


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	24/07/2025	Manager:	LH	Date:	25/7/25
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0330				Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	13/05/25	Site Notice:	13/05/25		
Officer:	LW				
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:					REFUSAL

Development Description:	Proposed new agricultural machinery building.
Site Address/Location:	Land to the south of Lower Road, Longridge, PR3 2YL.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments received with respect to the proposed development.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	The LHA does not consider that the application as submitted fully assesses the highway impact of the proposed development.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
<p>Two letters of representation have been received. The concerns raised within the letters can be summarised as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existing access track is poorly constructed and not fit for purpose resulting in mud and debris on the highway;• Highway safety in relation to the movement of unlit vehicles between the fields on opposite sides of Lower Road that are unregistered for use on the highway;• The condition of the land to the north of Lower Road which is associated with application ref: 3/2022/0676 for the construction of a similar agricultural building;• The detrimental appearance of the existing site including old vehicles and dirt track;• Noise disturbance caused by plant machinery movements;• The use of the site/ building for an agricultural contracting business;• Pollution to the nearby Page Brook caused by fuel or other effluent leaks;• Inaccuracies within the submitted information relating to the claimed acreage, machinery and land ownership. <p>The condition of the land to the north of Lower Road does not form a material consideration in the determination of this application. The issues raised with respect to inaccuracies in land ownership have been addressed via the submission of an amended Certificate B. The applicant has also confirmed the size of the land holding and machinery owned.</p>	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy:
Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2023/0749: Prior notification for a proposed new agricultural storage building (Permission Required).

3/2023/0487: Prior notification for a proposed new agricultural storage building (Withdrawn).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to an agricultural field which is located on the southern side of Lower Road, Longridge. The site is situated within an area of Open Countryside and benefits from no other designations or constraints.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought for the construction of a proposed agricultural machinery building measuring 9.14m by 9.14m. The proposal would incorporate a pitched roof form with an eaves and ridge height of 3.83m and 5.32m respectively and would be constructed from concrete panels and timber boarding to the external elevations and profiled cement sheet panels to the roof.

It is also understood that additional works have recently been carried out on the land, including the formation of a new field access off an existing area of hardstanding which adjoins Lower Road towards the western boundary of the land parcel, as well as the construction of a track extending from this access to the location of the proposed building. The original field access remains in situ.

It is also noted that the proposal site benefits from an existing timber-clad stable type building towards the eastern boundary of the field. However, there does not appear to be any formal planning consent associated with this structure.

Principle of Development:

The site is not located within a defined settlement boundary and as such Policy DMG2 is of relevance.

Policy DMG2 states that within Tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas development must meet a number of criteria. This includes development that is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture. As such, an assessment must be made as to whether the proposed building is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture.

In this instance, planning consent is sought for the construction of an agricultural storage building. A similar development was proposed by the applicant under prior notification application 3/2023/0749. This proposal was refused on the basis that the applicant had failed to provide sufficient supporting information to justify the need for the building in relation to an existing agricultural trade/ business currently in operation on the land, which is a core requirement of the GPDO. Additional concerns were also raised with respect to the siting of the building.

The supporting information submitted with this application states that the applicant's agricultural holding is 7.3 hectares in area, with the land the subject of this application being rented from a local farmer for the purpose of storing machinery and grazing sheep.

The information goes on to state that the machinery is used onsite as well as for the applicant's agricultural contracting business and is currently stored outside at the application site. This includes 2no. tractors, front and rear mounted mowers, hay tedder, hay rake, hedge cutter, fertiliser spreader, land rollers and grass chain harrows, pasture topper, sheep trailer and flatbed trailer, ATV and ATV trailer and equipment for handling hay bales. The applicant's intention is to construct the proposed agricultural building in order to house this equipment, in addition to the storage of hay and temporary accommodation of sheep.

While the holding and farm itself is not a major farming enterprise, it was identified that livestock and a range of agricultural machinery were present at the time of visiting the site and historic aerial photography indicates that both the livestock and machinery have been present at the site for an extended period of time.

Taking account of the above, it is considered, on balance, that the proposed building would be a justifiable addition to the application site for the purposes of agriculture. Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposed development would conflict with Policy DMG2 and is therefore acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the additional material planning considerations.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

In this instance, the proposed building would be sited approximately 130m away from the nearest residential receptors fronting Lower Road. Given the separation distance that would be in place between the proposed development and neighbouring properties and taking account of the scale of the use proposed, no significant concerns are raised from the proposed development beyond those associated with existing use of the site and surrounding land.

Concerns have been raised with respect to noise disturbance arising from the movement of machinery; however, the site is already in agricultural use and the movement of vehicles to and from agricultural land is common practise. In addition to this, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would result in noise disturbance significantly above that which is already associated with the agricultural operation currently being carried out on the site.

Consequently, it is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents to a degree that would warrant the refusal to grant planning permission.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning decisions should ensure that development:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).*

Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

“Within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledged the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build”.

Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy also states that all development must:

“be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials [and] consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance, particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities”.

The design of the building itself would reflect the nature of other agricultural buildings within the area. Concrete panels, timber boarding and profiled cement sheet panels are common materials found on similar developments along Lower Road and as such their use as part of the proposed development would not appear out of place relative to its surroundings. The size and scale of the building is also considered proportionate to the proposed use.

However, concerns have previously been raised with respect to the siting of the building which remains unchanged from that previously proposed under refused prior approval application 3/2023/0749.

The surrounding area has a clearly rural and open character, with large fields interspersed with boundary vegetation and scattered clusters of buildings, the closest of which are located directly adjacent Lower Road to the north of the proposal site. However, despite the general proximity to these existing buildings, the proposed building itself would be sited over 150m into the application site.

In an attempt to justify the siting of the proposal, the applicant has stated that the location for the building has been chosen as the least visible option to the public, minimising disruption to the local scenery and shielding the building from the view of potential thieves. However, the siting of the building would result in the development appearing an isolated and detached addition to the landscape, being viewed separately from the existing built form to the north of the application site. In addition to this, the proposed location of the building has necessitated the construction of a substantial length of new track extending from the site access. This has resulted in additional visual harm to the surrounding countryside which would not have been required were the building located closer to the site access and existing buildings. As such, the aforementioned justification for the location of the building is not considered to outweigh the resultant adverse impact upon the visual amenities of open countryside landscape.

In view of the above, the proposed development is considered to have an adverse impact upon the visual amenities of the immediate area and wider open countryside landscape, contrary to Paragraph 135 of the NPPF and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Core Strategy.

Highways and Parking:

Lancashire County Council Highways have been formally consulted on the proposed development. In their initial response dated 21st May 2025, the Local Highway Authority made a request for further information with respect to the site access and internal layout, along with drawings detailing swept path analysis and visibility splays.

During discussions with the applicant, it was stated that the entrance proposed for use is an existing access and there will no change to the volume of traffic coming and going from the site as a result of the development. It was further stated that the hardstanding area between Lower Road and the field access has been present for many years and the proposed entry way is the widest option, opposed to the other field

gate which has immediate access straight onto the roadside. The applicant also suggests that the access gate has a greater field of vision than that of the adjacent residential properties along Lower Road.

However, the field access in question is understood to have recently been constructed with historic aerial and street view imagery showing the original access to be the field gate located further to the east along Lower Road, which remains in situ. Furthermore, as the additional drawings requested by the LHA have not been provided, it cannot be determined whether the development would result in no adverse impact upon highway safety in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site. Accordingly, the proposal fails to adequately consider the potential highway implications of the development contrary to the aims and objectives of Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which seeks to restrict development proposals likely to have an adverse effect on highway safety and parking.

Landscape/Ecology:

A Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy has been submitted in support of the proposed development. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit have been consulted on the Strategy; however, no comments have been received. Notwithstanding this, the assessment indicates that construction of the building would not result in a loss of biodiversity to the application site, with the building to be sited on an existing sealed surface. In addition to this, on-site habitat creation is proposed through the introduction of tree planting. As such, the proposal is considered to satisfy the statutory requirements with respect to Biodiversity Net Gain subject to the imposition of suitable conditions..

It is noted that the proposed building would be sited within close proximity to a number of mature trees which border the proposal site. Whilst it is not anticipated that the development would result in any direct impact upon these trees, were the application to be approved, a condition would need to be attached requiring all retained trees to be protected during the construction phase of the development.

Concerns have also been raised with respect to the pollution of the nearby Brook by fuel and other effluent leaks. However, given the proposal relates to the construction of an agricultural building for the storage of machinery, feed and temporary livestock accommodation and taking into account the existing use of the site, it is not anticipated that the development would result in a significant increase in the risk of pollution. Were the application to be approved a condition could be attached regarding drainage.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

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

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be refused for the following reasons:
01:	The proposed agricultural building by virtue of its siting would result in an isolated and detached form of development, which together with the substantial length of new track, would be harmful to the open character of the countryside surroundings. As such, the proposal fails to comply with Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2008-2028) and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
02:	The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in any adverse impact upon highway safety and parking within the immediate vicinity of the site. The proposal therefore fails to adequately consider the potential highway implications of the development, contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2008-2028) and the National Planning Policy Framework.