

T: [REDACTED]
E: mail@ericawright.co.uk
W: www.ericawright.co.uk

PLANNING STATEMENT

for the

CHANGE OF USE OF THE REMAINING TRADITIONAL BARNs
TO CREATE CLASS E SPACE AT
ROOT FARM, DUNSOP BRIDGE

For

The Duchy of Lancaster

HB105/AM/EW

July 2025

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
2	Site description and planning history	4
3	Proposed development and benefits arising	5
4	Location and national planning policy and AONB management plan assessment	7
5	Conclusions	10

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Erica Wright Architecture Ltd has prepared this planning statement to accompany an application for the change of use of the remaining traditional barns at Root Farm Buildings, Dunsop Bridge in the Forest of Bowland, area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to form Class E use.
- 1.2 The site is in the long term ownership of the applicant, The Duchy of Lancaster.
- 1.3 Section 2 of this statement provides further details of the site, designations covering the site and its planning history.
- 1.4 The application has been brought forward following the successful completion of the 2021 approval and the applicant's wish to provide further space on site for employment use.
- 1.5 Section 3 details are provided of the proposed development at the site and the local benefits that will arise from it.
- 1.6 Section 4 includes an assessment of the extent to which the proposed development complies with the policy requirements of the development plan for Ribble Valley and policy guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as the Management Plan for the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 1.7 Conclusions to the statement are provided at Section 5.
- 1.8 The application is made up of the following documents, in addition to this planning statement:
- Full plans package (Erica Wright Architecture Ltd)
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Updated Ecology report (Bombus Ecology)
 - Structural engineers statement (Toppings)

Applicant and Development Context

- 1.9 The applicant for development is The Duchy of Lancaster. Founded in the 13th century, The Duchy of Lancaster is a unique portfolio of land, property and assets held in trust for the Sovereign in His role as Duke of Lancaster. The site is on the Duchy of Lancaster's Whitewell Estate which forms part of over 18,000 hectares of land owned by the Duchy across England and Wales.
- 1.10 There has been significant investment by the Duchy in the Whitewell Estate over the past ten years. This has focused primarily on repairing and improving the standard of its existing properties for residents and local businesses but has also seen, over the past 12 months, significant investment in the redevelopment of Root Farm under the 2021 approval. The Duchy's commitment and financial support to B4RN communication infrastructure continues to bring super high speed internet across to Dunsop Village and across the Estate.
- 1.11 The continuing aim of this further planning application for Root Farm is to provide an environment that encourages slow, sustainable growth in the area that benefits the local community without disrupting the fine equilibrium, balance and charm of Dunsop Bridge. Bringing the traditional barns back into use at Root Farm will bolster the existing provision but further provide additional employment space within a range of unit sizes.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PLANNING HISTORY

Site Description

- 2.1 The planning application relates to the 2 remaining traditional barns at Root Farm to the south of Dunsop Bridge.
- 2.2 The site is situated C 200m south of Dunsop Bridge village and is within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.3 Other than its location within the AONB, the site is not covered by any planning designations. The site is not within the flood zones surrounding the Rivers Dunsop and Hodder, to the north and Langden Brook to the west.

History and Current Uses

- 2.4 In terms of the evolution of the farm, it notes that the earliest map of the site from 1847 shows a building on the site labelled "Root or Lower Staple Oak". 1873, 1901 and 1955 maps show the evolution of the building complex.
- 2.5 The buildings on site include the original farmhouse (tenanted), the existing holiday cottage and the built out approved detail of planning approval 3/2021/0925. This approval allowed for the two remaining traditional barns (The Dairy and Central Barn) to be repaired and made water tight for future use. It is these two barns that are now the subject of this further planning application

Highway Access

- 2.6 The site has two established accesses. An access from the north links the site to Dunsop Bridge and it is this access that is used by all traffic to the existing and proposed development. A second access to the south is used for agricultural access.
- 2.7 The access to the north, has benefitted by the implementation of the agreed Section 278 works to improve visibility and safety for the existing and proposed development use.

Ecology and Environment

- 2.8 The application is accompanied by an updated report from Bombus Ecology.
- 2.9 This confirms that the development of the site, subject to appropriate mitigation, will have no unacceptable impact on ecology.
- 2.10 From the Ribble Valley Council's application website, Root Farm has three main planning history records.
- 2.11 Approved application (3/2009/0961) related to the conversion of a former doctor's surgery at site to a holiday cottage. A second approved and implemented application (3/2012/0003) confirmed that the building could be rebuilt to provide the same holiday cottage use. The third approved and implemented (3/2021/0925) is the recent approval for the conversion of the "L" shaped building to Class E use and the provision of new industrial buildings.
- 2.12 There are further applications relative to the 3/2021/0925 applications including 2no discharge of condition applications, 1no variation of condition application and a further planning application for the site of an ENWL electricity sub station.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND BENEFITS

Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed development consists of the change of use of the two remaining traditional barns at the Root Farm site for a rural commercial development falling within Class E (Commercial Uses) of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order.
- 3.2 The Duchy of Lancaster's proposals are designed to deliver readily available and appropriate commercial development space across part of the site which is flexible enough to meet the needs of and attract a variety of users, and has the benefit of the established communal service space (kitchen, meeting room, toilets etc).
- 3.3 There are two distinct areas of built footprint proposed on site, The Dairy building footprint consists of units with a GFA of 245sqm and the Central Barn footprint consists of units with a GFA of 275 sqm, both will create workshop space suitable for a variety of users.
- 3.4 Class E of the new use classes will allow for a variety of uses but it is intended that the work units may be used for offices, workshop areas or even for storage facilities.
- 3.5 Flexibility in design, with each unit accessed separately, will allow for the units to be let individually or in combination as preferred.
- 3.6 Flexibility of sizes in all areas of development is considered important given the more remote location of Dunsop Bridge and to allow the Duchy of Lancaster to ensure that it has every opportunity of accommodating potential tenants' needs.
- 3.7 Overall, the scale of buildings at site following redevelopment will remain as existing.

Sustainable Design

- 3.8 The proposals incorporate a number of sustainable design features as listed below:-
- The units will all be heated from the sites district ground source heat pump heating system (already installed and available to extend into the 2 barn buildings)
 - The units will benefit from the installed solar PV system to the developed "L" shaped roof (already installed)
 - Provision of electric car charging points
 - Inclusion of barn owl boxes to the mature tree line to the river near the entrance to the site, swift boxes to the eaves position around the single storey build area and bat boxes to the new gable apex position.
 - Rooflights and window openings of sufficient scale to allow natural light ingress into buildings, reducing the need for artificial light.
 - The Duchy have also introduced its sustainability policy to ensure the use of more sustainable materials in the design, manufacture and delivery of the proposed development with all emphasis on local and UK supply.

Access

- 3.9 Previous Section 278 Highway access details have been implemented to the Root Farm site and the development now enjoys clear visibility and improved safety at the highway junction.
- 3.10 In addition to vehicular access opportunities, the site is clearly in close proximity to the village of Dunsop Bridge, allowing easy access on foot by residents, as well as allowing those working on the site to access and support the services that the village has to offer.

Landscaping

- 3.11 All landscaping to the site has been agreed as part of the 3/2021/0925 approval and discharged condition

Benefits of Development

- 3.12 The development will deliver a number of benefits to the local area. The aim of the planning system is to deliver economic, environmental and social objectives, as confirmed by paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.13 The benefits delivered by the Root Farm development will span these three objectives, as confirmed below:

Economic Benefits

- 3.14 The following economic benefits of development will arise:
- Construction benefits arising from development
 - Delivery of new jobs in rural Ribble Valley
 - Support for local supply chain companies
 - Creation of new business rateable premises
- 3.15 Wherever possible, every effort will be made to encourage local businesses to occupy the new commercial spaces where reasonable and practicable.

Social Benefits

- 3.16 The following social benefits of development will arise:
- Support for a living, working countryside
 - Sustainability for the area

Environmental Benefits

- 3.17 The following environmental benefits of development will arise:
- Reuse of traditional buildings, preserving the historic fabric and detail for generations to come is inherently sustainable
 - The reuse of a previously developed site – delivery of new development on a site with buildings upon it is considered inherently sustainable.
- 3.18 For the above reasons it is considered that the development will give rise to multiple benefits which will relate to its compliance with local and national planning policy.

4 LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN ASSESSMENT

4.1 The development plan for the area is the:

- The Ribble Valley Adopted Core Strategy 2008 – 2028; and
- The Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development DPD 2008 – 2028

4.2 It is only the policies of the Core Strategy which relate to this proposed development.

4.3 The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 – 2024 is also a relevant material consideration. However, the Management Plan is seen to be a document which is focused on strategic initiatives and actions for the AONB team to undertake; it is not a Plan which includes a checklist of policies for development proposals to conform to.

4.4 The Management Plan does however include the following vision for the areas which is relevant to the proposals and which references the importance of farmsteads and a sustainable local economy

The Forest of Bowland landscape retains its sense of local distinctiveness, notably the wide open moorland character of the Bowland Fells, undulating lowland farmland, clough woodlands, traditional buildings and the settlement patterns of its villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

It is a landscape valued for the range of services and benefits it provides for society, with a functioning, diverse natural heritage where land management practices allow opportunity for natural processes to develop and flourish; and where partnership-working between land managers, conservation bodies, communities and businesses is focused on delivering more for nature together.

The rich cultural heritage of the area is also better understood and managed; and both the nature and culture of the area help to support a resilient and sustainable local economy.

The Forest of Bowland is a truly outstanding landscape, where it can clearly be demonstrated that the management of the AONB has conserved and enhanced the quality, understanding and enjoyment of the landscape for all.

4.5 Policy assessment is set out in the form of “Heading” policy analysis, in order that the policies of the development plan, the NPPF and, where relevant policies exist, the AONB Management Plan are considered together.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

KEY STATEMENT DS2: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The policy states that the Council will apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

KEY STATEMENT EN3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Council will seek to ensure that proposals for development are sustainably design and support efforts to mitigate climate change.

NPPF: Paragraphs 7, 8 and 11

- 4.5.1 The proposals for Root Farm have been brought forward to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 4.5.2 No concerns regarding the principle of development or compliance with the local plan have been identified by the Council with the 03/2021/0925 approval and it is anticipated that the applications will therefore be approved, without delay, in accordance with paragraph 11c of the NPPF.
- 4.5.3 In terms of EN3, the development incorporates a number of sustainable design features, including district GSHP's heating systems and Solar PV electricity generation. It is therefore considered that this policy is complied with.

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

KEY STATEMENT EN2: LANDSCAPE

The policy states that:

"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".

Also that:

"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".

NPPF: Paragraphs 174 and 176

- 4.5.4 The proposals have been brought forward by an applicant and historic landowner experienced in land and building management in, and respectful of, the designed area.
- 4.5.5 The development within this designed area can be considered "limited in scale" as anticipated by NPPF Paragraph 176. As existing buildings which have had all their external repair detail approved under 03/2021/0925 this change of use application simply requires use agreement, with no further alterations or change to material finishes.
- 4.5.6 Landscaping detail has all been agreed to the site as a whole under 03/2021/0925 and is currently being introduced on site.

ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

KEY STATEMENT EC1: BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

POLICY DMB1: SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN: OBJECTIVE 2.3 LOCAL ECONOMY AND RURAL SERVICES

NPPF: Paragraphs 81-85

- 4.5.7 The application for the change of use is intended to deliver benefits to the local economy.
- 4.5.8 The AONB Management Plan (objective 2.3) states that the AONB Management Team will *“Promote and support rural services and the socioeconomic development of the area, particularly where such activity helps to conserve and enhance natural beauty”*.
- 4.5.9 The development seeks to promote the socioeconomic development of this part of the AONB whilst at the same time, helping to enhance natural beauty through regeneration of this previously developed site.
- 4.5.10 The proposals conform strongly to national policy support for a prosperous rural economy.

TRANSPORT

KEY STATEMENT DM12: TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS

POLICY DMG3: TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY

NPPF: PARAGRAPHS 105 AND 111

Key statement DM12 states that *“New development should be located to minimize the need to travel. Also it should incorporate good access by foot and cycle and have convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car.”*

- 4.5.11 All transport / access detail has been established / organized under the 03/2021/0925 approval. NPPF Paragraph 105 acknowledges that:

“opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”.

- 4.5.12 Root Farm site is well located in relation to Dunsop Bridge which is only a short walk away. This will allow for access on foot by any residents from the village using the site.

- 4.6 It is understood that in light of the policy detail above, it can be considered that the requirements of local and national planning policy are met by the proposed development.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In conclusion, the proposed development at Root Farm, Dunsop Bridge, has been brought forward by a historic landowner with a unique long term affinity for and interest in the area. The landowner seeks only to deliver high quality development which delivers long term sustainability benefits for the local area. This is achieved by working within the existing footprint of the site and with a reduced amount of built development proposed.
- 5.2 The delivery of further employment space is intended to find a new use for the remaining traditional buildings on site at Root Farm, helping to boost the socioeconomic conditions of this rural part of the Ribble Valley.
- 5.3 The development will result in multiple economic, social and environmental benefits, as confirmed in section four of this statement.
- 5.4 The proposals are assessed to be compliant with the development plan and national planning policy.
- 5.5 The applicant looks forward to engaging with Ribble Valley Borough Council in order to deliver the benefits that this development will bring to the village of Dunsop Bridge, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that is the Forest of Bowland and the wider local area for generations to come.