

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	BT	Date:	16/10/24	Manager:	LH	Date:	18/10/24
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Application Ref:	3/2024/0530	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	18/4/24	
Officer:	BT	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed conversion of barn to two two-storey, three-bedroom dwellings and one three-storey, four-bedroom dwelling with associated landscaping, outbuildings and parking.
Site Address/Location:	Barn at Cockshotts Farm, Stubbins Lane, Sabden, BB7 9EH.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Sabden Parish Council:	No objections.

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objections subject to conditions.

LCC PROW:	No objections subject to adherence with standing advice.
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LCC Archaeology:	No objection subject to condition.
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RVBC countryside:	No objections.
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CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
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Two objections have been received in relation to the proposal which are summarised as follows:

- Concerns with respect to the impact of the proposal upon highway safety

It should be noted that one of the above objections primarily expresses support for the proposal, albeit with concerns raised with respect to potential occurrences of on-street vehicle parking.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable development
Key Statement EN2: Landscape
Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets
Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations
Policy DMG1: General considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations

Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility
Policy DME2: Landscape And Townscape Protection
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets
Policy DME6: Water Management
Policy DMH3: Dwellings In The Open Countryside And AONB
Policy DMH4: The Conversion Of Barns And Other Buildings To Dwellings
Policy DMB5: Footpaths And Bridleways

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

None.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a barn building situated within the defined settlement area of Sabden within the Forest Of Bowland National Landscape and Sabden Conservation Area. The barn building lies within the Northern extents of Sabden's defined settlement area with access to the application site being from Public Right Of Way BW0337070 from Stubbins Lane. The barn building comprises stone elevations, timber windows and slate roof tiles with its principal North-eastern elevation comprising a blocked up arched cart entry and projecting walls which form the remnants of a porch canopy for the cart entry. The building's South-western elevation comprises a sizeable catslide roof which incrementally projects from North to South, with a sizeable section of the catslide roof being absent from the building's North-western corner. The North-western and South-eastern gable ends of the building accommodate a series of sporadically aligned door and window openings at both the ground and first floor level. The application site is predominantly encompassed by a stone wall boundary (save for the North-eastern perimeter of the site) with the interior of the site comprising a mixture of hardstanding and concrete (some of which has grassed over). An area of scrub lies between the North-western elevation of the barn and Public Right Of Way BW0337070. Sabden Village Hall lies immediately to the South of the application site with the residential property of Churchfields and St. Nicholas's Church lying slightly further away to the South-east. Additional residential properties lie to the South-west of the application site on Wesley Street with the Milking Parlour lying slightly further way to the North-east. The defined settlement area of Sabden predominantly lies to the West of the proposal site with the wider area comprising a mixture of woodland, agricultural land and open countryside.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning consent is sought for the residential conversion of the application building to two two-storey, three-bedroom dwellings and one three-storey, four-bedroom dwelling. Additional works proposed include associated landscaping, construction of outbuildings, formation of vehicle parking areas and the conversion of an existing single storey outbuilding to a garden / bike store.

Principle of Development:

The proposal site lies within the defined settlement area of Sabden within the Sabden Conservation Area and Forest Of Bowland National Landscape.

Policy DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

'Within areas defined as open countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.'

In addition, Policy DMH4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where:

- 1. The building is not isolated in the landscape, i.e. it is within a defined settlement or forms part of an existing group of buildings, and*
- 2. There need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure, and*
- 3. There would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests, and*
- 4. There would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy, and*
- 5. The proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area*
- 6. That any existing nature conservation aspects of the existing structure are properly surveyed and where judged to be significant preserved or, if this is not possible, then any loss adequately mitigated.*

The building to be converted must:

- Be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alteration, which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building;*
- Be of a sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would harm the character or appearance of the building –*
- The character of the building and its materials are appropriate to its surroundings and the building and its materials are worthy of retention because of its intrinsic interest or potential or its contribution to its setting, and*

The building has a genuine history of use for agriculture or another rural enterprise.

Having regard to criteria point 1 of Policy DMH4, the barn building subject to the proposed residential conversion is situated in close proximity to Sabden Village Hall and numerous residential properties and as such does not read as an isolated feature within the surrounding landscape. The proposed development would therefore satisfy the requirements of criteria point 1 of Policy DMH4 and locational requirements of Policy DMH3.

Turning to criteria point 2, access to the proposed development would be from Stubbins Lane which serves as the existing access to the site and the application's supporting information indicates that foul water is to be dealt with by way of a package treatment plant. A communal heating system is also indicated on the application's proposed site plan. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed residential conversion of the barn would warrant any unnecessary expenditure by public authorities or utilities on the provision of infrastructure. The proposal would therefore satisfy the requirements of criteria point 2 of Policy DMH4.

Having regard to criteria points 3, 4 and 5, amendments to the original design concept of the proposed scheme of residential conversion have been secured (these are covered in more detail in the report's

visual amenity section) and in light of these it is not considered that conversion of the barn building and associated outbuilding would be damaging to the landscape qualities or natural beauty of the area. In addition, it is not anticipated that the development proposed would be harmful to any nature conservation interests. Furthermore, whilst the agricultural use of the barn building ceased some time ago, the main farming enterprise at Cockshotts Farm remains operational. As such, it is not considered that the proposed reuse of the barn and associated outbuilding would be of detriment to the Borough's rural economy. Accordingly, the proposal would satisfy the requirements of criteria points 3, 4 and 5 of Policy DMH4 and design requirements of Policy DMH3.

Turning to criteria point 6, ecological survey work has been submitted in support of the application which found no presence of protected species within the barn building. In addition, no concerns with respect to the impact of the proposed development upon protected species have been raised, subject to adherence with appropriate working methodologies. As such, the proposed development meets the requirements of criteria point 6 of Policy DMH4.

Having regard to the additional criteria within Policy DMH4, a structural survey has been provided in support of the application which shows the structural integrity of the barn to be in generally good condition and capable of supporting the proposed residential conversion. In addition, analysis shows that the barn could comfortably accommodate the necessary living space for three dwellings as proposed. Furthermore, the character of the barn and its external materials reflect the vernacular of historic farm buildings within the locality and contribute to the rural setting of the area and as such is considered to be worthy of retention. Moreover, a Heritage Impact Assessment and Historic Building Appraisal have been provided in support of the application both of which comprehensively document the agricultural origins of the barn and surrounding site therefore it is clear that the barn benefits from a genuine history of use for agriculture. The proposed development would therefore satisfy the additional criteria within Policy DMH4 and structural requirements of Policy DMH3.

Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy requires decision taking to consider the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure to serve those moving to and from new developments. This is consistent with the NPPF which requires development proposals to promote sustainable transport. Two bus stops lie approximately 300 metres away to the South-west of the proposal site which are served by a total of three bus routes (624, 638, 64). Furthermore, the proposal site lies within a defined settlement with nearby amenities being within walking distance of the site. As such, future occupants of the proposed development would not be entirely reliant upon the use private motor vehicles. The proposal would therefore satisfy the requirements of Policy DMG3.

Taking account of all of the above, the proposed development would satisfy the requirements of Policies DMH3, DMH4 and DMG3. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to further assessment of additional material planning considerations.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Paragraph 135 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'.

Furthermore, Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals for development to consider the effects of development upon existing amenities.

In this instance, analysis shows that all windows openings within the proposed South-western elevation of the converted barn would solely provide views into the confines of the proposal site. Further analysis shows that the window openings proposed for the barn's South-eastern gable end would solely provide

views onto the North-western roof slope of Sabden Village Hall. In addition, the window openings proposed for the North-western elevation of the barn building would be sited at a sufficient distance from the domestic curtilage areas serving No. 37 and No. 39 Crow Trees Road, with extensive tree cover also in place between the barn's North-western elevation and these properties. Furthermore, the window openings proposed for the barn's North-eastern elevation would not interface with any residential properties. Accordingly, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme of residential conversion would compromise the privacy of any neighbouring residents.

