

Planning Statement

Fencegate Farm, Dinckley

Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Rural Solutions, on behalf of the Trustees of The George Warburton 1985 Trust ('the Applicant'). This Statement is submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council in support of a full planning application for the replacement of an existing dwelling.

The existing dwelling comprises a single-storey bungalow, with existing access and parking spaces. The proposed development would replace this bungalow with a two-storey house, with a detached garage and reorganised curtilage to provide suitable private amenity space.

Site Description and History

The existing dwelling is a bungalow located on Ribchester Road (Salesbury Hall Road according to Google Maps). The bungalow is single-storey and covers a relatively large footprint of 202m². The existing bungalow is currently vacant. The building has been constructed to a relatively poor design and the use of poor-quality materials. The site also includes three outbuildings and a barn. The buildings are spread across the entire site and are in a significant state of dilapidation. The total existing footprint of buildings equates to 323m². Land to the north, which is in the applicant's ownership, has an agricultural use, however, the existing barn on site has been separated from that use and is part of the existing curtilage of the bungalow.

The existing curtilage of the bungalow is clearly defined with fencing surrounding the site and closely associated buildings. Furthermore, the existing curtilage includes a significant amount of hard standing, leading to all buildings, which further illustrates the amount of development across the site. This defined curtilage is shown below:

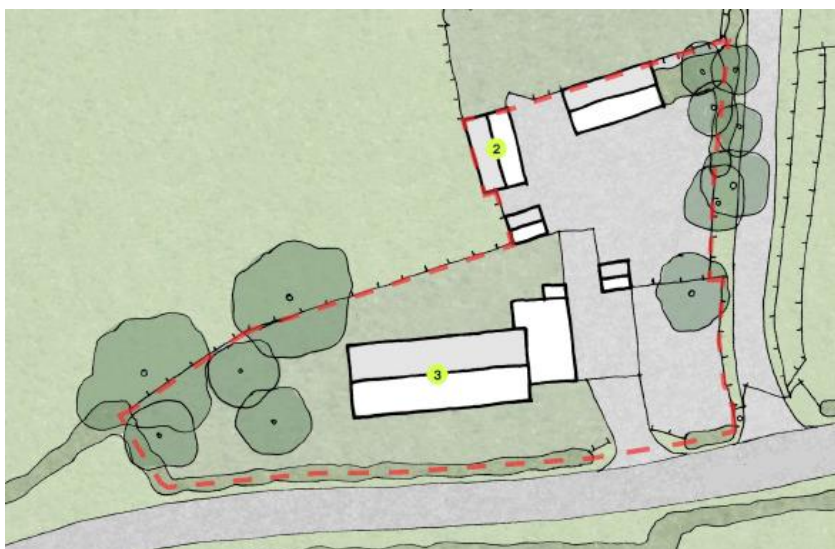


Figure 1: Existing curtilage plan

The site is covered by several trees, none of which are protected by tree preservation orders. The quality of trees is variable and is discussed further in the sections below.

Existing access is provided to the site via Ribchester Road (Salesbury Hall Road). This provides suitable access for vehicles entering and exiting in forward gear. Furthermore, the access is onto a straight road, with good visibility for road users.

The site is located within the open countryside, with the nearest neighbouring property to the east. This neighbouring property is 100 metres away from the site and is comprised of an equine facility. The nearest residential property is located more than 200 metres to the northeast.

The wider area does not have a typical vernacular that characterises properties in the area. However, typically properties in the wider area tend to be two stories, with a large curtilage and comprised of coarse stonework. All properties in the wider area are also detached and set a significant distance from their neighbours.

The site is not included within or close to any areas of special conservation, in terms of heritage or ecology, and is not subject to any areas of protected landscape or views.

The site is located within flood zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. Furthermore, the site is at a low risk of surface water flooding, meaning that this area has a chance of flooding between 0.1% and 1% each year.

No planning history can be found on Ribble Valley Borough Council's website.

Proposed Development

The proposed development includes the following:

- Demolition of existing dwelling, outbuildings and barn
- Erection of two-storey detached house
- Rearrangement of curtilage
- Enhancement of access and erection of gate
- Additional tree planting and landscaping across the site



Figure 2: Proposed layout plan



Figure 3: Curtilage comparison plan



Figure 4: Proposed elevations

Planning Policy

Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that planning decisions should be undertaken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Below is a summary of the Development Plan documents and more detailed commentary on the relevant planning policies likely to be applicable for development proposals at the subject site.

Ribble Valley Borough Council adopted their Core Strategy in December 2014 and it forms part of the borough's Development Plan. The previous 1998 Local Plan has now been fully superseded by the Core Strategy and no saved policies remain. The Council also adopted the Housing and Economic Development (Development Plan Document) in 2019, which forms part of the Development Plan. The Council's Local Development Scheme states that a new Local Plan will be adopted in 2023, however, no progress on the Local Plan is evident from the Council's website. Therefore, the following documents comprise the area's development plan:

- Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley 2014
- Housing and Economic Development (Development Plan Document) 2019

Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley

Key policies pertaining to the proposed development include (no policies are relevant from the Housing and Economic Development (Development Plan Document) 2019):

- DS1: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
- DS2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- EN2: LANDSCAPE
- EN3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- EN4: BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY
- DM12: TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS
- H1: HOUSING PROVISION
- DMG1: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
- DMG3: TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY
- DME1: PROTECTING TREES AND WOODLANDS
- DMH3: DWELLINGS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE & THE AONB
- DMH4: THE CONVERSION OF BARNs AND OTHER BUILDINGS TO DWELLINGS

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) sets out national planning policy for England. National Planning Practice Guidance provides further information on how policies should be interpreted.

National policy and guidance are material considerations in any planning decision.

The following key areas of national policy and guidance are of key relevance to this case:

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development.
- Section 4 – Decision-making.
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places.

Other material considerations include:

- We consider that the previous planning consent at Woodfield, Ribchester Road, BB6 8AL (ref: 3/2017/1210) to be materially relevant to this application. The approved planning application at Woodfield proposed the demolition of the existing bungalow and the replacement of a two-storey house. This current planning application has taken design influence from this application, as it has been deemed acceptable by Ribble Valley and follows very similar characteristics.

Key Planning Issues

Principle of development

Policy DS2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy sets out the council's positive approach to sustainable development. The policy accords with paragraph 11 of the NPPF 2023 which states the following:

“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

The application site is located within the open countryside, with an existing single-storey bungalow contained within a defined residential curtilage. Policy DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

“Within areas defined as open countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to:
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”.

The existing use of the property and land remains residential and has not been abandoned. Furthermore, details will be provided in the design and landscaping section below, however it is considered that the proposed replacement dwelling will not have an adverse impact on the landscape. In regard to the existing curtilage, the proposal looks to amend the curtilage, to provide a more logical layout. A curtilage comparison plan has been submitted with this application.

However, the proposed curtilage is not a greater size than the existing curtilage. The existing curtilage equates to 1,781m² and the proposed curtilage would measure 1,781m². The Oxford Dictionary defines an extension as the following: “a part that is added to something to enlarge or prolong it.” Based on this definition, the proposed does not extend the curtilage, it simply reorganises it for the benefit of both the residential occupiers and the agricultural use to the north; as the curtilage will no longer “jut out” into the agricultural land and will have a more defined separation.

Therefore, as the application proposes the replacement of an existing dwelling, that does not have an adverse impact on the landscape and does not extend the residential curtilage, the proposal accords with Policy DS2 and DMH3 of Ribble Valley’s Core Strategy 2014, and the NPPF 2023 (as amended).

Design and landscaping

The existing site comprises a large bungalow, three outbuildings and a barn, all of which are located within the existing residential curtilage. It is proposed to demolish all buildings, due to their state of repair and poor design quality. The existing footprint of all buildings on site equates to 323m². The proposed development would include a two-storey house, comprising five bedrooms and a detached garage. The total proposed footprint, including the detached garage, equates to 219m². Therefore, the proposed development would reduce the overall built footprint on site by 104m². Furthermore, the proposed development

significantly reduces the spread of development across the site and therefore has a positive impact on the open countryside and wider landscape character.

The proposed house would be placed in a similar location to the existing bungalow, however the proportions will be significantly altered. The existing bungalow is wide and stretches across the front of the site. The proposed dwelling would have a significantly reduced width and therefore would improve the visual impacts on the wider landscape from the street scene. Furthermore, the proposed development would enhance the existing landscape by planting additional trees and hedging around the site, including to the south facing onto the highway. This will more greatly screen the house from the street scene and allow only glimpsed views of the house when directly passing it.

The proposed garage would be detached and positioned to the rear of the site. Due to being significantly set back from the highway, it will not be readily visible from the street scene. Furthermore, trees are proposed to the rear of the property, therefore screening the development from the wider countryside to the north. The existing access will be utilised and enhanced. A gate is proposed to the front of the site, set back from the highway. This will provide security for the occupants, whilst also being aesthetically pleasing.

The design of the site and the house has been influenced by the local character and vernacular of the area. Residential properties are scattered across the area and do not share a specific design; however, similarities exist. Typically, properties are large detached two-storey houses, with a moderate to large private amenity space. Material palettes of properties in the area differ, however, houses are typically constructed with traditional materials such as stone and their design is relatively traditional in nature. The proposed house is detached, two storeys, with a relatively traditional design and would be constructed with coarse stonework. The proposed development responds to the existing character of the area and reflects this character within its design, which accords with Policy EN2 that states; “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.”. Moreover, the proposed development would be a significant improvement compared to the existing poor quality building and reflects paragraphs 131 and 133 of the NPPF 2023, which strongly encouraged the development of beautiful buildings.

The proposed landscaping for the development results in a contained site, that is well screened within the countryside and provides a good area of private amenity space. Currently, there is a significant amount of hardstanding of poor quality across the site. This is proposed to be replaced with resin-bound grave detail, with natural stone curbs. Also, more grass and loft landscaping is proposed across the site. This both provides a more aesthetically pleasing environment but also responds to the wider character of the open countryside.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development accords with policies EN2 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy 2014, and the NPPF 2023 (as amended).

Highways

The existing access will be utilised and enhanced. Currently, the access is for the bungalow and the agricultural use to the north. However, the proposed access would solely be used for the house and an existing access to the west will be used for the agricultural use. This

will ensure greater separation between the uses and prevent potential conflicts between vehicles and these uses.

The existing access provides good visibility splays down Ribchester Road (Salesbury Hall Road according to Google Maps) east and west, as the road is straight in this section. Furthermore, the proposed garage provides two parking spaces, and the proposed driveway can accommodate several additional vehicles. Therefore, the proposal ensures highway safety is maintained and accords with policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy 2014 and the NPPF 2023 (as amended).

Amenity

The nearest neighbouring property is to the east. This neighbouring property is 100 metres away from the site and is comprised of an equine facility. The nearest residential property is located more than 200 metres to the northeast. The eastern boundary of the site is well screened by trees, therefore the proposal does not result in any harm regarding overlooking or loss of light, due to the distance of neighbours and the screening provided. Therefore, the proposed development would accord with policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy 2014 and the NPPF 2023 (as amended).

Trees

The application is accompanied by a tree survey, prepared by Bowland Tree Consultancy. The survey showed that two trees are graded U (T3 and G2) due to ash dieback and deadwood showing in the tree. Due to the poor quality and health of these trees, they are proposed to be removed. However, all other trees surveyed showed good signs of health and will be retained. Furthermore, it is clear from the survey, that the proposed development would not encroach on tree root protection areas and therefore would not harm existing good-quality trees.

Furthermore, as referenced within the Design and Access Statement the proposed development would plant additional trees, responding to the native species in the area and providing greater screening and privacy for the occupants. Moreover, the enhancement of trees reflects the character of the area as open countryside and significantly improves the views of the site from the street scene. Therefore, the proposal accords with policy DME1 of the Core Strategy 2014 and the NPPF 2023 (as amended).

Ecology

As has been described, the proposed development will result in the demolition of all existing buildings on site. Due to the rural nature of the area, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report has been produced and accompanies the application.

The report details that a bat survey was undertaken on 22nd January 2024. The report concludes that there was no evidence of roosting bats in any buildings and that the property had negligible potential for roosting bats. Furthermore, there was no evidence of any other protected species on site.

Therefore, the proposed development would not impact any protected species and would comply with policy EN4 of the Core Strategy 2014 and the NPPF 2023 (as amended).

Conclusion

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act states that planning decisions should be undertaken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application is made in accordance with the development plan. The proposed development has been designed sensitively. This has resulted in a high-quality design being developed and would have a positive impact on the wider landscape and character of the area. Furthermore, all technical matters have been carefully considered and the development would not result in harm to highways, ecology or trees in the area.

Therefore, the proposed development accords with national and local policies, and should be positively determined without delay.