



# The Newdrop Inn Green Moor Lane Knowle Green Preston

Full Planning Application for the Conversion of Public House to 5 no.  
Dwellings

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## PLANNING STATEMENT

February 2020

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## **/1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. PWA Planning is retained by John and Sue Barr ('the applicant') to progress a full planning application for the conversion of a public house to 5 no. dwellings ('proposed development') at The Newdrop Inn, Green Moor Lane, Knowle Green, Preston, PR3 2XE ('application site'). The purpose of this Planning Statement is to conclude on the acceptability of the proposal in terms of relevant national and local planning policy, along with any material or technical considerations.
- 1.2. The planning application is made to the Ribble Valley Borough Council ('the Local Planning Authority') as a full planning application and relates to the red edge application site boundary defined on the submitted Location Plan (Drawing No. 2991\_025).
- 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 statement should be read alongside the submitted application package which includes the following documents:
  - 1 APP form, relevant certificates and notices;
  - Planning statement (this document);
  - Drawn information: -
    - o Drawing No. 2991\_002 Existing Elevations
    - o Drawing No. 2991\_003 Existing Elevations

- Drawing No. 2991\_010 Existing Lower Ground Floor
- Drawing No. 2991\_011 Existing Ground Floor
- Drawing No. 2991\_012 Existing First Floor and Roof
- Drawing No. 2991\_020 Proposed Lower Ground Floor
- Drawing No. 2991\_021 Proposed Ground Floor
- Drawing No. 2991\_022 Proposed Upper Floor
- Drawing No. 2991\_023 Proposed Elevations
- Drawing No. 2991\_024 Proposed Elevations
- Drawing No. 2991\_025 Proposed Site Plan and Location Plan
- Drawing No. 2991\_026 Existing Site Plan
- Drawing No. P.1292.20.01 Tree Survey and Removal Plan
- Drawing No. P.1292.20.02 Tree Protection Plan
- Ecology Survey;
- Financial Information (**CONFIDENTIAL – NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**);
- Heritage Statement.

## **/2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1. The application site relates to a public house, known as The Newdrop Inn and associated buildings located off Higher Road. The Newdrop Inn has been owned and run by the applicant since 1982. Despite success in the past, in recent years the business has been less successful and was advertised by the client for market sale as a going concern between 2015 and 2018. No market interest was however shown for the site and with profits falling the applicant feels they have no choice but to seek an alternative use for the site. The application therefore seeks to convert The Newdrop Inn into 5 no. residential dwellings.
- 2.2. The public house as existing includes bars, a restaurant, beer cellar, storage areas and a number of guest bedrooms spread over three floors. Attached to the public house is managers accommodation split over two floors. Just off the public house lies a dwelling occupied by the applicant and an outbuilding utilised for storage. Externally, the site includes a carpark for visitors to The Newdrop Inn to the east and an area of mown grassland to the south.
- 2.3. The site lies within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). The site's wider setting is characterised by agricultural land to all sides. A barn is located directly adjacent to the west of the site. The nearest settlement of Longridge lies approximately 3.5km to the south west.
- 2.4. A Location Plan showing the site within its wider setting is provided within the supporting documents (Drawing No. 2991\_025). The aerial image in Figure 1 below illustrates the site within its local setting.





*Figure 1: Aerial Image Showing the location of the site, including barn to the west (now constructed) (not to scale) (Source: Google Earth)*

- 2.5. There are no cultural heritage designations or ecological constraints associated with the site itself or its immediate vicinity. The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is at its lowest.

