

# Conversion of barn to create two dwellings

Park Farm  
Whalley Road  
Barrow

## Planning & Heritage Statement

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning & Heritage Statement has been prepared by LJJ Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of Mr Warbrick in support of a full planning application for the conversion of an existing barn to create two dwellings at Park Farm, Whalley Road, Barrow.
- 1.2 This Statement describes the application site, the proposed development and assesses its merits against the relevant up-to-date policies of the development plan, the relevant national policies and all other material considerations.
- 1.3 It demonstrates that the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant technical and general development management policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014) and also accords with Government policy and guidance as detailed within the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework').
- 1.4 Consequently, having regard to the development plan and all material considerations, there is a compelling case for planning permission to be granted without delay, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development at Paragraph 11(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 2 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises a stone barn located within the main cluster of buildings at Park Farm. The main section of the barn is two storeys in height, with a single storey lean-to at the rear. It is attached to the existing farmhouse, which is located to the south. The wider farm complex contains agricultural buildings of various ages, styles and sizes.
- 2.2 The site is accessed directly from the A59 and lies circa 600m from the services and facilities in Barrow. It also benefits from good transport links to Clitheroe, which is located 2km away to the north.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is predominantly rural in nature, albeit framed by the adjacent, primary road network and in the context of the established settlements in the vicinity.

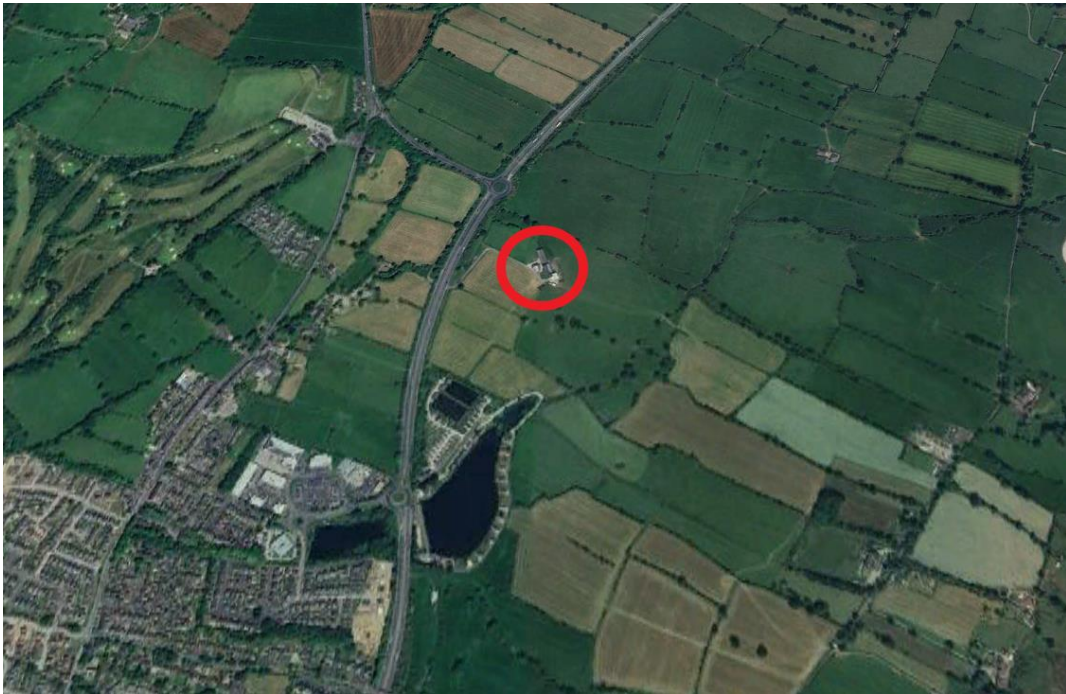


Figure 1 – site location

- 2.4 With regard to known constraints, there are no listed buildings or conservation areas within the vicinity which would be affected by the proposed development. There are no trees, protected or otherwise, which would be impacted by the scheme.
- 2.5 The site lies in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. There is a public right of way running through the farmyard (see Figure 2 below) but no closures or diversions are required to facilitate the proposals. No other constraints are known which would prevent the scheme from being delivered as set out.

### Planning history

- 2.8 The Council's online planning records show several recent applications for additional agricultural buildings at the farm, though the barn in question does not appear to have been subject to any specific proposals.

