


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	KH	Date:	16/02/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	17/2/26
Site Notice displayed	Y	Site Notice Expired	27/08/25					

Application Ref:	3/2025/0580	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	06/08/25	
Officer:	KH	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		Decision Approval

Development Description:	Full planning permission for conversion of barn into two dwellings. Alterations to access and construction of detached triple garage. Creation of new vehicle access to farmhouse and construction of attached double garage.
Site Address/Location:	Holmes Farm, Higher Commons Lane, Balderstone BB12 7LR

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No response.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objections subject to conditions relating to construction methods, site access arrangements, parking and turning areas and position of gate.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
<p>LCC Archaeology – The Heritage statement submitted gives a good overview of the buildings and their history. The barn appears to be hybrid, built to accommodate dairy cattle but to the general footprint of a combination barn (containing crop storage and processing and livestock housing in one building) which may suggest a reasonably early example of a dairy farming building, many in the district are conversions of the earlier combination barns, adapted to take advantage of growing demand for dairy produce in the industrial towns of Lancashire in the last half of the 19th century.</p> <p>The barn has several phases of alteration and extension and an unusual pattern of fenestration and other openings. The pigsties are an unusual survival and appear to represent a well-preserved example of what was once a common feature of farmsteads, representing a significant element in the household economy of the farming family, with the addition of a fowl house above the pig housing. It is to be lamented that this building is to be demolished although it is accepted that new uses for pigsties and henhouse is difficult in a modern setting.</p> <p>We would advise that an archaeological building record be made of the barn and the pigsties/fowl house comprising a record of the barn to level 2/3 (Level 2 with cross sections) and of the pigsty building to level 3 as set out in “Understanding Historic Buildings” (Historic England 2016).</p> <p>This should be secured by placing a condition on any planning permission that is granted.</p>	

Reconsulted 08/10/25 – response welcoming the retention of the pigsties, although ideally, they should remain in its original positions but if this cannot be accommodated then, in principle, we would accept the relocation of the structure within the former farmstead area, subject to the original building being subject to a historic building record which can be secured using the condition in our previous correspondence.

United Utilities – general observations requiring drainage to accord with the principles in the NPPG and the new National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (2025) with all options for the sustainable management of surface water being thoroughly investigated before any surface water connections are accepted from new development to the public sewer. Where a new surface water connection to the public sewer is proposed then robust evidence is required to demonstrate the drainage hierarchy has been fully investigated and there are no other sustainable options available for the management of surface water.

Publicity Responses:

One response received raising concerns with the three-garage unit and its location 1m from the property line which may result in shadow from the building at different times of the year. The location and the height might be significant; placement of the building more than 1m away, or a reduction in the ridge height may ameliorate this issue. In addition a distance of 1m between the building and property line will make it hard to manage that side of any hedge/shrubs /trees.

It says in the application that the existing barn has simple water run off within no downpipes; this is not correct. The current situation is that a portion of the water from the barn is collected in a gutter linked to a downpipe which passes into one of our gutters. This will need to be addressed. Anticipate that all such water will in future be taken to the side of Holmes Farm.

We note that there are plans to create new openings in the side of the barn facing the road. When we carried out our conversion some years ago this was not permitted.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Policy DS1: Development Strategy
Policy DS2: Sustainable Development
Policy EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME6: Water Management
Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside & the AONB
Policy DMH4: Conversion of Barns and other Buildings to Dwellings.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/1997/0700 – planning application for the adjoining property for the other part of the barn to be converted.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

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

The immediate site consists of the farmhouse and associated agricultural buildings accessed off Higher Commons Lane with the defined settlement of Osbaldeston some 330m to the west and the surrounding area predominantly rural in character comprising of open agricultural fields and open countryside with small clusters of built form and large, detached dwellings sited to the west and further north of the site.

To the immediate east is the other part of the barn which has already been converted in the early 1990's and is now occupied as a dwelling.

The barn has a main element with lofts and mezzanine and single storey stable in the form of a lean-to on the southern-west elevation constructed of coursed and random sandstone and the roofs are traditional timber and slate. The front elevation has been reroofed with clay tiles.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

This proposal is to convert part of the barn into two dwellings (one single storey 2 bed and one two storey four bed) and erect a detached garage to serve these properties. A new access to the farmhouse is also proposed together with the erection of a double attached garage to the northwest corner of the existing farmhouse.

The existing pigsty/henhouse and single storey lean-to extension to the western side of the barn are proposed to be demolished. Amended plans show the pigsty to be relocated to house a cycle store.

Principle of Development:

Policy DMG1 is engaged insofar that it largely relates to all built-form development proposed within the borough.

The site is an existing barn and therefore compliance with policies DMH3 and DMH4 is necessary.

DMH3 allows for dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB provided they are limited to:

- Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied.
- The appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.
- The rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings subject to the following criteria:
 - The residential use of the property should not have been abandoned.
 - There being no adverse impact on the landscape in relation to the new dwelling.
 - The need to extend an existing curtilage.

