


**Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.**

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>BT</b>	<b>Date:</b>	29/5/25	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>29/5/25</b>
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2025/0041			 <p>Ribble Valley Borough Council <a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	18/4/25 & 21/5/25	<b>Site Notice:</b>	18/4/25	
<b>Officer:</b>	BT			
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>				<b>REFUSAL</b>

<b>Development Description:</b>	Proposed regularisation of change of use of land and construction of three stable buildings.
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	Acrelands, Sawley Road, Grindleton, BB7 4QS.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
<b>Grindleton Parish Council:</b>	No objections to the proposal, minor concerns raised with respect to potential highway safety issues.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	No objections subject to condition.

<b>LCC PROW:</b>	Consulted 14/4/25 – no response received.
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<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
<p>One objection has been received in relation to the application with respect to the supply of water within the locality of the application site. Notwithstanding this, the issue of water supply does not form the basis of a material planning consideration and as such cannot be assessed as part of this application.</p>	

**RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:**

**Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**

- Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
- Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
- Key Statement EN2: Landscape
- Policy DMG1: General Considerations
- Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
- Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
- Policy DMB5: Footpaths And Bridleways

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**Relevant Planning History:**

**3/2005/0263:**

Two storey extension (Approved)

**3/1996/0446:**

First Floor Extension (Approved)

**ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:****Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The application relates to a detached two storey property located on the North-eastern outskirts of Grindleton. Access to the application property is from the South-west from Sawley Road via Public Right Of Way FP0321043, with the property's access track located on the North-eastern side of PROW FP0321043 and running alongside Public Right Of Way FP0321044. The application property consists of a stone and slate based farmhouse property which has been subject to extensions over the last few decades. The Southern portion of the application property's domestic curtilage area comprises an area of hardstanding which currently accommodates one of three stable buildings subject to this application. The two additional stable buildings subject to this application are sited outside of the property's curtilage area to the South-west of the application property on an area of hardstanding on the Western side of the property's access track. The application site lies within the Forest Of Bowland National Landscape with the surrounding area comprising a mixture of woodland, agricultural land and open countryside.

**Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**

Retrospective planning consent is sought for the retention of three stable buildings along with a change of use of the agricultural land on the Western side of the property's access track to accommodate two of the three unauthorised stable buildings. The application's supporting information states that these unauthorised works were completed in March 2024.

**Principle of Development:**

The application site lies outside of the Borough's defined settlement areas. Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy allows for the provision of development outside the Borough's defined settlement areas subject to the following criteria:

- 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.*
- 3. The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.*
- 4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
- 5. The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.*
- 6. The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.*

In this instance, the proposal relates to the retention of unauthorised stable buildings which would be solely utilised for private equestrian use. Whilst the use of modestly sized stable buildings for private equestrian use could potentially fall within the realm of a recreational development appropriate to a rural area, the proposal would in this instance involve the retention of three stable buildings with a collective footprint of over 100 square metres in area. In light of this, a sufficient justification in terms of need needs to be demonstrated for retention of the buildings. Whilst the applicant has provided supporting information detailing a breakdown of use for each of the unauthorised stable buildings, it is understood

that the applicant does not currently own any horses. Furthermore, the breakdown of use provided in relation to each of the stable buildings is somewhat speculative in nature and is not reflective of any existing equestrian use currently being undertaken on site (the application's supporting information states that the unauthorised stable buildings were erected by previous occupants of the application property). Consequently, it is not considered that sufficient justification has been provided in support of the application to justify the retention of all three of the unauthorised stable buildings for use as a small-scale recreational development within a rural area. Furthermore, the unauthorised development would not be utilised in relation to any of the other exceptions for development allowed under Policy DMG2.

Additional criterion within Policy DMG2 requires all development within the Forest Of Bowland National Landscape to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the landscape by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting however in this instance it is considered that the unauthorised development, if retained, would fail to successfully assimilate within the surrounding landscape (the visual impact of the proposed development is assessed in further detail in the report's 'Visual Amenity/External Appearance' section).

Taking account of all of the above, retention of the unauthorised development would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policy DMG2 and as such is considered to be unacceptable in principle.

#### **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, the unauthorised stable buildings lie at considerable distance from residential receptors and would not be utilised for commercial purposes in the event of being retained. As such, retention of the unauthorised development raises no concerns with respect to its impact upon neighbouring amenity. Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents. 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 National Landscapes (previously known as Areas Of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Paragraph 189 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.'*

The above is reiterated within Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy:

*'The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.'*

In this instance, three stable buildings have been erected at the application site. The building marked as 'stable 3' on the submitted plans is a modestly sized structure with respect to its footprint and lies within the confines of the application property's domestic curtilage area and is only readily visible when stood directly outside the property's access gates. As such, the visual impact of stable 3 is largely unapparent and this structure is not read within the context of the surrounding open countryside.

In contrast, the buildings marked as 'stable 1' and 'stable 2' on the submitted plans are both highly visible on approach to the application property from the South along the site's access track. In addition, whilst these buildings are modestly sized structures in term of their height, they collectively occupy a footprint of over 90 square metres and are sited in close proximity to one another, with a noticeable absence of any other built form in the open fields surrounding the buildings which form part of the site's open countryside setting. As such, stable buildings 1 and 2 collectively read as a conspicuous, over dominant and isolated form of development which fails to comfortably assimilate within the surrounding open countryside. In addition, historic aerial imagery suggests that the construction of the hardstanding area to accommodate stable buildings 1 and 2 has resulted in the removal of numerous trees (spanning a distance of approximately 40 metres, some of which appeared to have been mature trees) which were previously in place along the Western side of the application site's access track which in turn has had an urbanising impact on the character of the site. Accordingly, it is considered that retention of the unauthorised development would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area and for this reason it is not considered that the proposal would in this instance conserve or enhance the character of the surrounding National Landscape. The proposal would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 135 (C) and 189 of the NPPF and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Core Strategy.

#### **Highways and Parking:**

The proposed development has been subject to review by Lancashire County Council Highways who initially sought clarification with respect to the use proposed for the unauthorised stable buildings. The applicant has since confirmed that the stable buildings would be solely utilised for private use in the event of being retained. In light of this, the LHA have raised no issues with retention of the unauthorised development in relation to access, parking provision or general highway safety, subject to the imposition of a condition restricting use of the stable buildings to private use only. On this basis, it is not considered that retention of the unauthorised development would have any undue impacts upon highway safety as such the proposal satisfies Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy (highways).

#### **Landscape/Ecology:**

The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as it forms the basis of retrospective development. No other ecological constraints were identified in relation to the proposed development.

#### **Other Matters:**

Public Right Of Way

Constraint analysis shows the official route of Public Right Of Way FP0321044 as running alongside the Western side of the application property's access track and through the current location of unauthorised stable buildings 1 and 2. Further analysis shows that a diversion order has been applied for to relocate the affected Right Of Way however this is not referenced in the application's supporting information and it is understood that this diversion order has not been determined to date. Furthermore, Lancashire County Council's Public Rights Of Way team have been consulted in relation to this planning application however no response has been received to date. Notwithstanding this, analysis shows that the diverted Right Of Way would follow a largely similar course to the existing Right Of Way if diverted as shown in the diversion order applied for. In addition, whilst retention of the unauthorised development is considered to be unacceptable for the reasons conveyed earlier in this report, it is accepted that the Right Of Way could still be diverted as proposed in the absence of the unauthorised development being in place and in this instance it is not considered that the proposed diversion would be of such significance to be of detriment to the route or the enjoyment of members of the public utilising the Right Of Way.

**Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**

It is not considered that sufficient justification has been provided in support of the application to justify retention of all three of the unauthorised stable buildings for use as a small-scale recreational development appropriate in a rural area. Furthermore, the unauthorised development would not be utilised in relation to any of the other exceptions for development allowed under Policy DMG2. Retention of the unauthorised development would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Policy DMG2 and as such is considered to be unacceptable in principle.

Furthermore, a significant component of the unauthorised works reads as a conspicuous, over dominant and isolated form of development which fails to comfortably assimilate within the surrounding open countryside. Accordingly, it is considered that retention of the unauthorised development would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area and for this reason it is not considered that the proposal would in this instance conserve or enhance the character of the surrounding National Landscape. The proposal would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 135 (C) and 189 of the NPPF and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Core Strategy.

It is for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that planning consent be refused.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning consent be refused for the following reasons:

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| <b>01:</b> | It is not considered that sufficient justification has been provided in support of the application to justify retention of all three of the unauthorised stable buildings for use as a small-scale recreational development within a rural area. Furthermore, the unauthorised development would not be utilised in relation to any of the other exceptions for development allowed under Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Retention of the unauthorised development would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and as such is considered to be unacceptable in principle.   |
| <b>02:</b> | Two of the three proposed stable buildings read as a conspicuous, over dominant and isolated form of development which fails to comfortably assimilate within the surrounding open countryside. Accordingly, it is considered that retention of the unauthorised development would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area and for this reason it is not considered that the proposal would in this instance conserve or enhance the character of the surrounding National Landscape. The proposal would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 135 (C) and 189 of the NPPF and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. |