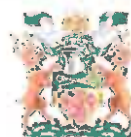


**Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.**

**Application Ref:** 3/2018/0278

**Date Inspected:** 16/05/2018

**Officer:** AB



**Ribble Valley  
Borough Council**

[www.ribblevalley.gov.uk](http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk)

**DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**

**REFUSED**

**Development  
Description:**

**Proposed conversion of the existing, approved residential accommodation in the attached former barn into a separate dwelling.**

**Site Address/Location:**

**Mere Syke Farm Settle Road Wigglesworth BD23 4SN**

**CONSULTATIONS:**

**Parish/Town Council**

None received.

**CONSULTATIONS:**

**Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies**

**LCC Highways:**

No objections.

**CONSULTATIONS:**

**Additional Representations.**

No representations have been received.

**RELEVANT POLICIES:**

**Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**

Policy DS1 – Development Strategy

Policy DS2 – Sustainable Development

Policy EN2 – Landscape

Policy H1 – Housing Provision

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations

Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations

Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility

Policy DMH3 – Dwellings in the open countryside and AONB

**National Planning Policy Framework**

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

3/2018/0279 - Proposed sub-division of existing dwelling (the original farmhouse) into two dwellings. Awaiting Determination

3/2010/0736 - Partial demolition and alterations to existing outbuildings to form a self-contained annex residential unit and workshop. Approved with conditions

3/2009/0381 - Proposed internal remodelling of previously converted residential store adjoining house at Mere Syke Farm, including associated external fenestration alterations and improvements. Partial demolition and alterations to existing residential garage/workshop and store outbuilding. Approved with conditions

**ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

**Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**

Planning consent is sought for the sub-division of an existing residential property at Mere Syke Farm, Wigglesworth. The application site is located within the open countryside on the east side of Forest Becks Brow and close to the northern boundary of the Borough. The site

is remote in terms of access to services and facilities; the nearest village is Wigglesworth around 3km away by road and in the neighbouring Craven District.

The building which is the subject of this application forms part of the property known as Mere Syke Farm. The building originally comprised a farmhouse with an attached barn on the southern side. Planning application 3/2009/0381 sought consent to, part retrospectively, convert the attached barn to living accommodation. Planning consent was granted and the barn has been converted in accordance with the approved plans.

This application seeks to sub-divide the existing dwelling, comprising the farmhouse and former barn, by establishing the former barn as a new planning unit. A separate planning application 3/2018/0279 seeks consent for the subdivision of the original farmhouse into two dwellings. In combination, the two applications would result in the formation of three separate residential properties at the site.

As existing, the barn is occupied as the applicant's main residence. Whilst there remains an interconnecting door between the former barn and the original farmhouse at ground floor level the barn is, for all intents and purposes, occupied as a separate and distinct residential unit. Vehicular access to the barn from Forest Becks Brow runs down the south side of the building and leads to a hard surfaced parking area to the rear. There is a second gated access approximately 65m to the south of the first access. From this a hard-surfaced track has been formed which crosses land in the applicant's ownership and provides access to a parking area beyond the rear boundary of the lawned garden of the farmhouse.

This application seeks to regularise the existing situation. It is noted that the external changes to the barn appear to have been carried out in accordance with the plans approved by planning application 3/2009/0381 and this application does not seek any additional alterations to the building's appearance.

#### **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**

In determining the application it is important to consider the principle of the development, its impact of the visual appearance of the surrounding area, its effect on the residential amenity and its impact on highway safety.

#### **Principle of Development**

Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the Borough is the Ribble Valley Core Strategy adopted in December 2014. The policies contained within the Core Strategy can be given full weight.

Key Statement DS1 of the Core Strategy provides the development strategy for the borough and directs the majority of new housing development towards the Principal Settlements and also focuses some development towards the more sustainable Tier 1 settlements. Policy DMG2 assists in the interpretation of the development strategy. It states that within the less sustainable Tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas development must meet one of six considerations none of which apply to the proposed development.

Policy DMH3 sets out the circumstances in which the principle of dwelling(s) in the open countryside and AONB may be acceptable. Although the conversion of buildings is acceptable (in principle) under Policy DMH3, it does stipulate that these must be suitably located. This approach is supported by paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that '*Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances*'. However paragraph 55 of the Framework does permit new isolated homes in the countryside where development would '*re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting*'.

The development approved under planning application 3/2009/0381 and since implemented

has already resulted in the re-use of the existing barn. As such, it is not considered that the proposed development would meet any of the special circumstances set out NPPF paragraph 55 given that the building is no longer redundant nor disused.

Policy DMH4 of the Core Strategy sets out the detailed approach to the conversion of barns and other buildings to dwellings. Policy DMH4 lists six considerations that need to be satisfied for the conversion of a building to be considered acceptable in the open countryside and AONB. It also notes four requirements with which a building to be converted must comply.

