



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2025

by **E Fawcett BA (Jt Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th February 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001306

The Old Dairy, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark, Whitewell, Lancashire BB7 3DG

- 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 Dr Alexander Bonner against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/2025/0362.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as “Two-storey side extension. Modification of an existing window opening to form a new front entrance door. Installation of solar panels and air source heat pump.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (FBNL). The statutory purpose of National Landscapes is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, places a duty on relevant authorities to seek to further this purpose. I have had regard to, and applied, this duty in my consideration of this appeal.
3. Both parties have referred to amended plans submitted to the Council during the consideration of the planning application. However, the Council’s decision was made based on those originally submitted and no amended plans have been provided as part of this appeal. I have therefore determined the appeal against the plans considered by the Council when it made its decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area, with particular regard to the FBNL.

Reasons

5. The appeal property forms part of a group of 3 dwellings created through the conversion of former agricultural barns. Together, these form an attractive L-shaped arrangement of traditional stone buildings facing onto a shared courtyard. Their appearance retains strong links to their historic agricultural use, with original features preserved and only limited openings, particularly to the front elevations.
6. The group is visually dominated by a large 2-storey building that sits perpendicular to the appeal property and part of the adjoining dwelling. The lower part of the group, which includes the appeal property, intersects this larger building just above

its eaves and is characterised by a distinctive expansive catslide roof. This gives it a single storey appearance to the front, where it faces the courtyard. This roof is an important feature of both the appeal property and the wider group, and is largely unbroken with just 2 small rooflights.

7. The proposed development would include a 2- storey extension to the side of the appeal property. Although the use of stone and slate to the external walls and roof would reflect the materials of the existing building, the roof configuration would not respect its design or proportions or those of the wider group. The ridge would be offset from that of the original building, resulting in a comparatively short rear roof slope, at odds with the proportions of the existing building, giving the rear elevation a somewhat squat appearance. This sizeable addition of a structure of different proportions would complicate the appearance of the building, at odds with its simple character. As a result, the extension would appear visually jarring and discordant in relation to the proportions and simple form of the existing building.
8. The overhang to the proposed covered terrace and the large openings would further exacerbate the extension's incongruous appearance, introducing features not typically found on traditional agricultural buildings, including within this group. These elements would detract from the simple agricultural form and vernacular character of the wider group. Moreover, the number of openings proposed in the extension's front roof slope, concentrated within a relatively small area, would detract from the distinctive expansive and predominantly unbroken roof slope, to the detriment of its traditional agricultural character.
9. Reference has been made to Historic England's publication document "Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse" (2017). This advises that extensions should be subordinate in scale and relate to the massing and character of the existing farmstead group. The appellant has referred to photographic examples within this document. Whilst the appellant considers that the proposed extension would be subordinate to the existing building, it would fail to relate to the historic agricultural character and appearance of the appeal property and the wider group, particularly due to its overall form, roof configuration and design of openings. The proposal is not directly comparable to the examples referenced in this document, both in terms of the overall design and the context.
10. Paragraph 189 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. Whilst the proposal would have a limited effect on the wider landscape, given that most views would be from within the immediate vicinity of the appeal property, the Framework is clear that the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage is also an important consideration in these areas. As a former agricultural barn complex within an agricultural landscape, the appeal site contributes to the cultural heritage of the FBNL. For the reasons set out above, that contribution would be diminished through the appeal proposal.
11. Overall, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area, with particular regard to the FBNL. The proposal would therefore conflict with the relevant provisions of Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMH5 of the Core Strategy. Collectively these policies, amongst other things, seek to conserve and enhance the FBNL and

ensure that development reflects local distinctiveness and vernacular style, with an emphasis on visual appearance and relationship to surroundings.

Other Matters

12. The appeal property is situated close to the Grade II listed building 'Lees House Farmhouse'. Mindful of the statutory duty set out in s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting. The historic farm complex, of which the appeal site forms part, makes a positive contribution to the listed buildings significance. Nevertheless, given the location of the proposed development and the limited intervisibility between the site and the listed building, in my judgement, the proposal would preserve the setting of this listed building and the contribution it makes to its significance. I note the Council also raises no concerns in this respect. However, the absence of harm is neutral in my consideration of this appeal and does not alter my overall conclusion.
13. The appellant has set out in their statement that the proposal is supported by the occupiers of the neighbouring properties, and I note that no representations have been received from them. I also acknowledge that the proposal would actively support sustainability objectives in respect of renewable energy and energy efficiency through several measures. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified in respect of the proposed 2-storey side extension.
14. The appellant has referred to several previous planning applications relating to the appeal site and adjoining properties. No details of those decisions have been provided. I also acknowledge the appellant's frustration with the Council's approach. However, my decision must be based on the merits of the proposal and in accordance with the development plan for the area, and I have identified harm for the reasons set out above.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

E Fawcett

INSPECTOR