



JUDITH DOUGLAS TOWN PLANNING LIMITED

Holmes Farm, Higher Commons Lane, Balderstone, Lancs
BB2 7LR.

Full planning permission for conversion of barn into two
dwellings alterations to access and construction of garages.
Creation of new vehicle access to farmhouse and
construction of garage.

Planning, Design and Access Statement
JDTPL 0532

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning, design and access statement, is submitted on behalf of the applicants in support of a full planning application for the conversion of a traditional agricultural barn into two dwellings, improvements to the existing vehicles access and provision of garages and gardens for the new dwellings. The proposal includes a new access and garage for the farmhouse.
- 1.2 This Statement will describe the application site and surroundings, and the development being proposed. The relevant planning policies will then be discussed. We will demonstrate that the application complies with the development plan and other material considerations and conclude that planning permission should be granted.
- 1.3 This application should be read in conjunction with drawings:
- 24-030 PL01B LOCATION PLAN
 - 24-030 PL02 EXISTING SITE PLAN
 - 24-030 PL03 EXISTING ELEVATIONS – FARMHOUSE
 - 24-030 PL04 EXISTING ELEVATIONS – FARMHOUSE
 - 24-030 PL05 EXISTING FLOOR PLANS – BARN
 - 24-030 PL06 EXISTING ELEVATIONS – BARN
 - 24-030 PL07_rJ PROPOSED SITE PLAN
 - 24-030 PL08_rD PROPOSED BARN FLOOR PLANS
 - 24-030 PL09_rC PROPOSED GARAGE 1 AND 2 FLOOR PLANS
 - 24-030 PL10_rD PROPOSED ELEVATIONS 1
 - 24-030 PL11_rD PROPOSED ELEVATIONS 2
 - 24-030 PL12 GARAGE 1 PLAN AND ELEVATIONS
 - 24-030 PL13A PROPOSED SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE STRATEGY
 - Bat Survey and Ecology Report July 2025 - Knight Sky Ecology
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Statement July 2025- Knight Sky Ecology
 - Habitat condition assessment - Knight Sky Ecology
 - Statutory Metric Macro- Knight Sky Ecology
 - Historic Buildings Appraisal May 2025 - Stephen Haigh Buildings Archaeologist
 - Structural Condition Survey - Paul Snape Consulting
 - Tree survey May 2025 - Lakeland Tree Consultancy

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 Holmes Farm is located within the open countryside, and outside a settlement boundary as defined in the Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development, Development Plan Document. The site is approximately 470m south-east of the settlement boundary of Osbaldeston. The landscape character type for the site is described as undulating lowland farmland. The landscape around the site is agricultural fields bounded by substantial hedges including trees.
- 2.2 The proposed site comprises Holmes Farm which is a substantial two storey farmhouse and its garden, a two-storey agricultural barn and various outbuildings. The whole site is served by one vehicle access from Higher Commons Lane, and this also provides agricultural access to the adjacent land which belongs to Holmes Farm.
- 2.3 Holmes Farm has a pedestrian access from Higher Commons Lane. Its garden is separated from Higher Commons Lane and the vehicle access by a stone boundary wall. The house has two entrance doors one on each side gable. The door in the south-western gable is reached by the garden path. The door in the north-eastern gable gives access to the farmyard. The house is constructed in coursed stone with stone quoins and stone heads cills and jambs. It has a blue slate roof and upvc windows.
- 2.4 The barn and attached lean-to shippon, is a large building constructed out of natural stone with a mixture of roofing materials including stone slate, blue slate and tiles. It is a traditional agricultural building. The elevation to the road has no openings within it except for a small opening at eaves level. The stonework is dressed randomly coursed sandstone. The roof is covered with tiles. There is a small opening in the north-east elevation which faces along Higher Commons Lane. On the south-western side is a long single storey lean to with a single pitched roof constructed in random coursed stone. The roof is covered in blue slate within which are eight rooflights. There are a few existing openings include a breathing slit surrounded by dressed stone, a doorway and a window opening. Attached to this lean-to is a further store with a pitched roof and a concrete water tank. There is another small opening in the gable of the main barn above the lean-to. The edges of the roof are finished with stone copings.
- 2.5 The existing north-west elevation of the barn has the main features of the barn including the waggon entrance which has timber doors set back. It is constructed in random coursed stone and has several openings which have dressed stone surrounds including two breathing holes. The roof is covered in slate and the edges are finished with flat coping stones and kneelers.

- 2.6 Attached to the barn which is proposed convert is Holmes Cottage. Holmes Cottage is a barn conversion which was originally part of the barn. See planning history. The garden to Holmes Cottage is separated from the farmyard by a high brick wall running at 90 degrees to Higher Commons Lane and the returning around the yard with a lower stone wall. Within the farmyard is a stone pigsty.
- 2.7 There is an existing vehicle access between the barn and the farmhouse which serves both properties. This leads to a small farmyard and provides agricultural vehicle access to the fields beyond. The farmyard has a concrete surface.
- 2.8 The field at the rear of the farm building extends to about 4.9 hectares. There are two public footpaths which run to the west and north of the site, beyond the agricultural fields. There are to ponds nearby one approximately 60m to the north-west and the other approximately 80m to the south-west.
- 2.9 Higher Commons Lane is an adopted highway according to the Lancashire County Council mapping service "mario maps". The speed limit is 30mph. The road does not carry a bus service.
- 2.10 The GOV.UK flood map for planning indicates that the site is within flood zone 1 an area least likely to flood. The planning pre-application advice received from the Council indicated that the site is located within an area susceptible to groundwater flooding and the road as Higher Commons Lane is susceptible to surface water flooding.
- 2.11 The site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings in the vicinity. The planning pre-application advice received from the Council stated that building is considered to constitute a non-designated heritage asset.

3 PLANNING SITE HISTORY

- 3.1 The Council's online planning history does not record any recent planning applications on the site. The following applications probably relate to the barn conversion attached to the barn.

3/89/0510 Barn at Holmes Farm, Higher Commons Lane, Balderstone change of use from a barn to a dwellinghouse. Approved with conditions 14/12/1989.

3/1997/0700 Holmes Farm Cottage, Higher Commons Lane, Balderstone. Conversion of existing attached barn and stable block to domestic accommodation. Restructure existing house conversion of existing attached barn and stable block to domestic accommodation. Restructure existing house. Approved with conditions 22/12/1997.

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposed development centres around providing a new viable use for the existing barn which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset through its conversion into two dwellings and an improvement to the vehicle access. To this end the farmhouse is to be provided with a new access to the south-western side of the house, garaging and turning which will remove vehicular activity associated with the farmhouse from the farmyard. To create the garage a small lean to on the rear of the house is to be demolished. The existing access to the farmyard and boundary wall is to be moved across taking part of the farmhouse garden. An improved vehicle access is proposed to serve the two dwellings within the converted barn and to continue to provide agricultural access to the field to the north-west. Garaging for the barn conversions is provided at the rear of the site in one building.
- 4.2 The proposed barn conversion will provide a single storey two-bedroom dwelling with garden and single garage and parking space and a two storey three-bedroom dwelling with garden and double garage. The conversion will include the insertion of some new openings and the demolition of the small lean-to and concrete water tank on the southwest elevation. The roof is to be covered in natural blue/grey slates. The garages for the barn conversion are within one building with a footprint of 12.165m by 7.3m and a height to the eaves of 2.25m and to the ridge of 4.516m. The proposed garage for the farmhouse has a footprint of 8.5m by 7.3m and a height to the eaves of 2.25m and to the ridge of 4.516m. They are proposed to be constructed in random coursed stone with a natural blue/grey slate roof.

5 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Planning pre-application advice.

- 5.1 Planning pre-application advice was sought from the Council reference RV/2025/ENQ/00008. This confirmed that the development was in principle acceptable. It stated *“The Ribble Valley Core Strategy notes that the re-use of existing rural buildings provides an important opportunity to preserve buildings that contribute to the areas character and setting, can usefully provide a housing resource and promote sustainability.”* The advice highlighted areas where further information would be needed to support the application and suggested design changes. The layout of the site has been amended so that the

development does not now propose and extension to the residential curtilage of the farmhouse.

Highways pre-application advice.

- 5.2 Prep-application advice was sought from the Local Highway Authority. The pre-application advice was positive. The scheme has evolved, and the comments made by the LHA have been taken into account.

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 6.1 The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted 2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Core Strategy (2014)

- 6.2 The following policies are of relevance to the proposal:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

- Key Statement DS1 (Development Strategy) sets out the development strategy for the Borough
- Key Statement DS2 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) – the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Key Statement EN2 (Landscape) 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.
- Key Statement EN4 (Biodiversity and geodiversity – The Council will seek wherever possible to conserve and enhance the area’s biodiversity and geodiversity.
- Key Statement EN5 (Heritage Assets) – expects there will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings.
- Key Statement DMI1 (transport Consideration)- new development should minimise the need to travel. It should encourage travel by means other than the private car.
- Policy DMG1 (General Considerations) – sets out various criteria to be considered in assessing planning applications, including a high standard of building design, proposed development being sympathetic to existing land uses, highway safety and not adversely affecting the amenities of the area.
- Policy DMG2 (Strategic Considerations) – expects development to be in accordance with the Development Strategy and that development proposals in defined settlements should consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement. The policy goes on to indicate that within the open countryside, development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. It also indicates that 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 DMG3 (Transport and mobility) consider the development in relation to the primary route network, the provision made for access by pedestrian, cyclists and those with reduced mobility
- Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands aims to protect trees from development and requires applications which affect trees to be accompanied by a detailed arboricultural survey
- Policy DME2 (Landscape & townscape protection) development should enhance local landscapes
- Policy DME3 (Site and Species protection and conservation) -seeks to protect wildlife species protected by law and their habitats.
- Policy DME4: (Protecting Heritage Assets) in considering development proposals the Council will make a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings.
- Policy DME6: (Water Management) development proposal should include measures for the conservation, protections and management of water.
- Policy DMH3 (Dwellings in the open countryside and the AONB) the conversion of buildings to dwelling is supported where 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.
- Policy DMH4 (The Conversion of Barns and other buildings to dwellings) – Permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where the building is not isolated in the landscape i.e. forms part of an already group of buildings and there need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure.
- Policy DMH5: Residential and curtilage extensions. Proposals to extend or alter residential properties must accord with Policy DMG1 and any relevant designations within which the site is located.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes paragraph 84 supports isolated homes in the countryside where:

“b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;”

Section 9 Promoting sustainable transport.

“115. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;”

“116. 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.”

Section 12 of the NPPF achieving well-designed and beautiful places is relevant.

Paragraph 135 seeks to ensure that development adds to the overall quality of the area and is sympathetic to local character and history, built environment and landscape setting.

Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 210 requires that in determining planning applications local planning authorities should take account of:

“a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”

7 EVALUATION

7.1 The main planning issues to be considered in the determination of this planning application are:

- The principle of the development
- Heritage Assessment
- Sustainability
- Visual impact on the quality of the landscape.
- The design of the proposals
- Residential amenity.
- Highways
- Ecology
- Flood Risk
- Biodiversity net gain
- Trees

Principle of the development

7.2 The site is in the open countryside outside of the settlement boundary of Osbaldeston. It is also outside the area of National Landscape and is not within Green Belt. Key Statement DS1 relates to new housing development and seeks to direct new housing development within an identified strategic site and the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge in addition to Tier 1 Villages which are the more sustainable of the Borough's 32 defined settlements. The same policy also requires development within the Borough's remaining 23 Tier 2 Village settlements to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration

benefits. The site is not located within a defined settlement and is therefore within the open countryside. Policy DMG2 requires development in the open countryside to meet at least one of six stated criteria. The pre-application advice confirms the development does not meet these criteria but can be considered appropriate under Policies DMH3 and DMH4 which relate to the conversion of buildings to dwellinghouses. DMG2 also states that *“within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge 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.”*

- 7.3 Policy DMH3 limits new residential development in the open countryside to certain types of development. This includes *“2.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”*.
- 7.4 The locational requirement of DMH3 is defined in policy DMH4 (1) which supports the conversion of buildings to dwellings provided that the building is not isolated in the landscape and is part of an existing group of buildings. The building forms a group with the farmhouse at Holmes Farm and the dwelling Holme Cottage. Policy DMH3 and DMH4 provide an exception to the development strategy for the borough which is to focus new housing development to larger settlements. As such the proposal is not in conflict with Key Statements DS1, DS2 and DMG2.
- 7.5 The remaining criteria of Policy DMH4 are also satisfied. There are already existing services at the site as the barn is adjacent to two residential properties and as such there would not likely be any unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities thereby satisfying criterion 2 which requires *“there need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure”*.
- 7.6 Criterion 3 requires *“there would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests,”* These matters will be discussed in later sections and demonstrate that this criterion is satisfied. Criterion 4 requires that there is *“no detrimental impact on the rural economy”*. The applicant states that *“the property known as Holmes Farm ceased to be an operational farm approximately 25 years ago. The main barn was storage for machinery and cattle feed. The single storey was a milking parlour for cows and dairy preparation for milk collection. Since that time the building has not be used*

for agricultural purposes but has been vacant except for a limited use for storage purposes for some domestic items. The land still owned by the family is approximately 12 acres, let on an annual basis to a local farmer who has adjoining land. The land is now used for grazing sheep in part and haylage with nothing through winter. Access is mainly during grazing time i.e. spring/early summer for animal inspection either on foot or Land Rover. Later in summer grass cutting machinery uses the access via farmyard or adjacent fields. There have never been any problems with access for equipment to our knowledge. Pedestrian access is seasonal only when sheep are on the land.” This demonstrates that there is no active agricultural use of the buildings on the site, and they are redundant for agricultural purposes. The land associated with Holmes Farm has been let to a local farmer who has land adjacent who does not use the building at Holmes Farm. Pedestrian and vehicles access to the land will continue to be provided. The conversion of the barn to two dwellings at Holmes Farm will not adversely affect any rural business and will not adversely affect the rural economy.

7.7 Criteria 5 and 6 of DMH4 relate to the design of the development, its impact on the landscape and the effects on nature conservation which will be discussed in later sections and demonstrate that these criteria are satisfied.

7.8 Policy DMH4 also required that the building to be converted must:

“1. be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alternation, which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building. The council will require a structural survey to be submitted with all planning application of this nature. this should include plans of any rebuilding that is proposed;

2. be of a sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would harm the character or appearance of the building, and

3. 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

4. the building has a genuine history of use for agriculture or another rural enterprise.”

7.9 The Structural Condition Survey dated July 2025 confirms that the main barn and the shippon (referred to as former stables), is in good structural condition and suitable for conversion. It does not indicate the need for complete or substantial reconstruction. Policy DMH4 (1) is satisfied. The conversion of the building into two dwellings is wholly within the envelop of the

existing structure and does not require any extensions. The character of the building, its materials and design are ‘*worthy of retention*’ and the Council has confirmed that the building can be considered a non-designated heritage asset. As described above the building has a genuine history of being used for agricultural purposes. The conversion of the barn into two dwellings is acceptable under policy DMH4.

7.10 The NPPF paragraph 84 supports isolated homes in the countryside where:

“b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;”

The proposed conversion of the barn to dwellings would re-use a redundant and disused building and lead to an enhancement of its immediate setting. As the Council considers the building to be a non-designated heritage asset the conversion would be the optimal viable use of a heritage asset. In principle the proposed conversion of the barn into two dwellings accords with paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

Sustainability

7.11 The pre-application advice offered an assessment of whether the site is sustainable under policy DM12. It was concluded that *“The site is located within close proximity to Osbaldeston (Tier 2 village) and the small settlement of Balderstone, neither of which have defined settlement boundaries and are considered to be the least sustainable settlements within the Borough. The site is located within walking distance to a pub and a primary school, however users would have to navigate an unlit road with no footpath to reach these and to reach a bus stop to provide access to key services and facilities. Whilst the site is not considered to be a sustainable location for housing, this would need to be balanced against the benefits of re-using an existing building.”* When taken as a whole the benefits of the development outweigh the disbenefits of the location of the development and planning permission should not be withheld on this basis

Heritage Assessment

7.12 The farmhouse, barn to be converted and associated outbuildings are described in the submitted Heritage Assessment under the section statement of heritage significance on page 6 as *“an incomplete farmstead, truncated by the previous conversion of part of the barn”* and have *“a low level of heritage significance, arising from their architectural and historic interest in the local context”*. The assessment concludes that there is *“a slight negative impact on the significance of the site primarily through the elevational changes to the barn and the*

demolition of the pigsty, though many principal features of the barn, such as the large north-west entrance and the first-floor doorway, would be retained. However, given the redundant nature of the barn as an agricultural structure and the obvious consequent deterioration in its condition, continued disuse poses a more fundamental threat to the building's future and instead, the residential conversion offers a sustainable use which would preserve its salient features in a viable manner.”

- 7.13 Without a new viable use, the building is likely to deteriorate resulting in the loss of historic fabric. The barn is the principal feature of heritage significance. There will be visual benefits to the removal of the former water tank which will better reveal the original stonework on this elevation. Consideration has been given to the retention of the pigsty. However, it is a difficult building to re-use and repurpose without significant alteration. The building in the heritage statement describes it as *“The double pigsty situated on the north-west side of the farmyard remains largely intact externally, albeit the roof has been replaced with concrete tiles (photo 10). It has a pair of pens on the south-west side enclosed by upright flagstones, and its low ground floor openings are characteristic for the building type, while a loft within the building very likely housed poultry.”* The openings in the photograph 2 are the only openings into the building. A person has to crouch down to enter the pigsty and head height inside is limited. This severely limits the use the building could be put to.



1 Pigsty

- 7.14 It has been qualified in the Heritage Assessment that the development will result in a slight negative impact to the non-designated heritage asset. The conversion of historic barns can rarely be achieved without some harm to the historic structure and there has to be a balance between securing a new optimal variable use and the needs of the new occupants and the protection of the historic character of the building. The number of new openings proposed has been kept to a minimum and significantly revised from the scheme submitted for pre-application advice.
- 7.15 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF requires that *“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”* In reaching a balanced decision the Council can consider the public benefit in the conversion of the barn into two dwellings making a positive contribution to the Borough’s housing supply. There is an environmental benefit through the implementation of a new optimal viable use for the building and a sustainable benefit through the re-use of an existing building. The retention of the barn contributes positively to the character of the rural landscape. There is an economic benefit during the construction period through the provision of employment. Overall, the proposed development is in conformity with Key Statement EN5 and policy DMH4.

Visual Impact on the quality of the landscape

- 7.16 The traditional stone barn makes a positive contribution to the quality of the landscape reflecting the traditional agricultural heritage of the area. The proposed development will secure the future of this traditional building by providing it with an optimal viable use. The creation of modest sized gardens and garages for the barn conversion and a garage for the farmhouse will not have any significant adverse impact on the qualities of the landscape. This is because the extent of the residential curtilage for the barn conversion is confined to the existing farmyard area and a small area of land to the rear of the farmyard. This small area of land is between the garden of the farmhouse and the garden of Holmes Cottage. The site will not extend beyond this existing boundary line of the adjacent residential properties. See figure 1.



Figure 1 Aerial image of Higher Commons Farm showing existing extent of development and rear boundary of Holne Cottage. Source Google Earth

- 7.17 It is not unusual for dwellings to have garages within the rear garden, and these can often be provided under permitted development rights. The proposed provision of a new single storey garage at the rear of the farmhouse within the existing residential curtilage will not look out of place within the landscape. The provision of garages for the barn conversion within a single building adjacent to the farmhouse garage and adjacent to the existing hedge boundary and neighbours' garden will not look prominent in the landscape. The proposed development uses materials which reflect the vernacular style of the area. The proposal will improve the setting of the barn and farmhouse through the removal of the dilapidated outbuildings. The proposal preserves the visual qualities of the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, features and building materials as required by Key Statement EN2 and policy DME2.