The creation of a permanent dwelling by the removal of any condition that restricts the occupation of dwellings to tourism/visitor use or for holiday use will be refused on the basis of unsustainability.

DMH4 grants planning permission for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where:

- The building is not isolated in the landscape i.e. it is within a defined settlement or forms part of an already group of buildings; and
- There is no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure; and
- There would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests; and
- There would be no detrimental effect on rural economy; and
- The proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area;
- That any existing nature conservation aspects of the existing structure are properly surveyed and where judged to be significant preserved or, if this is not possible, then any loss adequately mitigated.

The building to be converted must:

- Be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alteration which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building. The council will require a structural survey to be submitted and plans of any rebuilding proposed;
- Be of sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would harm the character and appearance of the building; and
- The character of the building and its materials are appropriate to its surroundings and the building and its materials are worthy of retention because of its intrinsic interest or potential or its contribution to its setting; and
- The building has a genuine history of use for agriculture or another rural enterprise.

The conversion should be of a high standard and should not harm the appearance or function of the area. Access should be safe and capable of improvement without harming the appearance of the area.

A building is not isolated in the landscape and a structural survey has been submitted and the majority of historic agricultural built form is proposed to be retained.

The Northwest Elevation has a large barn door at the west end which has timber doors set back as well as two further door openings and one window opening at ground floor level and a door and two window openings at first floor. The timber to the doors and windows is in poor condition. The wall is in good condition and reasonably pointed with no sign of movement.

The Southwest Elevation is a single storey wall to the stable built in random sandstone. The walls are all in good condition and reasonably pointed with no sign of movement. There are three door openings and three window openings. The timber to the doors and windows is in poor condition. This elevation has some sections of gutter but they are in poor condition with no downspouts

The Southeast Elevation fronts onto Higher Commons Lane and is constructed in dressed, randomly coursed sandstone. This elevation has no openings except for a small circular vent at high level. The wall is in good condition and reasonably pointed with no sign of movement. The gutter is missing from this elevation with only brackets remaining.

The Northeast Elevation is built in dressed, randomly coursed sandstone. There is a single window opening at ground floor level. The wall is in good condition and reasonably pointed with no sign of movement. The window is boarded over.

The roof to the main barn is original to the rear (north west) with slate on timber rafters and purlins. This is in poor condition and badly deflected and failing. The roof to the south east has had the slates replaced with clay tiles and is in reasonable condition.

Internally the main section of the barn is split into several rooms as detailed on the plans. All internal walls are in good condition. Some walls are built in red brick with the gable wall to the adjoining property rebuilt in blockwork.

The timber beams are in poor condition and the original roof to the rear (as mentioned above) is in poor condition with water damaged timber and rot. The re-roofing to the front elevation with new purlins, rafters and felt below clay tiles. There is also a large tank supported by steel beams below the ridge area.

The large lean-to stable area is in good condition with stalls in place below the mono span trusses and purlins supporting the roof. The timber is in poor condition with some signs of deflection, rot and/or infestation. Some timber under boarding has fallen from the rafters.

There are two small buildings to the south end which have no signs of movement.

The barn has solid floors to all areas which have had no movement.

Suitability for conversion

The external and internal walls are in good condition. The roof to the rear and the lean-to area is in a poor condition.

The tank and two small rooms on the southwest elevation would be removed/demolished.

Level lowered that the existing foundations should be avoided and this may require underpinning. Alternatively, a reinforced raft could be placed over the existing floor to carry the new inner leaf and internal walls. The existing walls would be retained and the depth of the existing founding stones will only indicate the details on the new floor slab.

The historic openings would be reused where possible and the number of new openings has been kept to a minimum.

Amended plans have been received which remove the proposed windows to the southeast frontage. With the additional openings proposed restricted to the rear (northwest) and side (southwest) elevations, these would not unduly impact on the character and would not result in removal of historic fabric.

The proposal therefore satisfies policies DMG1, DMH3 and DMH4.

Residential Amenity:

The site adjoins Holmes Cottage to its eastern side and therefore care needs to be given to the positioning of additional windows particularly the side projection (northeast) elevation as this faces into the cottage garden. The existing window at ground floor to the side (northeast) elevation would serve a utility room and be obscure glazed which is acceptable.

Openings within the side (southwest) elevation would face towards Holmes Farm, albeit at an angle and therefore whilst these would reflect the existing fenestration in terms of placement and size, these would serve the main living areas and one of the bedrooms for the single storey 2 bed element. The interface with the existing farmhouse would be around 17m at an obscure angle which given these are ground floor windows with existing screening and proposed boundary treatment these would be considered acceptable.

There is an existing opening to the northeast elevation which overlooks the adjacent garden of the adjoining conversion. It is proposed that this window would serve a utility room, however, it would be appropriate to ensure this opening is obscurely glazed in order to avoid any undue loss of privacy.