## **/3 PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1. The application site and its immediate surroundings have been subject to a planning history search on Ribble Valley Borough Council's planning register. The following planning applications have been noted on the site itself:

- **Application ref. 3/2018/1138** *Removal of condition 3 from planning permission 3/2002/0962 requiring the property to be utilised for holiday let purposes or as an annexe to the public house. Approved 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019.*
- **Application ref. 3/2017/1055** *Application for Lawful Development Certificate for use of the property as a dwelling on the basis that it has been occupied as a dwelling in breach of condition 3 of planning permission 3/2002/0962 for more than ten years. Approved 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017.*
- **Application ref. 3/2002/0962** *CREATE/RELOCATE MANAGERS ACCOMODATION WITHIN EXISTING A3 OPERATIONAL SITE. Approved 8<sup>th</sup> January 2003.*

3.2. Whilst other applications exist on the site itself, none of these are deemed relevant to the proposal at hand.



## **/4 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE**

- 4.1 Pre-application advice was obtained from Ribble Valley Borough Council in June 2017 for the change of use from a public house to five dwellings, amenity space and parking area under pre-application ref. RV/2017/ENQ/00031.
- 4.2 Whilst it is not necessary to repeat all the Council's advice here, comments were provided in the pre-application over the location of the site within the Open Countryside and the financial information presented. In response to this further financial and marketing information has been provided to illustrate the significant efforts the applicant has gone to in their attempts to sell the business as a going concern or for an alternative use with little market interest.
- 4.3 Comments were also provided over the elements of the design of the proposal put forward in the initial sketches produced for the pre-application submission. This submission includes a new set of plans which address these concerns and provides a high-quality scheme which respects the existing character of the building. The response raised further comments over the buildings historic interest and value. Although the supporting Heritage Statement confirms the building is of little historic interest, the scheme has been designed to respect the historic fabric and features of the site.
- 4.4 The response goes on to detail the need for further technical reports and submission requirements. These matters have subsequently been considered through the preparation of supporting surveys, reports and plans as part of this planning submission.

## **/5 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1 The proposed development seeks to convert the existing public house and associated managers accommodation into 5 no. dwellings. Each dwelling benefits from large living spaces ideal for family living. Detailed design proposals and layouts for each property are provided in the supporting planning drawings.
- 5.2 Dwelling no. 1 includes accommodation split over two levels. The ground floor includes an open plan kitchen/dining/living area, utility room and study. The first floor includes three double bedrooms, with the master bedroom including an en-suite and a further family bathroom.
- 5.3 Dwelling no. 2 includes accommodation split over three levels. The lower ground floor includes 4 double bedrooms, two of which have en-suite bathrooms and a further family bathroom. The ground floor includes an open plan kitchen/dining/living area, utility room and study. The first floor houses the master bedroom including an en-suite and dressing room.
- 5.4 Dwelling no. 3 includes accommodation split over two levels. The lower ground floor includes 4 double bedrooms, one of which has an en-suite and a further family bathroom. The ground floor has an open plan kitchen/dining/living area, utility room and WC.
- 5.5 Dwelling no. 4 includes accommodation split over two levels. The lower ground floor includes a garage, double bedrooms, family bathroom, WC and large master bedroom with an en-suite. The upper ground floor includes an open plan kitchen/dining/living area, utility room and double bedroom with en-suite. The lounge also benefits from a balcony off the south elevation, with the other rooms facing the south elevation having new full length glass windows. A full length window is also present above the garage door on the western elevation.

- 5.6 Dwelling no. 5 relates to the conversion of the existing manager's accommodation into a dwelling house split over two levels. The ground floor configuration will remain consistent with the existing configuration. The first floor will be reconfigured to provide a master bedroom with en-suite, two further double bedrooms and a bathroom.
- 5.7 No internal or external changes are proposed to the dwelling listed as no.6 in the supporting plans which is detached from the public house but included within the overall site. The building is already a separate dwelling (see above planning history).
- 5.8 The design of the proposed development aims to create a high-quality modern scheme which enhances the quality of the area whilst respecting the historic fabric of the longstanding public house. The existing windows are to be replaced with a mix of timber and aluminium coated counterparts. The upper first floor bay windows are to be replaced with powder coated box to oriel windows. A new glass bay to the south elevation with a balcony is proposed to provide views of the local area. A section of timber cladding is also proposed to part of the western elevation. A limited number of new openings are to be incorporated into the design to allow for additional windows and doorways. No external design changes are proposed to dwelling nos. 5 and 6 (dwelling no. 6 is already a dwelling).
- 5.9 Each of the properties will benefit from amenity space, comprising a mix of the existing stone setts and grass to the east and south of the existing built form. A new landscaping belt with trees and shrub is also proposed to the east of the site.
- 5.10 Primary access to the site will continue to be taken from Higher Road to the north of the site which has provided a safe and convenient access to the site for many years to the existing carpark. The carpark itself is to be significantly reduced in size from its current surface coverage, with the eastern element of the carpark returned to open agricultural grassland. The remaining carpark will provide spaces for the dwellings in accordance with the LPA's carparking standards. A further access point to the south of

the site is proposed for dwelling no. 4 which includes two parking spaces and a turning area.