Design of the proposals

- 7.18 The design of the conversion has endeavoured to re-use as many of the existing openings in the building as possible and to preserve features such as breathing slits and small openings. The surround to the tall opening on the north-west elevation is retained and is filled with stone preserving the agricultural history of the building whilst allowing for the building to be converted to a new use. The waggon entrance has been used to light the living area with

the glazing positioned at the location of the waggon door in order to preserve the recess which served as a canopy. New windows have been inserted in the south-east elevation facing the road to provide a window into bedroom one for the single storey unit and lighting to the principal room on the ground floor of the two-storey unit. The openings are modest in size. The first-floor bedrooms 2 and 3 in the two-storey unit are provided rooflights to provide adequate light.

- 7.19 The number of window openings and rooflights has been reduced following pre-application advice. Three rooflights are proposed for the single storey unit. The centre of the building is provided with a double height space to reference the historical use of the building as a barn. This central space has no external walls. Natural light is provided by adding glazing at ridge level. This provides natural light to the ground floor kitchen food preparation and dining area as well as the staircase to the first floor. Adequate natural light to this central area of the barn would be impossible to achieve without light being provided from a rooflight. A similar feature has been used on the adjacent Holmes Cottage see photograph 2.



2 Rooflights positioned at the ridge line of Holmes Cottage

- 7.20 Modest gardens have been provided close to each new dwelling. The garden adjacent to the access is to be defined by a new wall. The garden for the new two-storey dwelling is enclosed by existing high boundary walls and an additional wall to separate the garden from the proposed courtyard. The garages are proposed at the rear of the site. They are small scale and to be constructed out of natural materials. The garages for the barn conversion are provided as one building simple in form and are positioned so that they will appear as rural outbuildings commonly seen on farmsteads in the area.
- 7.21 The existing stone garden wall running along the existing vehicle access is to be re-positioned to enclose the garden of the farmhouse and provide separation from the access to the barn conversion. The garden wall along Higher Commons Lane will be retained and reducing in height to 0.9m to improve visibility at the existing relocated access and the proposed access to the farmhouse. This will retain these features in the landscape.
- 7.22 The creation of a new access for the farmhouse is desirable from a highway safety point of view as the current access is severely substandard. The re-alignment and improvement of the existing access is necessary to improve the existing access to serve the proposed barn conversion to secure an optimal viable use for this non-designated heritage asset. The alterations to the garden walls and the introduction of a new access for the farmhouse is justified on this basis. The proposal is compliant with policies DMG1, DME2 and DME4.

Residential amenity

- 7.23 The relationship between the proposed two storey dwelling and Holmes Cottage will not lead to any loss of privacy or overlooking of windows between the two properties. There is sufficient distance between the existing farmhouse and the proposed two storey barn conversion for there to be no loss of privacy through overlooking of windows or private outdoor amenity space and complies with the requirement of policy DMG1 in this respect.
- 7.24 There is about 14.2 m between the south-west elevation of the single storey conversion and the side elevation of the farmhouse. A new hedge is proposed along the boundary wall to the re-aligned access which can provide screening. Although the farmhouse front garden is reduced by the proposed development adequate private outdoor amenity space is provided.

Highways

- 7.25 The existing access which serves the farmhouse, barn and the agricultural land to the rear has substandard visibility for drivers as the barn stands close to the edge of the highway. The small lean-to on the barn adjacent to the access severely limits visibility toward Osbaldeston and the garden wall limits visibility towards Mellor Brook. The proposed development aims to

improve highway safety overall by creating a new vehicle access for the farmhouse and an improved access for the barn conversion and agricultural access to the land. The farmhouse will have the sole use of its new access. The potential vehicle activity associated with the agricultural building (should its use for agricultural purposes resume) will cease when it is converted to dwellings. It is proposed to improve the existing access by providing an access 3.5m wide with substantially improved visibility for vehicles exiting the site onto Higher Commons Lane. This access will serve the two new dwellings and the land to the rear.

