

Planning Department  
Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Council Offices  
Church Walk  
Clitheroe  
BB7 2RA

Date 14<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Ref 2413.corr.RVBC250814

Dear Sir/Madam,

**2413 Sugar Hill Farm, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark, Clitheroe, BB7 3DG**

Stanton Andrews is retained by Mr Hopkinson ('the applicant') to progress a planning application in connection with the formation of a new agricultural/field access off Clitheroe Road at Sugar Hill Farm - full address as above. There is no additional development proposed in connection with the agricultural/field access.

The planning application has been submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-14254019) and contains the following information alongside this letter :-

1. Completed copy of the 'Full Planning' application form
2. Location Plan Drg Ref. 2413/PL01
3. Existing Topographic Plan Drg Ref. 2413/EX03
4. Proposed Field Access Plan Drg Ref. 2413/PL03
5. Arboricultural Survey prepared by Lakeland Tree Consultancy
6. Tree Protection/Removal Plan prepared by Lakeland Tree Consultancy
7. Small Site Biodiversity Metric
8. UK Habitat Classification maps (Pre and Post Development)

The purpose of this letter is to present a general overview of the site and the proposed development. This application follows on from pre-app advice from RVBC (RV/2024/ENQ/00021). The ambitions for the site and current scheme have been reconsidered since the pre-app stage following confirmation from RVBC that the pre-app proposal would not be supported. Originally it was the intention to provide an alternative access/driveway to the property. However, now it is the intention to simply continue to use the fields within the ownership for agricultural use and a new field access is proposed from Clitheroe Road to facilitate this.

The need for this application and the alternative field access from Clitheroe Road is due to the part sale of the land. The location plan supporting the application highlights the current ownership of the applicant. The existing field access from Clitheroe Road now serves a separate portion of land to the north of the ownership line so an alternative access is sought for the land which remains.

Following the original pre-app advice from RVBC, we have received highway's advice direct from Lancashire County Council (LCC) over the proposed field access (dated 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024). The current proposal takes on board LCC's recommendations and it is understood the access will present no highway safety concerns.

## EXISTING SITE

The ownership boundary covers approximately 9.1 hectares and is located in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) near Cow Ark, Clitheroe.

Within the ownership is a detached stone-built farmhouse which is nestled in a rural woodland setting to the south west of the plot. The property also has a detached garage/office which gained approval back in May 2019. The remainder of the associated land to the north east of the property consists of undeveloped agricultural fields.

The farmhouse can currently be accessed off Whitewell Road via a private drive which banks down to and then bridges over Cow Ark Brook. Currently, there is no vehicular access to the agricultural fields within the ownership.

A location plan showing the site within its wider setting is provided within the supporting documents. An aerial image of a similar area is also provided in Figure 1 below.



*Figure 1 : Aerial image of the site with property highlighted in red. Additional agricultural land highlighted in blue.*

The application boundary (area of development) consists of a small portion of land within the general ownership. This measures at 185m<sup>2</sup> and currently includes an area of modified grassland alongside trees and a small section of hedgerow at the boundary with Clitheroe Road. For the purposes of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment, an additional/separate zone is identified on the location plan which is intended to provide an on-site provision for any compensatory habitat creation deemed necessary.

In terms of additional planning matters :-

- There are no public rights of way in the immediate vicinity.
- The whole site is located within Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is at its lowest.
- Other than the AONB designation, there are no further ecological or landscape designations.
- There are no tree preservation orders on site.
- There are also no heritage assets within the application site.

## PROPOSAL

To assist vehicular access to the fields within the ownership, permission is sought for a new agricultural/field access off Clitheroe Road.

The new access would provide a dedicated agricultural access to the fields and removes any potential conflict between smaller domestic vehicles and larger agricultural vehicles at Sugar Hill Farm. The existing access to the property off Whitewell Road (and over the brook) will continue to serve the domestic uses of the farmhouse and detached garage/office.

The access is designed to follow recommendations from LCC's Highways Team – i.e. 6m wide with 6m radius and ensuring any gate is set back 10m from the edge of the highway (to allow vehicles to clear the highway prior to the gate being opened).

The proposed plans also illustrate that the access can accommodate appropriate visibility splays to prepare for the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed in the area. The visibility splay measures have been agreed with LCC's Highways Team prior to this application.

An arboricultural survey has been undertaken to support the proposal. The results of the survey confirmed a couple of trees are 'unsuitable for retention' and these are to be removed on safety grounds. Any remaining landscaping fronting Clitheroe Road will be largely unaffected by the proposal with the placement of the access ensuring it takes into account the high-quality mature trees at the boundary with the highway.

The small sites metric has been undertaken for the respective BNG assessment. This takes into account both the application area and the additional habitat creation zone (red line and red hatched areas on the location plan). The metric confirms the baseline biodiversity value of the area habitat units is 0.4513. The baseline biodiversity value of the existing hedgerow units is 0.0260. A proportion of these baseline units will be lost through the construction of the proposed access but these habitats are of low/medium distinctiveness only (i.e. no designated habitats, no irreplaceable/priority habitats and no habitats of high distinctiveness).

The loss is compensated regardless and the supporting UK Habitat Classification Post Development map confirms the additional habitat creation measures that are proposed. These measures achieve at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity value.

The current development proposal illustrated will result in a net gain biodiversity value for area habitat units of 0.0497 (11.02%) whilst the net gain value for hedgerow units would be 0.0450 (172.93%). The UK Habitat map provides indicative locations for the proposed tree/hedgerow planting but as long as the numbers are achieved then the locations within the respective areas can be adjusted whilst still achieving the mandatory net gain figures.

The metric tool and supporting habitat maps demonstrate that the current proposals would exceed the mandatory BNG requirements whilst all the measures are more than capable of being discharged successfully on-site.

## SUMMARY

The proposed access is necessary for the future maintenance and management of the agricultural land at the property. Following pre-app advice, we believe the main controversial aspect of the development has been omitted (i.e. linked alternative driveway) and the minor proposal that remains relates to continuing/servicing the existing land use now that a portion of the land has been sold off.

The proposal is of a design, position and scale that avoids and/or minimises impacts on existing landscape features. As such it can be considered to be sympathetic and in keeping with the AONB and comply with policies DMG1, DMG2 and EN2 of RVBC's Core Strategy.

The proposed scheme exceeds the 10% BNG requirements and no further interventions beyond those already proposed are required.

Following input from LCC Highways, it is understood the proposal will also present no highway safety concerns.

The applicant is keen to ensure the current proposal can proceed with the Council's support wherever possible. Once reviewed, and if necessary, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss any matters in more detail during the planning period.

We trust this is all to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely



Daniel Bowe RIBA  
for and on behalf of Stanton Andrews Ltd