Furthermore, the proposed communal plant building, outdoor store building and garden store for plot 1 would be sited well away from the site's nearest residential receptors within the confines of the application site and would therefore have no overbearing impacts upon any neighbouring properties. The proposed communal plant building and outdoor store building would be sited in close proximity to the North-western elevation of Sabden Village Hall however these buildings would be sited in largely the same location as an existing timber shed and silo which occupy a similar height / cubic volume to the proposed outbuildings therefore no concerns are raised with respect to the placement of the proposed outbuildings.

Having regard to the amenity of future occupants of the development, all habitable rooms within each of the proposed dwellings would be served by a sufficient quantity of windows therefore future users of the dwellings would receive an adequate provision of natural light and outlook to support the proposed residential use.

Consequently, it is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents or future users of the site. The proposed development would therefore be compliant with the aims and objectives of Paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF and Policy DMG1.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.'

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides additional general design guidance as follows:

'All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing and style...particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.'

With respect to development within the Forest Of Bowland National Landscape, Paragraph 182 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'

Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy provides similar guidance:

'The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced...the Council considers that it is important to ensure development proposals do not serve to undermine the inherent quality of the landscape...the Council will also seek to ensure that the open countryside is protected from inappropriate development.'

Policy DMH4 provides additional guidance with respect to the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings as follows:

'Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where there would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area... the building to be converted must be of a sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would harm the character or appearance of the building.'

In addition, Historic England guidance on converting traditional farm buildings states:

'There should always be a presumption in favour of maximising the use of existing openings without changing their size and limiting the formation of new ones. Where new openings are added or new windows inserted within existing door openings, great care needs to be given to their placing and design'.

In this instance, the original design conception of the proposed development included the introduction of several new window openings, with the fenestration proposed for the barn's North-eastern elevation aligned in a somewhat regimented configuration which was not considered to be reflective of the more random sequence of openings typically seen within historic agricultural buildings. A projecting glazed feature was also proposed for the barn's cart entry which was not considered to be sympathetic to the historic character of the barn in as much that the glazed structure would have drawn the eye away from the barn's cart entry which is one of the building's key historic features. In addition, full surrounds were originally proposed for all window openings within the barn with several of these being sizeable in terms of their thickness. Furthermore, the originally proposed plant and store room building comprised a sizeable structure in terms of its footprint which was not considered to be a subservient addition to the application site.

Following extensive negotiation with the applicant, an amended scheme has since been secured which includes a reduction to the quantity of new window openings proposed, with all new openings now solely serving habitable rooms. Notwithstanding the new openings proposed, the proposed scheme of residential conversion would otherwise be centred around the use of the barn's existing openings. In addition, the previously proposed projecting glazed feature has since been omitted from the scheme and the alignment of fenestration proposed for the barn's North-eastern elevation has also been revised to reflect a more randomised sequence of openings. Further amendments have also been secured in relation to the scheme's fenestration which include a reduction to the quantity of full window surrounds, several of which have been replaced with lintel / cill features. Reductions have also been made to the thickness of all stone window and door surrounds so as to lessen the domestic aspects of the proposed development. Additional works proposed include the infilling of the barn's currently exposed South-western roof slope with a replacement section of roof comprised of materials to match the existing roof slope. These works would respectfully restore the South-western roof slope of the barn to its original state and as such are considered to be acceptable. Furthermore, no extensions to the footprint or height of the barn are proposed as part of the conversion. As such, the proposed scheme of residential conversion would be largely respectful to the historic character of the barn building.

No specific or indicative details have been provided with regards to the use of external materials for the proposed development however the application's supporting information indicates that timber doors and windows and slate roof tiles would be utilised in the proposed residential conversion of the barn, all of which would reflect the rural vernacular of farmhouses and associated historic agricultural buildings within the locality. As such, the proposed use of external materials is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to further details being provided with regards to materials and specifications.

Domestic outdoor space for the proposed dwellings would be facilitated through the conversion of the existing concrete and hardstanding areas within the Western half of the site to soft landscaped areas which in turn would deliver an additional minor visual enhancement to the site given that the existing concrete and hardstanding areas are overgrown and untidy at present. The remainder of the site would be subject to further hardstanding treatments in order to facilitate the creation of pathways, access ramps, steps and vehicle parking and all of these works would be undertaken within the existing confines

of the proposal site. As such, conversion of the barn to residential use would not require any encroachment into open countryside.