- 7.26 A new vehicle access is proposed to the farmhouse 3m wide with the first 5m off the adopted highway covered in a hardbound material. This will lead to a new double garage at the rear of the farmhouse with a turning area so that vehicles can enter and leave in forward gear. The access has a visibility splay of 2m by 93m to the south-west and 2m by 66m to the north-east. The access, turning and garage are all within the existing residential curtilage of the farmhouse. The applicant has followed planning pre-application advice to avoid encroachment into the land to the rear by the extension of the residential curtilage. The amount of hard surfacing has been reduced to a minimum.
- 7.27 The existing vehicle access which currently serves the farmhouse, barn and agricultural land to the rear has substandard visibility for drivers leaving the site. It is proposed to improve this access to serve the proposed dwellings in the barn conversion and to provide continued agricultural access to the land to the rear by repositioning the access away from the barn wall. This requires the access to be moved over onto part of the farmhouse garden. The garden wall adjacent to Higher Commons Lane will be reduced in height. The proposed access will be 3.5m wide and hard bound for the first 5m. This achieves visibility splays of 2m by 70m to the south-west and 2m by 47m to the north-east.
- 7.28 The proposed dwellings have each been provided with two parking or garage spaces. This satisfies the parking requirements for a one-bedroom and a two-bedroom dwelling. The farmhouse is provided with at least three off-street parking spaces which is the maximum parking requirement.
- 7.29 The proposed new access for the farmhouse with adequate visibility splays will provide a significance improvement in highway safety for the occupiers of the farmhouse. The applicant describes the current use of the access for agricultural purpose in paragraph 7.6 above. The land is let to a farmer who owns the adjoining land. The farmer has access to the land via his own fields or by using the access at Holmes Farm. The use of the access by large machinery occurs infrequently when a grass crop is taken. The rest of the time the land is access by Land Rover or on foot. The improvement to the existing access to serve the proposed

dwellings and agricultural land, together with the removal of the farmhouse traffic and the removal of agricultural traffic associated with the farm buildings should not result in any greater highway safety issues and overall should lead to an improvement in highways safety. The proposal complies with policy DMG1 and DMG3 and NPPF paragraphs 115 and 116.

Ecology

- 7.30 A protected species survey for the presence of bats and owls has been undertaken as well as other ecological constraints being considered in relation to Great Crested Newts. The barn is used as a bat roost. The proposed works will result in the loss of the bat roost and so mitigation measures in the bat method statement are proposed in section 5 of the submitted Report. Evidence of nesting birds were observed, and the barn was used as a roosting stie for a single barn owl. Mitigation measures are proposed in section 5 of the report. This includes the provision of an owl nesting box. The site is 55m to the south-east of a pond where Great Crested Newts are confirmed at being present. The ecologist considers that the proposed land included in the development site does not include *“potential refuge habitats or suitable features for hibernation”*. Mitigation measures are provided in section 5, and the ecologist concludes *“Provided mitigation measure are strictly implemented; it is not considered the GCN present a significant ecological constraint to the proposed development.”* The proposal complies with the requirements of Key Statement EN4 policy DME3.

Flood Risk

- 7.31 The planning pre-application response advised that the site in an area which is susceptible to surface water flooding. A water drainage strategy has been provided in drawing 24-030 PL13- Proposed surface water drainage strategy. This is compliant with policy DME6.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 7.32 A biodiversity net gain assessment has been undertaken. The 10% biodiversity enhancement required for habitats is proposed on land adjacent to the site in the applicant’s ownership. The application site boundary has been drawn to include the area to deliver the biodiversity net gain ‘on-site’. The biodiversity net gain is proposed to be provided through the planting of 21 native trees and a hedgerow.

Trees

- 7.33 A tree survey has been carried out. The survey identified one group of trees and one hedge which were categorised as low-quality category C adjacent to proposed garage 2. The proposal is to retain the hedge and trees. The development accords with policy DME1.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed conversion of the barn into two dwellings will secure the optimal viable use for this redundant barn, a non-designated heritage asset, which makes a positive contribution to the rural landscape. There is a public benefit in the provision of two dwellings to the Boroughs housing. The future uses for the building at the site as residential dwellings and continued low key agricultural access to the land is supported by the proposed improvements to vehicles access.

- 8.2 We have demonstrated that the buildings to be converted are appropriately located, structurally sound and capable of being converted without the need for major alterations or extensions. We have shown that the altered access to the site will provide an overall improvement to highway safety.

- 8.3 We have demonstrated the proposed development complies with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.