



DANIELS FARM, PRESTON ROAD, ALSTON, PR3 3BL

Outline application for a residential development of 3no.
dwellings following demolition of agricultural buildings

PLANNING STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2018



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/1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. PWA Planning is retained by Mr. Neil Forshaw ('the Applicant') to progress an outline planning application for the erection of 3no. dwellings at Daniels Farm, Preston Road, Alston, PR3 3BL ('the application site'). The purpose of this Planning Statement is to assess and conclude on the acceptability of the proposal in terms of relevant national and local planning policy, along with material considerations.
- 1.2. This planning application is made to Ribble Valley Borough Council (the Local Planning Authority) as an outline planning application with access applied for in detail. The application site boundary is defined on the Location Plan (ref. 3061 001) and the Indicative Block Plan, shown on the same drawing, shows how the development could be arranged on site.
- 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 furthermore that there are significant material considerations which indicate that planning permission ought to be granted. In addition, this statement will seek to demonstrate that there are no technical reasons which would hinder the grant of planning permission.
- 1.4. This Planning Statement, alongside a review of the site history, provides a description of the proposed development together with an appraisal of the planning merits of the scheme as a whole. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application package, which includes the following documents:
 - 1 App Form, certificates and notices;
 - Bat Survey
 - Drawn information:
 - Location Plan and Indicative Block Plan (ref. 3061 001)

- Existing Site Layout (ref. 3061 001)

/2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is located at Daniels Farm, Alston and comprises three agricultural buildings and associated areas of hardstanding which form part of an existing farmstead. The buildings constitute two steel framed barns with corrugated steel sheets, the largest of which lies to the west of the site. The third building to the east is a more modern former feeding shed built from concrete blocks and is currently used for storage.
- 2.2. The site lies within an existing cluster of farmstead buildings off Preston Road (B6243), 175m to the east of the site. It is bound to the west by the curtilage of the dwelling of Alston Fold Farm and agricultural buildings from The Barn are located directly to the east. The site is accessed off Preston Road, via a private agricultural access track which is shared with The Barn and Alston House Farm. The site is shown on the accompanying Existing Block Plan and an aerial image of the site within its wider setting is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Aerial image showing site location (not to scale) (Source: Google Maps)

- 2.3. Within the site's close vicinity, agricultural fields surround the site. Off Preston Road to the southeast, several houses are located on both sides of the road, the closest of which lies 130m away, as well as Francos and the White Bull restaurants. Alston Dairy lies across Preston Road 275m to the east of the site. The settlement boundary of Longridge lies 600m to the north of the site, whilst Grimsargh lies 1km to the southwest of the site. Bus stops off Preston Road 200m to the southeast provide regular bus services to Longridge and Preston City Centre via Grimsargh.
- 2.4. The site lies fully within Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is at its lowest. The site is not subject to any ecological or landscape designations and there are no active TPOs on the site. In terms of heritage designations, there are no heritage assets within the vicinity of the site and the nearest listed building is the Grade II listed Church of Our Lady located 600m to the southwest of the site. A public footpath (3-2-FP-108) runs through the site along the farm's access track and (3-2-FP-109) connects to this footpath which continues to the west. The site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area.

/3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. The application site has been the subject of a planning history search on Ribble Valley Borough Council's website. The following applications have previously been made at Daniels Farm:

- **3/1999/0381** – *Proposed Garage*. Approved with conditions 2nd July 1999
- **3/1993/0767** – *Detached Garage and Part Demolition of Existing Shippon*. Approved with conditions 8th February 1994
- **3/1992/0535** – *Relocation of agricultural worker dwelling (resubmission)*. Approved 19th July 1993
- **3/1992/0324** – *Agricultural workers dwelling*. Refused 20th August 1992
- **3/1990/0555** – *Proposed Change of Use Of Stone Agricultural Barn To One Agricultural Workers Dwelling*. Refused 22nd January 1991

3.2. As none of these planning applications mentioned above were dealt with recently, it is considered that there are no past planning applications relevant to the proposed development.

/4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. The proposed development is for the erection of 3no. dwellings following demolition of the 3no. existing agricultural buildings on the site. Although the layout is indicative at this stage, the accompanying Indicative Block Plan (ref. 3061 001) demonstrates how three 4-bed detached houses could be achieved on the site.
- 4.2. The majority of the proposals would take place on existing area of hardstanding, with one of the dwellings in roughly the same location as the large barn building and the other two on the opposite side of the access track. Although the application is submitted in outline and details of house types have not been submitted, it is the intention that the house types would respect the character of the surrounding area. The indicative plans show that two of the dwellings could contain integral garages, whilst one would have a separate double garage. The blue rectangles on the indicative plan show potential patio areas.
- 4.3. The existing access track to the farmstead would be utilised to provide access to the proposed dwellings. The access track would continue north, via a gated access to connect to the agricultural access track to the north. The point of access to Alston Fold Farm to the west of the site is to be maintained and remodelled to form a gentle radius on the corner. The Indicative Block Plan also indicates that a designated passing place is to be installed along the access track.
- 4.4. Details regarding layout, landscaping, appearance and scale will be dealt with by a subsequent Reserved Matters application.

/5 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.1. The site is considered to be of low ecological value. The accompanying bat survey assessed the buildings on the site and identified no evidence of bats roosting within the three buildings which are proposed to be demolished. There are no suitable cavities within the buildings and therefore, all three buildings have negligible bat roosting potential.
- 5.2. The report states that within the surrounding area of the barns, Himalayan Balsam is present which is to be removed. Also, the surrounding pasture is considered to offer low commuting and foraging opportunities for bats. With the majority of the development taking place on existing hardstanding, it is anticipated that there is to be no adverse ecological implications from the development. As stated within the Bat Survey report, the large gardens of the proposed dwellings have the potential to bring ecological gain to the site.

Trees

- 5.3. There are no trees which exist on the site and the trees which are located along the site boundaries will not be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposed development is not anticipated to cause any impact regarding trees.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.4. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is at its lowest. Since the site is less than 1ha in area, no Flood Risk Assessment is required. As indicated on the Indicative Block Plan, as there is to be the creation of additional hard standing, surface water would be discharged via verge soak-a-ways.

Access and Parking

- 5.5. Adequate and safe access for all proposed dwellings and would be provided off Preston Road, which is not anticipated to impact the existing farmsteads and dwellings within

the vicinity. Sufficient parking provision will be achieved on the site, with the indicative plan showing that each of the dwellings could have garages and off-road parking.

Conclusions

- 5.6. It is not considered that there are any technical considerations which would preclude the grant of planning permission for the proposed development.

/6 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

6.1. 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 considerations indicate otherwise."

6.2. The statutory Development Plan for the application site comprises the Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 (Adopted December 2014). Consideration should also be given to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Policy Guidance, emerging planning policy and any supplementary planning guidance documents or guidance considered relevant to the proposed development.

6.3. According to Ribble Valley's Local Plan Proposal Map, the site is located within the Open Countryside and Land Outside Main Settlement. These Local Plan policies (1998) have been replaced by the Core Strategy.



Figure 2: Extract from the Local Plan Proposals Map (1998)

- 6.4. The draft Housing and Economic Development DPD proposals map indicates that the site lies within the Open Countryside (Policy EN2) and within the Minerals Safeguarding Area (Policy EN3).

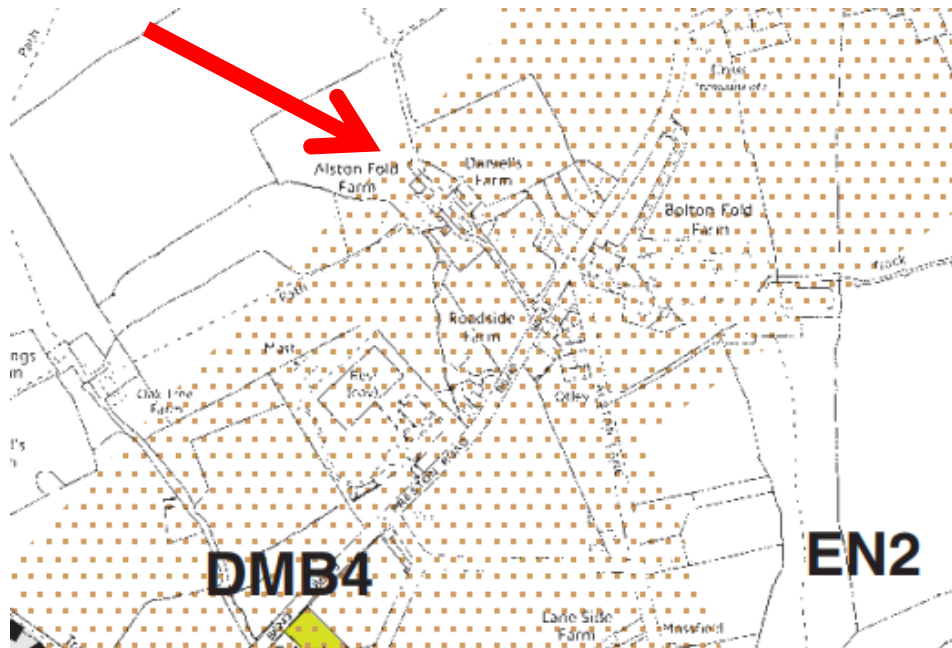


Figure 3: Draft Housing and Economic Development DPD Proposals Map

Core Strategy 2008 – 2028

- 6.5. **Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy** sets out the hierarchy for new housing development and outlines the locations where growth is to be focused. The application site or the wider Alston area is not identified as a location for growth. This policy indicates that the scale of planned housing growth will be managed to reflect existing population size and that within smaller settlements, development which has regeneration benefits, for identified local needs will be considered in all the borough's settlements. It states that through this strategy, *"development opportunities will be created for economic, social and environmental well-being and development for future generations."*

- 6.6. **Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development** reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. It states that the Council will need to develop proactive relationships with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.
- 6.7. **Key Statement EN2: Landscape** relates primarily to the Forest of Bowland AONB, however it indicates that as a principle, the Council will expect development to be in keeping with *"the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials"*.
- 6.8. **Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change** states that the Council will liaise with County Council over development within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas in determining planning applications. Due to the proposed development of 3no. dwellings on land close to other dwellings and active farmsteads, it is not anticipated that this would cause any issues regarding mineral extraction.
- 6.9. **Key Statement H1: Housing Provision** states that there is a target of at least 280 dwellings per year over the period of 2008 to 2028. The requirement for new homes will be delivered in line with the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The inspector who dealt with the recent appeal at Higher Road (ref. APP/T2350/W/17/3186969), dated 22nd May 2018 stated that Ribble Valley Borough Council can only demonstrate a 4.5-year housing supply through using a 20% buffer and highlighted a record of under-delivery within the borough. Although the Housing Land Availability Schedule (published September 2018) indicates a 5.3-year supply with a 5% buffer.
- 6.10. **Key Statement H2: Housing Balance** states that planning permission for residential development will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that it delivers a suitable mix of housing that accords with the projected future household requirements and local need across Ribble Valley.
- 6.11. **Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations** states that development should be located to minimise the need to travel and promotes the use of public transport.

- 6.12. **Key Statement DMG1: General Considerations** sets out criteria relating to design, access, amenity, environment and infrastructure which aims for the Council to deliver the vision for the area and helps to achieve quality development.
- 6.13. **Key Statement DMG2: Strategic Considerations** outlines further strategic considerations relating to development. This policy assists in the interpretation of the Development Strategy and underpins the settlement hierarchy for the purposes of delivering sustainable development. This policy states 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.
- 6.14. **Key Statement DMG3: Transport and Mobility** is related primarily towards major development proposals. It however states that all development will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with the current approved standards.
- 6.15. **Key Statement DMH3: Dwellings in Open Countryside and AONB** aims to protect the open countryside from sporadic or visually harmful development and is seen as a high priority by the Council as necessary to deliver sustainable patterns of development and overarching core strategy vision. Development in this area is limited to:
- a) *"development essential of the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need..."*
 - b) *appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings...*
 - c) *the rebuilding or replacement of existing buildings, subject to specific criteria."*

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

- 6.16. 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.

- 6.17. 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 11**) whereby 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.
- 6.18. Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 8 of the Framework as having three overarching objectives:
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
 - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
 - c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*
- 6.19. Section 5 of the NPPF sets out the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing. As **paragraph 73** identifies, local planning authorities should identify a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their adopted housing

requirement. **Paragraph 11** also states that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Therefore, applications for housing development should be looked upon favourably in the context of sustainable development. As PWA Planning consider that Ribble Valley cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply, **paragraph 11 (b)** of the NPPF is to be engaged where the tilted balance is towards sustainable housing development.

- 6.20. **Paragraph 78** indicates that to promote sustainable development within rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The NPPF supports villages to grow and thrive, especially where this would support local services. **Paragraph 79** seeks to avoid isolated new homes within the countryside.

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 6.21. The application site lies within the Open Countryside, where residential development is restricted under policies **DMH3** and **DS1** which aim to avoid isolated homes outside of settlements. Whereas the site lies outside of a defined settlement boundary, it is considered that the proposed development would not lead to completely isolated new dwellings, as there are two dwellings within close proximity as part of the existing cluster the site lies within. There are also a number of dwellings within Alston located off Preston Road within 250m of the site.
- 6.22. The applicant could seek to convert the agricultural buildings into 3no. dwellings, which would comply with **Policy DMH3**. Alternatively, the applicant could seek to convert the buildings under Class Q of the GPDO, as the agricultural buildings are in reasonable structural condition. However, it is considered that the existing structures have limited aesthetic merit and the proposed development provides an opportunity to visually enhance the site. The proposals would result in an attractive development through the clearance of land and removal of existing unattractive structures. The proposed

development also seeks to deliver high quality attractive dwellings on the site which are in keeping with the character of the residential development within the surrounding area.

- 6.23. **Paragraph 79** of the NPPF states that isolated homes within the countryside would be acceptable if the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting. As mentioned previously, it is not considered that the proposals would lead to completely isolated new homes, and furthermore the proposed development seeks to enhance the site's setting, which the NPPF supports, through the replacement of unattractive buildings. This would achieve a more attractive and high quality development than through the conversion of the buildings, which is also supported by **Policy DMG1**.
- 6.24. As PWA Planning considers that Ribble Valley cannot demonstrate a five-year supply, this reduces the weight which should be attributed to **Policy DMH3** in the decision process. The Council's Housing Land Availability Schedule (September 2018), indicates a 5% buffer is currently being used to calculate the five-year supply, even though the Inspector who dealt with the appeal at Higher Road concluded that there has been a 'persistent record of under-delivery of housing' and stated that a 20% buffer should be used. The Council's reasoning behind using their methodology is based on guidance from the Housing Delivery Test, which is set to apply from November 2018 and therefore the Council's housing supply position is far from robust. As it is considered that Ribble Valley cannot demonstrate a five-year housing supply, **paragraph 11 (b)** is to be engaged and there is to be a tilted balance towards sustainable housing development.
- 6.25. The site lies within a relatively sustainable location for residential development as there are strong public transport links and easy access to local services within Longridge and Grimsargh. The provision of new homes within this area is therefore in line with the social objective of the NPPF. **Paragraph 78** of the NPPF also supports opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. As the NPPF states, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village

may support services in a village nearby. The proposed development would also provide economic benefits through the use of local contractors through construction. The site has limited ecological or biodiversity value and the proposed development seeks to make effective use of available land through the replacement of the existing buildings. Therefore, the proposed development would meet the criteria relating to sustainable development as set out within the NPPF.

Design and Amenity

- 6.26. Although the application is submitted in outline, it is the intention that the development would deliver a scheme which would reflect the character of the surrounding area, in terms of house types and materials to be used, in accordance with **Policy DMG2** and **EN2**. As mentioned previously, the proposals seek to achieve an attractive development and will improve the visual setting of the site. The buildings on site currently have no aesthetic merit, whilst the proposals would clear the site and deliver attractive new dwellings.
- 6.27. The Indicative Block Plan also indicates how a layout could be realised on site which would be in compliance with **Policy DMG1** which seeks to achieve high-quality development that would not cause any adverse impacts regarding amenity. The layout plan demonstrates how three dwellings could be easily accommodated on the site and shows that there would be sufficient separation distances from existing and proposed dwellings and there would be appropriate curtilage areas for each dwelling.

Ecology and Trees

- 6.28. In terms of ecology, the accompanying Bat Survey report identifies that there is no evidence of bats roosting within the existing structures on site. The land surrounding the barns are also of limited ecological value, which is supported by the Bat Survey and therefore the proposals would result in negligible ecological impacts, in accordance with **Policy DMG1**. Landscaping proposals will be dealt with at the Reserved Matters stage, however it is anticipated that this would see a gain of ecological features on the

site. The proposed dwelling's gardens are also considered to bring ecological gain to the site.

Access, Traffic and Parking

- 6.29. The site will be accessed via the existing access track off Preston Road to the southeast of the site and the access arrangements to Alston Fold farmhouse and The Barn will remain unaffected. It is anticipated that the proposed access can be achieved on the site with negligible impact. Parking provision will be provided through garages and off-road parking areas, which will comply with Council standards, in line with **Policy DMG3**.
- 6.30. **Policy DM12** minimises the need for travel and promotes the use of public transport and as the site is located close to bus stops, this would encourage the use of public transport. The proposed development of three dwellings is also considered to have negligible impact on the transport network.

Summary

- 6.31. The proposed development would provide, although modest, a valuable contribution towards the Borough's housing supply, which is notable given that it is considered Ribble Valley cannot robustly demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Therefore, in line with NPPF paragraph 11, there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.32. Three new dwellings could be achieved through permitted development on the site or by applying for planning permission to convert the buildings, however the proposals seek to create a more attractive development which would improve the immediate setting of the site, providing environmental benefits. The proposed development would also provide both social and economic benefits through the delivery of new homes.
- 6.33. There are no technical considerations with regards to design, ecology or transportation which should warrant the refusal of this planning application.

6.34. In line with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF which states that where the development plan is out of date, as is the case here where a 5-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated by the Council, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. Clearly, the benefits associated with the proposed development, including its contribution to housing delivery and that a high quality development would replace an unattractive set of farm buildings, would not be outweighed by any adverse impacts associated with the development. As such, planning permission should be approved without delay.

/7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 PWA Planning is retained by Mr. Neil Forshaw to progress an outline planning application at Daniels Farm, Preston Road, Alston, PR3 3BL for a proposed development of 3no. dwellings following demolition of existing agricultural buildings.
- 7.2 The proposed development would provide a valuable contribution towards Ribble Valley Borough Council's housing supply. The scheme would improve the visual appearance of the site and would result in a sustainable housing development, which is promoted by the NPPF. There are no technical or environmental reasons which would indicate permission should not be granted.
- 7.3 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed development complies within local planning policy, the NPPF and other relevant material considerations. As such the proposed development is considered acceptable and should be approved without delay.



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