## **/6 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The planning application is supported by the necessary technical reports to demonstrate that the proposed development is capable of being implemented without significant adverse impacts arising from site constraints. These impacts are considered below.

### **Ecology**

- 6.2 An ecological survey, desktop survey and ecological impact assessment were carried out for the site. It was found there is virtually no semi-natural habitat on the development site, with no important habitats or vegetation occurring within or adjacent to the site which would be impacted by the proposal. There were no records or any protected or important species occurring on or adjacent to the site. The report therefore concluded with adequate mitigation, there will be no negative ecological impact from the proposed development.

### **Financial Report**

- 6.3 A Financial Report has been prepared as part of the application for The Newdrop Inn from the years ending 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 including notes on the financial performance of the business over this period.
- 6.4 In summary, the report details the significant falls in the turnover and profit of the business in recent years. The applicant has also had to introduce significant amounts of their own capital into the business in order to keep the business trading. This resource has now been exhausted and the applicant can no longer continue injecting money into the business for it to remain a going concern.
- 6.5 The report also details reasons for the businesses lack of sale when marketed between 2015 and 2018. These include managerial costs which would be expected in similar operations, the declining profits, the lack of cash within the business, staffing problems

given its location and competition within the catering industry in the Ribble Valley. It is therefore concluded The Newdrop Inn cannot continue in its current form with the profits made in recent years insufficient to provide a reasonable income for the owners and repay loans which have been necessary to repay the loan taken to keep the business going.

- 6.6 A copy of the marketing information is contained in Appendix A.

### **Heritage Statement**

- 6.7 The planning application site is considered a non-designated heritage asset and a Heritage Statement has been undertaken in support of the planning submission. The statement concludes that the planned closure of The Newdrop Inn represents the end of an era, brought about by unavoidable commercial pressures. The proposed conversion of the building will, however, sustain and enhance the landmark status of the building/site, and therein conserve some of the Newdrop's historic interest in a manner that also greatly improves its architectural quality.
- 6.8 Given that the building retains little by way of appreciable heritage significance, the proposals have only marginal relevance to the conservation of built heritage, but what relevance they do have has been acknowledged and respected by the planned conversion of the site. Therein the provisions of planning law and guidance as they relate to conservation of the historic built environment have been satisfied in a manner that avoids unnecessary harm and promises notable benefits, most specifically related to future sustainable use and visual appearance.

### **Tree Survey**

- 6.9 A tree survey and tree removal plan have been undertaken for the site. The survey found low tree cover on the site, with the existing trees of low and limited importance. A small number of trees and areas of hedging are to be removed as part of the scheme.

All trees to be removed however are to be accommodated within the development proposals, with new planting at the landscaping stage in areas of open space.



## 17 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 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."*

7.2 In this instance, the Development Plan for the area comprises of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014). Key planning policy documents that comprise 'material considerations' include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

7.3 As can be seen from the below extract from the Ribble Valley Local Plan Proposals Map (2016) provided at Figure 2, the site is designated as Landscape (Key Statement EN2) given its location in the Forest of Bowland AONB.