Furthermore, amendments have been made to the originally proposed plant and store room building with the amended scheme comprising separate plant and store room buildings with gable roof profiles which in turn has resulted in a significant reduction to the bulk and massing of the buildings originally proposed. In addition, the garden / bike store proposed for plot 1 would be a modestly sized structure in terms of its height and footprint and both the proposed plant and store room building and garden / bike store proposed for plot 1 would be detailed in timber boarding and slate roof tiles which would be in keeping with the rural and agricultural character of the site. Furthermore, the works of conversion to the existing stone outbuilding to serve as a garden room / bike store for plot 2 would involve the reinstatement of original materials and insertion of timber boarded doors which would be sympathetic to the historic character of this building.

Taking account of all of the above, the proposed scheme of residential conversion would be compliant with current heritage guidance and it is considered that the proposed development as a whole would enhance the character and appearance of the barn building and application site and in turn, the visual amenities of the surrounding Forest Of Bowland National Landscape. The proposal would therefore satisfy the requirements of Paragraph 135 (c) and 182 of the NPPF and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMH4 of the Core Strategy.

Impact upon Character/appearance of Conservation Area:

With reference to making decisions on applications for development in Conservation Areas, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

"...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

This guidance is reiterated in Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Borough Valley Core Strategy which stipulates that all development proposals should respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of all Conservation Areas.

The *Sabden Conservation Area Appraisal (2005)* identifies numerous elements as contributing to the Conservation Area's special interest which include:

- The village's industrial past and links with cotton weaving and printing
- The rural setting of the village in lowland fringe farmland in a valley between Pendle Hill and White Hill
- Siting of the village within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape
- Prevalent use of local stone as a building material
- Architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area's buildings, including 2 listed buildings

Views of Pendle Hill, White Hill and Northwards views from Whalley Road are all noted as Key Views within the above appraisal. Threats to the Conservation Area are listed as the continuing loss of original architectural details and use of inappropriate modern materials or details. In addition, the application building, along with numerous other buildings in Sabden are identified as Buildings of Townscape Merit within the above Conservation Area Appraisal, with these buildings being deemed to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by virtue of serving as good

examples of their type where the original materials and details, and the basic, historic form of the buildings has survived.

In this instance, and as conveyed above, the proposed scheme of residential conversion would be largely respectful to the historic character of the barn building, with the large majority of the building's historic openings being utilised and with no extensions proposed to the barn building. In addition, a sympathetic palette of external materials would be utilised as part of the proposed conversion which includes the use of slate roof tiles, timber doors and windows and conservation style roof lights. As such, the basic historic form of the barn building would be retained through the proposed development and the converted barn building would remain in keeping with the vernacular of historic buildings within the locality. Furthermore, the proposed development would prevent further deterioration of a non-designated heritage asset which contributes towards the historic significance of the area and the proposed scheme of residential conversion would not detract from or result in any harm to any of the Conservation Area's elements of special interest or key views referenced above.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development as a whole would deliver an enhancement to the character and appearance of the application building and in turn, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As such, the proposed development would satisfy the requirements of Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Heritage:

Correspondence from Lancashire County Council's Archaeology team identifies the barn as holding sufficient historic interest by virtue of its origins to the period 1750-1880 which is widely recognised as being the most important period of farm building development in England. As such, the provision of a Level 2-3 Historic Building Record has been recommended in order to document the archaeological and historic importance associated with the barn building and application site. The provision of a Historic Building Record has been secured through the imposition of a planning condition.

