section is considered largely applicable to the change of use element of the proposal, which will see the existing dwelling converted to provide

ancillary accommodation in support of the proposed cookery school. Whilst **Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development**, directs development towards the main settlements, it does acknowledge that priority will be given to brownfield sites in the development of employment-generating uses. Moreover, the policy also infers that development which will strengthen the wider rural and village economies will be supported in principle. The proposals compliance with this policy also implies the application can be considered acceptable when viewed against **Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy**.

- 5.14 It is expected that the cookery school will draw in people from all over the region and beyond. The varying length of classes/experiences will ensure the project is appealing to a broad range of people and groups. On this basis, the proposal can be considered as in accordance with **Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy**, which looks to support developments that aim to make a positive contribution to the tourism economy through the conversion of existing buildings.
- 5.15 **Key Statement DM12: Transport Considerations**, relates mainly to new development and the need for it to be sustainably located. As this application relates to the expansion of an existing developed site, the proposals consideration against this policy is not thought to be determinative. However, as it is quite clear the site's rural location limits its accessibility via public transport, it should be noted that the expected vehicle movements are not thought to be in excess of those associated with site's previous lawful use as a spa or hotel.
- 5.16 **Policy DMG1: General Considerations** assists in ensuring that development proposals are in line with numerous broad criteria by providing a series of overarching considerations regarding the quality of developments. The policy categorises the criteria under 6 headings which are as follows:
- Design;
  - Access;
  - Amenity;
  - Environment;
  - Infrastructure;
  - Other.
- 5.17 The application has sought to ensure the existing building remains unaffected as part of the proposals. By extending the existing garage there has been no need to modify Thorneyholme Hall as was the case previously when a large indoor swimming pool was installed, this has since been demolished. The proposed extension to the garage has been designed to compliment Thorneyholme Hall, without being so prominent as to detract from it. The fact it has been kept to a single-story structure and angled away from the front elevation of Thorneyholme Hall allows for the extension to provide the required space without compromising the wider site.
- 5.18 Secondly as the works associated with the proposal does not extend beyond the curtilage currently associated with the property, nor constitute the over development of the site, it can be assumed that impacts on local amenity and indeed any environmental implications of development are not considered of significant concern as to form part of the applications determination. The on-site vegetation has been considered as part of the application and the necessary precautions have been taken. The same can be said in relation to infrastructure considerations as the development would

not result in the loss or devaluing of any open space provision or be of notable impact on other social infrastructure or prejudice future development.

5.19 The access element of this policy focuses around ensuring all traffic and parking implications have been considered and that adequate provision is made to accommodate the development. In this regard, it should be noted the proposed plans include establishing 23 parking spaces in the area south-west of the site which has previously been used as a menage and a tennis court. This area has since become disused, overgrown and somewhat unsightly suggesting that utilising this area to increase parking provision would be both logical and result in an enhancement of the site.

5.20 **Policy DMG2** outlines further strategic considerations. The policy assists in the interpretation of the Development Strategy and underpins the settlement hierarchy for the purposes of delivering sustainable development. Dunsop Bridge is considered a tier 2 settlement, with the Application Site falling outside the adopted settlement boundary. In such locations the policy details that development must meet at least one of the following considerations:

1. *“The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area.*
2. *The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.*
3. *The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.*
4. *The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
5. *The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.*
6. *The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.”*

5.21 Whilst the development isn't essential for the local economy or social well-being it certainly would deliver associated benefits through an influx in visitors to the area. However, the varied level and style of the classes/experiences the cookery school intends to offer will ensure the proposals can be viewed as a recreational development which by virtue of the on-site provision and limited scale can be viewed as acceptable within its rural location of Dunsop Bridge and as such compliant with this element of the policy. The subsequent section provides further clarity on development within the AONB inferring the most important consideration will be:

*“The protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting.”*

5.22 The Proposed Development offers the opportunity to sustain the use of Thorneyholme Hall which over recent years has had numerous uses. The necessary works are limited to within the properties associated curtilage which limits the impact on the surrounding landscape and the need to establish

additional infrastructure in Dunsop Bridge to accommodate the development. Whilst the proposal does include new built form, a portion of the development does consist of the re-use of the existing garage. The proposed extension seeks to incorporate the materials used in the existing structure to ensure it is in-keeping, additionally the works have been limited to a single storey and directed away from the primary elevation of Thorneyholme Hall. On this basis, it is not considered the Proposed Development is in conflict with any element of DMG2.

- 5.23 As noted when considering the proposals against Policy DMG1, it is thought adequate provision has been put in place on site to serve the needs of the development and ensure no increase in pressure on the existing network and parking facilities is generated as part of the proposed works. Consequently, the application is considered to be generally acceptable when considered against **Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility**. It is accepted that the site's rural location doesn't lend itself well to taking advantage of public transport however for those visiting Dunsop Bridge the Application Site is readily accessible on foot via established footpaths or indeed via bicycle. The cookery school will provide further attractions for Dunsop Bridge and as noted throughout the statement, likely be of notable value in strengthening the existing village, whilst also providing additional employment. The proposal also seeks to safeguard the vitality of the building and bring it back into use. Therefore, whilst the Proposed Development could be considered as not wholly consistent with the policy there is a significant degree of compliance and moreover the policy details that proposals should be considered in the context of the wider Development Strategy.
- 5.24 The policy advises that proposals will be expected to meet the adopted parking standards, which in this circumstance is thought to be those detailed in Appendix 2 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan. Regarding C2 uses the maximum the standards require is 1 space per bed for short courses and 1 per 2 beds for longer courses. Thorneyholme Hall has 8 bedrooms at present, however there is potential for each room to accommodate two beds, suggesting the maximum spaces required would be 16. The application seeks to utilise the redundant tennis court/menage to provide 23 parking spaces meaning spaces in excess of the minimum requirements.
- 5.25 **Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands** looks to provide protection against development which would be of detriment to existing woodlands and tree coverage. The policy details that applications where arboricultural implications are likely should be accompanied by the relevant assessments and necessary plans. Whilst no unacceptable impacts to existing trees are anticipated the application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment on the basis the site is characterised by mature tree cover, with a number of the trees benefitting from protected status. The report confirmed that *"construction of the development, as proposed, can be achieved whilst retaining all of the trees, although the 'U' category trees and group are recommended for removal in accordance with prudent arboricultural management, regardless of the development proposals"*. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in the context of this policy and would not induce any unacceptable impacts on existing tree populations.
- 5.26 **Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection** states the proposals which induce significant harm to important landscapes or landscape features will not be supported. Such features are outlined as including:

1. *"Traditional Stone Walls.*
2. *Ponds.*

3. *Characteristic Herb Rich Meadows and Pastures.*
4. *Woodlands.*
5. *Copses.*
6. *Hedgerows and Individual Trees.*
7. *Townscape Elements such as the Scale, Form, and Materials that Contribute to the Characteristic Townscapes of the Area.*
8. *Upland Landscapes and Associated Habitats Such as Blanket Bog.*
9. *Botanically Rich Roadside Verges (That are Worthy of Protection)."*

5.27 As with previous policies, it is considered that the information detailed in this statement is sufficient as to qualify the proposal's impact as acceptable. Effort has been made to ensure disruption to existing features is minimal and that the development sits well within the existing cluster of buildings. The proposal would secure the continued use of an existing building of architectural merit and ensure it remains a positive feature within the existing landscape.

5.28 **Policy DMB1:** Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy, seeks to provide support for applications which look to support businesses within the Borough. A large portion of the policy relates to farm diversification or existing businesses, both of which are not applicable to the application at hand. However, the policy does outline that for proposals seeking to redevelop/convert existing sites to employment generating, uses will be assessed against a number of criteria. The latter two criteria relate to the loss of existing employment, which isn't a concern in regard to this application given the lawful use of the premises is at present C3 – dwellinghouse. Therefore, in order to gain support from the policy the emphasis is placed on demonstrating accordance with the adopted Development Plan and outlining the environmental benefits of the proposal. In relation to the latter point the Proposed Development provides the opportunity to secure development which will be of visitor/tourism benefit to the area without permitting for any impacts on the settlements valuable landscape or strain on existing services.

5.29 **Policy DMB3:** Recreation and Tourism Development, encourages development which would "*extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the borough*". As noted throughout this statement the cookery school would offer a range of classes covering differing lengths and aimed and varying abilities and as such would appeal to a wide range of people both within and outside the Borough. The proposal involves only a small level of additional built development that sits well within the existing cluster of buildings. The change of use would retain Thorneyholme Hall and thus not undermine the character of the area and has the facilities to accommodate the necessary level of parking without being of a scale where highway impacts are considered likely. Considering all of the above it is concluded the proposal would not conflict with the criteria laid out within the policy.

## 6 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 6.1 The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions as per Paragraph 2 of the Framework and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 6.2 The NPPF sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. 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 planning permission unless there are strong reasons that permission should not be granted. The NPPF also strongly supports economic and housing development.
- 6.3 Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 7 of the Framework as having three dimensions; namely economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 17 sets out the core planning principles which include the need to:
- *“Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs...*
  - *Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings...*
  - *Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable...”*
- 6.4 In terms of economic benefits, the proposal would make a positive contribution to rural economy within the Ribble Valley Borough Council region and the settlement of Dunsop Bridge. The scale of the development is in keeping with the locality and will clearly provide a significant economic boost to the area without compromising existing facilities.
- 6.5 The social aspect of sustainability is met, in that the proposal will result in securing the retention and continued use of a high-quality building, and comprises establishing the building as a cookery school which remains a compatible use with infrastructure largely in place to support the development. The existing building will not be subject to any external alteration, with only minor internal changes needed to facilitate the development. Additionally, with the site's accessibility to the associated local footpaths and bridleways, attracting visitors to this location permits for wider access and enjoyment of the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 6.6 Turning to the environmental aspect of sustainability, the site is not subject to any statutory ecological designations, national Heritage designations or protected species. Tree Preservations Orders are prevalent on site but the relevant precautions have been undertaken and the applicable reports commissioned to ensure the development remains acceptable and low impact. Moreover, the proposal seeks to retain the development largely within the parameters of existing built form, which is inherently more sustainable than the development of greenfield sites which would likely be higher of environmental value.



- 6.7 It is considered that the Proposed Development will result in the successful retention and revitalisation of the existing building in a manner which is in line with the Core Planning Principles detailed in the NPPF. The principles not only encourage the effective use of land by reusing existing development sites and having regard for the value of retaining heritage assets but also highlights the need to support rural communities and *“not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives”*.
- 6.8 Paragraph 19 outlines the Government’s commitment to ensuring the planning system does not serve to impede sustainable growth and that such growth is encouraged and supported. The section goes further to state that significant weight should be placed on the need to support such sustainable economic growth.
- 6.9 Following on from the above, Chapter 3 “Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy” seeks to provide further support for sustainable development within rural areas. This section places the emphasis on planning policies to provide this support outlining the local policy should *“support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings”*.
- 6.10 Chapter 4 of the Framework, Promoting Sustainable Transport, at Paragraph 32 states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. It is clear that this is not the case with the proposal now before the Council.
- 6.11 Whilst in Section 5 of this statement it was considered that the Proposed Development is compliant with a large majority of the policies detailed within the Development Plan. It is also clear that in addition to this, it is considered that the proposal does comprise sustainable development in the context of Paragraph 14 and would not result in any adverse impacts in that respect. In particular, the site: -
- a) Is able to accommodate development of this scale without over-intensifying the use of the site.
  - b) Is well located to allow for access to numerous Public Rights of Way.
  - c) Is within walking distance of the local centre of Dunsop Bridge;
  - d) Would make effective use of a developed site which stands within an existing cluster of buildings;
  - e) Can be developed without harm to neighbouring land uses;
  - f) The development would avoid generating an adverse visual impact due to the nature of the proposal and the developed nature of the surrounding area.
- 6.12 As such, this proposal is considered to deliver a sustainable form of development as is required by the NPPF. The scale of development and its context in relation to its location is considered acceptable and whilst there would be some impacts it is not considered that there would be sufficient harm to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the many benefits. Consequently, guidance is clear that planning permission should be granted.

- 6.13 Chapter 10 of the Framework considers climate change, flooding and coastal change. Paragraph 100 states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk.
- 6.14 The site is shown to be located within Zone 3 and therefore at risk to flooding. However, the relevant works accompany this submission with the flood risk assessment showing the site to actually be flood zone 2 and that based on the minor scale of the proposals and the existing infrastructure there will be no change to the flood risk upstream or downstream of this location and the flood risk at site remains low. Therefore, the proposals are not thought to be in conflict with Paragraph 103 which states that when determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- 6.15 Paragraph 187 of the Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and that decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.16 Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, Local Planning Authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.17 Paragraph 215 states that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans in accordance to their degree of consistency with the Framework, in that the closer the policies in the plan are to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that should be afforded.
- 6.18 This statement and supporting drawings have demonstrated that this application is consistent with the above exerts, in that the development will not generate significant adverse impacts and should therefore be subsequently approved.

## 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 PWA Planning is retained by Michael Reilly to prepare and submit a full planning application for the change of use of the existing site from a residential dwelling to a Cookery School at Thorneyholme Hall, Dunsop Bridge, Lancashire. The description of the development as per the submitted 1APP form is as follows:

*“Proposed change of use from Dwellinghouse (C3) to a Cookery School (C2).”*

7.2 The works would result in a number of key benefits which are deemed relevant to the determination of the application, namely: -

- Establishment of a cookery school on the periphery of Dunsop Bridge providing sustainable economic development of notable value to the rural economy.
- The enhancement of local character and distinctiveness through securing the continued use of an established building within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in a sustainable capacity;
- Support for existing businesses and suppliers in the area during construction, contributing to the local economy.

7.3 This statement has shown the proposal to be acceptable when considered alongside the Development Plan policies. The application represents acceptable development within an existing cluster of buildings on the edge of Dunsop Bridge by virtue of its compliance with key statements DS1: Development Strategy. Furthermore, the design of the scheme and level of parking provision is thought to be acceptable in the context of the site use and location.

7.4 The scheme is supported by a suite of drawn information which alongside this statement clearly demonstrate that there would be no harmful impacts resulting from the proposed development and hence no reason that planning permission ought not to be granted. In addition to that, there are other material considerations which support the granting of planning permission and which should be afforded significant weight in the determination of the application.

7.5 For the reasons identified within this statement, it is considered that detailed planning permission for the Proposed Development should be granted and the application is commended to the authority.