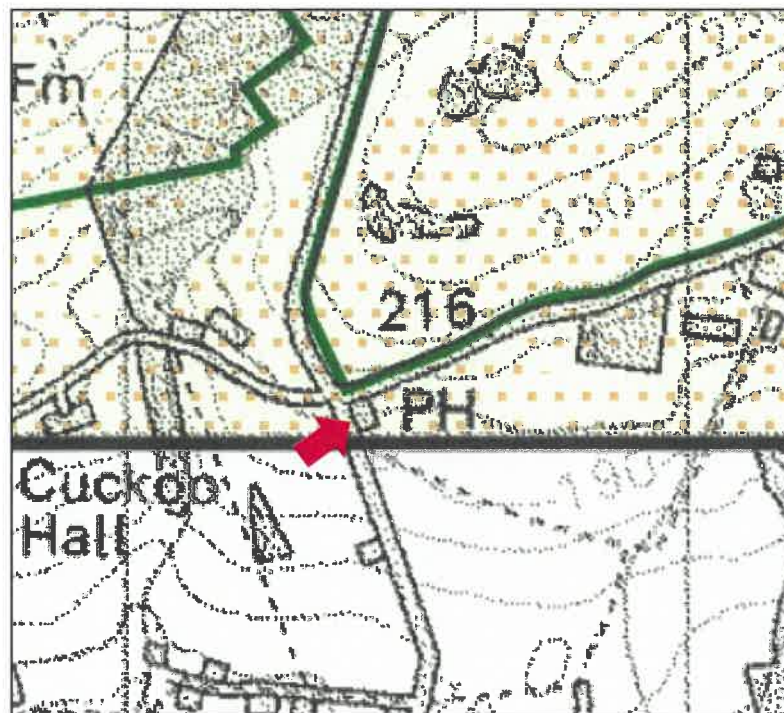


Figure 2: Ribble Valley Local Plan Proposals Map (2016)

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

7.4 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy sets out the development strategy for the Borough for the period up to 2028. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

- Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy;
- Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development;
- Key Statement EN2: Landscape;
- Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate;
- Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Key Statement H1: Housing Provision;
- 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 DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets;
- Policy DME6: Water Management;
- Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside;
- Policy DMH4: The Conversion of Barns and Other Buildings to Dwellings;
- Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy.

7.5 **Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy** seeks to outline briefly the locations in which growth will be focused. The statement refers to strategic sites already allocated for development and Tier 1 and 2 settlements as the primary location for housing. In allocating development, the Council will have regard to the AONB, Green

Belt and similar designations when establishing the scale, extent and form of development to be allocated under this strategy.

- 7.6 **Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development** looks to mirror Paragraph 11 of the NPPF which details the sustainable development principle that seeks to guide both authorities and developers. Further to that it places emphasis on the Council to develop proactive relationships with applicants to ensure that where possible applications are approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.7 **Key Statement EN2: Landscape** focuses on protection of the Forest of Bowland AONB through ensuring development contributes to the conservation of the area by enhancing and protecting the landscape and character. 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.
- 7.8 **Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change** seeks to ensure developments meet an appropriate sustainable design and construction standard in order to address the causes and consequences of climate change. The Council will assess applications against the current Code of Sustainable Homes (though this has now been revoked), Lifetime Homes and Buildings for Life and BREEAM standards, or any subsequent nationally recognised standards.
- 7.9 **Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** outlines how the Council will conserve and enhance the area's biodiversity and geodiversity and to avoid the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats. Negative impacts on biodiversity through development proposals should be avoided.
- 7.10 **Key Statement H1: Housing Provision** states land for residential development will be made available to deliver 5,600 dwellings, estimated at an average annual completion target of at least 280 dwellings per year over the period 2008 to 2028 in accordance with baseline information.

- 7.11 **Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development** details where employment development will be focused and supported. Proposals that result in the loss of existing employment sites to other forms of development will need to demonstrate there will be no adverse impact upon the local economy.
- 7.12 **Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy** aims to encourage proposals which strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings.
- 7.13 **Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations** states new development should be located to minimise the need to travel. It should incorporate access by foot and cycle and have convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car.
- 7.14 **Policy DMG1: General Considerations** assists in ensuring that development proposals are in line with numerous broad considerations 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 and Other.
- 7.15 **Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations** assists in the interpretation of the Development Strategy and underpins the settlement hierarchy for the purposes of delivering sustainable development. The policy also 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. In protecting the AONB the most important consideration is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area. New development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings and be in keeping with the character of the landscape.

