

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

REUSE OF PART OF FORMER FARM SITE TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT
SPACE AT ROOT FARM BUILDINGS, DUNSOP BRIDGE

DUCHY OF LANCASTER





Rural Solutions

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

LOCATION

ROOT FARM BUILDINGS, DUNSOP BRIDGE

PROPOSAL

REUSE OF PART OF FORMER FARM SITE TO CREATE
EMPLOYMENT SPACE

APPLICANT

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

ISSUE DATE

15/09/2021

PREPARED BY

JAMES ELLIS
MRTPI, PLANNING DIRECTOR

CANALSIDE HOUSE
BREWERY LANE
SKIPTON
NORTH YORKSHIRE
BD23 1DR

01756 797501
INFO@RURALSOLUTIONS.CO.UK
WWW.RURALSOLUTIONS.CO.UK
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND NO. 6839914
VAT REGISTRATION NO. 972 8082 90

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I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1: Rural Solutions has prepared this planning statement to accompany an application for the reuse of part of a former farm site to create employment space at Root Farm Buildings, Dunsop Bridge in the Forest of Bowland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.2: The site is in the long-term ownership of the applicant, The Duchy of Lancaster. More details on the applicant are provided later in this statement.
- 1.3: Section two of this statement provides further details of the site, designations covering the site and its planning history.
- 1.4: The application has been brought forward following an extensive pre-application engagement, with consultation undertaken with the community, Ribble Valley Borough Council and the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Team. Details are provided at section three of this statement.
- 1.5: At section four details are provided of the proposed development at the site and the local benefits that will arise from it.
- 1.6: Section five includes an assessment of the heritage of the site and the proposed development.
- 1.7: Section six includes an assessment of the extent to which the proposed development complies with the policy requirements of the development plan for Ribble Valley and policy guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as the Management Plan for the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 1.8: Conclusions to the statement are provided at section seven.
- 1.9: The application is made up of the following documents, in addition to this planning statement:
- Full plans package (Wright Design Partnership)
 - Ecology report (Bombus Ecology)
 - Highways statement (PSA Design)

Applicant and Development Context

- 1.10: The applicant for development is The Duchy of Lancaster. Founded in the 13th century, The Duchy of Lancaster is a unique portfolio of land, property and assets held in trust for the Sovereign in His or Her role as Duke of Lancaster. The site is on the Duchy of Lancaster's Whitewell Estate which forms part of over 18,000 hectares of land owned by the Duchy across England and Wales.

- I.11: As a historic landowner the Duchy of Lancaster is the custodian of many areas of outstanding natural beauty and historic structures in rural areas. Its purpose is to protect and preserve these historic assets and, as such, it is able to take a more holistic approach to development than many other commercial developers. The Duchy's overriding objective is to enhance the sustainability and quality of its historic estates for the benefit of the communities living there, both now and for future generations.
- I.12: The Whitewell Estate is one of the Duchy of Lancaster's flagship rural estates, consisting of around 2,400 hectares of what was the traditional Lordship of Bowland. Today the Estate combines sustainable upland farming with tourism related amenity and a vibrant local community. The Duchy provides 55 homes to residential tenants on the Whitewell Estate. In addition, it supports nine main farm tenancies (four dairy herds and other enterprises including beef and sheep), 468 acres of woodland, 33 commercial and miscellaneous lettings including the multi-award-winning Inn at Whitewell, a village shop, post office, café, two commercial office units and a holiday cottage. This all contributes to employment in the local area, providing facilities to support local businesses and the livelihood of a significant number of people.
- I.13: There has been significant investment by the Duchy in the Whitewell Estate over the past ten years. This has focused primarily on repairing and improving the standard of its existing properties for residents and local businesses. The Duchy's commitment and financial support to B4RN communication infrastructure will bring super high-speed internet across to Dunsop Village and across the Estate.
- I.14: The Duchy is acutely aware of the issues affecting rural life, such as lack of local employment, transport and connectivity to services and other built environments as well as a lack of opportunities for young people. Their aim is to try and address some of these issues by investing in sustainable developments supported by the local communities, where possible, that will build on the social wellbeing and contribute to improving the local economy for residents.
- I.15: The overarching aim is to provide an environment that encourages slow, sustainable growth in the area that benefits the local community without disrupting the fine equilibrium, balance and charm of Dunsop Bridge.
- I.16: The Duchy of Lancaster has consulted with the community on its draft plans for the site, as confirmed in section three of this statement.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND PLANNING HISTORY

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1: The planning application relates to a large part of the Root Farm site to the south of Dunsop Bridge.
- 2.2: The site is situated c.150-200m from Dunsop Bridge and is within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the implications of which are assessed throughout this report.
- 2.3: Other than its location within the AONB, the site is not covered by any planning designations. The site is not within the flood zones surrounding the River Dunsop to the north and Langden Brook to the west.

History and Current Uses

- 2.4: A heritage assessment of the site is included in section five of this statement.
- 2.5: However, in terms of the evolution of the farm, it notes that the earliest map of the site from 1847 shows a building on the site labelled 'Root or Lower Staple Oak'. 1873, 1901 and 1955 maps show the evolution of the building complex and selected maps are included in section five.
- 2.6: The site currently consists of (as shown in Fig.1) the following uses:
- A farmhouse, which together with some associated buildings, is let on a short-term tenancy for residential use;
 - A holiday cottage (a rebuild of a building which stood on the same footprint);
 - A large footprint building currently used for commercial purposes, primarily associated with estate management purposes; and
 - A range of former farm buildings that are disused and at the end of their viable life.

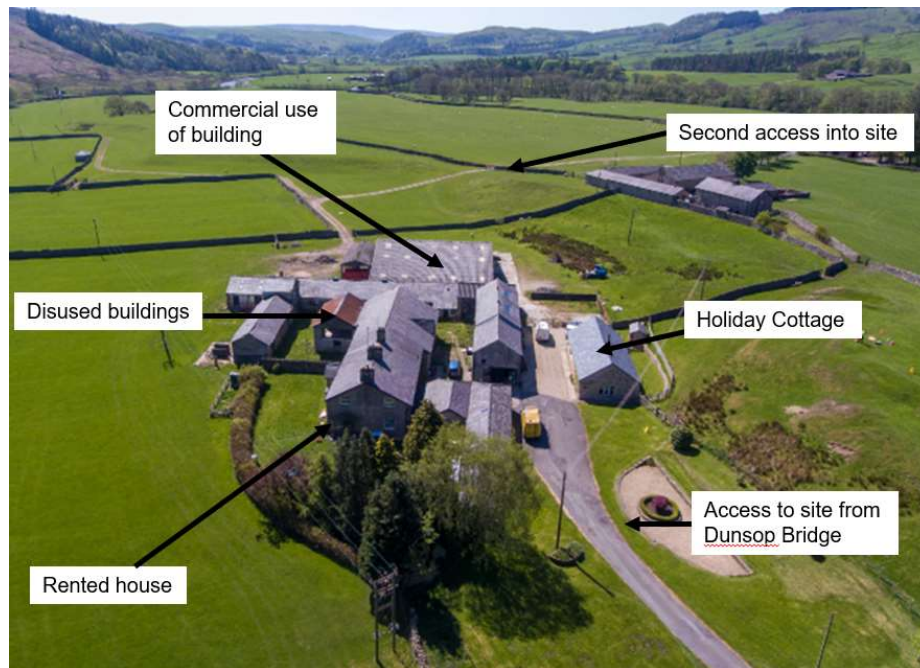


Fig. 1 Overview of existing site

2.7: Some of the buildings on the site are used in an un-intensive manner, or not currently used at all. However, there is the clear potential to further intensify the use of the site without planning consent (based on the extant use or Class R permitted development rights), resulting in greater activity at the site and movements to and from it than currently exist.

Highway Access

2.8: As confirmed in Fig. 1 the site has two established accesses. An access from the north links the site to Dunsop Bridge and it is proposed that this access is used by all traffic to the proposed development, as this is the existing access that is currently used.

2.9: Fig.2 below shows that highway visibility northwards towards Dunsop Bridge village is relatively good, given the low height of the bridge. Looking southwards away from the village there is an opportunity to improve the existing visibility splay by repositioning the roadside dry-stone wall slightly further away from the roadside.



Fig 2. Existing visibility from the access track leading to Root Farm from Dunsop Bridge (image above left shows south facing view; image above right shows north facing view)

2.10: The application is accompanied by a Highways report from PSA Design which should be full consulted separately.

Ecology and Environment

2.11: The application is accompanied by a report from Bombus Ecology.

2.12: This confirms that the development of the site, subject to appropriate mitigation, will have no unacceptable impact on ecology.

Planning History

2.13: Root Farm has only two planning history records on Ribble Valley Council's application website.

2.14: Approved application (3/2009/0961) related to the conversion of a former doctor's surgery at site to a holiday cottage. A second approved and implemented application (3/2012/0003) confirmed that the building could be rebuilt to provide the same holiday cottage use.

2.15: The holiday cottage sits adjacent to, but not on, the application site.

3. PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1: The application has been brought forward following an extensive pre-application engagement process as confirmed below.

Engagement with Ribble Valley Borough Council

- 3.2: As part of an early-stage engagement with the Borough Council a meeting was held with a senior representative of the Economic Development and Planning department at the Council, in order to confirm whether the proposed type and scope of development could be considered acceptable. The Duchy has historically engaged with Ribble Valley Borough Council to discuss a long-term sustainable development strategy for the Whitewell Estate. Root Farm buildings was a site referenced as part of these discussions and no issues were raised regarding the proposed type and scope of development.
- 3.3: A pre-application enquiry was subsequently undertaken. This consisted of a meeting with the Head of Planning from Ribble Valley Borough Council who subsequently provided written pre-application feedback.
- 3.4: The written feedback dated 30th April 2021 confirmed as follows:

Further to our "meeting" on the 31/03/21 I now confirm the following points.

First of all thank you for using our pre application advice service and the comprehensive documents you included in the submission. It is pleasing to see the commitment of the Duchy of Lancaster to the borough and the desire to work with the borough and the local community.

As indicated there is no objection to the principle as outlined in your brief to create and convert workshops/ studios and new build storage space aimed at supporting the local community and securing some local employment. The Council would seek to work with you in this commitment and try and ensure that where possible any employment use remains local and to the benefit of the immediate area.

In our meeting I emphasised that this advice is without the benefit of Lancashire County Council who are the highway authority as they offer their own pre application service but ultimately any planning decision would be made by the Borough Council. In order to minimise traffic movements and sustainability objectives any application should include anticipated traffic movements. I would also advise any scheme should make provision for secure cycle provision and electric charging points.

At our meeting you asked about the use of solar panels and I confirm that if at all possible these should be sited on the smaller units which would

help reduce the visual impact and secure the protection of the AONB from inappropriate development.

It is the view that the overall design of the scheme is acceptable but more consideration should be given to the roller shutter doors on the proposed storage unit so as to reduce the impact. I am confident that this in itself is not an unsurmountable issue.

- 3.5: As confirmed in the following section, all of the points raised in relation to design in this positive pre-application feedback have been accepted and the application plans changed accordingly.

Engagement with Forest of Bowland AONB Management Team

- 3.6: Details of the proposed development were provided to the Forest of Bowland AONB Manager. An informal online meeting was subsequently held in August 2021 between the AONB Manager, a representative of the Duchy of Lancaster and Rural Solutions.
- 3.7: At the meeting, details of the pre-application feedback from the Council were shared and it was confirmed how the application would respond to these points.
- 3.8: No specific concerns in terms of the proposed development use or the design were raised at the meeting.

Engagement with Local Community

- 3.9: As a major long-term landowner in the area the Duchy of Lancaster is keen to ensure that it consults with local communities on any proposed development which would impact them. Two open community consultations exercises have taken place as part of this process and feedback has informed the plans now submitted for consideration.
- 3.10: Full draft proposals for Root Farm buildings and basic proposals for a more central site within Dunsop Bridge were made available for public comment in 2021. This followed an early broader consultation in 2020.
- 3.11: Details of both consultations can be found at the public website www.dunsopbridge.com. However, in terms of the 2021 consultation it can be confirmed that on the 2nd July 2021 a total of 143 leaflets (59 paper and 84 digital copies) were sent out to tenants of the Duchy of Lancaster and posted through the letterboxes of all known village houses, farms and businesses in and immediately surrounding the village of Dunsop Bridge.
- 3.12: The leaflets invited community feedback on the draft plans and proposals for Root Farm buildings. Posters were displayed around the village and a soft copy of the information was made available on the dedicated website: www.dunsopbridge.com. Hard copy plans were sent out on request.
-

- 3.13: It is not the intention of this statement to summarise the responses of the consultation, as this has been done by the Duchy of Lancaster in a document¹ provided on the website.
- 3.14: However, it is noted that questions were raised regarding the 'need' for the development and the appropriateness of access arrangements. The proposed development is policy compliant and therefore 'need' is not a central planning issue. The Duchy has already received expressions of interest from a number of potential occupiers. Details are not shared in the application for reasons of confidentiality, without the certainty of a planning permission in place.
- 3.15: In terms of access, the application is supported by a report from a highways consultant which confirms the appropriateness of the access and amount of car parking spaces proposed.
- 3.16: In conclusion, the applicant has undertaken a broad-ranging consultation with key stakeholders (local authority, AONB Management Team, Parish Council, Ward Councillors and the local community), prior to bringing forward this application.
- 3.17: Feedback received has been considered and design amendments and / or additional supporting studies have been produced in order to respond to it.

¹ <http://www.dunsopbridge.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/20210812-Summary-Results-Community-Consultation-2-Root-Farm-proposals-Dunsop-Bridge.pdf>

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND BENEFITS

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1: The proposed development consists of the reuse of part of the Root Farm site for a rural commercial development falling within Class E (Commercial Uses) of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order.
- 4.2: The existing holiday cottage and residential property and some of the former farm buildings are not included in the proposed development.
- 4.3: The Duchy of Lancaster's proposals are designed to deliver appropriate commercial development space across part of the site which is flexible enough to meet the needs of and attract a variety of users.
- 4.4: As confirmed in section three, the Duchy of Lancaster's proposals are in the public domain as a result of community engagement. The landowner has received interest in occupying floorspace at the proposed development from a number of businesses (who for confidentiality purposes are not listed here).
- 4.5: There are two distinct areas of built footprint proposed on the site, as shown in Fig. 3 below.
- 4.6: The southernmost footprint consists of workshop / units with a GFA of 487sqm. These will replace the existing former agricultural building on the site and will create workshop space suitable for a variety of users.

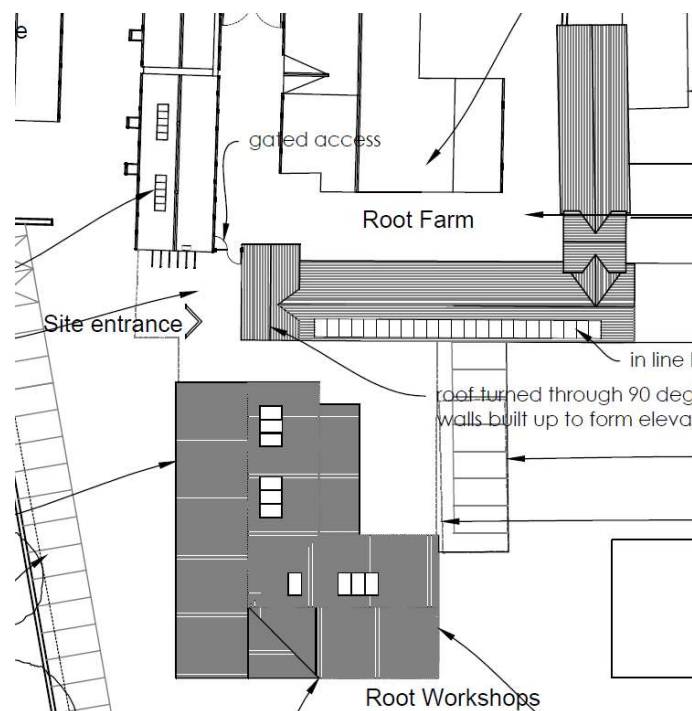


Fig. 3 Site Plan extract showing workshop buildings to the south and studios to the north.

4.7: As shown in Fig. 4 below, the larger workshops space will be divided up into four distinct areas. This creates flexibility in terms of lettings and will help to attract smaller businesses to the site.

