

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.								
Signed:	Officer:	KH	Date:	08/10/25	Manager:	LH	Date:	10/10/25
Site Notice displayed	17/07/25	Site Notice Expired	07/08/25					

Application Ref:	3/2025/0146	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	17/07/25	
Officer:	KH	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		Decision Refusal

Development Description:	Proposed change of use of land to residential with access track (60m long), gate (2m high) and boundary treatments (1.2m high fences and 1m high stone wall), bin store and parking area to the rear.
Site Address/Location:	Evesons Barn, Simonstone Lane, Simonstone BB12 7NU

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No response.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objections subject to conditions relating to access materials and drainage, visibility splays and existing access to the permanently closed.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Neighbour Responses:	
<p>One response received raising concerns with traffic movement on Simonstone Lane due to increased usage and speeding traffic. The existing access is not suitable due to its junction with Simonstone Lane and the restricted site lines when merging on to it. I am therefore largely in favour of the proposal as it will alleviate this problem. I would also urge that adequate steps are taken to avoid run off surface water onto Simonstone Lane.</p>	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy:
Policy DS1: Development Strategy Policy DS2: Sustainable Development Policy EN1: Green Belt Policy EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Policy EN5: Heritage Assets Policy DMG1: General Considerations

Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

23/0521 – Proposed conversion of disused agricultural barn to one dwelling including demolition of attached outbuilding, creation of garden area and parking.

23/0935 – Approval of details reserved by condition 3 (Written Scheme of Investigation), condition 10 (Drainage Scheme) and condition 13 (Landscaping Scheme) of planning permission 3/2023/0521 – Partially Discharged.

24/0478 – Approval of details reserved by conditions 7 (Schedule of Works), 8 (door and windows specification), 9 (external materials), 11 (lighting details), 17 (solar panel details) of planning permission 3/2023/0521 – partially discharged.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The site is located outside the settlement boundary within land designated as Greenbelt.

The immediate site consists of a converted agricultural building with the surrounding area comprising of farm and agricultural buildings, agricultural fields as well as terraced and larger dwellings sited to the west and further north of the site.

Vehicular access was approved for the barn conversion via the existing track off Simonstone Lane to the west.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

This application seeks to create a vehicular access from Simonstone Lane to provide an additional access to the barn conversion from the south (rear) elevation rather than the north (front) elevation.

This would introduce a 60m long tarmacked access track across the field to the south accessed through a 2m high 4.4m wide timber gate together with 1.2m boundary timber fences to boundaries and a 1m high stone wall to either side of the proposed entrance up to the new gate access together with a tarmacked parking area for up to 4 cars.

Principle of Development:

The proposed vehicular access road and associated boundary treatments are located within the Green Belt. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Key Statement EN1 of the Core Strategy states that the overall extent of the Green Belt will be maintained to safeguard the surrounding countryside from inappropriate encroachment. The development of new buildings in the Green Belt will be limited to the purposes of agriculture, forestry, essential outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of the designation.

Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that development is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions applies. This includes (a-g) buildings for agriculture and forestry; appropriate facilities including buildings for outdoor sport and recreation; extension and alterations of a building; replacement of a building; limited infilling in villages; limited infilling in villages and limited affordable housing for local community needs. None of which apply in this case.

Paragraph 154(h) of the Framework allows for 'Other forms of development provided they preserve the openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'. These are: i. mineral extraction; ii engineering operations; local transport infrastructure; iv the reuse of buildings; (v) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and vi development including buildings brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

The development submitted relates to an approved barn conversion with the application proposing an additional access route through the agricultural field to the south of the barn conversion. There is a requirement to consider whether this development would meet any of the exceptions.

The development could satisfy Paragraph 154(h) subject to the development preserving the openness of the Green Belt. The tarmac access track would extend for 60m in length with a minimum width of 5m running at an angle through the centre of the field separating this into two sections with boundary fencing to both sides and a 2m high, 4.4m wide timber boarded gate within a powder coated black metal frame and stone boundary piers at the entrance. The boundary fences would be formed from 1.817m wide 5 bar timber horizontal rails with 1.175m high timber posts.

The type, length and position of this access road and associated gate and boundary treatments is considered to be out of character and introduce an overtly domestic appearance to the site which is currently an open field that is devoid of any other built form. Therefore, this would be a prominent development that would result in a loss of openness in the Green Belt given that it would introduce built form to undeveloped and open land.

Paragraph 153 goes on to state that 'Very Special Circumstances (VSC) will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'. There are no VSC in this case to justify allowing this inappropriate development.

As part of the approval for the barn conversion a curtilage plan was submitted and agreed in order to limit the amount of land to be used in association with the barn conversion which together with the removal of permitted development rights would limit the amount of domestic paraphernalia in this Green Belt location to an acceptable degree.

The application states that the proposals are required in order to provide a better alternative access route to the barn. However, based on the information submitted it is considered that as there is an existing access that serves at least two other residential properties and provides access to Simonstone Hall and Whalley Road to

the east that the proposed access is not necessary, would result in an overtly domestic appearance to the site and therefore this is not considered to merit VSCs.

The tarmac track at 60m long together with stone walls, timber gate and fencing would be out of character and domesticated in nature resulting in an overly prominent on this exposed field. There is also a concern that this could lead to more domestication of this land with the track running along the centre of the site thus resulting in a unacceptable impact on the character of the area and the Green Belt in terms of its openness.

The proposal would therefore be contrary to Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 and Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

As the site is not located within a defined settlement boundary, the proposed development should be assessed under the criteria outlined within Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Policy DMG2 states that:

Within the tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas development must meet at least one of the following considerations:

- 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.*

The proposed development would not fall within the scope of any of the criteria.

The location of the track within the middle of the site linking to the highway at 60m in length is not appropriate and there is no established need for the proposed track to enable access to the site as there is an existing access from the same highway much closer to the barn conversion which is utilise by other adjacent residential properties.

As such the development does not comply with Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Residential Amenity:

The nearest residential properties are Evesons Farm and Cottage Grade II Listed and sited opposite the barn to the north and The Bungalow adjacent to the east. As these are all existing buildings care needs to be given to the positioning of additional windows particularly to the front (north elevation) facing the farmhouse/cottage as these primary elevations are less than 10m distant.

Visual Amenity/Heritage Assets:

There are some public rights of way nearby, none which cross the application site. The site is visible from the public highway, Simonstone Lane to the west, which allows views of the site from public viewpoints.

The vehicular access, gate and boundary treatments represent an urban form of development which would result in an unacceptable impact on this open and rural location, contrary to policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

The site is less than 10m to Evesons Farm and Cottage which are Grade II Listed, however it is not considered that the proposal would result in any direct harm to these designated heritage assets.

BNG/Ecology:

Details of Biodiversity Net Gain have been submitted with the application. The draft BNG report concludes that the proposed works would result in a loss of 0.11 habitat units and 0.01 hedgerow units resulting in an overall loss of 90.45% and 40.59% respectively.

An additional 0.12 habitat units and 0.01 hedgerow units are required in order to achieve a 10% net gain.

Whilst some limited replacement hedgerow of 3m has been shown on the submitted plans no details of improved amenity grassland have been provided, and the application lacks detail on a strategy for how the 10% uplift will be achieved. Additionally, any BNG provision would appear to be reliant on land outside of the red edge, in which case a legal agreement would be required to secure the BNG off-site, however this has not been submitted.

The proposal therefore fails to meet the statutory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain contrary to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Highways:

The proposal would result in a new vehicular access from Simonstone Lane which is C classified Road subject to 30mph speed limit.

LCC Highways have been consulted on this application and are of the view that the access is acceptable and would not result in any undue impact on the adjacent properties.

LCC require conditions relating to access materials and drainage, visibility splays and for the existing access to the permanently closed. However, this would not be appropriate as the existing access serves a number of other properties.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The additional access would result in an unacceptable form of development within the Green Belt and an excessive and prominent access track which is not necessary within this prominent rural location to the detriment of the openness of the Green Belt and open and rural character of the area by virtue of its length, materials and urban/domestic features.

The proposal also fails to meet the statutory requirements for BNG as required by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be refused for the following reason:
01	The proposed development is contrary to the provisions of Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Chapter 13 'Protecting Green Belt Land' of the National Planning Policy Framework in that the development would result in the introduction of unnecessary urban form which fails to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal is considered to represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been put forward which would outweigh the resultant harm caused.

02	The proposed development fails to meet one of the exception criteria for allowing development outside of the settlement boundaries and would result in an adverse impact on the open and rural character of this countryside location, by virtue of the urbanisation of this agricultural field with a prominently sited access track and overtly domestic gate and boundary features, contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.
03	The proposed development would result in the loss of existing habitat and hedgerow units, with insufficient information included within the draft BNG assessment to demonstrate an appropriate strategy for achieving the statutory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain would be achieved. Additionally, this would be dependent on land outside of the red edge (off-site provision), which would need to be secured in a legal agreement, which has not been forthcoming. The application is contrary to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021).