



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 April 2025

by **S Brook BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/25/3360729

1 Ferry Butts, Garstang Road, Chipping, Lancashire, PR3 2QJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Graham Gregson against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 3/2024/0793.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Change of use of a commercial building to domestic residential to extend an existing dwelling house'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Change of use of a commercial building to domestic residential to extend an existing dwelling house, at 1 Ferry Butts, Garstang Road, Chipping, Lancashire, PR3 2QJ, in accordance with the terms of the application, reference 3/2024/0793, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. All areas in England and Wales designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have been retitled National Landscapes (NL). For the avoidance of doubt, I have used the term NL, which is the term used in the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Main Issues

3. The main issues are a) whether the building is suitable for retention, having regard to its appropriateness to its surroundings, its intrinsic interest and contribution to its setting, and b) the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the building itself, and the area, which includes the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (FoBNL).

Reasons

Suitability for Retention

4. The appeal site comprises a former joiner's workshop which adjoins 1 Ferry Butts, a traditional stone cottage, with slate roof. No 1 adjoins a further cottage and these buildings form a short terrace within the countryside.
5. Policy DMH4 of the Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley, adopted December 2014, (CS) is specific to the conversion of buildings to dwellings. Criterion 3 of the second part of this policy, requires that 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. The supporting text to CS policy DMH4 states that, the re-use of existing rural buildings provides an important opportunity to preserve buildings that contribute to the areas character and setting, can usefully provide a housing resource, and promote sustainability.

6. I understand that the appeal building dates from the 1960's. It is relatively small in scale and has a simple overall form. It is set down and set back from the adjoining cottages and it shares a similar roof gradient. While not possessing any intrinsic historical or architectural interest itself, due to its position, form and massing, it sits comfortably alongside these cottages in the rising topography of this rolling farmland, forming a small group, which contributes positively to the locality. While originally of a commercial nature, the workshop is not overtly industrial or utilitarian in either scale or appearance, with fenestration of domestic proportions. Its materials are not out of character with those used in the wider area. Visually, the building appears appropriate in its setting, which is a working agricultural landscape.
7. Further, as an existing building of substantial construction, its reuse would provide the means to extend an existing residential building in a manner that the supporting text to CS policy DMH4 recognises as usefully providing a housing resource and promoting sustainability.
8. As such, the existing building is appropriate to its surroundings, and I find no compelling reasons to suggest that it is not worth retaining. Therefore, I find no conflict with criterion 3 of the second part of CS policy DMH4.

Character and Appearance

9. Criterion 1 of the second part of CS policy DMH4 specifies that 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. Criteria 3 and 5 of the first part of CS policy DMH 4 additionally require that conversions are not harmful to the landscape qualities of the area or nature conservation interests, and that they are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. Further, CS Policy DMG1 requires a high standard of building design that responds to its surroundings, including landscape character, through the consideration of matters such as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.
10. As the appeal site lies within the FoBNL, as the decision maker, there is a duty upon me to seek to further the purposes of this protected landscape. NL's are designated for the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. The Forest of Bowland Management Plan 2019-2024, states that development within and close to AONBs is expected to conform to a high standard of design, to be in keeping with local distinctiveness and, fundamentally, seeks to conserve and enhance the AONB's natural beauty. CS Key Statement EN2 and policy DMG2 require that the landscape and character of the FoBNL be protected, conserved and enhanced, while the Framework advises that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes.
11. The proposal would include; the application of timber cladding over the existing rendered walls of the workshop, replacement of the existing green metal sheet roofing with natural slate, replacement hardwood garage doors, replacement of all other existing doors and windows using powder coated aluminium in a matt black

finish, the addition of a window to the gable end and doors to the rear, also using powder coated aluminium in a matt black finish, as well as four rooflights to the rear roof slope.

12. As a result of the proposed alterations, the scale and massing of the building itself would remain unchanged and so in this respect, it would continue to sit comfortably alongside these existing cottages, in the rolling pastoral farmland that surrounds the site. The replacement of existing doors and windows as proposed, and the addition of a small number of new openings, would not change the character or appearance of the existing building to any significant degree, particularly in public views. Slate appears to be a traditional building material in the locality, and its use would be consistent with the adjoining cottages.
13. The most significant change to the building would be the application of timber cladding to the existing walls. Initially, this would draw the eye and increase the visual prominence of the building in its setting, due to the newness of the timber. However, this would diminish as the timbers weathered, allowing the altered materials to assimilate into the landscape.
14. The use of timber as a building material is not uncommon in the area, with many farm buildings utilising the material. I accept that these are often detached farm buildings of an agricultural style. Nevertheless, it is a material common to the local area and while the finish to the existing building would change, it would not necessarily alter the building's character. It would still read as a workshop type building, distinct from the adjoining cottage, which is how it appears now, and so, the traditional built form and character of the adjoining cottage would not be undermined. Given the visual distinction between the workshop and the cottage, while the proposal would in effect significantly increase the domestic footprint of No. 1, it would not necessarily read as such externally, and so, the proposal would not appear as a discordant addition to this dwelling.
15. The existing former workshop is an established part of the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would result in some change, principally in terms of materials, however, these materials are consistent with the local vernacular and the building would retain its character as a former workshop. As such, the proposal would not appear incongruous, and the character and appearance of the building itself, and the wider area would not be harmed. Therefore, I find that the proposal would be consistent with furthering the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the FoBNL. It would not conflict with or undermine this purpose.
16. To conclude, the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the building itself, or the area. Consequently, I find no conflict with CS Key Statement EN2 and policies DMG1, DMG2, and DMH4, the purposes of which, have been set out above.

Conditions

17. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council with reference to the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. The appellant has had the opportunity to comment. I have made some revisions to the Council's suggested conditions in the interests of clarity and to ensure compliance with the Framework.

18. I have imposed a condition which concerns the statutory time limit. In the interests of certainty, I have also imposed a condition concerning the approved plans. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, a condition secures the materials as provided on the plans and application form.
19. A Bat Survey Report and Method Statement, dated 15 January 2024, accompanied the proposal and includes a number of reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures. These measures appear proportionate to the low risk identified to this species. Therefore, I have imposed a condition to secure these measures. I have omitted the specific requirements relating to bat box implementation and retention as these are included in the measures contained in the report.
20. I have not imposed a condition which restricts use of the building as a separate residential unit as this would require a further application for planning permission.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole and all other material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S Brook

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 01 – Existing Floor Plans and Elevations and Site Location Plan, and 02 – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations and Site Plan.
3. The materials to be used on the external surfaces of the development hereby approved, shall be implemented in accordance with those indicated on the application form and drawing no 02 – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations and Site Plan.
4. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures contained within the Bat Survey Report and Method Statement, dated 15 January 2024, undertaken by Dave Anderson.