

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	11/12/25	Manager:	LH	Date:	12/12/25
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0822			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	13/11/25	Site Notice:	13/11/25	
Officer:	LW			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed erection of an agricultural livestock building.
Site Address/Location:	Bowker Farming, Woods Brow, Balderstone, BB2 7LG.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments received with respect to the proposed development.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	N/A

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
No representations received.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2025/0495: Prior notification for proposed cattle shed 36.4m long, 18.27m wide, 5.06m high to eaves, 6.0m high to ridge under Part 6 Class A of the GPDO (Permission required).

3/2016/0110: Extension to an existing agricultural building to house livestock in winter and machinery store. Construction of roof over existing concrete collecting yard which will attach to an existing agricultural building (Approved).

3/2010/0310: Proposed agricultural building for a cattle and implement store (Approved).

3/2008/0347: Erection of cattle shelter/store (Approved). 3/2006/1054: Extension to cattle/store shed at the southern end of field ref: 8591 – Woods Brow (Approved).

3/2003/0572: Cattle enclosure with hay/ tractor store, to the southern end of field ref: 8591 – Woods Brow (Approved).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to an agricultural holding known as Bowker Farming comprising numerous existing agricultural buildings accessed off Woods Brow, Balderstone. The site to which the proposal relates is located outside of any defined settlement area and on land which benefits from an Open Countryside designation.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought for the construction of an agricultural livestock building measuring 36.6m by 18.3m with a maximum eaves and ridge height of 7m and 10m measured from the lowest ground level. The building would be accessed via a sliding steel door to the eastern elevation and would be constructed from concrete panels/ blockwork and Yorkshire boarding to the external walls with corrugated fibre cement roof sheeting and polycarbonate rooflights. The southern elevation of the building would be open with lockable feed barriers and a 1.8m roof canopy.

As part of the overall development, a yard area would also be created, part of which would be bordered by an Armco barrier and 1.1m high railings.

Principle of Development:

The proposal site is situated within the Open Countryside. Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that proposals for development outside of the Borough's defined settlement areas can be considered as justifiable if "*the development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture*".

The proposed development consists of an agricultural livestock building. The submitted supporting information states that the applicant operates a beef and sheep enterprise with the agricultural holding extending approximately 24 hectares of which 7 hectares are owned and 17 are rented. The owned land is located off Woods Brow (the proposal site), while the rented land is located at Brindle, Chorley. The information goes on to state that 3 hectares of the land has been rented for many years, with the remaining 14 hectares having been rented recently with the option to purchase the land. The land comprises pasture and meadow, however, to date all the land is grazed, and silage is bought in. The supporting information also states that in addition to the land, there are a number of buildings sited on the owned parcel of land at Woods Brow, including a cubicle shed, a small livestock straw bedded building and a storage building.

The information goes on to state that the proposal is for a purpose-built livestock building to house suckler cattle and their progeny. The cattle are currently housed in the existing buildings; however, these buildings are not particularly well suited to this purpose and this together with the applicant's plans to expand the cattle enterprise gives rise to the need for the proposed building. It is also stated that the proposed creation of a concrete yard area is required to provide manoeuvring space to facilitate tractor access to feed the cattle as well as the storage of silage bales.

It is noted that the proposed building would comprise a large footprint measuring 36.6m by 18.3m. In seeking to justify the size of the building, the submitted supporting information states that the applicant currently operates a suckler cow enterprise which includes 24 suckler cows and 8 young heifers which are predominantly pedigree Limousin cattle. However, there are plans to expand the suckler herd to 50 breeding cows with the aim of retaining their bull calves until they are circa 12 months of age before selling them. The heifer calves will also be retained and then calved and sold with calves at about 24 months of

age. The information states that the applicant wishes to house the cows and calves on straw bedded yards rather than cubicles with the proposed building needed to accommodate this form of livestock housing.

The submitted supporting information goes on to state that the cattle weigh circa 900kg each, with a cow of this weight requiring 8m² of space within a bedded yard to allow for sleeping, feeding and loafing and therefore the space required for 50 suckler cattle could be 400m². The proposed building has an internal floor area of 648m² and comprises 8 bays with each bay providing 81m² floor area, therefore five bays of the proposed building would be used to house the enlarged herd of cows. Each bay measures 4.5m and therefore on the basis that each bay will house 10 cows, they will each have 450mm of feed space which is understood to be the appropriate amount of space when there is continuous access to feed.

Furthermore, assuming half of the calves are female and half are male, there will be 25 0–12-month-old heifer calves and 25 12–24-month-old heifer calves, which will require 3.6m² and 5.1m² of space respectively within a bedded yard to allow for sleeping, feeding and loafing. Therefore, the 0–12-month-old heifers will require 90m² and the 12–24-month-old heifers will require 126m². This will use the majority of the remaining space within the proposed building. The building is therefore large enough to accommodate 50 suckler cows and 50 heifers with a small amount of space to spare. The 25 bull calves that are retained for circa 12-months are to be housed in the existing cubicle building. As these cattle are smaller than the cows currently housed in this building the feed space required is less and based on a requirement of 250mm per animal they will only require 6.25m which is available with the current arrangement.

With the above in mind, the proposed development would support the ongoing business activities of the applicant's agricultural operation and is considered to be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. The development would therefore comply with Policy DMG2 of the Core Strategy and is acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the material planning considerations.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Paragraph 135 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments 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."

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

The proposed livestock building would be sited within the nearby vicinity of residential receptors which lie in excess of 160m away to the south. However, the proposal site is a working farmstead with existing agricultural buildings used for livestock accommodation. Taking this into account and given the separation distance that would be retained between the development and nearby residential receptors, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would be so unduly harmful to the amenity of neighbouring residents as to warrant the refusal to grant planning permission in this particular instance.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting".

In addition, Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy provides general design guidance as follows:

“All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials”.

The application site is also located on land designated as Open Countryside. In relation to development within the Open Countryside, Policy DMG2 of the Core Strategy states:

“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.”

The proposed development would comprise a substantial footprint measuring approximately 670 square metres and would be sited on sloping ground with a maximum height of 10m to the rear and 7.7m to the front when measured from the adjacent ground level. Despite this, the development would be sited within close proximity to several existing, albeit smaller scale, agricultural buildings and the yard area associated with the holding. The building would therefore be read in context with the existing agricultural use of the site and would not appear an overtly isolated addition to the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, whilst the building would be a substantial addition to the proposal site, its size and scale have been sufficiently justified in terms of agricultural need, with the footprint of the building required to accommodate the applicant’s expanded cattle herd and the proposed height needed to ensure safe access by modern farm machinery and good ventilation for animal respiratory health.

The proposed building would also be constructed from concrete panels, Yorkshire boarding and corrugated fibre cement roof sheeting, all of which are typical of agricultural buildings and would visually integrate with the existing structures on site. On balance, the materiality and overall design of the proposed development is therefore considered appropriate for its proposed use and would not significantly detract from the aesthetic value of the surrounding countryside landscape to a degree that would warrant the refusal to grant planning permission.

Taking all of the above into account, the proposed development is considered acceptable in respect to visual amenity and external appearance in this particular instance.

Highways and Parking:

No highway relates issues have been identified with respect to the proposed development. The proposal is associated with the existing agricultural use of the site, and no alterations are proposed to the existing site access. The development is therefore considered acceptable with respect to highway safety.

Landscape/Ecology:

Trees

The proposed building would be located within close proximity to a number of trees. Whilst it is not anticipated that the proposal would result in any direct harm upon these trees a condition has been attached requiring them to be protected during the construction phase of the development in order to mitigate the risk of any adverse impact.

BNG

A Biodiversity Net Gain Report has been submitted in support of the application which indicates that the construction of the proposed development would result in the loss of 0.1116 hectares of modified grassland. Despite this, the submitted report confirms that the identified biodiversity loss could be offset through on-site habitat creation, involving the enhancement of 0.1300 hectares of modified grassland and the planting of 8no. new trees. This in turn would result in a post-development biodiversity net gain of

12.11%. As such, the proposed development satisfies the statutory requirements with respect to BNG subject to the statutory condition being satisfied.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

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

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