- 7.16 **Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility** details how weight will be attached to the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure moving to and from the development. Developments will also be required to provide adequate car parking in line with currently approved standards.
- 7.17 **Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands** details that there will be a presumption against the clearance of broad-leaved woodland for development purposes. Where applications are likely to have a substantial effect on tree cover, the Borough Council will require detailed arboricultural survey information and tree constraint plans.
- 7.18 **Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection** states the proposals which induce significant harm to important landscape or landscape features. 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)."*
- 7.19 **Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets** states support will not be given for alterations to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest which would cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset. Proposals involving the loss of important historic fabric from listed buildings will also not be supported.

7.20 **Policy DME6: Water Management** states developments will not be permitted where proposals would lead to an unacceptable risk of flooding. Applications should include details of surface water drainage.

7.21 **Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside** outlines that residential development within the open countryside will be limited to the following:

1. *"Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers' dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied;*
2. *The appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction;*
3. *The rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings subject to the following criteria:*
  - *The residential use of the property should not have been abandoned;*
  - *There being no adverse impact on the landscape in relation to the new dwelling;*
  - *The need to extend an existing curtilage."*

7.22 **Policy DMH4: The Conversion of Barns and Other Buildings to Dwellings** states planning permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where:

1. *The building is not isolated in the landscape, i.e. it is within a defined settlement or forms part of an already group of buildings, and*
2. *There need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure, and*

- 3. There would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests, and*
- 4. There would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy, and*
- 5. The proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.*
- 6. That any existing nature conservation aspects of the existing structure are properly surveyed and where judged to be significant preserved or, if this is not possible, then any loss adequately mitigated.*

*The building to be converted must:*

- 1. Be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alternation, which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building. the council will require a structural survey to be submitted with all planning application of this nature. this should include plans of any rebuilding that is proposed;*
- 2. Be of a sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would harm the character or appearance of he building, and*
- 3. The character of the building and its materials are appropriate to its surroundings and the building and its materials are worthy of retention because of its intrinsic interest or potential or its contribution to its setting, and*
- 4. The building has a genuine history of use for agriculture or another rural enterprise.*

**7.23 Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy** states proposals for the development, redevelopment or conversion of sites with employment generating potential in the plan area for alternative uses will be assessed with regard to the following criteria:

- 1. The provisions of policy DMG1, and*



2. *The compatibility of the proposal with other plan policies of the LDF, and*
3. *The environmental benefits to be gained by the community, and*
4. *The economic and social impact caused by loss of employment opportunities to the borough, and*
5. *Any attempts that have been made to secure an alternative employment generating use for the site (must be supported by evidence (such as property agents details including periods of marketing and response) that the property/business has been marketed for business use for a minimum period of six months or information that demonstrates to the council's satisfaction that the current use is not viable for employment purposes.)*

## **Material Considerations**

### ***National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)***

- 7.24 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.
- 7.25 The Framework sets out 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.
- 7.26 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.*

7.27 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with good design, and states this is a key aspect of sustainable development. Decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or tastes and should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is however proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

7.28 Section 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Local planning authorities are instructed to consider the wider social, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

### ***Public House Viability Test (2014)*<sup>1</sup>**

7.29 Whilst not specifically engrossed by the Local Plan, the aforementioned document compiled by CAMRA in 2014 is referenced by other authorities when considering planning applications for conversion of pubs. The document sets out a set of questions

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<sup>1</sup> <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/www1-camra/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/08155247/Public-House-Viability-Test-v.2015.pdf>

to test the viability of the pub. In almost all instances, the answers of the questions specific to Newdrop Inn would imply that the pub is a pub in which CAMRA would be unlikely to object to its conversion, and therefore its long-term viability as a pub is clearly not achievable.

## **/8 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT**

### **Principle of Development**

- 8.1 The application site is located in the Open Countryside where in accordance with Key Statement DS2, development is not to be generally focused. Policy DMH3 however allows for the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. The proposed development of The Newdrop Inn and associated buildings is considered to comply with the thrust of this policy given the development represents the conversion of an existing building which is long established within its surroundings. Furthermore, this application offers a golden opportunity to secure the building with a long-term use before it falls into disrepair, as in the case of the Moorcock Inn near Waddington. In this respect, the proposals have been designed to enhance the existing built form whilst respecting the historic fabric of the building. This is discussed further in the design section of this statement.
- 8.2 The proposed development is located within the Forest of Bowland AONB covered by Key Statement EN2 where development is expected to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. The proposals at hand is located within the existing public house building, with the changes proposed to the building in keeping with the character of the area and required to bring the site back into a viable use. The proposal seeks to improve both the setting of the property, but also ensure it continues to contribute to the AONB. Collectively it is considered the proposal can find support through Key Statement EN2.
- 8.3 The proposed development is considered to comply with the list of requirements in Policy DMH4 which relates specifically to the conversion of existing buildings to dwellings. Firstly, in terms of point (1) the proposed development is not considered to be isolated in the landscape. The Newdrop Inn sits within an existing cluster of buildings, including the pub itself, the adjoining manager's accommodation, the applicants house, outbuilding and barn directly to the west. All these buildings in the

cluster are longstanding within the existing landscape and form an important part of the character of the area.

- 8.4 In terms of point (2) no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure will be required as part of the development given the existing facilities which have served the existing public house and properties on the site.
- 8.5 On point (3) the proposals have been carefully considered as not to impact on the landscape qualities of the area, with the proposal considered to lessen the impact on the landscape over the current arrangements on site. The current large carpark will be reduced in size and excess land returned to the landscape via reinstating the area to agricultural land.
- 8.6 In terms of point (4) the supporting marketing and financial information demonstrates that the business is no longer viable as a going concern and an employment generator for the area. This matter is discussed further later in the statement under Policy DMB1.
- 8.7 Point (5) relates to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. The proposals involve the conversion of the building in a sympathetic manner as to respect its historical fabric and remain in keeping with the character of the AONB. The aforementioned reduction in hardstanding associated with the existing use will reduce the developments impact on the AONB and enhance the character of the area.
- 8.8 In terms of Point (6) the supporting bat survey confirms there are no bat concerns which will need to be preserved or lost during the development. The proposed development therefore has no impact on nature conservation.
- 8.9 Policy DMH4 goes onto list the points in which buildings are considered suitable for conversion. The proposed development is deemed structurally sound and capable of conversion given its longstanding use as a public house, with only minor modifications needed to enable conversion to dwellings without impacting on the character and

appearance of the building. The building is of an appropriate size to accommodate the 5 no. dwellings proposed, with the supporting plans demonstrating generous living space in all the properties without the need for an extension to the building. The character of the building is to be maintained through conversion, with the additional materials chosen to improve the quality of finish over current development whilst respecting its historic fabric. The building has been in use as a public house for many years and should be considered a longstanding rural enterprise.

- 8.10 Considering Policy DMH4 in the round, the proposed development is considered fully compliant with the requirements of the policy, constituting a building which is suitable for conversion to dwellings.
- 8.11 A further key consideration is the protection of the rural economy within the Borough, with Key Statements EC1 and EC3 associated with the protection of employment sites and the visitor economy. Given the site's existing use as a public house these policies are considered relevant to the proposal at hand. Policy DMB1 however details where the conversion of sites with employment generating potential, such as this, will be supported subject to meeting a set of criteria.
- 8.12 The proposal is considered to comply with the listed criteria of Policy DMB1, with the development meeting points (1) and (2) in that it meets the various provisions of Policy DMG1 and the Local Development Framework more widely.
- 8.13 Point (5) of Policy DMB1 states that attempts must be made to secure an alternative employment generating use for the site supported by evidence of the business having been marketed for a minimum of six months or provide evidence that the current use is no longer viable. In terms of marketing for the site, extensive marketing has taken place over several years in order to secure a new owner for the site either to continue the existing use as a public house or an alternative employment generating use.
- 8.14 The Newdrop Inn was first marketed in September 2015 by Christie & Co who specialise in marketing businesses including pubs and restaurants. Despite the sales price being

reduced over the marketing period, little interest was shown in the site and the sales agreement was ended in December 2017. The site was then marketed with GVA from January 2018 with a further reduction in price, a commercial property agent, but again there was little market interest and the agreement was ended in June 2018. John Lavelle was instructed in May 2018 to undertake work on possible viable uses and potential buyers, but no interested parties were found. The applicant themselves contacted a range of businesses with an interest in public houses/restaurants, including the Seafood Company, Individual Inns, Ribble Valley Inns and James Places, but no buyer was found.

- 8.15 The above evidence therefore demonstrates the site has been robustly marketed for period greater than 6 months, with the client providing evidence of an extensive search for a buyer for the business. The documentation associated with the marketing is provided in Appendix A. The lack of interest in the site for business purposes means the alternative residential use put forward should be viewed as key to sustaining the long-term future of the site.
- 8.16 The second element of point (5) relates to the applicant presenting information which demonstrates the site is not viable for employment purposes. Included in this submission is a Financial Report which provides detailed financial information and commentary on how the business is no longer viable as a going concern, which is discussed in further detail within the Technical Considerations chapter of this statement. It is however important to re-emphasise the client has had to bring significant amounts of their own financial resources into the business in order for it to remain a going concern in recent years, but turnover and profits have continued to fall. The efforts of the client to sell the business as a going concern have been unsuccessful as demonstrated by the above marketing information and the client can no longer sustain the business for its current use with their financial resources exhausted. With the business no longer financially viable it is not deemed to be viable for employment purposes. Furthermore, in considering the CAMRA viability test, it is evident that the future viability of the building as a pub is clearly unlikely.



- 8.17 In addition to the above, the Borough is considered to have an over-provision of employment land, meaning the loss of potential alternative economic uses for the site would not give rise to unacceptable economic impacts. The HED DPD includes the allocation of 4ha of employment land, which constitutes an over provision of 1.6ha against Core Strategy figures. Submitted as part of this application is an opinion from Eckersley (Appendix B). The advice relates to land to the south of Blackburn Road, Longridge, but considered the nature of the market in general terms and the overall quantum of approved employment land against this demand which is deemed relevant to the proposal at hand, and importantly the location of employment land to the east of Longridge (like this application) away from the main artery routes, particularly relating to the proximity to the motorway. This is further supported by the Halls Arms Business Centre, located approximately 900m to the south of the site which occupies a former public house and is now utilised as office space. The site is not at capacity and still advertising office space. Given the site is located in a countryside location close to the applicants site this further illustrates the low demand for office space in the area. It is therefore considered the development of site for nonemployment uses would not have any adverse material impacts on the overall supply of employment land and hence would not give rise to unacceptable economic impacts.
- 8.18 In relation to the NPPF, the proposal accords with the principles of sustainable development. In terms of economic benefits, the construction of the proposal would offer the opportunity to provide support for existing businesses and suppliers in the area during construction, contributing to the local economy.
- 8.19 The social aspect of sustainability is met, in that the proposal will result in the creation of valuable family homes within the Borough. The development will also help combat climate change through incorporating high standards of energy efficiency.
- 8.20 Turning to the environmental aspect of sustainability, the site is not subject to any statutory ecological designations, or protected species. The proposal will not have a negative ecological impact on the site or its surrounding area. Any trees lost will be replanted elsewhere on the application site and a significant area of hardstanding to

the east of the site will be returned to open grassland. It is not within an area at risk of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency.

- 8.21 Considering all these elements as a whole, the proposal is thought to constitute sustainable development as sought by the NPPF. Taking collectively, these elements help meet the tests set by parts 3 and 4 of the aforementioned policy. Notably, given the limited employment at the site, the matter relating to sourcing staff (see summary within Financial Report) and the lack of interest from other employment related uses during the marketing exercise the loss of employment opportunities to the borough will be limited, and the associated economic and social impact negligible. The principle of the development can therefore be supported.

## **Design and Technical Considerations**

### ***Design***

- 8.22 The supporting suite of planning drawings accompanying the application illustrate the appearance of the proposed development. The design of the development has been carefully considered to provide a high-quality finish to the elevations whilst respecting its historic fabric. No extensions are proposed to the current built form, with the existing buildings long established within the landscape setting of the Forest of Bowland AONB. Materials have been chosen which compliment the building and landscapes existing character, such as timber replacement windows and doors. Some modern features are proposed, such as box oriel windows and a glass balcony to replace aging bay windows. The building is of an appropriate size for 5 no. dwellings whilst respecting the amenity of each property. The applicant is committed to ensuring energy efficiency and appropriate home standards are incorporated within the scheme. Taking into account the above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the design principles of Policy DMG1 and Key Statement EN2.
- 8.23 In terms of landscaping, each property includes appropriate levels of amenity space made up of the existing stone setts and grass. The wider landscaping aims to enhance

the landscape character of the AONB, with much of the existing hardstanding from the carpark returned to open grassland. The landscaping belt and new hedgerow to the east of the site will also soften the developments impact on the wider landscape character of the AONB.

### ***Highways***

- 8.24 The proposal utilises the existing access to the north of the site off Higher Road as the primary access point, serving the carpark for 4 of the proposed dwellings. This access point has provided safe and convenient access to the site for many years and is considered appropriate for the proposed development. A second access point is proposed to the south of the site for dwelling no. 4. The walls and landscaping bordering this access point will be no higher than 90cm in order to provide appropriate visibility splays. The vehicle movements to and from the site are predicted to be lower than the site's current use, lessening the impact on the surrounding highways network from the current use as a public house. Carparking is to be provided in accordance with standards appropriate to the number of bedrooms in each property. The proposals are therefore considered to comply fully with highway requirements of Policy DMG1.

### ***Heritage***

- 8.25 The supporting Heritage Statement demonstrates the site has low historic value and is not designated as a listed building in accordance with Historic England's listed building search. The proposal at hand has been designed to protect the buildings historic features and maintain the existing character of the building, with external changes to the building kept to a minimum. The proposals are therefore deemed to be in full accordance with Core Strategy Policy DME4.

### ***Flood Risk***

- 8.26 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding is at its lowest. Given it is a conversion, the proposal intends to connect to the existing drainage system

associated with the public house and dwellings on site. The proposals are therefore deemed to accord with Core Strategy Policy DME6.

### ***Ecology***

- 8.27 The proposed development is deemed to have minimal impact on biodiversity, with the site having limited ecological value. The planting of trees and reinstatement of areas of current areas of hardstanding to open grassland are likely to bring improvements to the site's biodiversity and ecological value. The proposals are therefore deemed to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EN4.

### **The Planning Balance / Summary**

- 8.28 Overall, it is considered the proposed development is consistent with both the Development Plan and NPPF. The conversion of the pub to residential meets the tests set by the aforementioned policies within the Development Plan. Notably from the supporting information it is evident that extensive marketing has been undertaken, with no market interest registered. The financial information provided demonstrates the falling turnover of the business, along with the sums of the money put back into the business by the applicants over the past years of their ownership. The conversion of the pub to residential is the remaining viable option for the building and would not lead to a loss of employment opportunities within the Borough. Rather, the sensitive design would lead to improvements in the aesthetic quality of the building, lessen the impact on the AONB and deliver a development that would have less impact environmentally than the existing business (or alternative employment or commercial uses), by virtue of reduced trip rates associated with the proposed development versus the existing use along with improvements in energy standards by virtue of buildings regulations and the relevant planning policy requirements. The principle of the development can therefore be supported.
- 8.29 There are no technical considerations which are deemed to restrict development of the site, with the site being of low ecological value and lying within Flood Zone 1. The

existing access to the site is suitable to provide safe access to the development and appropriate levels of carparking are provided for the proposals.

## **9.9 CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a requirement upon Authorities when determining planning applications to do so in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 9.2 This statement has set out the planning policy relevant to the determination of the planning application and has assessed the proposed scheme in this context. Section 7 of the statement discusses the planning policy context, and it is concluded that the proposed development is in overall compliance with the relevant policies of the plan.
- 9.3 The scheme is supported by the necessary technical information and other evidence which 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.
- 9.4 For the reasons identified within this statement, it is considered that planning permission for the proposed development should be granted and the application is commended to the authority.