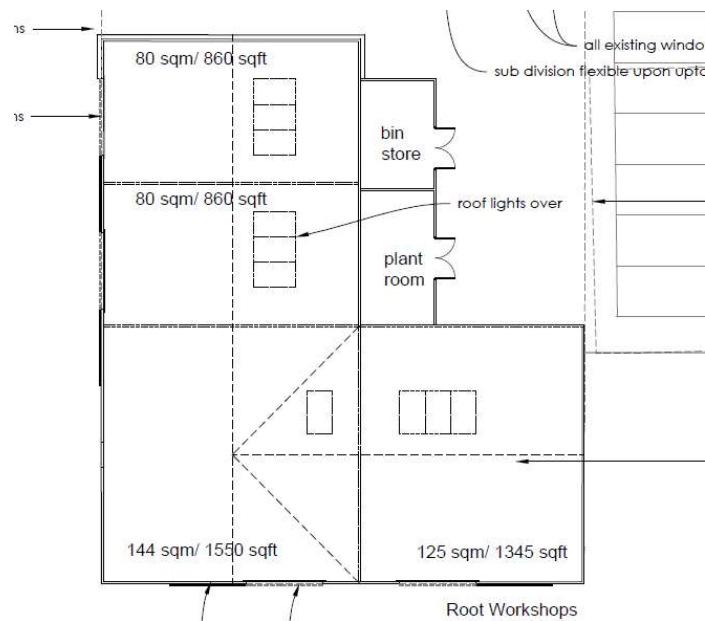


Fig. 4. The workshop building is proposed to be sub-divided into four distinct areas

4.8: To the north of the workshop an 'L' shape development including studio / work units is proposed. The spaces, shown in Fig. 5, will have a GFA of 343sqm.

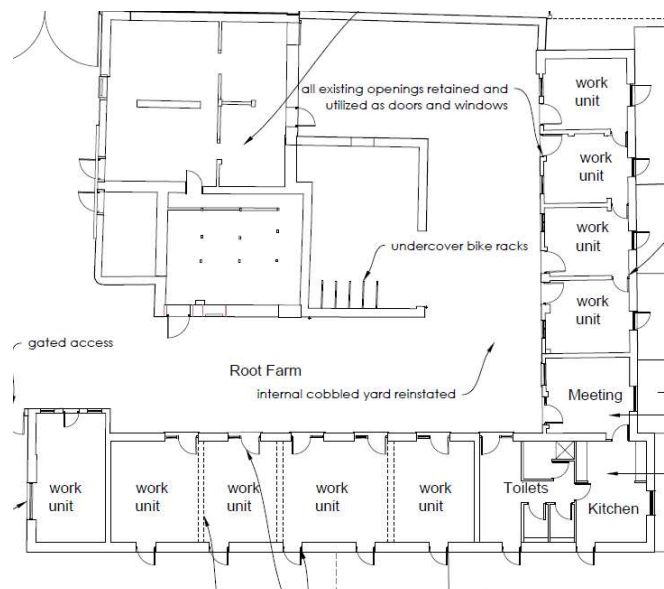


Fig. 5 Layout of work units

4.9: Class E of the new use classes will allow for a variety of uses but it is intended that the work units may be used for offices, workshop areas or even for storage facilities.

- 4.10: Flexibility in design, with each studio accessed separately, will allow for the units to be let individually or in combination as preferred.
- 4.11: Flexibility of sizes in both areas of development is considered important given the more remote location of Dunsop Bridge and to allow the Duchy of Lancaster to ensure that it has every opportunity of accommodating potential tenants' needs.
- 4.12: Overall, the scale of buildings at site following redevelopment will be reduced.
- 4.13: Two redundant buildings at site are not proposed to be converted under the application, but will be repaired as confirmed in Fig. 6 below.
- 4.14: As confirmed on the plan (annotations upon it) repair works (internal and 'like for like' external works not requiring planning permission) are proposed in order to protect these buildings.
- 4.15: Following development of the proposed workshop and studio space, the Duchy of Lancaster will then be able to respond to any specific future needs and growth requirements of the community and local businesses in order to consider.... future viable options and designs for these buildings.

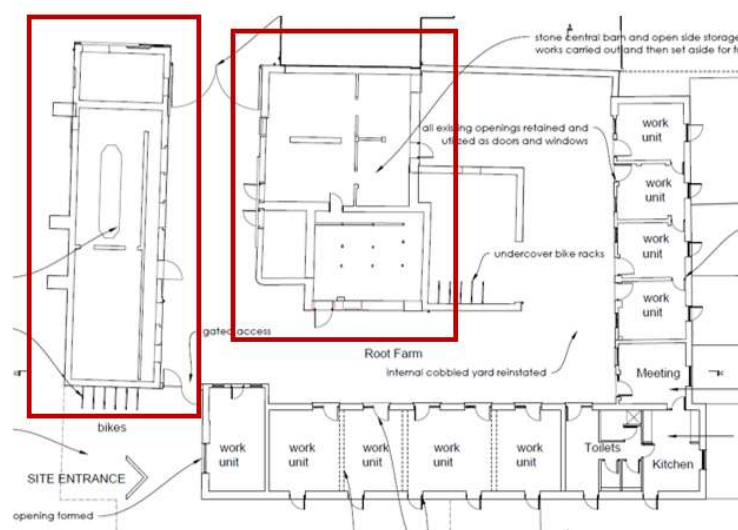


Fig. 6 Former agricultural buildings not included for conversion in this application.

Sustainable Design

- 4.16: The proposals incorporate a number of sustainable design features as listed below:
- The inclusion of solar panels. These are included on the southern facing roof slope of the studios' building and reflects advice provided at the pre-application stage with a suggestion to site these on the smaller units only.

The provision of small scale solar energy generation reflects the Forest of Bowland's Renewable Energy Position Statement (2014) which supports such installations.

- Provision of electric car charging points.
- Inclusion of barn owl boxes to the mature tree line to the river near the entrance to the site, swift boxes to the eaves position around the single storey build area and bat boxes to the new gable apex positions.
- Rooflights and window openings of sufficient scale to allow natural light ingress into buildings, reducing the need for artificial light.
- New trees and c.100m of hedgerow will be planted as part of the proposals, as confirmed later in this section of the statement.
- The Duchy are also currently reviewing the use of more sustainable materials in the design, manufacture and delivery of the proposed development.

Access

- 4.17: Highway access details are provided in the attached report from PSA Design which should be consulted separately.
- 4.18: However, it is noted that the proposals include an enhancement of the existing visibility splays into the site.
- 4.19: As shown in Fig. 7 below, the visibility splay to the south of the access into the site (photo at Fig.2) will be enhanced by realigning the stone wall back into the site.
- 4.20: It is anticipated that the visibility splay to the north of the access will be protected by a planning condition ensuring that on the riverside land, which is owned by the Duchy of Lancaster, there is no tree or plant growth which would restrict the visibility splay.
- 4.21: In addition to vehicular access opportunities, the site is clearly in close proximity to the village of Dunsop Bridge, allowing easy access on foot by residents, as well as allowing those working on the site to access and support the services that the village has to offer (improved facilities have been consulted on with the local community – see section three).

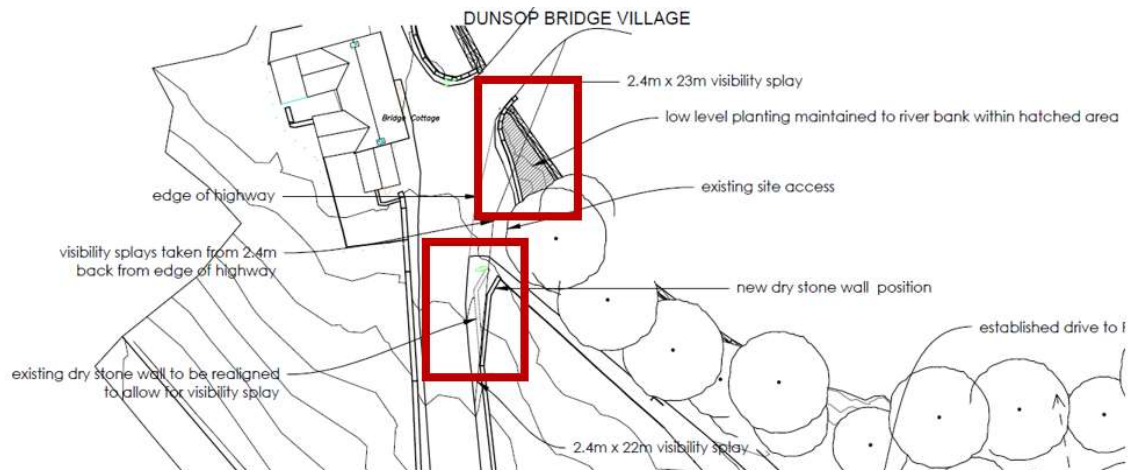


Fig. 7 Visibility splays highlighted on site plan.

Landscaping

- 4.22: The proposed landscaping approach to the site is to respect the appearance of a former farmstead in the landscape, without overly formal or excessive new landscape planting added.
- 4.23: A new hedge will be planted along the eastern edge of the site to be provided with stock proof fence to field side hedge to be mixed native species hedging. This is a requirement in order to prevent livestock approaching the converted buildings.
- 4.24: In addition, to the western edge of the site some new tree planting will be added in order to provide some screening of car parking spaces from the property at Root Hill Estate Yard which is also part of the Duchy holdings.

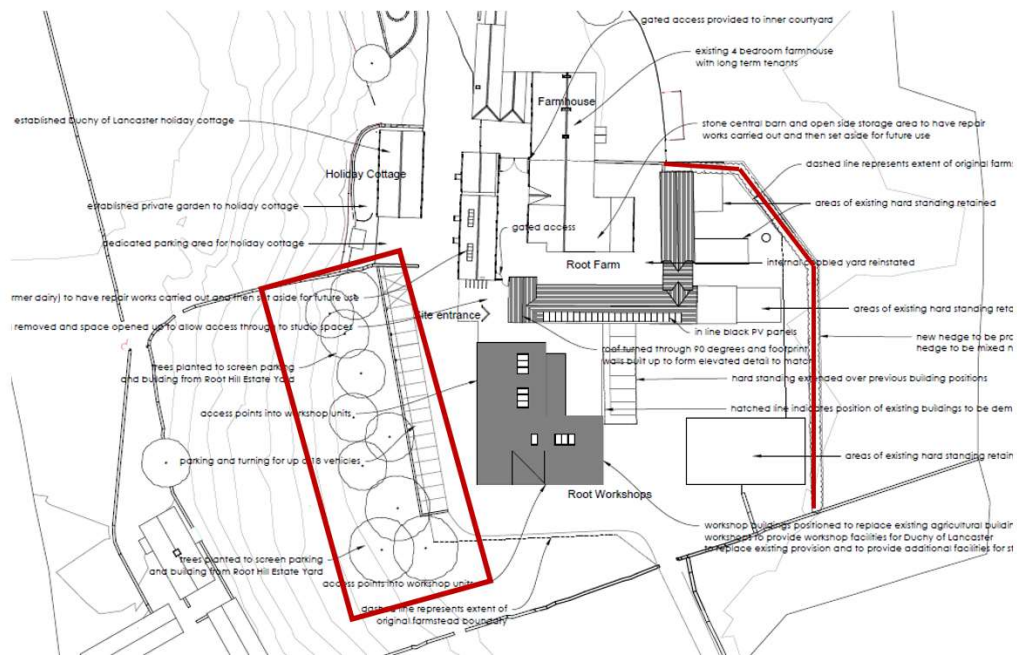


Fig. 8 New hedgerow (c.100m) and new tree planting highlighted on site plan

BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT

4.25: The development will deliver a number of benefits to the local area. The aim of the planning system is to deliver economic, environmental and social objectives, as confirmed by paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.26: The benefits delivered by the Root Farm development will span these three objectives, as confirmed below:

