


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	MC	Date:	6/11/2025	Manager:	LH	Date:	6/11/25
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0643			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	25/09/2025	Site Notice:	25/09/2025	
Officer:	MC			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Planning permission for proposed conversion of Barn 2 within the curtilage of the listed Writtenstone Farmhouse, into ancillary residential accommodation. Works to include insertion/infilling of window and door openings, replacement of cement fibre roofing with slates and engineering operations to include the lowering of the ground level adjacent to the barn.
Site Address/Location:	Writtenstone Farm, Writtenstone Lane, Longridge, PR3 2ZN.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Longridge Town Council:	No response received.

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objections subject to condition that the building remains ancillary.
LCC Archaeology:	No objections following submission of the historic building record.
RVBC countryside:	No objections subject to conditions that the development is implemented in accordance with the method statement.
Growth Lancashire:	The Heritage and Conservation Officer considers that proposed development would cause no discernible level of harm or loss of significance to the heritage assets identified above including their setting.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
None.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
<p>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</p> <p>Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Sustainable development Key Statement EN2: Landscape Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations</p> <p>Policy DMG1: General considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets</p>

Policy DMH4: The Conversion Of Barns And Other Buildings To Dwellings
Policy DMB5: Footpaths And Bridleways

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act Section 16 & 66

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2025/0644

Listed Building Consent for proposed conversion of Barn 2 within the curtilage of the listed Writtenstone Farmhouse, into ancillary residential accommodation. Works to include insertion of new and infilling of existing windows and doors. Works to include insertion/infilling of window and door openings, replacement of cement fibre roofing with slates, insulation of walls and roof, installation of underfloor heating, alterations to internal openings.

Pending Consideration

3/2025/0511

Listed Building Consent for internal works to renew and thermally upgrade the ground floor slab, replaster and thermally upgrade the external walls, install thermal roof insulation and creation of a WC at ground floor and an ensuite at first floor.

Approved with Conditions

3/2025/0311

Replacement of existing doors and windows and installation of one new conservation style roof light.

Approved with Conditions

3/2024/0746

Listed Building Consent for proposed re-slating roof including re-leading valleys and chimneys and re-pointing all external walls and washing existing render.

Approved with Conditions

3/2024/0622

Planning permission for proposed conversion of barn 1 to two-storey, five bedroom dwelling; demolition of outbuilding 1 and construction of new double garage; construction of new roof and conversion of outbuilding 2 to form single-storey incidental domestic hobby space; alterations to existing vehicular access, creation of domestic curtilage and landscaping; new sewage treatment plant and diversion of public footpath.

Approved with Conditions

3/2024/0622

Planning permission for proposed conversion of barn 1 to two-storey, five bedroom dwelling; demolition of outbuilding 1 and construction of new double garage; construction of new roof and conversion of outbuilding 2 to form single-storey incidental domestic hobby space; alterations to existing vehicular access, creation of domestic curtilage and landscaping; new sewage treatment plant and diversion of public footpath.

Approved with Conditions

3/2024/0623

Listed Building Consent for proposed conversion of barn 1 to two-storey, five bedroom dwelling; demolition of outbuilding 1 and construction of new double garage; construction of new roof and conversion of outbuilding 2 to form single-storey incidental domestic hobby space; alterations to existing vehicular access, creation of domestic curtilage and landscaping; new sewage treatment plant and diversion of public footpath.

Approved with Conditions

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site is located adjacent to the boundary with the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, within the Open Countryside. The site relates to a farmstead situated on the Eastern outskirts of Longridge. Access to the application site is via Writtenstone Lane from Lower Road with Writtenstone Lane also serving as Public Right Of Way BW0302019. Subsequent access to the site from Writtenstone Lane is via an access track which serves as Public Right Of Way FP0302021 which runs along the south-eastern perimeter of the application site. The surrounding area is predominantly agricultural.

Writtenstone Farm comprises a detached two storey farmhouse which is Grade II Listed (Written Stone Farmhouse) and a number of barns which are considered to be curtilage listed. To the East of the bar is also the Grade II Listed inscribed stone named 'The Written Stone'.

The site is also located within the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan Area.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning consent is sought for the conversion of the barn building identified as 'Barn 02' on the submitted site plan to ancillary living accommodation associated with the main Farmhouse. The works proposed are as follows:

- Excavating a 300mm wide trench to the North and East Elevations capped off with a steel grid where a French drain would be laid to the perimeter of the building.
- Opening of windows to the South-East elevation
- New timber doors added to existing openings to South-West elevation
- Insertion of small window opening to ground floor of North-East elevation
- Replacement of cement fibre roofing sheets to single storey roof with slate

Principle of Development:

With regards to the principle of development, 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. It is important however in an area such as Ribble Valley that this is carefully managed through the development management process and that clear guidance is offered.

The conversion of buildings should be of a high standard and in keeping with local tradition. The impact of the development, including the creation of garden area and car parking facilities (or other additions) should not harm the appearance or function of the area in which it is situated. Access to the site should be to a safe standard and be capable of being improved to a safe standard without harming the appearance of the area.

Policy DMH4 states that:

Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where:

- 1. 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*
- 2. There need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure, and*
- 3. There would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests, and*
- 4. There would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy, and*

5. *The proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.*
6. *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:

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.*

Whilst the proposed development is not for a new residential unit and relates to ancillary accommodation, the application has been accompanied by a Structural Survey dated February 2024 which confirms that the barn is considered suitable for conversion as it is in generally good condition structurally with little or no sign of previous or ongoing movement.

As such, there is no in principle objection to its conversion.

Visual Amenity:

Key Statement EN2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

“The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced.”

Policy LNDP3 of the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan states that:

“All new development proposals will only be supported when they are of good design that responds positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the surroundings.”

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG1 provides specific guidance in relation to design and states:

“All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style [and] consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings.”

In addition, Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG2 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”.

Lastly, Policy DMH5 states that:

“Proposals to extend or alter existing residential properties must accord with Policy DMG1 and any relevant designations within which the site is located”.

With regards to the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, it is noted that the building would not be extended to provide the ancillary accommodation. The proposal would result in the insertion of new windows/doors to existing openings (notwithstanding the insertion of one small window). Following amendments to change the design of the windows to simple plain glazed timber framed casements, is considered to be acceptable. In addition, the replacement of the single storey roof with slates would be an improvement on the existing materials.

The insertion of a new small window is not considered to detrimentally alter the agricultural character of the barn as this would be low level and would not result in an overly domestic appearance.

A small amount of land would be excavated to the North-East elevation to allow for the implementation of a drain and as this would not result in any significant changes to the land levels that would alter the character and appearance of the landscape, this is considered to have no detrimental impact on the setting of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

In terms of the level of accommodation proposed, it is noted that the building is two storeys in height and would provide a home office, quiet space and kitchenette at ground floor level, with a hobby room with w/c and storage at first floor level. Whilst the level of accommodation proposed is not necessarily modest, as the building is of two storeys, a condition could be added to any grant of permission to ensure the barn remains ancillary to the main farmhouse. In addition, there are heritage benefits to the scheme through the re-use of a redundant barn which shall be assessed below.

Heritage:

The listing for Written Stone Farmhouse is as follows:

SD 63 NW 7/131

LONGRIDGE, WRITTEN STONE LANE, Written Stone Farmhouse

II

House, probably late C18th. Sandstone rubble with slate roof. L-plan. 2 storeys. Facade of 3 bays with chamfered quoins and windows of 3 lights with square stone mullions and plain stone surrounds, except for the central window on the 1st floor which has a plain stone surround with semi-circular head. The door has a plain stone surround with a semi-circular head.

Listing NGR: SD6258537882

In addition, the listing for The Written Stone is as follows:

SD 63 NW 7/130

LONGRIDGE WRITTEN STONE LANE The Written Stone

II Inscribed stone, 1655. Sandstone. About 8 feet long, 2 feet wide and 18 inches deep. The following is written in incised letters: 'RAVFFE RADCLIFFE LAID THIS STONE TO LYE FOR EVER AD 1655'.

For legends about the stone see Smith, Tom C., A History of Longridge, Preston, 1888, pp. 27-30.

Listing NGR: SD6261737902

In assessing the proposal, regard must be given to the statutory duties imposed on the authority in respect

of the preservation and enhancement of such assets. In this respect, at a local level, Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 are primarily, but not solely, engaged for the purposes of assessing likely impacts upon designated heritage assets resultant from the proposed development.

Key Statement EN5 states that:

“There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.

This will be achieved through:

- *Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.*
- *Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.*
- *Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.*
- *Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.*
- *The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.”*

With Policy DME4 stating, in respect of development within conservation areas or those affecting the listed buildings or their setting, that development will be assessed on the following basis:

“Alterations or extensions to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported. Any proposals involving the demolition or loss of important historic fabric from listed buildings will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist.”

Policy LNDP4 of the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan also states that:

“All of the town’s heritage assets, including the three Conservation Areas, will be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.”

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Given the proposal relates to a Grade II Designated Heritage Asset, special regard must also be given to the statutory duties imposed on the authority, pursuant to national legislation, particularly in respect of the preservation and enhancement of such assets.

The principle statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended by s.58B (1) of Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) is to preserve or enhance the special character of heritage assets, including their setting. As such, in determining applications that affect designated heritage assets, the authority must consider the duties contained within the principle Act which states the following;

Listed buildings - Section 16 (2) (as amended by s.58B of Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023):

In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the building. Under s.58B (2) this includes preserving or enhancing any feature, quality or characteristic of the asset or setting that contributes to the significance of the asset.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024):

The National planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out further duties in respect of determining proposals that affect heritage assets stating that ‘in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation’.

The Framework sets out further duties in respect of considering potential impacts upon designated heritage assets with Paragraphs 212 – 221 reading as follows:

212: When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

213: Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

214: Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

215: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

216: 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.

217: Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

218: Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the

significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

219: Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

221: Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

The Heritage and Conservation Officer has provided comments on the scheme. With regards to the French drain proposed, they raise no objection.

Turning to the replacement roof slates, they note that the slates and ridge stones are to be reclaimed to match those of the farmhouse and laid in a diminishing course which replicate the original arrangement. The works are welcomed and would be a considerable improvement on existing cement fibre/sheet metal coverings. They recommend a condition that any replacement/new slates be submitted for approval and secured by condition.

In terms of the proposed doors and windows, they note that the applicant has reviewed a previous design of doors/windows to match the farmhouse, which was considered to be contrary to the agricultural character of the barn. The proposed amended windows are to be simple plain glazed timber framed casements, and the doors along the SW elevation are to be replaced with good quality timber with design and glazing taking cues from the ad hoc existing arrangement of doors that will help to retain the agricultural character. No objection is raised to the new window proposed also.

It is considered that proposed development would cause no discernible level of harm or loss of significance to the designated heritage asset or the setting of the listed farmhouse or the 'Written Stone'.

As such, the proposal meets the objectives contained in Chapter 16 of the NPPF, Policy DME4 and Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy, and I raise no objections from a heritage perspective.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals for development to consider the effects of development upon existing amenities.

Due to the isolated location of the site, it is not considered that the conversion of the barn to ancillary residential accommodation associated with the main farmhouse would result in any adverse impact with regards to residential amenity in accordance with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Highways and Parking:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG3 states that:

'All development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with currently approved standards'.

In addition, Policy DMG1 states that all development must:

- '1. consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.
2. ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated'.

The proposal would not increase the number of bedrooms at the site or impact on existing parking arrangements. The Local Highway Authority have been consulted on the scheme and raise no objections subject to the inclusion of a condition to ensure the building remains as ancillary to existing dwelling to avoid the creation of separate dwellings which may be substandard in terms of parking provision and/or vehicular manoeuvring area.

Subject to the above condition, the scheme is compliant with the above policies.

Landscape/Ecology:

Protected Species

A preliminary roost survey carried out at the application site on 12 April 2024. Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on the barn on 6 June 2024 and 3 July 2024 which found a soprano pipistrelle bat roost which was located in a gap under the bargeboard on the northern side of the barn. A Method Statement has now been submitted which confirms that the bat roost can be and will be retained as the works do not require the removal of the fascia board or any works to the roof in the location of the bat roost.

The report concludes that as a result of the retention of the bat roost, the works will remain legally compliant with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). On this basis, a Natural England mitigation licence will not be required. However, the works are required to follow the precautionary working measures outlined in the report, which could be secured by condition as recommended by the Countryside Officer.

Trees

The proposed French drain would be sited within the Root Protection Area of a tree located to the North of the existing barn. The supporting information indicates that the installation of the French drain would involve some excavation works, although when the Planning Officer visited the site, it was noted that the roots are already covered by a stone built outbuilding, separate from the curtilage listed barn. The Design & Access statement indicates that the proposed trench will be dug by hand in the vicinity of the tree canopy. Whilst the tree is not protected, it is shown for retention and as such, it would be reasonable to include a condition for tree protection measures to ensure the tree is not harmed throughout the installation process.

BNG

An updated proposed site plan has been submitted which indicates the extent of excavation works. This would impact on less than 25sqm of on-site habitat due to the footprint of excavation works and as such, falls within the '*de minimis*' exemption for needing to provide a 10% net-gain in biodiversity.

Other Matters:

With regards to Archaeology, the Historic Environment Unit and Lancashire County Council have been consulted on the application. They note that The 1st edition Ordnance survey 1:10560 map, surveyed in 1844, shows a small building on the site of the building identified in the application as Barn 2. This varies slightly in its footprint from the current Barn 2 so it may be a predecessor of the current Barn 2, and the current building may incorporate some of the building shown in its fabric, although some of the difference may be due to cartographic variations. By the 1890s re-survey the map shows a building with the same footprint as Barn 2, including the rear outshut which, from the documentation supporting the application seems to have been two separate structures with the gap between later filled in to create a further room.

The Historic Environment Team originally recommended an archaeology condition be attached to any grant of permission for a Written Scheme of Investigation for building recording. This has been undertaken prior to determination and submitted. The Historic Environment Team have provided updated comments on the document and have advised that the report is acceptable and no further conditions relating to archaeology are required.

Policy DME6 states that:

“Development will not be permitted where the proposal would be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or exacerbate flooding elsewhere.

Applications for development should include appropriate measures for the conservation, protection and management of water such that development contributes to:

- 1. Preventing pollution of surface and / or groundwater*
- 2. Reducing water consumption*
- 3. Reducing the risk of surface water flooding (for example the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS))*

As a part of the consideration of water management issues, and in parallel with flood management objectives, the authority will also seek the protection of the borough’s water courses for their biodiversity value.

All applications for planning permission should include details for surface water drainage and means of disposal based on sustainable drainage principles. The use of the public sewerage system is the least sustainable form of surface water drainage and therefore development proposals will be expected to investigate and identify more sustainable alternatives to help reduce the risk of surface water flooding and Environmental impact.”

With regards to drainage, following concerns that the French drain would discharge out on to the hard surfaced farm yard/track area, the proposed site plan has been updated and now indicates that the drain would connect to the existing culverted watercourse, which is considered acceptable.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The proposed scheme of residential conversion for the barn building accords with the relevant Policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and is not considered to be harmful to the historic character of the barn building, outbuilding or setting of the Grade II Listed Writtenstone Farm or Written Stone.

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.
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