Highways and Parking:

Lancashire County Council Highways have reviewed the proposal and have raised no major concerns with the proposed development with respect to access, vehicle parking or general highway safety however requests were initially made for an amended Location Plan to be provided along with confirmation from the applicant to confirm vehicle access rights over Public Right Of Way BW0337070. A request for the provision of secure cycle storage to serve the proposed dwellings was also made. Following this, the applicant has since provided an amended location plan as requested along with confirmation of having vehicle access rights over Public Right Of Way BW0337070. Details of secure cycle storage provision for each of the proposed dwellings has also since been incorporated into the application's proposed site plan. These details have been subject to further informal review from the LHA who have raised no further issues with the proposal. Conditions have been imposed on this consent with respect to construction management, surface materials and secure cycle storage as recommended by the LHA.

Concerns with respect to highway safety have been raised during the application's public consultation process. These concerns are primarily centred around the proposed development of the hardstanding area which lies between the North-eastern elevation of the barn building and PROW BW0337070. The concern raised makes reference to the development of this area for off-street parking as being problematic in light of the fact that this area is currently utilised (albeit informally) as a vehicle turning area for large delivery and farm vehicles with a further assertion that the loss of this area to the proposed development would have implications for highway and pedestrian safety. These concerns are noted however the area of land in question lies within the ownership of the applicant who is therefore under no obligation to allow continued use of their own land for third party vehicle movements.

Furthermore, the concerns raised have been given due consideration by the LHA who concur with the above with respect to land ownership and no further concerns have been raised by the LHA in relation to highway or pedestrian safety.

In light of all of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would have any undue impacts upon highway safety as such the proposal satisfies Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy (highways).

Landscape/Ecology:

Protected Species

A bat scoping survey carried out on 30/8/23 deemed the application site as having low risk of supporting roosting bats with no evidence of bats found on site. Notwithstanding this, the presence of bat roosts could not be ruled out entirely as not all areas of the application building were accessible at the time of surveying. In addition, evidence of bird nesting was found on site in the form of swallow nests within the building. In light of this, further emergence survey work was carried out on 24/6/24 which identified no bat roosts. On this basis the submitted emergence survey confirms that the proposed development would have no impacts upon roosting bats however the report states that works undertaken on the application building will result in a loss of potential roosting habitat. The report also confirms that the proposed development will have an impact on breeding birds due to the loss of suitable habitat and potential loss of nests. In light of the above findings, no further survey work has been recommended however the submitted emergence survey provides a number of recommended working practices and precautionary measures to be undertaken and adhered to during implementation of the proposed development so as to avoid and mitigate for any potential disturbances to protected species. Adherence with the recommended working practices and precautionary measures has been secured by way of a planning condition.

Trees

Analysis shows the presence of trees within influencing distance of the proposed development, namely with respect to the attenuation crates proposed for plots 1 and 2 and the vehicle parking area to the North-east of the barn. Notwithstanding this, the trees in question are encompassed by existing concrete / hardstanding therefore it is highly likely that the root protection areas of these trees has already been compromised as a result of ground compaction. The proposed development has been subject to review by the Council's Countryside Officer who concurs with the above and in light of this has deemed the provision of a tree survey as unnecessary however recommendations have been made for the imposition of a condition to ensure the protection of the identified trees during the construction phase of the development.

BNG

The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as it is subject to the de minimis exception.

Other Matters:

Public Right Of Way

Public Right Of Way BW0337070 provides access to the application site from Stubbins Lane therefore consultation has been undertaken with Lancashire County Council's Public Rights Of Way team. The response from LCC PROW raises no objections to the proposed development subject to adherence with their standing advice. Given the proximity of the application site to the adjacent PROW the applicant is advised to contact Lancashire County Council's Public Rights of Way team to discuss their proposal prior to commencing any works on site.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The proposed scheme of residential conversion for the barn building accords with the aims and objectives of Policies DMH3, DMH4 and DMG3 of the Core Strategy thus securing the principle of development. The proposed development would not have any undue impact upon the amenity of any neighbouring residents, nor is it considered that the development proposed would be harmful to the historic character of the barn building or Sabden Conservation Area. In addition, the proposed development as a whole would enhance the character and appearance of the barn building and application site and in turn, the visual amenities of the surrounding Forest Of Bowland National Landscape. Furthermore, the proposal raise no concerns with respect to highway safety and whilst ecological constraints are present on site it is considered that these could be effectively managed through the introduction of appropriate mitigation measures.

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.
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