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Your ref: 3/2025/0377
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Date: 18 June 2025

For the attention of Ben Taylor

Planning Application No: 3/2025/0377

Grid Ref: 376720 441477

Proposal: Prior approval for the proposed change of use of a former agricultural building to one dwellinghouse under Schedule 2, Part 3 Class Q of the GPDO.

Location: Fields Farm, Mearley, Pendleton BB7 1PU

Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that 'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios' (Paragraph 116).

Having reviewed the documents submitted, Lancashire County Council acting as the local highway authority would raise an objection regarding the proposed development and concludes that there are highway grounds to support an objection as set out by NPPF.

The A59 is a strategic route which carries a significant volume of traffic at high speed, the national speed limit. The existing accesses on the A59 are either classified side roads serving towns or unclassified roads serving villages or agricultural accesses providing access to agricultural land. There are no direct accesses on the A59 serving individual dwellings.

This application would result in an intensification of use of an existing agricultural access to a residential dwelling access where there are no existing direct accesses on the A59 due to it being a strategic route.

We would advise that an alternative means of access is sought for the proposed dwelling via the established access on Clitheroe Road to the south of the site.

Proposal

The proposed development is for the change of use of a former agricultural building into a two storey, five bed dwelling.

Site access

There is an existing agricultural access from the A59 Whalley Clitheroe Bypass and then a single vehicle width track leading to the barn, a distance of approximately 592m from the public highway.

The A59 is a strategic route in Lancashire which carries a significant volume of traffic in the Borough and across the boundary to Yorkshire and vice versa and is subject to the national speed limit.

There are currently no direct residential accesses on the A59 due to it being a strategic route.

The vehicle movements associated with a dwelling, which will introduce turning movements on the A59 at peak times, this will cause a highway safety issue due to the high volume and speed of vehicles in both directions on the A59. Drivers will not be able to easily join or cross the traffic flow on the A59 at peak times due to the lack of gaps forming and this will likely result in drivers taking risks to access the dwelling and collisions will arise as a result.

We would advise that an alternative means of access to the barn is sought through the land to the southeast using the established access which joins Clitheroe Road.

The previous five years collision data records collision clusters at the side road junctions leading off the A59 associated with turning manoeuvres which demonstrates the areas of high conflict.

The applicant's agent has indicated to the local planning authority that agricultural vehicles accessing the site from the A59 have been few and infrequent in the past, and we understand the agricultural movements to occur predominantly off-peak when flows are lower which allows drivers to more easily join the traffic flow and vice versa and causes a lower impact. The agricultural traffic would continue in isolation of the barn being converted to residential use.

The change of use to a residential dwelling would intensify the use of the access by residents' vehicles and those servicing the property, eg Royal Mail, utilities, refuse vehicles (see later comments), visitors, on-line deliveries, emergency vehicles, etc.

The existing access is approximately 4.2m wide and does not provide sufficient width for 2 vehicles to pass side by side.

Visibility splays

The A59 is subject to a national speed limit of 60mph for which a Stopping Sight Distance (visibility splays) of 215m should be provided in both directions measured 2.4m back from the carriageway edge along the centre line of the access.

Given the carriageway lanes layout and road geometry of the A59 the highway authority requested that an additional drawing was submitted to demonstrate the splays at the existing access.

A revised Location Plan (Drawing ex.00 reb B dated 12.6.25) was submitted to the local planning authority. This demonstrates that visibility of at least 215m can be achieved from both locations.

We have reviewed this additional information and conclude that although visibility splays can be achieved for the speed limit, that the introduction of a direct residential access on the A59 would be detrimental to highway safety for both the residents, their service requirements (emergency, refuse, deliveries, postal service) and highway users travelling along the A59. This is due to the high volume and speed of traffic.

Refuse collection

It should be noted that the highway authority would not accept refuse bins being collected from the A59 as a refuse wagon stopping on the carriageway would cause significant highway safety issue. There are no other direct residential access points on the A59.

Pedestrians/cyclists

There is a divergent shared footway/cycleway along the southwest side of the A59 which carries the Lancashire Cycleway and crosses the access.

The increase in vehicle movements would be detrimental to pedestrians and cyclists at the access.

Public Rights of Way

Public Footpath ref FP03-24-004 Mearley passes along the upper section of the access track from the A59 and through the proposed dwelling's curtilage along its western elevation.

The county council's Public Rights of Way team have been consulted separately and may provide comments direct. However, the following should be noted.

The granting of planning permission does not constitute the diversion of a Definitive Right of Way. If it is necessary for Public Rights of Way to be temporarily diverted or temporarily closed, it is the landowner's responsibility to ensure that this is done following the appropriate legal procedures. A temporary closure will only be granted where it is the intention to re-open the right of way upon expiration of the closure on the route recorded on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way.

The development must not commence until the necessary procedures are in place, either allowing the development to take place without affecting the right of way as recorded on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way and subsequent diversion orders and side roads orders. Or, if it is necessary to divert the above listed Public Right of Way, then the necessary Orders must be confirmed prior to construction to avoid enforcement action should the above Public Footpath become affected. There is no provision under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to allow a retrospective diversion of paths that are already affected by either partially completed or completed development.

Car & cycle parking

The site is remote from local amenities and facilities, including public transport, and consequently there will be a reliance on the use of private motor vehicles.

Notwithstanding that the Highway Authority raises an objection to the proposal, for completeness we would make the following comments on parking.

No car parking has been indicated on the submitted drawings. However, as the applicant owns the land surrounding the development site the highway authority considers that car parking can be provided. The highway authority would expect three car parking spaces, an electric vehicle charging point and a secure covered cycle store to be provided for the 5 bedroom dwelling. No vehicles should obstruct the line of the footpath recorded on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way.

Conclusion

To conclude, the proposed development raises highway safety concerns which result in the Highway Authority recommending refusal of the application on transport and highway grounds, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The proposal would introduce a direct residential access onto the A59 where there are currently none, due to the A59 being a strategic route and carrying a significant volume of traffic at high speed. Drivers will need to take risks to cross and join the flow of traffic at peak times due to the heavy volume of traffic and this will likely result in collisions.

Lancashire County Council acting as the highway authority considers this is contrary to paragraphs 115 b) and 116 of the NPPF as it poses significant safety concerns which cannot be adequately mitigated.

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