


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	WJ	Date:	9/9/19	Manager:		Date:	
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Application Ref:	3/2019/0569	 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</small>
Date Inspected:	25 th July 2019	
Officer:	LG	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		APPROVAL

Development Description:	Erection of single storey events/function building. Extension of service road and grass over hardstanding area currently used as a base for marquee.
Site Address/Location:	Foxfields Farm, Whalley Road, Hurst Green

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments received.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	Originally raised several queries in relation to parking provision and the ability of larger vehicles (coaches etc.) to access the site without causing undue harm and adverse highway safety issues. Following receipt of further information from the applicant, these matters have been addressed to the satisfaction of LCC Engineers and no objections are raised.
United Utilities:	No issues subject to the implementation of a drainage scheme which accords with the order of priority detailed within the NPPF and NPPG.
LLFA:	No comments to make based on the nature and scale of the scheme.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
No additional responses received.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy • Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development • Key Statement EN2 – Landscape • Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development • Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy • Policy DMG1 – General Considerations • Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations • Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility • Policy DME3 – Site Species Protection and Conservation • Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Rural Economy • Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development • National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2017/0957 - Change of use of agricultural land to a camping facility including an area for tents and the siting of five camping pods and a facilities building with associated vehicular access tracks and pedestrian tracks – **Approved**

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The site is located within the open countryside and in relatively close proximity to the boundary of the Forest of Bowland AONB. The surrounding area is characterised by sporadic rural development including farm complexes, private dwellings and other countryside uses.

The site in question is accessed via a private single track leading from Whalley Road which serves a number of different properties. The camping pods which were approved in 2017 are now in situ and form part of the built landscape. The proposed events building would be located to the east of these units in a clearing, surrounded by trees and mature woodland.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Permission is sought for the erection of a single storey events building to be used in association with the existing holiday let business and to host events such as weddings.

The building has a footprint of circa 68sqm and would stand 6.6m at its highest point. The external materials would comprise oak frames and cladding, large expanses of glazing (to be treated to avoid glare/reflection) and cedar shingle to the main roof. Car parking would be accommodated on an existing hardstanding at the lower end of the site, with a short new length of internal track provided to allow service vehicles to reach the building.

Principle of Development:

Key Statements EC1 & EC3 seek, in principle, to support development which strengthens the visitor economy, particularly where this would enable farm diversification and assist in sustaining the rural economy. Policy DMG2 contains a limited number of criteria in which development in the countryside will be permitted, including *“small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area”*.

Policy DMB3 provides specific guidance on development of this nature and again lists numerous qualifying criteria against which schemes will be considered:

- The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;
- The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;
- The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;
- The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;
- The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and

- The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this, adequate mitigation will be sought.

Paragraphs 83 and 84 of the NPPF confirm that development which assists in the delivery of a prosperous rural economy will be supported, including those which provide diversification opportunities and sustainable tourism/leisure facilities. However, any such development should be sensitive to its surroundings and should not have an unacceptable impact on local roads.

It is therefore clear that new development must not only be justified in terms of its need and viability, but also any impact on the landscape and infrastructure requirements.

In terms of need, the applicant has submitted a supporting business case. This details the success of the existing camping pods, which have enjoyed high occupancy rates and continue to attract bookings. To sustain this growth, the business requires additional facilities for existing visitors and to attract further income as an events venue. Weddings are currently catered for by the use of marquees on a temporary basis, however this model is not considered to be sustainable in the longer term and it is felt that this restricts potential booking opportunities.

The expansion of the offer, by way of the multi-functional building, is not only expected to result in further income for the business but also create new employment (up to 2 full time and 15 part time) and help to support local suppliers who work in the wedding/events trade. It is also suggested that the price point of the venue would offer a more affordable location for events when compared to other similar facilities in the Ribble Valley.

The Council's Planning Policy Team has reviewed the submission and are satisfied that the proposals are in accordance with the Core Strategy policies relating to business growth, tourism and the local economy.

In light of these matters and accounting for the success of the existing business at the site, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable, subject to an assessment of all the associated technical issues which will be discussed in more detail below.

Landscape Impact:

The application site slopes upwards gradually from the internal access road and plateaus as it meets the adjacent woodland. The building is to be located east of the camping pods, sitting on this higher ground.

The existing pod development has introduced built form in to the landscape and in this respect any further development would not be visually isolated. In terms of scale, the proposal seeks to deliver a space which accommodates the basic necessities (WC, bar, kitchen and function room) whilst keeping the amount of development to the minimum required. The building would clearly be much larger than the pods adjacent, but its siting would mean that it would benefit from some natural screening by way of the existing cluster of trees to the south and also being seen against the dense backdrop of the woodland to the north.

The approach to design and overall vernacular is appropriate to the landscape setting, particularly by way of the material palette which is detailed earlier in this report. Primary public vantage points would be from the network of footpaths to the south and in mid to long range views. Due to the topography and natural screening currently in place, it is not considered that the development would result in significant or unacceptable harm to the open countryside.

Parking will be located on an existing area of hardstanding which is used for the pods and in this

regard there would be no greater impact.

Conditions may be required to control elements which have not been detailed at this stage but which could result in harm if not suitably managed, such as external lighting, hours of operation etc.

Residential Amenity:

Due to the rural nature of the area, the nearest neighbouring properties are some distance away and located sporadically. In this regard any impact from the physical built form of the proposals would be negligible. The size of the building will naturally curtail the extent of any event held at the site, however, the introduction of a commercial use does have the potential to generate disturbance which may carry across the open landscape.

It is accepted that a permanent building would afford greater noise insulation than the marquees currently used and in this regard there would be some betterment. This aside it would be appropriate to control hours of operation and associated activities to ensure that comings and goings from the site do not create undue impacts in this predominantly rural location.

Trees/Ecology:

There is no indication of any tree removal being required to facilitate the proposals and owing to the characteristics of the site, ecological issues would not present a constraint to the development of this pasture land.

Highways:

Following the submission of further information regarding parking capacity and swept paths leading to the site, LCC Engineers are satisfied that the proposals would not result in significant or unacceptable highway issues.

The swept paths confirm that larger vehicles, such as coaches can access and turn within the site without difficulty. This would also aid more sustainable transport methods with groups arriving in a single trip, rather than by several individual vehicles.

The surrounding highway network is also currently served by bus services with stops located within walking distance of the site on Whalley Road. In this regard some opportunity for travel by public transport exists for future users of the site.

Drainage:

An indicative drainage strategy is provided which states that foul waters would be discharged to a new septic tank/package treatment plant, with surface waters via an existing watercourse or soakaway if possible.

A condition will be added to ensure that a detailed scheme is submitted and approved prior to installation and first use.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

With all the above taken into consideration it is recommended accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning consent be granted.