

Design and Access Statement

In Support of a Planning Application for

**Change of use of agricultural land for
camping and touring caravans and
conversion of and extension to agricultural
building for use as camping barn**

**at
Cuthbert Hill Farm
Garstang Road
Chipping
Preston
PR3 2QJ**

**Elizabeth Harrison
17th January 2024**

Background

Cuthbert Hill Farm is a 17 acre farm located in within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site was purchased by the applicant in 2008. Up until the end of 2021 the land was used for grazing by a neighbouring farmer. Since then, the applicant and her father have worked the land and currently care for a flock of 60 ewes.

The existing farmhouse was granted a change of use to a holiday let December 2021. The holiday let enterprise has proved to be a hugely successful endeavour and is much more economically viable than the farming enterprise. Cuthbert Hill Farm has a VisitEngland Gold Award Accreditation. VisitEngland's Gold and Silver Awards celebrate accommodation establishments that outperform in their category, offering exceptional quality within their star rating.

In view of the success of the farmhouse, the applicant would like to put a further part of the site to a tourism use by adapting an under-utilised farm building for use as a camping barn and changing the use of one of the fields for use by campers and touring caravans. The proposal includes for the existing building to be extended to provide a facilities block.

Another operator within the Ribble Valley, Shireburn Park Ltd, has indicated there is a demand for touring pitches in the Ribble valley, and there has recently been a big loss of 120 touring pitches at Three Rivers Park, West .

The Site

The application site extends to 1.45 acres. It is situated within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, approximately 1.5 miles from Chipping, with a shop within 0.8 miles and pub within 0.9 miles.

The site is accessed from Garstang Road. In May 2022 planning permission was granted for a new access from the highway to be created. Access to the camping field and the camping barn will be via this new approved access.

Relevant Planning History

Application 3/2022/0047

New access to the highway (following the blocking off of existing) and extension to existing agricultural building.

Application 3/2021/1075

Regularisation of change of use of dwelling house (use class C3) to holiday let (sui generis) and siting of ancillary welfare unit.

Application 3/2013/0340

Proposed extension to an existing agricultural building to provide storage for silage and straw to be used for cattle on the farm.

Application 3/2012/0274

Proposed new agricultural building for the storage of manure.

The Proposal

The applicant applies for the conversion of and extension to a steel framed agricultural building to create a camping barn, together with the change of use of an agricultural field to create 10no. touring caravan pitches and 0.5 acres of tent pitches.

Camping Barn

The conversion of the agricultural building will include the installation of a first floor to provide four separate bedrooms. These will provide dorm style accommodation with three bunk beds to each room. Each room will have an en-suite shower room. Downstairs will consist of a large open-plan communal kitchen and shared living/games area. The ground floor space will also be available for use by users of the camping field.

The extension to the building will provide male and female shower and toilet facilities. These will be accessed both internally to provide for users of the barn, and externally to provide facilities for campers.

Externally there will be a covered washing up area and picnic benches to provide an outside eating area.

The existing barn measures 8.9m by 13.5m. The proposal involves minimum alterations to the exterior of the building. The existing barn entrance will be reduced and replaced with double glazed doors to allow natural light into the building. To the rear a narrow eye-level window is proposed to provide light to the kitchen area.

Natural light to the first floor will be provided by roof lights, two per bedroom.

Externally, it is proposed that the lower walls be clad in stone to bring the building in keeping with the original farmhouse, with the upper walls remaining timber clad.

The proposed extension will measure 7.1m by 7.9m with a sloping roof from 2.3m to 3.3m. Planning permission has previously been approved for an extension to this building however the extension currently proposed is for a smaller footprint and lower roof height, the previous permission allowing for a footprint of 9.1m by 13.5m and a maximum height of 4.7m

The extension will provide separate male and female shower and toilet facilities. These facilities will be accessed internally from the barn and externally for users of the campsite.

To the front of the extension, the roof will be extended to provide a covered washing up area.

A refuse area and chemical toilet disposal point will be sited off the southwest facing elevation.

The extension will be clad in the same materials as the existing barn; tanalized Yorkshire boards with stone cladding below.

Change of use of land to a touring caravan and camping site

The change of use will create 10 touring caravan pitches. Each pitch will measure 7m x 8m, including 3m x 7m hardstanding. Aside from these areas of hardstanding the ground will remain as grass to ensure that it is kept in keeping with the local area.

The caravan pitches are located to the south of the site in order to maximise the extensive views over the Ribble Valley.

The remainder of the field will be available for camping pitches. An area of 0.5 acres has been allocated which will allow for adequate space for vehicular movements around the edge of the field. This land will still be used for agriculture when it is not occupied by tents, for livestock grazing. The area proposed for tents will remain as permanent pasture and plots will be allocated to each customer to erect their tents.

Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the main national planning policy guidance. It states that the main purpose of the planning system in the country is the achievement of sustainable development. Section 6 of the NPPF relates to 'Building a strong, competitive economy'. Paragraphs 84 and 85 are particularly relevant to this application:-

Paragraph 84:

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.
- b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
- c) Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.
- d) The retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Paragraph 85:

Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

Local planning policy guidance is contained within the Core Strategy 2008/2028 – A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Adoption Version.

Key Statement DS2 of the core strategy identifies that the Council, when considering development proposals, should take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.

Key Statement EN2 deals with landscape and identifies that the Council expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.

Key Statement EC1 relates to business and employment development and states 'Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle.

Key Statement EC3 deals with visitor economy and identifies that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of the Ribble Valley will be encouraged.

Key Statement DMG2 requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations, three of which are:-

- The development should be essential to the local economy or social well being of the area.
- The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.
- The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.

Key Statement DMB1 (Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy) indicates that the Council will support proposals that are intended to support business growth in the local economy provided such proposals are in conformity with other relevant policies of the local plan.

Key Statement DMB3 (Recreation and Tourism Development) states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitors facilities in the Borough subject to a number of criteria:-

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

existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.

In the Forest of Bowland AONB the following criteria also apply:

- 1. The proposal should display a high standard of design appropriate to the area.*
- 2. The site should not introduce built development into an area largely devoid of structures (other than those directly related to agriculture or forestry uses).*

In the AONB it is important that development is not of a large scale. In the AONB and immediately adjacent areas proposals should contribute to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape. Within the open countryside proposals will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape area and should reflect the local vernacular, scale, style, features and building materials.

Policy Assessment

Principle of Development

The approval of this application will support the expansion of a small-scale rural tourist accommodation business through the conversion of an existing building, which will provide an attractive location for visitors to the Ribble Valley to stay. The application also supports the diversification of an agricultural business.

The local economy will benefit from tourists in the area, mainly being shops, pubs, restaurants, cafes etc. Chipping is less than a mile away to the north east and Longridge only 5 miles to the south. There are attractions in both Chipping and Longridge, and further afield in Clitheroe for tourists to visit which contribute to the local economy.

Visual Amenity

The proposal is for the conversion of an existing building with limited alterations to the exterior. The materials proposed, tanalized Yorkshire boards timber and stone cladding, are commonly used for agricultural buildings and in keeping with both the existing buildings at the proposal site and the aesthetic of other agricultural buildings in the surrounding area. The proposed extension is subservient to the existing building and provide a functional purpose necessary for the function of the proposal site. The building is closely related to the existing built form on the unit and would be seen within the context of the farm complex as a whole. It is considered that the building and extension would be in-keeping with the surrounding buildings in terms of its size, scale and design. It is not considered that the proposal will appear isolated or incongruous within the local landscape, nor have a detrimental effect on the natural beauty of the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Residential Amenity

The nearest residential property not affiliated with the farm is known as Halton Hill, approximately 180m away from the development site. It is considered that this property is sufficiently far from the development so not have any undue impact upon neighbouring residential amenity through overlooking, overshadowing, loss of daylight or outlook.

Landscape

From the list of important landscape features described in Policy DME2, only hedgerows and individual trees is relevant to the proposal.

The site is bounded by hedgerow on the north west boundary and individual trees long the south west boundary. The proposal does not interfere with either boundary and would not cause any harm to these existing landscape features.

Access and Parking

A new access to the site was granted planning permission on 10th May 2022. This access will be utilised to serve both the camping barn and the camping field. Parking is provided to the front of the camping barn, with users of the camping field parking on their individual pitches.

Conclusion

We consider that this Design & Access Statement demonstrates that the proposal represents sustainable development and is in compliance with the NPPF and Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy, and therefore planning permission should be granted.