It is the applicant's position that the application building, the former barn, meets the requirements of DMH4. However, of fundamental importance in the determination of the application is that the barn's conversion to residential use has already been undertaken in the form, as approved, of a residential extension to Mere Syke farmhouse. As such, in my opinion, Policy DMH4 of the Core Strategy is not relevant to the determination of this application. It is evident from the reasoned justification of Policy DMH4 that the Policy relates to the re-use of existing rural buildings which provides an important opportunity to preserve buildings that contribute to the areas character and setting. In this case, preservation of the application building, by virtue of its conversion to ancillary residential use, has already taken place and therefore one of the benefits of converting the building (i.e. safeguarding of a building that contributes to the areas character and setting) has already been realised.

The acceptance of the applicant's interpretation of Policy DMH4 and its application to this and similar schemes would result in fundamental harm to the development strategy for the Borough. It would support, in principle, the subdivision of residential properties in the open countryside and AONB that have been previously extended into adjacent agricultural buildings and could equally be applied to the sub-division of residential barn conversions. It is likely that the circumstances that have arisen at Mere Syke could be repeated at other sites across the borough and the approval of this application would set a dangerous precedent which cumulatively would lead to the perpetuation of unsustainable patterns of development.

Taking note of the above, it is thought that the relevant policies for the determination of the application are Key Statements DS1 and DS2 and policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 and that the proposal should be considered the same as any other planning application to sub-divide an existing dwelling in the open countryside and AONB.

There are no services or facilities within walking distance of the site. The nearest defined settlement in the Ribble Valley is Bolton-by-Bowland over 5km away and this is identified as a Tier 2 settlement with only limited services and facilities. The application site is close to the boundary with Craven District Council to the north east. The nearest settlements in this neighbouring district are Wigglesworth (approx. 3km away) and Long Preston (approx. 6km away). These settlements are categorised towards the lower end of the range of sustainability with Long Preston, the larger of the two settlements, recognised as offering only basic facilities.

Transport considerations are key to the delivery of sustainable development. There are no public transport facilities to serve the development and it is not considered that the proposals would result in any protection or enhancement of vitality or viability of the closest village centres by virtue of intervening distances. Occupants of the proposed dwelling would be solely reliant on the private motor vehicle to access services and facilities. There are no public transport options and no footpaths are provided along Forest Becks Brow and it is considered that the development would fail to comply with Core Strategy Policy DMG3.

Whilst the provision of one additional dwelling would result in a small contribution to housing supply this would not overcome the failure to comply with the development strategy or Key Statements DS1 and DS2 and Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 55 of the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the Core Strategy, when read as a whole, does not support the subdivision of residential planning units in such countryside locations regardless of any historic agricultural or rural use of the building, in whole or part. Support for such an approach would lead to the perpetuation of an unsustainable pattern of development in locations that do not benefit from adequate access to services or facilities. The proposal is considered contrary to Key Statements DS1, DS2 and Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Having regard to the visual impact of the development, there are no alterations proposed to the application building. Arising from the proposed subdivision of the residential planning unit is the requirement for a separate vehicular access and parking area to serve the farmhouse. The farmhouse would be served by a separate vehicular access 65m to the south which appears to have been used formerly as an agricultural field gate. A track has been laid approximately 50m across agricultural land to the south-east. The track follows the established field boundary and the track and parking area has been surfaced using an appropriate material so as to minimise its visual impact. Taking this into account, the proposals would not result in any detrimental visual harm to warrant refusal of the application although the introduction of the residential parking and track do have a minor negative impact.

In terms of the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, there would be no overlooking or loss of privacy arising from the proposed subdivision of the dwelling. The layout of the proposed new dwelling would provide 2-bed accommodation with adequate daylight and outlook from habitable rooms. The first floor would be an open plan kitchen/dining/lounge area which would be served by a number of window openings and existing roof lights. As such, the proposed unit would provide an acceptable standard of living accommodation to enable its use as a separate residential unit.

With regards to on-site parking, the proposed new residential unit would use the original vehicular access and parking area for the farmhouse. The County Highways Surveyor has raised no objection to the proposed development on highway safety grounds.

In conclusion, having regard to the above the proposal would be in direct conflict with the key sustainability principles contained within the Core Strategy and in direct conflict with the development strategy for the borough. It would result in the creation of one additional residential planning unit within the defined open countryside without sufficient justification and it is recommended that the application be refused.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning permission be refused for the following reason(s):

- |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>01</b> | The proposal is considered contrary to Key Statements DS1, DS2 and Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy in that the approval would lead to the creation of a new residential dwelling in the defined open countryside without sufficient justification, which would cause harm to the development strategy for the borough. It is further considered that the approval of this application would lead to the perpetuation of an unsustainable pattern of development in a location that does not benefit from adequate access to local services or facilities placing further reliance on the private motor-vehicle contrary to the aims and objectives of Policy DMG3 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development. |
| <b>02</b> | The proposed development would create a harmful precedent for the acceptance of other similar proposals in the defined open countryside without sufficient justification, which cumulatively would lead to the perpetuation of unsustainable patterns of development, outside the existing defined settlement which would have an adverse impact on the implementation of the Development Strategy as adopted within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, contrary to the interests of the proper planning of the area in accordance with the core principles and policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.                                                                                                                                                                       |