Economic Benefits

4.27: The following economic benefits of development will arise:

- Construction benefits arising from development - A study² by the CBI confirms that: *“Analysis by Oxford Economics shows that every £1 spent on UK construction creates £2.92 of value to the whole economy.”* The proposed development at Root Farm will require a construction investment totalling hundreds of thousands of pounds. This in turn will be multiplied by 2.92 leading to an economic benefit anticipated to be in excess of £1m. Much of this benefit will be realised locally in construction and supply chain businesses.
- Delivery of new jobs in rural Ribble Valley – the provision of new rural workspace at Dunsop Bridge will help to deliver jobs in this part of the Ribble Valley. Some of these jobs may be transferred to the area from other locations, or the provision of workspace in this location may lead

² Fine Margins: Delivering financial sustainability in UK construction, 2020 CBI

to the creation of new jobs which would otherwise not have existed as a result of new business creation (or business growth). Temporary construction related jobs will clearly be supported during the construction process.

- Support for local supply chain companies – all businesses operating from the site will have some supply chain requirements. This should benefit local businesses in the areas.
- Creation of new business rateable premises – the creation of new commercial use class buildings will result in increased business rates being paid to Ribble Valley Borough Council, therefore helping to maintain funding for the provision of local services.

4.28: It is noted that the pre-application advice received from Ribble Valley Borough Council specifically confirms the economic benefits, stating that:

“As indicated there is no objection to the principle as outlined in your brief to create and convert workshops/ studios and new build storage space aimed at supporting the local community and securing some local employment. The Council would seek to work with you in this commitment and try and ensure that where possible any employment use remains local and to the benefit of the immediate area.”

4.29: Wherever possible, every effort will be made to employ local labour and materials. Equally, local businesses will be encouraged to occupy the new commercial spaces where reasonable and practicable

Social Benefits

4.30: The following social benefits of development will arise:

- Support for a living, working countryside – it has long been identified that without appropriate development rural communities and areas can become unsustainable as services are lost and rural populations decline or age. The Duchy of Lancaster is concerned to ensure the long-term sustainability of rural areas such as Dunsop Bridge, as is clear from its delivery of an affordable housing development in the village, as well as its other plans (highlighted on the community consultation website identified in section three of this statement) for a more central site in the village.

The proposed development of rural workspace is not the most lucrative of potential development options for the site. However it is considered by the Duchy of Lancaster that this site remains the only viable location for an employment generating development of this type in the area that is both close to Dunsop Bridge and the facilities it offers and does not involve development of a greenfield site.

The delivery of new workspaces will contribute to the sustainability of the area by allowing those working in the village or surrounding area an opportunity to work in close proximity to where they live. It could also attract people to live in the area on the basis that they can then live and work in the same geographical area.

Environmental Benefits

4.31: The following environmental benefits of development will arise:

- Biodiversity net gain – the delivery of c.100m of new hedgerow as well as new tree planting on the site will help to deliver biodiversity net gain. At the same time bat, swallow and owl boxes will have either an enhancement or at least mitigation impact on these species.
- The reuse of a previously developed site – delivery of new development on a site with buildings upon it is considered inherently sustainable.
- The removal of asbestos as part of the redevelopment of the site.
- The replacement of existing buildings that are poorly insulated with better insulated buildings.
- Improvements to existing foul drainage from the site, which is partly served by a cesspit, by insertion of a new Klargestar package treatment plant.

4.32: For the above reasons it is considered that the development will give rise to multiple benefits which will relate to its compliance with local and national planning policy (as assessed in section six).

5. HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

5.1: The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 194) states that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

5.2: It should be noted that the application is not a heritage asset as defined by the NPPF (it is not a designated heritage asset or one that has been identified by the local planning authority on any local list, which is the definition given in the NPPF).

5.3: As shown in Fig. 9 below, there are listed buildings and structures in the vicinity of the site, so there has clearly been a survey of the area which has not then resulted in the Root Farm site, or any buildings upon it, being listed.

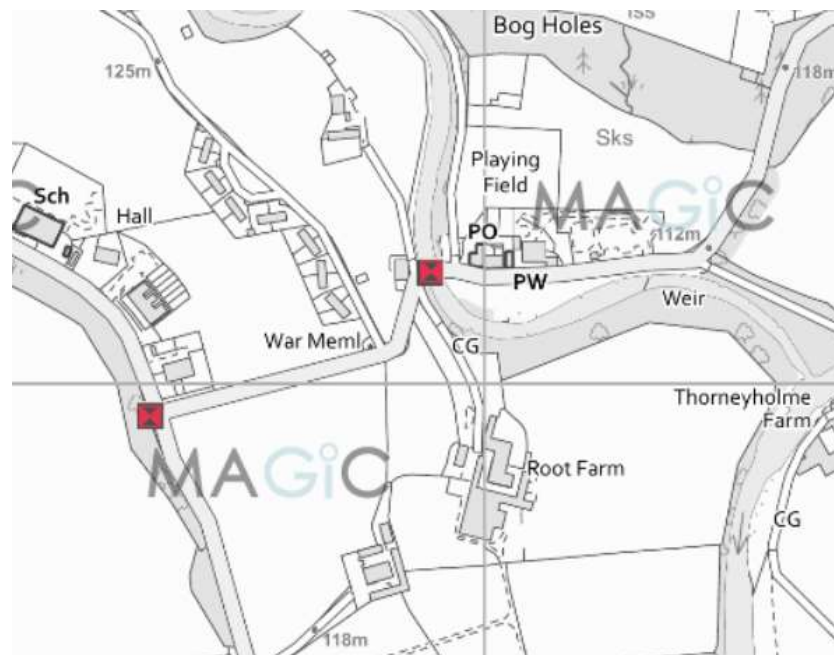


Fig. 9 Listed structures are in the vicinity of the site but there is no identified heritage asset upon it.

5.4: On that basis a heritage assessment of significance or impact is not a requirement of planning policy.

5.5: However, the Duchy of Lancaster has been keen to properly assess any heritage interest of the site and ensure that this is not negatively impacted by development. It has undertaken due research of the site in order to inform the proposals.

5.6: The assessment below is, however proportionate to the absence of any designation of local listing of the site. It must also be noted that the application

does not cover all of Root Farm site as identified in section four and that no heritage related matters have been raised in pre-application advice received.

Heritage Significance

5.7: Review of historic maps shows that the earliest map of the site, from 1847, shows a building on the site labelled 'Root or Lower Staple Oak'. 1873, 1901 and 1955 maps show the evolution of the building complex. Fig. 10 below shows a number of photographs of the site which include a clear historic evolution with lower status buildings the subject of this application in brick in part. Fig. 11 below includes the 1847 and 1893 site maps.



Fig. 10 Selected photos of the farm site (two storey buildings on middle row and in left hand side of bottom image not included in the application site)



Fig. 11 1847 map (above) showing earliest map record of the site and 1897 map (below) show historical development of the complex



- 5.8: It is considered that the complex, as a result of not being listed or locally listed, and having relatively standard former agricultural buildings is not of great significance.
- 5.9: The buildings on site which are of the greatest heritage interest are likely to be the house and those two-storey buildings directly associated with it. Buildings of lesser interest are acknowledged as being in poorer condition.

Heritage Impact

- 5.10: As identified in site photographs the part of the Root Farm site which is part of the application site and contains historic buildings (ie. not the portal frame agricultural building) is in relatively poor condition and requires investment.
- 5.11: The redevelopment of this part of the site is proposed to follow a similar footprint to former structures at the southern end of the site, which relate well to the history of the site.
- 5.12: The use of Welsh blue slate reused from the site, as well as stone or brickwork walls, in the studios' building will ensure that they remain historically appropriate in their setting.
- 5.13: At the same time as delivering new commercial floorspace, the Duchy of Lancaster also proposes to invest in like-for-like external repair and internal works to existing two-storey barns that are not proposed for reuse at the current time. This will deliver investment in the retention of historic buildings at the site which is considered a clear benefit of the scheme.
- 5.14: Details of hard and soft landscaping around new and retained buildings has been carefully considered in order to relate well to the historic farm complex.
- 5.15: In summary it is considered that in the proposals for this part of the site are:
- brought forward following pre-application advice from the local authority which included design advice that the applicant has accepted (but raised no specific heritage related matters);
 - relate to a site which is not a designated heritage asset or on any local list; and
 - have been carefully considered to ensure that they are sensitive to the history of the site and the evolution of the farmyard.
 - The Duchy of Lancaster firmly believes that it is in the long-term interest of the Estate, the local community, local businesses and the Area of Outstanding Beauty that is the Forest of Bowland for this site to be enhanced and for these buildings to be improved and brought back into use.

6. LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN ASSESSMENT

6.1: The development plan for the area is the:

- The Ribble Valley Adopted Core Strategy 2008-2028; and
- The Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development DPD 2008-2028

6.2: It is only the policies of the Core Strategy which relate to this proposed development.

6.3: The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 is also a relevant material consideration. However, the Management Plan is seen to be a document which is focused on strategic initiatives and actions for the AONB team to undertake; it is not a Plan which includes a checklist of policies for development proposals to conform to.

6.4: The Management Plan does however include the following vision for the areas which is relevant to the proposals and which references the importance of farmsteads and a sustainable local economy.

The Forest of Bowland landscape retains its sense of local distinctiveness, notably the wide open moorland character of the Bowland Fells, undulating lowland farmland, clough woodlands, traditional buildings and the settlement patterns of its villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

It is a landscape valued for the range of services and benefits it provides for society, with a functioning, diverse natural heritage where land management practices allow opportunity for natural processes to develop and flourish; and where partnership-working between land managers, conservation bodies, communities and businesses is focused on delivering more for nature together.

The rich cultural heritage of the area is also better understood and managed; and both the nature and culture of the area help to support a resilient and sustainable local economy.

The Forest of Bowland is a truly outstanding landscape, where it can clearly be demonstrated that the management of the AONB has conserved and enhanced the quality, understanding and enjoyment of the landscape for all.

(emphasis added)

- 6.5: As confirmed in section three of this statement the application is made following pre-application consultation with both the local planning authority and AONB management team.
- 6.6: To date, no concerns have been raised by those consulted in terms of the extent to which the proposals would conform to the adopted planning policies or management plan for the area.
- 6.7: However, on behalf of the applicant we provide the following assessment.
- 6.8: The assessment is set out in the form of 'Topic Area' policy analysis, in order that the policies of the development plan, the NPPF and, where relevant policies exist, the AONB Management Plan are considered together.

TOPIC AREA – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

KEY STATEMENT DS2: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The policy states that the Council will apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

KEY STATEMENT EN3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Council will seek to ensure that proposals for development are sustainably designed and support efforts to mitigate climate change.

NPPF: Paragraphs 7, 8 and 11

Commentary: The proposals for Root Farm Buildings have been brought forward following pre-application consultation with the Council and are assessed, in section four, to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

No concerns regarding the principle of development or compliance with the local plan have been identified by the Council and it is anticipated that the applications will therefore be approved, without delay, in accordance with paragraph 11c of the NPPF.

In terms of EN3, the development incorporates a number of sustainable design features, including solar panels, as assessed in section four of this statement. It is therefore considered that this policy is complied with.

TOPIC AREA – LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

KEY STATEMENT EN2: LANDSCAPE

The policy states that:

"The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area."

Also, 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."

NPPF: Paragraphs 174 and 176

Commentary: The proposals have been brought forward by an applicant and historic landowner experienced in land and building management in, and respectful of, the designated area.

It has undertaken informal pre-application engagement with the AONB Management Plan team (and local Council) in order to ensure that its proposals meet policy requirements.

The development within this designated area can be considered 'limited in scale' as anticipated by NPPF Paragraph 176.

The design and materiality of the proposals, including its landscaping and addition of trees and hedgerow, have been carefully considered to ensure sensitivity with the designated area. Materials will be reused from site where possible and new materials will be appropriate and of the highest quality.

TOPIC AREA – ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

KEY STATEMENT EC1: BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

POLICY DMB1: SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN: OBJECTIVE 2.3 LOCAL ECONOMY AND RURAL SERVICES

NPPF: PARAGRAPHS 81-85

Commentary: The proposals for the site are intended to deliver benefits to the local economy. These benefits, together with the supportive feedback of the Council on this matter, is confirmed at section four of the report.

The AONB Management Plan (objective 2.3) states that the AONB Management Team will *'Promote and support rural services and the socioeconomic development of the area, particularly where such activity helps to conserve and enhance natural beauty.'*

The development seeks to promote the socioeconomic development of this part of the AONB whilst at the same time helping to enhance natural beauty through regeneration of this previously developed site.

The proposals conform strongly to national policy support for a prosperous rural economy.

TOPIC AREA – TRANSPORT

KEY STATEMENT DM12: TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS

POLICY DMG3: TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY

NPPF: PARAGRAPHS 105 AND 111

Commentary:

Key Statement DM12 states that *"New development should be located to minimise the need to travel. Also it should incorporate good access by foot and cycle and have convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car."*

The development is relatively small in scale. It is in a rural area, where some level of development is accepted by policy makers, NPPF Paragraph 105 acknowledges that:

"opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making."

In this case the Root Farm site is well-located in relation to Dunsop Bridge which is only a short walk away. This will allow for access on foot by any residents from the village using the site. The designs for the site also include a bike rack area and electric car charging points, meaning that proportionate sustainable travel options are available.

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that: *"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."* The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement from PSA Design which does not identify any unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe impact on the road network. The enhancement of visibility splays into the site will assist in ensuring that this policy requirement is met.

TOPIC AREA – HERITAGE

KEY STATEMENT EN5: HERITAGE ASSETS

NPPF: Paragraph 203

As confirmed in section five the site is not a designated heritage asset and has not been identified as a non-designated heritage asset in any local list.

Nevertheless, regard has been had to the history of the site in creating the development proposals. The studio section of the development corresponds largely to the footprint of the existing range of buildings and the design of development responds to the desire to respect the setting of the two-storey vernacular buildings which are to be retained and repaired (but not converted) as part of the applicant's plans. Built footprint around these retained buildings will be reduced in the proposed scheme.

Pre-application engagement with the local Council has not raised any heritage concerns with the designs proposed, although wider design amendments have been tabled and accepted to ensure a high quality of development upon this historic site.

- 6.9: For the reasons set out above it can be considered that the requirements of local and national planning policy are met by the proposed development. This is in accordance with the pre-application feedback which confirmed that no concerns in relation to policy compliance were raised at the pre-application stage.

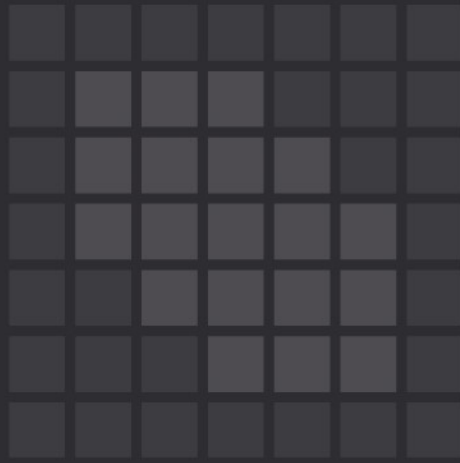
7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1: In conclusion, the proposed development at Root Farm, Dunsop Bridge, has been brought forward by a historic landowner with a unique long term affinity for and interest in the area. The landowner seeks only to deliver high quality development which delivers long-term sustainability benefits for the local area. This is achieved by working within the existing footprint of the site and with a reduced amount of built development proposed.
- 7.2: The proposals are brought following a pre-application engagement process with the local community, local authority and Forest of Bowland AONB Management Team.
- 7.3: The delivery of new employment space is intended to find a new use for part of the Root Farm site, helping to boost the socio-economic conditions of this rural part of the Ribble Valley.
- 7.4: The development will result in multiple economic, social and environmental benefits, as confirmed in section four of this statement.
- 7.5: The proposals are assessed to be compliant with the development plan and national planning policy, and no concerns in this regard have been raised at the pre-application stage.
- 7.6: The applicant looks forward to engaging with Ribble Valley Borough Council in order to deliver the benefits that this development will bring to the village of Dunsop Bridge, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that is the Forest of Bowland and the wider local area for generations to come.

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