

# Hothersall Parish Council

15 September 2025

Stephen Kilmartin,

Planning Department,

Ribble Valley Borough Council,

Council Offices,

Church Walk,

Clitheroe

BB7 2RA

Dear Mr. Kilmartin,

Re: Planning Application No: 3/2025/0653

Hothersall Parish Council wish to object to the Section 73 application for the variation of Condition 2 relating to the elevations and roof design of this development. In particular we wish to raise the following points and objections:

1. Hothersall Parish Council previously objected to the visual impact and massing of the approved development with the two blocks fronting onto Blackburn Road. We didn't believe that the test had been met by the approved proposal for a higher standard of development on open and undeveloped land in a rural area in the transition zone from the settlement of Longridge into Hothersall. This application to vary one of the key conditions set by the planning committee in its approval of the design in March 2025 demonstrates a further lack of concern for good design and a disregard of the planning committee insistence that the planning conditions are firmly upheld.
2. In paragraph 4.2 of the Planning Statement, the applicant refers to the planning committee refusing the previous application in November 2024 due to its uniformity and utilitarian form. This current application requesting a variance to the elevations and roof design, firmly returns the design to the original uniform and utilitarian form on which the previous application was refused by members.
3. Paragraphs 7.22 and 7.23 of the Planning Statement refer to Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which state that "good design is a key aspect of sustainable development" and "add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development". It is the view of Hothersall Parish Council that the proposed simplification of the design elevations and roof design from the March 2025 approval, does not satisfy either of these requirements.
4. Paragraph 8.3 of the Planning Statement acknowledges that the recessed elements in the approved scheme contribute to softening the appearance in its semi-rural setting, but goes on to say that the revised elevations achieve a "comparable outcome". This is incomprehensible as the elevations and roof structures are completely different and have been simplified.

5. Paragraphs 8.9 to 8.13 of the Planning Statement refer to the viability of the scheme. The Parish Council find it hard to believe that a local businessman and entrepreneur did not cost the design which was submitted for and achieved planning approval in March 2025, which is what these paragraphs are inferring. Indeed, Mr Myers presented to the committee in March 2025 and according to my notes, he referred to submitting a revised and viable scheme for approval. Making representation now that the original approved design was not viable and now needs to be redesigned as a result is unbelievable and appears to the Parish Council to be disingenuous.
6. Paragraph 8.10 of the Planning Statement uses a projected sale figure of £175/sq ft for the viability calculation. The Parish Council have obtained details of a comparable valuation of a similar new build development and planning use, in Blackburn, which is currently on the market for £210/sq ft. This would mean that the currently approved planning design would provide a return on investment of 15.83% (or 37.85% if the revised submission is accepted, which is over 80% more than the RICS guidance quoted!). The comparable site does not incorporate solar panels and therefore reduced running costs, which would attract a further premium to the sale price of this development, so the rate of £175/sq ft is seriously questioned by the Parish Council based on the evidence that we have obtained.
7. Paragraph 8.16 of the Planning Statement refers to the scheme being difficult to deliver due to rising construction costs. The RICS Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) produces information which demonstrates that construction tender prices have only risen 1.35% in the 6 months since the scheme was approved by RVBC Planning Department. Furthermore, these tender prices are only predicted to increase by 2.60% in the next 12 months, since the market has been particularly stable recently. Hothersall Parish Council therefore challenge this statement being made by the applicant that rising costs are affecting the financial viability.
8. In supporting the previous approval, members of the Planning Committee urged officers to be robust in the management of the conditions on which the development was being approved. Hothersall Parish Council further urge officers to uphold this requirement and we trust that we have provided sufficient evidence above to refuse this application to revise the conditions and refuse this amendment application.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Upton MRICS,  
Chair of Hothersall Parish Council