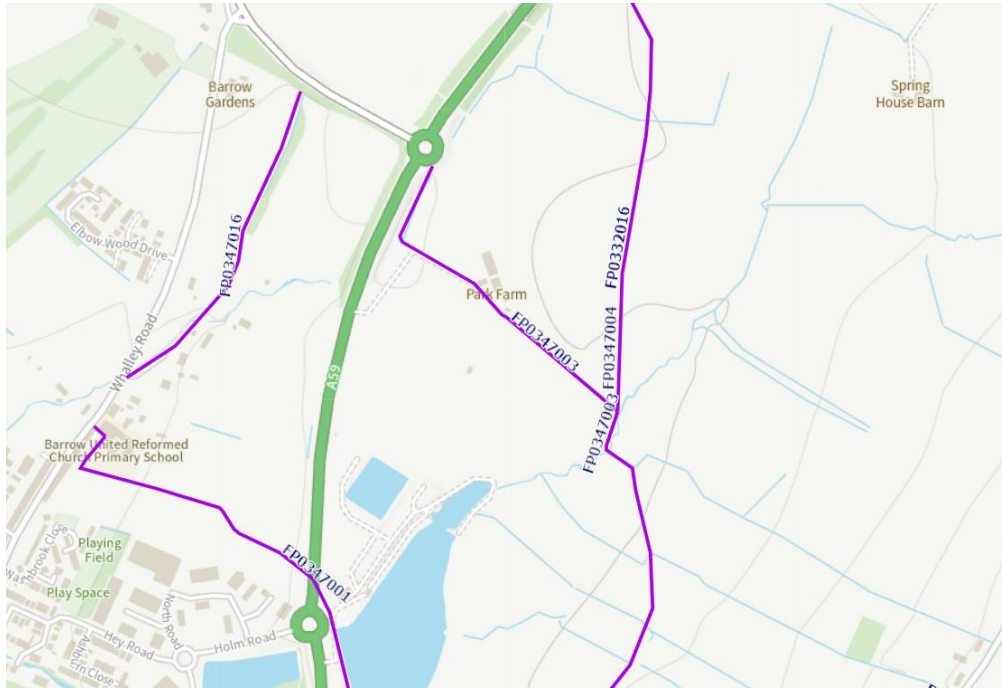


Figure 2 – PROW passing through the site (site denoted by red star)

### 3 Proposed development

- 3.1 The proposals seek to convert the existing barn to create two dwellings. Unit 1 would provide for 3 bedrooms and Unit 2 would be smaller, with 2 bedrooms. The barn is no longer fit for modern agricultural purposes, as evidenced by the recent submissions made for improved facilities elsewhere within the farmstead. The conversion project is to be undertaken by the applicant, with one of the units for him and the second for his daughter.
- 3.2 The conversion will take place wholly within the fabric of the existing building and utilise existing openings to serve the newly created habitable spaces within the barn. Some additional openings are required however this largely involves the adaptation of existing windows or doors. Each property would be afforded proportionately sized curtilage areas to the front and rear, enclosed by newly formed walls.
- 3.3 The existing slate roof of the main barn will be inspected and repaired where necessary. The cat slide lean-to at the rear is currently covered by profiled sheet roofing, which will be removed and replaced with slates to match.
- 3.4 Access will remain from the A59 and along the existing track, with new, dedicated parking spaces provided for each unit adjacent to the principal entrances.
- 3.5 Excerpts from the proposed drawing package are included below for reference.



Figure 3 – proposed site plan



Figure 4 – proposed elevations

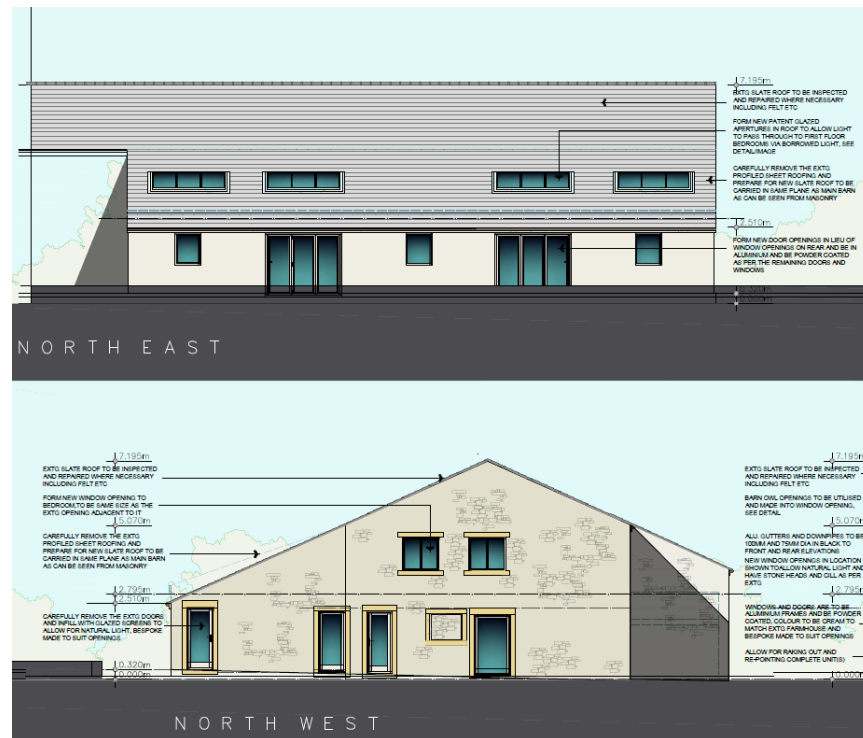


Figure 5 – proposed elevations

## 4 Planning policy

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers to the development plan as a whole and requires that application be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The development plan comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, adopted in December 2014. The site lies within the open countryside, as shown in the policies map excerpt below.



Figure 6 – HED DPD maps (site denoted by red star)

### The development plan

- 4.3 With regard to the scheme proposed in this application, the following Core Strategy policies are relevant:
- **Key Statement DS1** outlines the Council's development strategy with regard to housing, employment, retail and leisure .
  - **Key Statement DS2** confirms that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Wherever possible, it will aim to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

- **Policy DMG1** sets out various criteria to be considered in assessing planning applications and requires new development to be sympathetic to existing land uses, acceptable in terms of highway safety and should not adversely affect the amenities of the area.
- **Policy DMG2** confirms that new development should be in accordance with the overarching development strategy and should support the spatial vision. With the countryside proposals will be expected to be in keeping with the character of the landscape. The size, design and siting of new buildings should be in keeping with the character of the area.
- **Policy DMG3** requires that consideration is given to accessibility and transport credentials when assessing new development.
- **Policy DME2** seeks to ensure that important landscape features (walls, meadows, pastures and woodland) are retained and that the scale, form and use of materials in new development contributes to the character of the area.
- **Policy DME3** states that new development must be mindful of its potential impacts with regard to protected species, habitats and designated areas such as SSSI's and BHS.
- **Policy DMH3** confirms that provision of dwellings in the open countryside will be limited to a range of exceptions, including conversions which are suitably located, well designed and structurally capable of conversion without the need for substantial reconstruction.
- **Policy DMH4** allows for the conversion of barns (and other buildings) to dwellings, subject to a range of qualifying criteria, which will be discussed in greater detail in the assessment section of this Statement.

#### **National policy**

- 4.4 In addition to the Local Plan, the Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and details how they should be applied. It requires local planning authorities to adopt a presumption in favour of sustainable development, as detailed within paragraph 11.
- 4.5 With regard to the principle of residential development at this site, the following sections of the Framework are relevant:
- Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - Paragraph 11 confirms that the presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the Framework. For decision making this means approving development where it accords with an up-to-date development plan, or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date,

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granting permission unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies within the Framework indicate that development should be restricted;

- Paragraph 60 confirms the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of new homes;
- Paragraph 70 states that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing needs of an area;
- Paragraph 115 confirms that development should only be prevented on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe;
- Paragraph 123 states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, and which makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or brownfield land, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions;
- Paragraph 128 requires that development should make efficient use of land taking into account the need for different types of housing and other development and the availability of suitable land; market conditions and viability; availability and capacity of infrastructure; the scope to promote sustainable travel; the desirability to maintain the character and setting of an area or promote regeneration; and the importance of creating well-designed, attractive, healthy and safe places;
- Paragraph 131 advises that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creating better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities; and
- Paragraph 209 states that effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

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## 5 Planning assessment

5.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Act and the requirements of the Framework, this application must be considered in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The primary considerations relating to this proposal are:

- The principle of development
- Design, layout and residential amenity
- Protected species
- Car parking and highway safety
- Heritage assessment

### Principle of development

5.2 Policies DMH3 and DMH4 are primarily engaged in assessing an application of this nature. Policy DMH3 confirms that the conversion of existing buildings to create dwellings is acceptable in principle.

5.3 Policy DMH4 expands on this matter, requiring such proposals to be assessed against the following criteria:

- The building is not isolated in the landscape, i.e. it is within a defined settlement or forms part of an already group of buildings;
- There need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure;
- There would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests;
- There would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy;
- The proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area; and
- 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

In addition to this, the proposed building must:

- Be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alternation, which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building. the council will require a structural survey to be submitted with all planning application of this nature. this should include plans of any rebuilding that is proposed;
- 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

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potential or its contribution to its setting; and

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

5.4 For clarity each of these matters will be taken in turn below to demonstrate that the proposals are wholly compliant with the requirements of the Core Strategy.

#### Isolation in the landscape

5.5 The barn at Park Farm lies clearly within an existing, established group of buildings and by virtue of its age and historic role, is at the core of that cluster. This aspect of the policy is therefore satisfied.

#### Infrastructure

5.6 The site already benefits from existing services which will be utilised to support the proposed development. As such there need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities to support the new use.

#### Landscape impact

5.7 The conversion of this barn, at the centre of this long established farmstead, without the need for significant alteration and no extensions, has little impact on the landscape qualities of the area. Similarly, there are no nature conservation conflicts as confirmed by the ecological information which supports the application.

#### Rural economy

5.8 The conversion of the barn would have a neutral impact on the rural economy as it is no longer fit for modern agricultural activities. The farm benefits from buildings which are fit for purpose and as such the loss of this unused barn raises no issues.

#### Conservation of the natural beauty of the area

5.9 The proposed alterations to the building are modest in terms of affecting the fabric of the structure. This is deemed to protect the inherent character of the barn. The additional new or altered openings required to facilitate the residential use would not undermine the rural character of the building. Features such as the cart door are retained and utilised to ensure that it can be read as a former barn, post conversion.

#### Nature conservation

5.10 The application is supported by ecological assessments, following site surveys in June and July of this year. The findings of the assessments demonstrate that no unacceptable impacts will arise.

#### Structural integrity

5.11 The application is supported by a Structural Condition Survey, undertaken in June 2024. The survey confirms that the barn is in very good condition both internally and externally, and would not require any significant repair or alteration to facilitate conversion.

#### Size

5.12 As the drawing package demonstrates, the barn is of a sufficient size to more than comfortably accommodate two dwellings. Each provides for a good standard of amenity for future occupants and no extensions are necessary.

#### Character and materials

5.13 The materials to be retained in the exterior of the building comprise natural slate and sandstone which are typical of the area. Whilst not a designated or non-designated heritage asset, the building is worthy of retention accounting for its age and contribution to the rural environment. The original buildings appear on OS maps dating back to the mid 1800's (called Lower Elker Place Farm at that time) and the barn is therefore of some historic interest, albeit of a relatively low value.

#### Historic use

5.14 The barn was clearly built for agricultural purposes and has a long standing, genuine history in this regard in association with Park Farm.

#### Summary

5.15 It is evident, based on the information above and provided within the submission package, that the principle of development is wholly compliant with Policies DMH3 and DMH4 of the Core Strategy.

#### **Design, layout and residential amenity**

5.16 The proposals reflect the simple vernacular of the host building and utilise existing openings to facilitate the new residential use. Visual improvements will be secured through the removal of the existing sheet roofing to the lean-to, to be replaced by slate to match the host building.

5.17 The historic use as a former farm building will remain clear through its overall form and the retention of original features, such as the projecting cart door and existing windows/surrounds. New windows and doors would be powder coated aluminium, finished in cream to match that of the attached farmhouse.

5.18 Each new dwelling will be afforded a modest curtilage to the front and rear of the properties, to be enclosed by walling appropriate to the immediate surroundings. In this regard the visual

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impacts arising from the conversion are modest and localised.

- 5.19 The buildings are located within the 'Undulating Lowland Farmland' landscape character area as defined by the LCC document 'A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire'. This area is described in the associated assessment as being "*a particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication routes along the Ribble Valley*". This is particularly evident along the A59. The impacts of the conversion on the character of this landscape type are negligible and will be relatively well contained due to the layout and arrangement of the site.
- 5.20 The proposed arrangement also provides for sufficient levels of privacy and separation within the site, with regard to existing and proposed neighbouring residential uses. The conversion would not result in undue loss of privacy for existing residents and the scale and massing of the development will not be overbearing or visually dominant being a conversion of the existing barn.
- 5.21 In light of these factors, the proposed design, layout and landscape impact of the scheme is considered to be appropriate in this setting and would not result in any significant or unacceptable harm visually or with regard to residential amenity. The proposals are therefore compliant with Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMH4 in this regard.

#### **Protected species**

- 5.22 The application is supported by a detailed assessment to consider the potential impacts on protected species arising from the conversion proposals, including bat emergence surveys undertaken in July 2024.
- 5.23 The subsequent findings confirm that the buildings, and the surrounding habitat, offer a low level of bat roosting potential. The emergence survey which followed found no evidence of bats using the structure but more general activity was noted of bats foraging and commuting through the site.
- 5.24 Whilst opportunistic future use can never be fully discounted, the Report recommends a range of Reasonable Avoidance Measures ('RAMS') to minimise any possible disturbance during conversion works, should bats be present during construction.
- 5.25 During the survey it was noted that no owls were nesting within the building but that the existing owl box fixed to the gable of the barn was well utilised. Accordingly it is recommended that improved provision is included within the proposals, along with associated RAMS relating to owls.
- 5.26 The development is therefore compliant with Policy DME3.

#### **Car parking and highway safety**

- 5.27 Access to the proposed dwellings will be taken from the existing entrance on the A59, which is more than sufficient in terms of its width and visibility to provide for safe ingress and egress. Due to the nature of the road network, it is only possible to turn left when leaving the site, joining

the existing flow of traffic.

- 5.28 The level of traffic generated by a development of this nature will not be significant and would cause no adverse issues in terms of highway safety or capacity.
- 5.29 There is more than sufficient room within the site to provide parking and turning for vehicles and each new dwelling.
- 5.30 The Framework advises that development should only be refused on highway grounds where the impacts on the road network would be severe. This modest development raises no such issues and the access proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable.

### Heritage assessment

- 5.31 The Framework (para. 209) states that the impact of new development on non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when determining planning applications and that a balanced judgement is required with regard to any potential loss of significance.
- 5.32 The main barn appears to date from the early 1800's and is shown on the First Edition OS Maps from 1840. On the subsequent OS issue in 1890 the farmhouse and barn are clearly visible and denoted as 'Lower Elker Place Farm'.
- 5.33 The building is stone in construction and two storeys in height. It would have been used for housing livestock at ground floor with a hayloft above. The building has clearly been subject to alterations to meet changing needs throughout the years, including the provision of a lean to addition with a 'catslide' roof to the rear elevation sometime in the early to mid-1900's.



Figure 7 – 1840's OS First Addition



Figure 8 – 1890's OS First Edition 1:2500

- 5.34 The original building arrangement within the farmstead is generally linear in nature, with the core comprising the farmhouse and barn subject to this application. Over a number of years more modern agricultural structures have been erected to meet the needs of the holding, effectively surrounding the original stone buildings.
- 5.35 These more recent additions screen the buildings from wider vantage points and have rendered the original barn redundant in terms of operational, daily need. As such it is sought to secure its future by way of the proposed conversion.
- 5.36 The main barn is constructed of randomly coursed local sandstone rubble with stone quoins and surrounds to all openings, though the shared internal elevation with the attached farmhouse now comprises red brick having clearly been replaced/repared at some point in the past. The main roof of the barn is finished in stone slate, with sandstone ridge tiles and edging flags in place to the gable. The single storey lean-to at the rear has a more modern sheet metal roof, which is intended to be replaced with a more sympathetic covering to match the host barn.
- 5.37 Internally the barn is divided into various areas. The ground floor hay storage is served by a large cart door within a projecting bay which protrudes beyond the principal elevation of the barn. This is the primary entrance point and occupies a significant proportion of the floorspace.
- 5.38 The rear shippon area and the adjacent milking parlour contain livestock stalls and are accessed via a combination of pedestrian doorways and larger openings for the animals. It is noted that the window to the parlour, on the front elevation of the barn, appears to have originally been a doorway and formerly the primary entrance to this area.

- 5.39 The first floor hayloft is open plan in nature and served by forking holes, present on both the west and north facing elevations.
- 5.40 The historic significance of the barn is considered to be low and largely derived from its age, dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and its role as a traditional farm building within a historic farmstead. It has clearly been subject to numerous alterations and additions but retains its overall form which can be read and appreciated.
- 5.41 Whilst the historical significance of the barn is low, its age and overall character means that it is worth of retention by way of the proposed conversion, without which it may continue to deteriorate due to lack of use. The conversion would also secure a number of key visual improvements including removal of the unsympathetic lean-to roof to the rear.
- 5.42 The Framework requires that a 'balanced judgement' is required when considering non-designated heritage assets and any loss of significance which might occur. In this instance it is not considered that any notable harm would occur from these sensitive proposals which take place within the fabric of the original building and that clear enhancement can be achieved by way of the conversion. The proposals are therefore wholly in compliance with the Framework and Policies EN5 and DME4 of the Core Strategy.

## **6 Summary and conclusion**

- 6.1 This Planning & Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the conversion of a barn to two dwellings at Park Farm, Whalley Road, Barrow.
- 6.2 It has been demonstrated that the proposed development is wholly compliant with the relevant, up to date policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Additionally, no material considerations have been identified which would prevent the development from coming forward as set out.
- 6.3 Accordingly the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and permission should be granted without delay, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework.