



Suite 9
Grindleton Business Centre
The Spinney
Grindleton
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 4DH

Tel: 01200 449700
www.ghaonline.co.uk
email: info@ghaonline.co.uk

PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**IN RESPECT OF A FULL PLANNING
APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF
THREE POLYTUNNELS AND TWO
RAINWATER HARVESTING TANKS**

AT

**NEWLANDS NURSERY, SAWLEY ROAD,
CHATBURN, BB7 4LD.**

Prepared by: Gary Hoerty BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV
Our Clients: Mr Peter Bristol & Mr Christopher Bristol
Our Ref: Bri/910/3452/GH
Date: May 2024



Chartered Surveyors ■■■ Planning & Development ■■■ Land Agents
Valuers ■■■ Property Agency ■■■ Property Management



CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION	Page 3
2.	THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	Page 3
3.	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	Page 4
4.	PLANNING HISTORY	Page 4
5.	PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS	Page 4
6.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	Page 10

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 Gary Hoerty Associates has been instructed by Mr Peter Bristol and Mr Christopher Bristol to submit a full planning application on their behalf for the erection of three polytunnels and two rainwater harvesting tanks at Newlands Nursery, Sawley Road, Chatburn. The existing development has been successful giving rise to this proposed expansion which will enable the applicants to propagate and cultivate more stock as well as growing additional varieties to meet demand and to sustainably harvest rainwater for the irrigation of the plants on site.
- 1.2 Newlands Nursey has been successful since it was established just a few years ago, however the applicants do not have sufficient growing areas to meet demand, and this has given rise to this application. In addition to seeking permission for the polytunnels the applicants are seeking permission for two water storage tanks one of which has already been installed. The water tanks will allow the applicants to sustainably deal with the surface water from the polytunnels and they will be seen as part of the overall development.
- 1.3 We set out in this Planning Statement the recent planning history of the property, a description of the application site, a description of the proposed development, details of the relevant planning policies against which the development will be assessed and provide the planning case for the approval of the proposed development.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises a parcel of land adjacent to an existing plant nursery which has been operational for several years. The nursery site is situated approximately 250m to the north of the village of Chatburn and approximately 450m to the south of the junction of Sawley Road with the A59. The application site is a level parcel of land on the south western side of the existing nursery. To the west and south there are open fields and to the east on the other side of Sawley Road there are allotment gardens. Approval has been granted on land to the north which is in different ownership for camping pods and their development has commenced. Further north there is an existing large dwelling.
- 2.2 The existing development on the site which was approved under application reference numbers 3/2019/0463 and 3/2021/0685 provided for the erection of nine polytunnels, formation of car parking area in association with the formation of a market garden which is now known as Newlands Nursery.
- 2.3 In planning policy terms, in the Council's Core Strategy, the site is within the open countryside but not within the AONB and is not subject to any special designations.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposed development is for the erection of three polytunnels to be used for the growing of perennials, plants, shrubs, hedging and fruit and vegetables which represents an expansion and growth of their existing business, as shown on the submitted plans. In addition, permission is sought for the siting of two rainwater harvesting tanks on land adjacent to the polytunnels to provide water for watering the plants.
- 3.2 The three polytunnels each measure 7.92m x 48.77m. Their sides are 2.3m high above which is a curved roof resulting in a maximum height of 4.3m. They are of diffused polythene construction with the sides being green in colour. They will be sited immediately next to the last polytunnels that were erected on the site and on the same ground level. The ground is already level and therefore no earthworks will be required in order to implement the proposed development.
- 3.3. The proposed rainwater harvesting tanks, one of which is already present on site, each have a diameter of 6.4m and a height of 3m and are constructed from corrugated galvanised tin sheets. The tanks will be sited to the north west of the last polytunnels that were erected.
- 3.4 The proposed polytunnels are for stock only and not for access to the public and therefore the current car parking arrangements are sufficient.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 We set out below the recent planning history in respect of the applicant's property.
- 4.2 Planning application reference number 3/2019/0463 was an application for the erection of six polytunnels and formation of car parking area in association with the formation of a market garden which is now known as Newlands Nursery. The application was submitted on 15 May 2019 and approved with conditions on the 2 August 2019. The development was subsequently implemented by the applicants.
- 4.4 Planning application reference number 3/2021/0685 was an application for the erection of a further three polytunnels. The application was submitted on 29 June 2021 and approved with conditions on the 17 August 2021. The development was subsequently implemented by the applicants.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

General

- 5.1 Local Planning Authorities are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If it is to be approved, any development must therefore satisfy, as far as possible, guidance contained within the National Planning Policy

Framework 2019 (NPPF) and the relevant policies of the Council's Core Strategy 2008-2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley (Adopted December 2014)

- 5.2 We set out below extracts from the relevant documents to facilitate the assessment of the application proposal against the appropriate policies and guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework February 2023 (NPPF)

- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 is the main national planning policy guidance influencing planning decision making in England. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied and provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

- 5.4 Paragraphs 11 – 14 of the NPPF highlight the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making and therefore proposed development that accords with an up to date development plan should be approved, unless other material considerations indicate that the plan should not be followed.

- 5.5 Importantly, paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay.

- 5.6 Paragraph 11 also clearly spells out the Governments presumption in favour of allowing development that accords with an up to date development plan unless any adverse impacts of doing so would demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

- 5.7 Section 6 of the NPPF relates to "Building a strong, competitive economy" and paragraphs 84 and 85 are particularly relevant to this application as they relate to "Supporting a prosperous rural economy."

- 5.8 Paragraph 84 states:

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; and*

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.*

- 5.9 The approval of this application will support the continued growth and expansion of this successful horticultural enterprise, the additional polytunnels will increase the number of plants that the nursery can produce, and the proposed water tanks will provide for the sustainable use of rainwater for watering the plants at the nursery.
- 5.10 This paragraph of the NPPF very clearly supports the approval of this application.
- 5.11 The NPPF clearly supports the type of development proposed in this application. The approval of application 3/2021/0788 on appeal and the approval of application 3/2022/0907 by the Council both confirm the acceptability of this proposal in terms of the NPPF.

Council's Core Strategy 2008/2028 – A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Adoption Version

- 5.12 There are a number of Key Statements and Policies within the Adopted Core Strategy that are relevant to the proposal and which we will therefore comment upon below.

Key Statement DS2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development.

- 5.13 Key Statement DS2 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; and that it will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved whenever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. The policy also states that where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Policies in NPPF taken as a whole; or specific policies in that framework indicate that development should be restricted.
- 5.14 There are clearly Key Statements and Policies within the Core Strategy that are relevant to the application, although not all of them are a “precise fit” for this particular proposal. We therefore comment below on those Key Statements and Policies that we consider to be relevant.

Key Statement EN2: Landscape

- 5.15 The AONB in Ribble Valley is split into two sections, the Forest of Bowland and the Forest of Pendle. The application site is not within the AONB but is located between the two sections. Key Statement EN2 states, firstly, that the landscape

and character of the AONB will be protected, conserved and enhanced; and that any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. Secondly, and of relevance to this application, it states that the landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the AONB will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced. Finally, the Key Statement also identifies that as a principle the Council expects development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.

5.16 As the site is not within the AONB, EN2 does not specifically require the proposal to enhance the landscape and character of the locality. The proposal, however, is agricultural in nature. The only 'buildings' within the proposal are 3no. polytunnels that will be used for growing plants etc. We consider polytunnels to be a type of development that is common and acceptable in the countryside areas, not only in Ribble Valley, but also elsewhere in the Country, and that they do not therefore appear as particularly discordant features in the landscape. Having said that, in this application the additional polytunnels will be positioned on the lower part of the sloping site next to the existing polytunnels which were approved under application numbers 3/2019/0463 and 3/2021/0685. Overall, therefore, we consider that the proposed development will not have a harmful impact upon the appearance and character of the immediate locality or upon the setting of the two areas of AONB to the north and south of the site. As such, we consider the proposal to comply with the requirements of Key Statement EN2.

5.17 In the officer's report for the last application, 3/2021/0685, under the heading Visual Amenity/Landscape the officer states:

The site is located on fairly low-lying land almost completely obscured from the adjacent highway due to the dense hedgerow screening. The siting of the tunnels will not involve any earthworks as they will be located on an area of existing level land. There may be glimpses of the group of buildings in long distance views from higher land but the new structures will be located adjacent to the existing ones. As such will not be an isolated feature in the landscape and the minimal visual impact is considered acceptable.

5.18 The same assessment will naturally apply to the latest proposed development.

Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development

5.19 Key Statement EC1 states that 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. The proposed development will strengthen the wider rural and village economies, customers that come to the market garden to buy produce are likely to use the shops and public houses etc. in Chatburn and other local villages. As such we consider that the proposed development is in accordance with the intentions of Key Statement EC1.

5.20 In the officer's report for the last application, 3/2021/0685, under the heading Principle of Development, the officer states:

The Core Strategy is supportive of proposals which allow the expansion of businesses and provide employment opportunities (EC1 and DMB1). This proposal will provide 4 additional part time roles which will result in a total of 6 so will make a small contribution to providing employment. It may also attract visitors to the area. As such it is considered acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the material planning issues.

- 5.21 It is clear that the proposed development meets the criteria of Policy EC1.

Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy

- 5.22 This Key Statement relates specifically to the visitor economy stating that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged; and that significant new attractions will be supported in circumstances where they will deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to the local communities and employment opportunities.
- 5.23 We consider that the proposed development will attract both tourists and local residents thereby contributing and strengthening the visitor economy of Ribble Valley both in itself and through increased custom to other local businesses and facilities as stated in respect of Key Statement EC1.

Policy DMG1: General considerations

- 5.24 This is a general development management policy which states that, in determining planning applications, all development must satisfy a total of 20 criteria relating to the matters of design, access, amenity, environment and infrastructure.
- 5.25 The siting of polytunnels at this location has already been considered acceptable and therefore the design of the development which is the same as that previously approved should be accepted by the Council.
- 5.26 There is a safe access to the site and the proposed development will not directly increase the traffic to and from the site, it will provide the applicant with the opportunity to broaden the range and quantity of plants reared.
- 5.27 The building will not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area and there will be no adverse environmental implications arising from its development.
- 5.28 Overall it is clear that the development complies with the relevant requirements of Policy DMG1.

Policy DMG 2: Strategic considerations

- 5.29 Policy DMG2 requires development to be in accordance with the Core Strategy Development Strategy and to support spatial vision and identifies certain forms of development that are acceptable outside of the settlement areas, four of which are as follows:

1. *The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area.*
 2. *The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.*
 4. *The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
 5. *Development is for small scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.*
- 5.30 The proposed development is to facilitate the continued operation and diversification of the applicants' existing local business. The proposal will therefore benefit the local economy it provides employment for five full time employees and three part time employees.
- 5.31 The proposal development is agricultural development and is therefore needed for the purposes of agriculture, for the avoidance of doubt the planning definition of agriculture includes horticulture.
- 5.32 Policy DMG2 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.'* We consider that the proposal satisfies this particular requirement of the Policy.
- 5.33 Overall, we consider that the proposal satisfies the intentions of Policy DMG2.

Policy DME 2: Landscape and Townscape

- 5.34 This policy identifies that development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape features and sets out a list of relevant landscape features, the proposed development does not affect any landscape features, we therefore consider that the proposal fully satisfies the requirements of Policy DME2.

Policy DMB 1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

- 5.29 Policy DMB1 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. The policy states that:

"The expansion of existing firms on land outside settlements will be allowed provided that it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated within the local landscape. There may be occasions where due to the scale of the proposal relocation to an alternative site is preferable.

- 5.30 This proposal relates to an expansion of the applicant's existing business and arises as a consequence of its success after implementing the previously approved development.

- 5.35 Overall, we conclude that the proposal is fully compliant with the adopted core strategy. Therefore, in our opinion, the application should be approved. If, however, there are any aspects of the proposal that would, in the Council's opinion, prevent its approval, no doubt you will work proactively with us to find solutions, in line with the commitment contained within DS2.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposed development seeks to secure the continued operation and expansion of an existing business that will serve both local residents and tourists/visitors to the area to the benefit of the rural local economy. It will provide and secure the existing jobs of local people including employment opportunities for young people. It is an agriculturally based business that is appropriate to its existing location and the approval of the two previous applications by the Council clearly confirm the suitability of the location for this form of development. The existing access into the site has good visibility splays such that the proposal will have no detrimental effects on highway safety, and the level of traffic generated by the proposal will not increase and therefore will not have any harmful impact on the wider local highway network.
- 6.2 The NPPF and the Council's adopted Core Strategy are both supportive of rural tourism and strengthening the visitor economy in the Borough. We believe that this proposed development will assist the Council in achieving that objective.
- 6.3 Within this Planning Statement we consider that we have provided a reasoned justification explaining how the proposed development conforms to the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF. In order to satisfy the statement at paragraph 11 of NPPF, and Key Statement DS2, we therefore consider that permission should be granted without delay subject to any reasonable and necessary conditions.

G Hoerty

Gary Hoerty BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV