

Higher College Farm Blackburn Road, Longridge, PR3 2YY

Appeal against the Refusal of a Section 73 Application (Ref. 3/2025/0653) for the variation of condition 2 (Plans) on permission 3/2023/0706 for the proposed erection of 34 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access. Resubmission of application 3/2022/0553.

STATEMENT OF CASE
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/1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Statement of Case has been prepared by PWA Planning, acting on behalf of Ribble Valley Properties ("the Appellant"), in support of an appeal against the decision made by Ribble Valley Borough Council (the 'LPA') to refuse a Section 73 application (Application reference 3/2025/0653) for the variation of condition 2 attached to the permission reference 3/2023/0706. This consent (Reference Number 3/2023/0706) was for the proposed erection of 34 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access and was the resubmission of an earlier approved application (Reference Number 3/2022/0553) at Higher College Farm, Lower Road, Longridge, PR3 2YY.
- 1.2. Planning permission was granted in March 2025 (ref. 3/2023/0706) for the erection of 34no. Class B2 units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access. The Section 73 application (subject to this appeal) sought minor amendments to the approved elevations and roof design to simplify construction and improve viability while retaining the approved layout, scale, and landscaping.
- 1.3. The LPA refused the application on design grounds, and this Appeal seeks to demonstrate that the proposed revisions remain consistent with the character of the area, fully compliant with relevant local and national planning policy, and necessary to secure the viable delivery of the approved employment development.
- 1.4. This Statement of Case demonstrates that the proposed amendments:
 - Continue to represent a high quality and contextually appropriate design;
 - Enhance buildability and viability ensuring the allocated employment site is delivered and;
 - Fully comply with national and local policy objectives to support sustainable economic growth.
- 1.5. This Statement of Case is provided in support of the appeal being made under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and has been prepared in accordance with the latest Procedural Guide¹.

¹ [Procedural Guide: Planning appeals – England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/procedural-guide-to-planning-appeals)

/2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

Site Description

- 2.1. The appeal site, which extends approximately 1.5ha in size, is located at Higher College Farm, on the eastern periphery of Longridge's settlement boundary. The site currently comprises an area of land used for pasture together with the residential dwelling and outbuildings at Higher College Farmhouse. The site is an allocated employment site within the Housing and Economic Development Document (2019), reference EAL3. Figure 1 below illustrates the site and its wider setting.



Figure 1: Aerial image of the site in its wider setting (Source: Google Earth)

- 2.2. The site is bounded to the north by Blackburn Road (B6243) which runs in an east to west direction, while mature hedgerows are present to the northern and eastern boundaries. To the west, the site abuts a hedgerow lined track leading to Higher College Farmhouse located on the south of the site, beyond which lies a range of commercial buildings used by Clegg's Chilled Food Service and Anderton's Ribble Butchers for food processing, packaging, and distribution, along with external parking and servicing areas. To the east is a roadway which forms the main access to the food processing businesses, beyond which lies agricultural land.
- 2.3. The application site is located on the eastern edge of Longridge, which has a broad range of facilities and services.

- 2.4. The current access to the site is located along the western boundary, which is taken directly from Blackburn Road, located further to the north of the site.
- 2.5. There are no listed buildings within the site and, by reference to the Environment Agency's flood risk map, it does not fall within an area subject to flooding, lying wholly within Flood Risk Zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding.
- 2.6. The site is not subject to any local or national ecological designations. The site is located within the Open Countryside Area, as defined by Ribble Valley Borough Council's Proposals Map. The Forest of Bowland AONB lies approximately 1km to the north of the site.

Planning History

- 2.7. A search of Ribble Valleys Council's planning register has been carried out to understand the planning history relevant to the site and the proposed development. Planning applications relating to the site itself include:
 - 2025/0653: Variation of condition 2 (Plans) on permission 3/2023/0706 for the proposed erection of 34 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access. Resubmission of application 3/2022/0553. Refused, 1st of October 2025.
 - 3/2024/0256: Proposed change of use of existing dwelling (use class C3) to children's assessment centre for care (use class C2 residential institution). Withdrawn: 10 January 2025.
 - 3/2023/0706: Proposed erection of 34 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access. Resubmission of application
 - 3/2022/0553: Full planning permission for the erection of commercial units (Use Class E (g)) including conversion and extension of existing farmhouse for purposes of Use Class E (g). Approved 19th January 2023.
 - 3/2018/1105: Outline planning permission for 21 dwellings and associated works. Refused 3rd June 2019. 3/2017/0602: Outline planning permission for industrial units (use classes B1, B2, B8) and associated access, parking, landscaping and services infrastructure with all matters reserved except access and change of use of farmhouse to office (B1). Approved 1st December 2017.
- 2.8. In addition, the following planning applications have been made relating to nearby sites:

- 3/2020/0507: Outline Planning application for business units use classes B1(b)(c) and B2 and storage use class B8 and associated improvements to existing access with all matters reserved except for access. Approved 18th November 2020.
- 3/2019/0644: Land south of Blackburn Road, Erection of business units (use class B1) comprising three new buildings with access, parking and provision of secure compounds. Approved 29th November 2019.
- 3/2017/0317: Land South of Blackburn Road, Outline Planning application for Employment Floorspace (use Class B1, B2, B8). Approved 4th September 2017.

2.9. Application reference 3/2025/0653 was refused on the 1st of October 2025 for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that approval would result in the introduction of buildings, of an overtly utilitarian appearance, that fail to benefit from adequate articulation or visual interest and fail to respond positively to the inherent character of the open countryside setting of the site, being of significant measurable detriment to the character and visual amenities of the area.

2. The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Paragraph 140 of the National Planning Policy Framework insofar that approval would result in a diminished quality of development, comparative to that of the approved, resulting in a form of development that would fail to respond positively to the character of visual amenities of the area, being of detriment to the character and visual amenities of the defined open countryside and the immediate area.

2.10. The LPA considered that the simplified roof and elevation treatments proposed through the Section 73 application would detract from the visual quality of the approved scheme, describing the revisions as a reversion to the earlier, more utilitarian form that Members had previously raised concerns about. No objections were raised in respect of highways, amenity, landscaping, or ecology, and the principle of the development remained accepted.

2.11. This appeal therefore relates only to the design changes proposed, which are intended to secure a viable and deliverable form of the consented employment scheme. The only matter in dispute relates to design detail, specifically the revised roof form and simplified façades. No other technical or policy matters are contested.

/3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. This appeal relates to an application (planning reference 3/2025/0653) submitted under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Condition 2 (approved plans) attached to planning permission 3/2023/0706.
- 3.2. The development approved under 3/2023/0706 establishes the principle and layout of the employment scheme, comprising four blocks of small business units and a single ancillary battery storage and maintenance building. The approved scheme (3/2023/0706) followed extensive design revisions to address Members' previous comments regarding the form and appearance of the buildings.
- 3.3. The Section 73 application (subject to this appeal) sought to vary the approved elevations and roof design to allow for a more practical and economically deliverable version of the consented scheme. The proposed changes focused on simplifying the external design of the buildings, including a reduction in eaves and ridge heights, removal of recessed roof sections, and a return to a consistent dual pitch roof profile across the unit blocks. The contrasting mono pitch roof elements at the building entrances were retained to provide visual interest and articulation.
- 3.4. The revisions did not alter the approved layout, use, or scale of the development. All aspects of the previously approved landscaping, access arrangements, and materials palette were maintained. The scheme continues to employ a combination of Marchalite stone plinths and vertical timber effect composite cladding, ensuring a high-quality finish consistent with its rural edge setting and the surrounding employment uses.
- 3.5. The intent of the variation was to ensure that the development could be delivered viably and without unnecessary construction complexity, while maintaining the overall character and quality of the approved scheme.
- 3.6. The application was accompanied by 3D visual comparisons which clearly demonstrate that the proposed scheme retains the approved character, offering an equally coherent and attractive development. These are provided at Appendix A for ease.
- 3.7. Figure 1 (Access View) shows that both designs maintain a high-quality frontage and rural-edge sensitivity.

- 3.8. Figure 2 (West View from Blackburn Road) highlights that the simplified roofline achieves visual consistency and a slightly lower overall mass, improving the relationship with the open fields beyond.
- 3.9. Figure 3 (East View) shows no perceptible increase in visual impact, with the same rhythm of units, colour tones, and articulation.
- 3.10. These illustrations confirm that the proposed alternative design achieves visual equivalence with the approved scheme, with minor architectural simplification that is appropriate for an employment development in this context.

/4 RELEVANT POLICY CONTEXT

Development Plan

- 4.1. The Development Plan for the appeal site comprises of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 (2014) and the Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document (2019). Additionally, key policy documents that comprise 'material considerations' include the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), and any local supplementary planning guidance documents considered relevant to the proposal.
- 4.2. An extract from the adopted Proposal Map is provided in Figure 2, which illustrates the site is located with the countryside, outside of the defined settlement boundaries. However, the extract shows that the site is an allocated employment site, as per Policy EAL3 of the HED DPD.



Figure 2: Extract from the Proposals Map

- 4.3. Within the HED DPD three sites, totalling 4ha collectively, are put forward to be developed for employment land, to ensure that the LPA deliver a sufficient number of employment sites, with particular reference to meet employment requirements for Longridge and facilitate economic growth.
- 4.4. Policy EAL3 clarifies that the site, named 'Land at Higher College Farm, Longridge', is roughly 1.5ha in size, with the extent shown below by Figure 3.

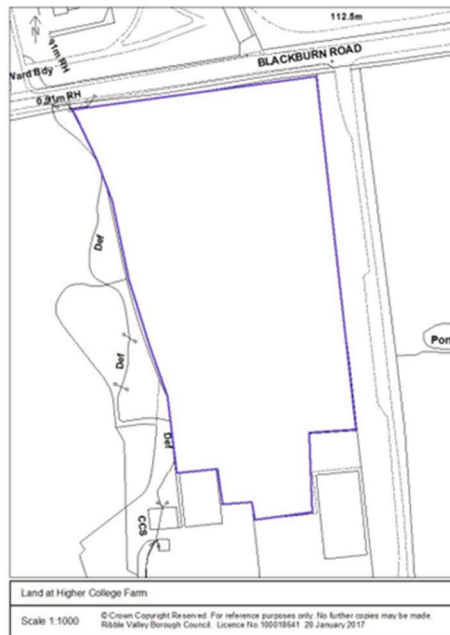


Figure 3: Policy EAL3 - Site Extent

- 4.5. **Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development** allocates 9 hectares of land for employment in appropriate and sustainable locations. The policy states land will be made available for employment use in order to support the health of the local economy and wider sustainable job creation.
- 4.6. **Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy** states that the majority of new housing should be concentrated within the settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.
- 4.7. **Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** echoes the NPPF, showing how the Council will favour proposals which reflect sustainable development.
- 4.8. **Key Statement EN2: Landscape** mainly focuses on protection of the Forest of Bowland AONB through ensuring development contributes to the conservation of the area by enhancing and protecting the landscape and character. The statement does offer more general coverage by linking the policy to the protection of all landscapes outlining that the Council expects all development to be in-keeping with the character of the local landscape.
- 4.9. **Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change** shows that the Council will seek to ensure all development is sustainable in its design and building standards, in order to address climate change.

- 4.10. **Policy DMG1: General Considerations** states that new development should be of a high standard, being sympathetic to its surrounds.
- 4.11. **Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations** shows that proposals within the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley should consolidate, expand or round-off existing development, in keeping with the surrounds.
- 4.12. **Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy** relates to business growth and the local economy. It states that proposals for supporting business growth will be supported in principle and approved so long as they adhere to the remainder of the core strategy and Local Development Framework.
- 4.13. **Policy EAL3: Higher College Farm** is the allocation of the site as employment land, found in the Housing and Economic Development Document (2019), to which this application relates. Land will be allocated for employment uses (defined as uses falling within classes B1 to B8) to meet employment land requirements in the plan period (2008-2028) as follows and as shown on the Proposals Map.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (NPPF)

- 4.14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in planning decisions as per Paragraph 2 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 4.15. The NPPF sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The presumption in favour of sustainable development (**Paragraph 11**) is at the heart of the NPPF, whereby proposed developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social, and environmental issues should be granted planning permission unless there are strong reasons that permission should not be granted. The NPPF strongly supports economic development.
- 4.16. Sustainable development is broadly defined in **Paragraph 8** of the Framework as having three overarching objectives:

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.17. **Paragraph 48** states that applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made swiftly, and within statutory timescales unless an extension has been agreed with the applicant in writing.

4.18. **Section 6** of the NPPF establishes that building a strong, competitive economy, with planning policies and decisions working to promote investment, expansion, and adaptation within the economy.

4.19. **Paragraph 85** shows that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity (our emphasis), taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

4.20. **Paragraph 86** states that Planning Policies should:

- a) *set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the national industrial strategy and any relevant Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- b) *set criteria, and identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- c) *pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics;*
- d) *seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- e) *be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, and allow for new and flexible working practices and spaces to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.*

The proposed development will, directly and indirectly, support the principles of the NPPF by supporting a rural business and by making an important contribution to the local economy.

- 4.21. **Paragraph 131**, in relation to design, states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 4.22. **Paragraph 135** states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that:
- a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*

- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

/5 CASE FOR THE APPELLANT

- 5.1. The LPA refused application ref. 3/2025/0653 for two related reasons, both concerning the design and appearance of the proposed variation. The first alleges that the amended design would result in buildings of an overtly utilitarian appearance lacking articulation and visual interest, to the detriment of the area's character.
- 5.2. The second reason for refusal claims that the revised elevations would represent a diminished quality of development compared with the approved scheme.
- 5.3. We do not agree with either conclusion. The 3D comparative visuals, submitted with the application, clearly show, the LPA's assertion is unsubstantiated. In our view, the amendments maintain a high-quality design that is fully consistent with the local area, planning policy, and the previously approved development.

Reason for Refusal 1

- 5.4. The first reason for refusal claims that the revised design would result in an "overtly utilitarian" appearance lacking articulation or visual interest, and that it would fail to respond positively to the open countryside setting. It is not agreed that this conclusion is justified or that any measurable harm arises from the proposed amendments.
- 5.5. The application site forms part of an allocated employment site under Policy EAL3 of the Housing and Economic Development DPD. Through that allocation, the LPA has already accepted that the character of this land will change from open countryside to built development. The principle of introducing commercial buildings in this location has therefore been established both through the allocation itself and the subsequent grant of planning permission under application 3/2023/0706.
- 5.6. In that context, the key consideration is not whether the revised design alters the rural character of the site, as that change has already been accepted, but whether the amendments now proposed would *exacerbate* visual impact to the extent that a refusal is warranted. We are of the opinion that it does not.

- 5.7. The proposed changes are minor, focusing on the simplification of the roof form and minor rationalisation of the elevations. The layout, scale, materials, and landscaping all remain as approved. The revised scheme retains a coherent and well-proportioned appearance, using the same high quality materials, marchalite stone and vertical timber effect composite cladding, to maintain a strong visual relationship with the surrounding context.
- 5.8. Policy DMG1 requires development to be of a high standard of design that respects the appearance and character of the locality, uses appropriate materials, and provides a safe and visually interesting environment. The proposal continues to satisfy each of these criteria. The use of high-quality materials, clear bay rhythm, and contrasting entrance features ensure visual coherence. The simplified roofline enhances consistency across the unit blocks and marginally reduces overall massing, improving the relationship with the surrounding landscape.
- 5.9. Policy DMG2 establishes that development outside settlement boundaries should either contribute to the local economy or social well being, or otherwise be justified as appropriate to a rural area. It further requires that development be “in keeping with the character of the landscape” in terms of its size, design, materials, landscaping and siting. The proposal satisfies these criteria. The site is allocated for employment use under Policy EAL3, and the proposed Class E(g) buildings will directly support the local economy and job creation. The revised design remains minor in scale and appropriate to its purpose.
- 5.10. It is therefore considered that the revised design does not introduce any new harm. The overall visual effect of the development remains largely unchanged, and certainly not to a degree that would justify the refusal of permission on design grounds. The visual coherence, material continuity, and articulation of entrances remain unchanged. The result is a functional yet high-quality industrial vernacular, consistent with both the approved design and nearby employment buildings.

Reason for Refusal 2

- 5.11. The second reason for refusal asserts that the proposed amendments would result in a “diminished quality of development” compared with the approved scheme, to the detriment of local character. Again, this conclusion is not supported by evidence or by the nature of the changes proposed. The proposal maintains functional efficiency, proportion, and

simplicity, attributes endorsed by Paragraph 135 of the NPPF, which does not equate good design with architectural complexity.

- 5.12. The design revisions are minor and limited to elements that have no bearing on the development's overall character or quality. The roofline has been simplified to a consistent dual pitch form, and minor façade adjustments have been made to improve construction efficiency. The materials, landscaping, and building footprint remain unchanged.
- 5.13. Through both the allocation and the previous grant of planning permission, the LPA has already accepted that this site is suitable for built development of this general form and scale. The approved scheme represents the established design baseline for the site. The question, therefore, is whether the proposed amendments materially worsen that approved visual outcome. The answer is clearly no.
- 5.14. The LPA's assertion of a "diminished quality" appears to stem from a subjective preference for the more complex roof structure of the approved scheme. However, design quality is not synonymous with design complexity. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF confirms that good design is achieved through developments that function well, are visually attractive, and are sympathetic to local character. It does not require architectural complexity or decorative detailing to achieve quality, rather, design quality should be assessed in terms of proportion, coherence, materials, and context. The revised scheme meets these principles by maintaining a simple appearance that is appropriate for its employment setting.
- 5.15. It is therefore considered that the design changes represent an evolution of the approved development rather than a regression. They do not increase visual impact or introduce harm to local character, and they maintain the quality of the approved scheme while improving its viability and deliverability.

Viability and Deliverability

- 5.16. A key driver for the proposed variation was the practical and financial deliverability of the consented scheme. Following the approval of application 3/2023/0706, it became clear that the detailed roof and elevation design, introduced at Members' request, would substantially increase construction costs. The additional complexity and material specification effectively rendered the scheme commercially unviable, and therefore undeliverable in the short term.

- 5.17. The Conlon Consulting Cost Appraisal (June 2025) submitted with the Section 73 application demonstrates that the simplified design achieves an estimated 17.4% reduction in construction cost, equivalent to approximately £849,000, without reducing material quality or altering the building footprint. The saving is achieved through the changes to the roof forms and façade detailing, which significantly improves build efficiency and long-term maintenance performance.
- 5.18. Ensuring that allocated employment land can actually be brought forward is a legitimate and important planning consideration. Paragraphs 81 and 86 of the NPPF place **significant weight** on supporting economic growth and enabling flexibility in response to changing business and market needs. Similarly, Core Strategy Policy DMB1 encourages proposals that sustain business growth and competitiveness. The NPPF (paras 81, 86) is explicit that **significant weight must be given to development that enables business investment and adaptation**. The LPA's refusal disregards this principle and risks undermining the employment land strategy set out in Policy EAL3.
- 5.19. The simplified design directly responds to these policy objectives. It allows the development of 34no. Class E(g) units and the associated battery storage facility to proceed viably, providing much needed employment space and investment in Longridge.
- 5.20. It is therefore considered that **significant weight** should be attached to the viability improvements arising from the proposed variation. In contrast, the LPA's reasons for refusal place no weight on this material factor, which conflicts with the Government's clear direction to support development that fosters local economic growth and makes effective use of allocated land.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 5.21. The 3D images submitted with the application (provided for ease at Appendix A) demonstrate that the proposal results in no additional visual harm compared with the approved scheme. In fact, the consistent roofline softens the built form against the skyline, particularly in longer views from the east and west (see Figures 2 and 3). Existing landscaping will further mitigate visual effects, ensuring the development remains well integrated within the local landscape framework.

Summary

- 5.22. The reasons for refusal relate solely to matters of design. No objections were raised by consultees or the case officer in respect of layout, scale, access, landscaping, highways, or amenity. It is therefore clear that the LPA's concerns are confined to a subjective judgement about the visual impact of the revised roof and elevation treatments.
- 5.23. The site forms part of an established employment allocation under Policy EAL3 of the Housing and Economic Development DPD. Through both the allocation and the subsequent approval of application 3/2023/0706, the LPA has already accepted that the introduction of built form on this site, and the resulting change in character from open countryside to employment land, is acceptable in principle. The relevant question for this appeal is whether the revised design materially worsens the visual impact of the approved scheme.
- 5.24. As demonstrated in the preceding sections, the proposed amendments do not increase visual impact, do not diminish architectural quality, and do not alter the relationship of the development with the surrounding landscape.
- 5.25. The proposal continues to accord with the design objectives of Core Strategy Policies DMG1 and DMG2, the employment principles of Policies EC1 and DMB1, and the site-specific allocation under Policy EAL3. It also reflects the NPPF's emphasis on achieving good design that functions well, is sympathetic to local character, and supports sustainable economic growth.
- 5.26. The public benefits of the development remain substantial. The proposal will deliver 34no. Class E(g) units and a battery storage facility, providing local business space, investment and employment opportunities in Longridge. The viability improvements secured through the revised design ensure that these benefits can be realised in the short term, supporting the LPA's wider spatial and economic objectives.
- 5.27. Against these significant benefits, the only harm alleged is a perceived reduction in design quality, a view that we and the appellant do not agree with. Any such perceived harm would be very limited and clearly outweighed by the public benefits of delivering a viable, policy compliant employment scheme on an allocated site.

/6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. This Statement of Case has explained how the proposed development is acceptable in the context of the Development Plan and other material considerations, and therefore the Appeal should be allowed.
- 6.2. The site's allocation under Policy EAL3 and the previous grant of permission have already established that the development of this land for employment use is acceptable in principle. The only matter at issue is whether the revised design results in additional harm to local character or visual amenity. It has been demonstrated that the simplified roof form and rationalised elevations do not materially change the overall appearance or quality of the approved scheme.
- 6.3. The proposal continues to represent a well-designed form of Class E(g) employment development that makes an important contribution to the borough's supply of employment land. The design revisions also guarantee that the scheme can be delivered viably, supporting the LPA's wider objectives for sustainable economic growth.
- 6.4. In conclusion, the key reasons the appeal should be allowed are as follows:
 - The principle of development is established with the site allocated for employment use (Policy EAL3) and already benefits from a valid planning permission (Ref. 3/2023/0706) and the appeal only concerns minor design refinements, not the principle, layout, or scale of development.
 - The scheme proposed is of a high-quality and appropriate design. The appeal only concerns the consideration of these minor design refinements, not the principle, layout, or scale of development. 3D visuals confirm the revised scheme maintains strong visual coherence, proportional massing, and material quality. The changes result in a cleaner, more unified appearance that sits comfortably within its rural-edge context.
 - The scheme is viable and deliverable. The design revisions deliver an estimated 17% cost reduction (£849,000), enabling the scheme's construction and occupation. Without these refinements, the consented development would face commercial infeasibility, delaying delivery of allocated employment land.

- There is no additional landscape or visual harm. The 3D views from Blackburn Road and site access show no increase in visual impact compared to the approved design. Lower eaves and consistent rooflines marginally reduce building prominence and enhance landscape integration.
- The proposals are fully compliant with Core Strategy Policies DMG1, DMG2, DMB1, and NPPF Paragraphs 85, 86, 131 and 135. The proposal supports sustainable economic growth while maintaining high design quality and landscape sensitivity.
- There are significant public benefits the development of 34 modern Class E(g) units and a battery storage facility will bring generating local employment and investment, contributing to the LPA's employment land supply and supports Longridge's local economy.
- In terms of the planning balance, any perceived reduction in architectural complexity is both minor and subjective, clearly outweighed by the scheme's substantial economic, practical, and visual benefits. The proposal therefore represents a high-quality, policy-compliant, and fully deliverable employment development that will make a positive contribution to Longridge's local economy and built environment.

6.5. For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that the appeal be allowed and Condition 2 of planning permission 3/2023/0706 be varied to substitute the revised drawings submitted under application 3/2025/0653.

APPENDIX A

3D Illustrations To Compare The Approved Design and The Proposed Alternative

Higher College Farm, Lower Road, Longridge



View at site access illustrating the approved design



View at site access illustrating the proposed alternative design

FIGURE 1



View from Blackburn Road (West) illustrating the approved design



View from Blackburn Road (West) illustrating the proposed alternative design

FIGURE 2



View from Blackburn Road (East) illustrating the approved design



View from Blackburn Road (East) illustrating the proposed alternative design

FIGURE 3



2 Lockside Office Park
Lockside Road
Preston
PR2 2YS

01772 369 669

www.pwaplanning.co.uk