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Dear Ben

RE: Consultation on planning application 3/2023/0274 – Laneside Barn, Grindleton Road, Grindleton BB7 4QH

I write in my capacity as Clerk to Grindleton Parish Council. As a statutory consultee, the Parish Council always seeks to balance any proposed residential development against the wider amenity of the village of Grindleton. The above application has been circulated for comment around members of the Parish Council, and discussed in detail by members at their meeting on 4 July.

The Parish Council is aware that the location for the proposed development is situated in a much-valued rural location merely metres from the boundary of the Forest of Bowland AONB. For these reasons, the Parish Council is keen to ensure that the application is subject to appropriate scrutiny. As a result, I have been asked to submit the following observations.

Crucially, the application seeks approval for the demolition of the barn and its replacement with a new construction, claimed to have a “barn type appearance”. In seeking to justify the demolition, the applicants claim (in para 5.4 of the Planning Statement) that the existing barn is of “no particular heritage value” and “there is nothing to suggest that any element of the barn is worthy of retention”. Grindleton Parish Council would strongly challenge these assertions. Members felt that the existing barn, which is in a prominent and stand-alone position, has been in situ since at least 1847, as evidenced by the map (below) from that date:



Laneside Barn

The property in question is therefore in the vicinity of 200 years old, rendering the applicant's view that it has no "heritage value" somewhat inaccurate. In members' opinion, the existing barn is perfectly suited to the space in which it sits and is considered to be entirely in keeping with the agricultural heritage of the area. As such, its historic value to the community is significant, and its loss to the local landscape would indeed be noticed.

Much of the Planning Statement is devoted to a discussion on technical aspects of Planning Law such as the "fall back position" (on which members accept they are not qualified to comment). However, members also noted the Borough Council's stance, as set out in the pre-application advice dated 23 February 2021, that consent for a new dwelling was not likely to be given as the property was to be situated in the Open Countryside. Furthermore, the Parish Council noted that permission to develop the property for residential use – whilst, importantly, retaining the original outer walls – has already been granted. Members considered that the previous application 3/2021/0307 gave a perfectly acceptable way forward, and wished to support the fall-back position approved in 2021. They saw no reason for the applicant to seek to go beyond this approval with a proposed demolition and rebuild, as is now set out in application 3/2023/0274.

During their deliberations, members also considered the design of the proposed development as set out in application 3/2023/0274:



Para 5.17 of the Planning Statement claims that "The proposed new dwelling...will continue to reflect its rural surroundings and would not appear incongruous or out of character within this area." Members would again strongly dispute this comment, feeling that the proposed design was out of keeping with the predominantly rural environment in which it would sit.

Members discussed the sustainability benefits which would arise from demolition and rebuild, and it was not apparent from the application that these would be any greater than if the existing structure had been retained.

One of the main benefits said to arise from the proposed demolition and rebuild would be the re-location of the property some 3.6m back from Grindleton Rd, thereby increasing road safety. However, members noted that concerns about access from the highway had been considered in application 3/2021/0307, when the existing structure had been retained, with road safety concerns not being sufficiently great to merit refusal.

Members were concerned at the precedent which would arise from the approval of application 3/2023/0274. The applicant owns significant areas of land in the vicinity of Laneside Barn, extending from Grindleton Rd to the River Ribble and over to Ribble Avenue. Members fear that future applications to develop this important green area would be forthcoming, to the detriment of residents of Grindleton parish.

Finally, members noted the recommendation of the initial Bat Roost Assessment report (conducted in April 2019) that a further survey works be carried out between May/September to confirm the presence/absence of use by roosting bats. In April 2021 (2 years ago), a further Bat Survey report Method Statement was submitted. This report also stated that no work would take place until static bat detector monitoring and a single emergence survey had been carried out in May/September to confirm the absence of bats. From the documentation published online, members are unable to reassure themselves that an appropriate bat survey has yet been completed within this timescale. Members accept that there is still time for a survey to be completed in the coming weeks prior to September; however, given that previous bat surveys may now have expired, and in order to ensure that both RVBC and the applicant are meeting their obligations to conserve biodiversity, the Local Planning Authority may wish to impose a condition requiring the applicant to complete the additional bat survey as was proposed in April 2021.

Members of Grindleton Parish Council would be grateful if their comments above could be considered when Planning Application 3/2023/0274 is determined.