Concerns have been raised by third party about the scale of the detached garage. Amended plans show this has been reduced and the proposed scale and siting do not raise any concerns with respect to overbearing impacts or loss of light.

Visual Amenity:

There are public rights of way nearby to the west and north but none which cross the application site. The site is visible from the public highway, Commons Lane, to the south with the south and western elevations visible from public viewpoints.

There are existing pigsties within the site which are proposed to be demolished. LCC Archaeology have suggested that these should be retained in their existing position. The agent has agreed to retention provided that they can be moved to another part of the site. This has been accepted.

An archaeological recording of these will be required prior to any work commencing.

The amended scheme proposes some small-scale demolition and additional opening which is acceptable subject to details of all windows and doors being submitted would be acceptable.

Taking account of the above matters, the proposal would bring a redundant building back into use.

Design and Materials:

The main aim is to retain and improve the historic elements of the barn and remove the some of the agricultural elements to allow for the conversion into two dwellinghouses. The existing openings would be reused for windows and doors with some changes to the mix of these. The amount of new glazing would be limited to the south west elevation once the existing store has been removed, with the number and position of glazed elements reflecting the existing.

In this case details of the windows and doors including materials, sections, reveals and finishes can be required by condition in order to achieve an acceptable scheme.

Internally the conversion would result in a side entrance with w.c. and open plan kitchen/dining/sitting area to the front and two ensuite bedrooms would be accommodated to the rear for the single storey unit. The two-storey unit would have its main entrance to the rear with boot room and w.c. as well as a study/living area and stairs with an open plan kitchen/dining area to the central area and a pantry and utility to the front, the first floor would accommodate three bedrooms and three bathrooms.

Externally the site would provide two double garages as well as parking areas and a relocated pigsty.

Random stonework would be retained together with render to the modern rear extension. Details of lintels, rainwater goods, hard and soft landscaping can be controlled by condition to ensure an appropriate scheme. Any repairs and replacement of stone and slate can also be conditioned.

Permitted development rights should be removed in order to prevent unacceptable extensions and curtilage buildings being erected without regard to their impact on the barn in this rural location.

Ecology:

A bat survey has been submitted which concludes that bats were observed foraging in the areas well as being observed entering the barn. The report confirms a roost within a single common pipistrelle recorded emerging from the barn. Due to the activity of bat on the site a Natural England Licence would be required. In this case the roost type and low scale impacts would qualify for the low impact licence scheme.

It is noted that for this particular proposal; and roost type the NE licence application would not require the completed of a Reasoned Statement and therefore, information relating to two of the three licensing tests (overriding public interest and satisfactory alternatives) is not required. A method statement set out in Section 5 of the Report seeks to address the Favourable Conservation Status test only. The mitigation measures proposed are acceptable in this instance.

Evidence of nesting birds has been observed and therefore a condition requiring no works during bird nesting season unless evidence is provided by a licensed ecologist that there are no active nests within the site would be appropriate.

The barn has also been used as a roosting site for a single barn owl and appears to have been used on a regular basis throughout the year. Therefore, appropriate mitigation for the loss of the roosting site is recommended.

Great Crested Newts have also been confirmed to be present in a pond 55m from the site, but as the site has no potential refuge habitats or suitable features for hibernating then the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures will not present a constraint to the proposed development – this can be controlled by condition.

It is also recommended that any external lighting should be low level, low intensity and directed downwards to prevent illumination of adjacent habitat this can be controlled by an appropriate condition.

The development will be subject to the mandatory BNG condition.

Highways:

The proposal utilises an existing access from Higher Common Lane which is unclassified and subject to 30mph speed limit and formation of a new separate access for the existing farmhouse.

A new 3m wide access would be created to serve the existing farmhouse and paved for the first 5m with two spaces in the new garage block would be sufficient for a 4+bed dwelling, together with appropriate visibility splays provided this is acceptable. Two parking p and would not result in any undue impact on the highway safety.

The existing farmhouse access would be widened to 3.5m wide and paved for the first 5m with two spaces in the new garage block as well as an additional parking space sufficient for the proposed 2 bed and 3 bed dwellings. The visibility splays to be provided to serve the barn conversion are below standard, however, they are an improvement on the existing access and would accommodate a small amount of additional traffic and therefore considered acceptable.

Overall, the scheme would not result in any undue impact on the highway safety.

Drainage and Flood Risk:

The site is not located within an area at risk of flooding. A suitable drainage scheme has been submitted which can be conditioned.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The proposal would result in some removal of modern structures and the stone-built barn being converted into two dwellings. Subject to details of materials, windows and doors, archaeological survey, construction method statement, appropriate ecology mitigation, drainage and highway works then this scheme would assist in retaining structures of some importance in terms of historic significance and thus secure the future use of the buildings.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions