



The Growing House:

A dwelling of exceptional design quality (NPPF 84e) with associated curtilage, landscaping and access, together with a car park for visitors to the remains of the roman road within the site (resubmission of application 3/2025/0095)

Land at Higher Road,
Longridge

Planning Statement

November 2025

commissioned by:
Mr N Richards

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by S&L Planning Consultants on behalf of the applicant in support of their planning application for a proposed new dwelling, known as the 'Growing House', on land at Higher Road, Longridge. It is a resubmission of application 3/2025/0095 which was submitted on 18th February 2025 and refused on 15th April 2025.
- 1.2 The proposed design of the Growing House is unchanged from the previous application but this resubmission is made with the benefit of the following new and updated supporting plans and documents, as well as this updated Planning Statement:
- Updated layout plan (to avoid conflict with a United Utilities water supply pipe)
 - Updated access plan (to address previous comments by the local highway authority)
 - Updated Design and Access Statement
 - Updated Landscape and Visual Appraisal
 - Correspondence between the applicant and RIBA Places Matter
 - Large scale CGIs
 - LIDAR mapping of the roman road
 - Counsel opinion
 - Relevant appeal decisions
- 1.3 The application is made in accordance with the national policy exception provided in paragraph 84(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 which justifies the development of isolated new homes in the countryside where their design is of exceptional quality.
- 1.4 The full description of the proposed development is:
- *Erection of a part single-storey and part two-storey dwelling of exceptional design quality (NPPF 84e) with associated landscaping, habitat restoration, change of use of land to residential curtilage and access from Higher Road, together with the creation of a small visitor car park for members of the public to view the remains of the roman road to be preserved within the site. (resubmission of application 3/2025/0095)*
- 1.5 This Planning Statement provides a brief description of the site and surroundings, summarises the Growing House proposal, and summarises the relevant policies of the statutory development plan for Ribble Valley and other material policy documents. It then assesses the merits of the resubmitted planning application against the identified policies, Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and all other material considerations.
- 1.6 In conclusion, it demonstrates that the Growing House proposal is in accordance with the relevant landscape, biodiversity and general development management policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan Core Strategy 2008 to 2028 and, insofar as there is a conflict with spatial development, countryside and housing policies, material considerations, and expressly the countryside policy exception at NPPF 84(e), indicate that a decision other than in accordance with the development plan, is justified in this case.

- 1.7 Consequently, it is demonstrated that having regard to the development plan and all material considerations, there is a clear and compelling case for planning permission to be granted in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Supporting information

- 1.8 This Planning Statement should be read together with the following list of plans and supporting documents submitted with the application:

a) Application drawings:

- Location plan
- Topographical survey 180220/TOP
- Existing site sections (1 of 2) 04001
- Existing site sections (2 of 2) 04002
- Proposed site plan 01003A
- Proposed access layout plan H4322-H-01 Rev P2
- Proposed elevations 03002
- Proposed ground floor plan 02002
- Proposed first floor plan 02003
- Proposed landscape masterplan 12870-LUC-XX-00-DR-L-0101 P01
- Proposed garden plan 01004
- Proposed planting plan (1 of 2) 12870-LUC-XX-00-DR-L-0400 P02
- Proposed planting plan (2 of 2) 12870-LUC-XX-00-DR-L-0401 P02
- Proposed sections (1 of 3) 04001
- Proposed sections (2 of 3) 04002
- Proposed sections (3 of 3) 04003
- Proposed street scene 03004
- Proposed CGIs

b) Application documents:

- Application form
- Design and access statement
- Landscape and visual appraisal
- Biodiversity net gain metric calculation and assessment
- Ecological appraisal
- Arboricultural constraints appraisal
- Flood Risk assessment and drainage strategy
- Archaeological desk based assessment
- Energy and sustainability statement
- Highway access technical note
- Mineral resource assessment
- Geo-technical assessment (Phase I)

2 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 A full description of the application site and surrounding area is provided in the updated Design and Access Statement and updated Landscape and Visual Appraisal which accompany the resubmitted planning application.
- 2.2 In summary, the three hectare application site is set in an elevated position on the southern side of Longridge Fell within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. It is located on Higher Road approximately 4 km northeast of Longridge to the west of the junction with Stoneygate Lane.
- 2.3 It lies on the south side of Higher Road, from which it is accessed, and comprises grazing pasture divided into two fields by a stone wall and enclosed by walls and hedges, and with a number of trees along the road frontage. The site slopes downwards from north to south, and also from east to west. The highest point in the northeast corner is 197.09m AOD and the lowest point in the southwest corner 179.35m AOD. The average gradient across the site is 1 in 7. The terrain and topography of the site is shown on the topographic survey plan (180220/TOP), the east-west and north-south existing cross sections (04001 and 04002) and 3D image on pages 5 and 6 of the Design and Access Statement.
- 2.4 The western part of the site also includes the steep valley side of Cowley Brook which runs along the west boundary and is covered by dense deciduous woodland. The east boundary is marked by a gravelled agricultural access track and stone wall and there are also two field gate access points on the Higher Road frontage. The site is not crossed by, or adjacent to, any public rights of way and the nearest footpaths are FP-0335002 which is approximately 165 metres to the east and FP-0335004 which is approximately 160 metres to the south.
- 2.5 There are two isolated properties immediately north of Higher Road, namely Cowley Brook Cottage and Cowley Brook Farm, but no other neighbouring buildings, and there are no nearby listed buildings or other designated heritage assets.
- 2.6 The site is crossed diagonally from northwest to southeast by the known alignment of the roman road between Ribchester and Carlisle, which is visible in places as a linear surface earthwork feature. It is a non-designated heritage asset and Lidar mapping data provided by the Roman Roads Research Association indicates that, at least, the foundation of the road structure can be preserved.

3 Proposed development

- 3.1 The Growing House proposal is a contemporary new dwelling which has been individually designed for the applicant and their family. The application seeks full planning permission for:
- *Erection of a part single-storey and part two-storey dwelling of exceptional design quality (NPPF 84e) with associated landscaping, habitat restoration, change of use of land to residential curtilage and access from Higher Road, together with the creation of a small visitor car park for members of the public to view the remains of the roman road to be preserved within the site. (resubmission of application 3/2025/0095)*
- 3.2 The proposed dwelling, and its design development, is described in detail in the updated Design and Access Statement and the drawings and reports submitted with the application, and is summarised below.
- 3.3 The overall concept and architectural design of the Growing House has been developed, and has evolved, since 2022, and with critical review and rigorous testing provided by the RIBA Places Matter design panel via four design reviews between February 2023 and August 2023. Because of the sensitive location of the site within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the design panel was chaired by a highly-experienced and respected landscape architect. The Places Matter Design Review Reports are enclosed at Appendix 1 of this Planning Statement.
- 3.4 The proposal is founded on the basis of enabling the applicant and their family to live a more sustainable and self-sufficient daily life, and how this is embedded and integrated into the architectural, engineering and landscape design of the dwelling. It is named the 'Growing House' for this very reason because it is centred on the concept of the building being a 'growing medium' on, around and in which vegetables, fruits and herbs can be organically grown throughout the year for food production needs:
- Growing food on the house - all of the ground floor external elevations will be constructed as 'green walls' using innovative 'bio-receptive concrete' and are designed for growing seasonal vegetables, fruits and herbs which are suited to vertical gardening techniques, such as espalier fruit trees, plums, gages, damsons, raspberries, blackberries, vines, leafy greens and climbing beans. This element was suggested by the Places Matter Design Review Panel and further developed and detailed during the design review process
 - Growing food around the house the walled enclosure along the southern side of the house will accommodate a kitchen garden and vegetable allotment which will be used for growing seasonal varieties of vegetables, small fruits and herbs that are suited to traditional gardening.
 - Growing food in the house the ground floor plan is designed to accommodate two integrated grow-houses. These are south facing (passively-heated) glazed boxes with glazed roofs, measuring 27 sqm and 28 sqm respectively, which will function as large

greenhouses / conservatories and provide the same climatic growing conditions with controlled lighting, heating and moisture, as well as using harvested rainwater and grey water supply and sprinklers to water the plants. The grow-houses will enable vegetables, fruits and herbs to be cultivated indoors on a year-round basis for food production as well as allowing natural light into the house.

- 3.5 Illustrations of how food will be grown on and around the Growing House are provided in the submitted CGIs and a selection is shown below.





- 3.6 The four-bedroom dwelling was initially devised as an earth-sheltered, single storey, dwelling which could not be seen from Higher Road. The Places Matter design review panel suggested that part of the accommodation was raised to create a first floor so that it would be possible to see 'glimpsed views' of the Growing House from the public highway. This was further developed to become the proposed L-shape floorplan, and orientated to face almost south to take advantage of the views and solar gain. It is arranged around a sheltered courtyard to the rear (north) from which it is also entered via the access and driveway from Higher Road, and is partly set into the sloping site. The accommodation is provided in a flat-roof single storey ground floor apart from a single first floor element which is a purposely-projecting part-cantilevered feature. The ground floor (see plan 02002) provides an entrance hall, kitchen,

lounge, office, gym, guest accommodation and the 2 no. 'grow-house' spaces, and the first floor (see plan 02003) contains two bedrooms and bathrooms.

- 3.7 The new dwelling, integral garage and courtyard are set towards the south east corner of the application site, perpendicular to the alignment of the roman road, and will be accessed via a low-key agricultural-type gravelled track from Higher Road alongside the retained stone wall, and which uses the existing field access point. A drystone wall 'pen' and protecting 'ha-ha' will enclose the house and provide shelter for the food growing garden and outdoor spaces.
- 3.8 The dwelling will incorporate PV panels on the first floor roof with battery storage, an air source hot water tank, infrared radiators, and rainwater harvesting and clean wastewater recycling systems to provide water for irrigation. Water from a natural spring within the site will also feed a new pond and wetland habitat area and fill a livestock drinking trough. The main materials for the dwelling are local facing stone (Longridge sandstone and millstone grit), bio-receptive concrete, stone gabion cages, timber cladding, matt-finish grey metal structural elements, cladding, windows and doors, and green / wildflower roofs.
- 3.9 The land within the wider application site (approximately 82%) will remain undeveloped as pasture and natural habitat. Fields F1, F2 and F3 (see Proposed Site Plan 01003A and Landscape Masterplan 12870-LUC-XX-00-DR-L-0101 P01) to the north and south of the dwelling, will be managed as restored hay meadow (in association with the Forest of Bowland Hay Time Project which seeks to restore managed, species-rich, hay meadows in the landscape of this part of the National Landscape). The wooded valley side of Cowley Brook will also be managed and 'rewilded', and extended with new native scrub planting. The landscaping, planting and biodiversity habitat-restoration proposals are shown and explained in detail in the Design and Access Statement, Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report.
- 3.10 The application also proposes to excavate and permanently preserve the remains of the Ribchester to Carlisle roman road which crosses the site. Lidar mapping data provided by the Roman Roads Research Association indicates that the foundation of the road structure, at least, can be preserved and a section will be displayed as a heritage asset which members of the public will be able to view (as a heritage benefit), together with the provision of a small visitor car park adjacent to Higher Road, and which will be accessed using the existing field access. The car park will be locked and people wishing to visit the road will be able to book a time and will be given an access code. The location of this car park and the proposed access works on Higher Road, is shown on the Proposed Site Plan (01003A) and the Proposed Access Layout Plan (H4322-H-01 Rev P2).

Pre-application consultation

- 3.11 A pre-application enquiry (2023/ENQ/00061) was submitted on 27th September 2023 and a response was received on 16th February 2024. In summary, the Council commented that:
- In spatial terms:

- the proposal would conflict with Key Statement DS1 and Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that it would create a new dwelling, located in the countryside outside of defined settlement limits, without sufficient justification - whereby it is not a dwelling intended to meet local housing needs, and it would not meet any of the other exception criteria within the policies.
- In landscape and visual terms:
 - the scale, configuration, siting and design of the proposal would be an anomalous and discordant introduction into the landscape that would result in significant visual and landscape harm to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and the immediate and wider character of the area. It would not be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials' as required by Key Statement EN2.
 - the proposal would not result in the 'protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area' and not 'be in keeping with the character of the landscape and special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting' as required by Policy DMG2.
 - the proposal would not be 'sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials' as required by Policy DMG1, and would conflict with its aim of ensuring that proposals consider the 'density, layout and relationship between buildings, with particular emphasis placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character'.
 - the scope (number and location of receptor viewpoints) of the LVA submitted with the planning application is adequate and the proposal is not EIA development.
- In terms of NPPF 84(e):
 - the Council confirms that the site would be considered as 'isolated'
 - the proposal may represent 'high quality' design but it would not be considered as being 'of an exceptional quality' or 'truly outstanding'. Particularly insofar that 'exceptional' or 'truly outstanding' design could not be considered as that which would result in adverse landscape and visual harm.
 - the proposal would not be 'sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area' and would not 'significantly enhance its immediate setting'.

3.12 The Council also commented that the proposal would lead to an unsustainable pattern of development, insofar that it is not within walking distance of local services and facilities and will be largely reliant on access by private car, and therefore conflict with Key Statement DMI2

and Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 3.13 The applicant and design team have duly considered the feedback received from the Council in preparing the final-scheme planning application. It is therefore submitted with full and comprehensive supporting evidence to demonstrate that the Growing House will not have an adverse impact upon the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and clearly meets the criteria and requirements of NPPF 84(e), and that planning permission should be granted.

Previous planning application 3/2025/0095

- 3.14 The Council refused planning permission for two reasons:

- 1) *The proposal would result in the introduction of a form of development that fails to be in keeping with the character of the landscape or be reflective of the local vernacular, particularly in terms of scale, style and features. With the proposal resulting in a level of cumulative visual change that would result in an overt visual suburbanisation and domestication of the site, significantly undermining the character, visual amenities and sense of visual openness of the area, being of significant detriment to the inherent character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape in this location. As such the proposal is considered to be in significant direct conflict with Key Statement EN2, and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the aims and objectives of Para.189 of the National Planning Policy Framework, also subsequently failing to satisfy the requirements of Para.84(e) of the Framework.*
- 2) *The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that approval would lead to the creation of a new residential dwelling, located outside of a defined settlement boundary in an unsustainable location where future occupants would be reliant on private motor vehicle, without sufficient justification, in that it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposal would meet any of the exception criterion inherently contained within the policy requirements or contained within Para.84(e) of the Framework.*

- 3.15 The applicant and their design team have therefore carried out the following additional work to support this resubmitted application and demonstrate that both reasons for refusal are not justified, and have been addressed and are overcome, so that planning permission should now be granted.

Reason for Refusal 1:

- i) The Design and Access Statement and the Landscape and Visual Appraisal have been updated to explain in greater detail, firstly, how the Growing House proposal has been designed, via a rigorous, iterative and evolving design process, to satisfy all of the criteria of NPPF 84(e) and, secondly, how its development will conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. This

confirms that there is no conflict with Key Statement EN2, Policy DMG1 and Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and NPPF 189.

ii) The applicant has held further discussions with RIBA Places Matter following the refusal and wrote to the Council on 4th July 2025 to summarise these and the RIBA Places Matter Design Review Panel Manager's response. The correspondence is enclosed at Appendix 2. It confirms that:

- Places Matter is the only design review panel recognised by the RIBA North West.
- Places Matter has carried out design reviews for 26 proposed NPPF 84e houses since 2018 and only endorsed five as meeting the policy criteria. The majority of the proposals it has reviewed did not meet, and/or where not deemed capable of meeting, the exceptional architectural and landscape design standards required. This demonstrates that the NPPF policy criteria and the Places Matter design review process are extremely difficult to pass, and approval of an individual scheme cannot set a precedent and lead to a profusion or deluge of proposals, which the Council indicated was a concern, as each must be exceptional on its own merits.
- Places Matter tailors the expert membership of a design review panel to suit the proposal subject to review. In this case, given the location of the proposed house in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the panel included two landscape advisors, including the chair, whereas normally only one landscape architect is involved.
- Places Matter recommended at the first design review, that a Landscape and Visual Appraisal should be carried out to assess the impact of the proposed house on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The LVA was presented at the second design review and the panel members agreed with the findings.

The Places Matter Design Review Panel Manager replied to the applicant on 3rd July 2025 and confirmed that the above points are factually accurate. Their reply also clearly reiterates that 'following the series of Design Reviews, the Panel assessed the Growing House proposition as meeting the criteria for NPPF Paragraph 84(e).'

The correspondence with RIBA Places Matter therefore confirms that the design review process is robust and structured to ensure that the merit of a proposed NPPF 84e house is properly assessed such that a local planning authority can trust its advice and it can, and should, be soundly relied upon for the purposes of determining this re-submitted planning application.

iii) The applicant has also obtained advice from counsel following the refusal, and their opinion is enclosed at Appendix 3. The opinion also refers to four relevant appeal decisions which are enclosed at Appendix 4. In summary, counsel advises:

- 1) As the definition of exceptional quality at NPPF 84(e) requires a qualifying proposed development to significantly enhance the immediate setting of a site, it is the case that if the Growing House meets this test then, consequently, the concern raised by the Council in Reason for Refusal 1, about impact on the National Landscape in this location, would not arise. This is also clear in the Inspector's decision in appeal APP/F1610/W/19/3236430 (see Appendix 4) where paragraph 10, setting out the main issue to be considered, says:

10. This [the main issue] is whether the proposal reaches the standard of design sought in Framework paragraph 79(e) for an isolated dwelling in the countryside, and this analysis will take account of the location within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the landscape character of the area.

Similarly, if NPPF 84(e) is met then there would be no policy breach of Key Statement EN2, Policy DMG1 and Policy DMG2. In short, if NPPF 84(e) is met then the issues in Reason for Refusal 1 are overcome.

- 2) Whilst it is ultimately a matter of planning judgment whether the proposed design of the Growing House is of exceptional quality, the evidence of the Places Matter Design Review Panel is, plainly, highly relevant to that assessment, and it was inappropriate of the Council to ignore or place no weight on it. This is made clear by the Inspectors in all four of the appeal cases in Appendix 4.

In an appeal, it is therefore inevitable that an inspector would attach material weight to the findings of the Places Matter Design Review Panel given its members' qualifications and detailed knowledge of architectural standards. It would also be incumbent on the Council to produce design evidence to counter that and, as yet, it has not done so.

- 3) The Places Matter Design Review Panel has provided detail on the number of projects it has considered which meet the exceptional design standard in NPPF 84(e). It is a small number. This helps to demonstrate the clear rigour and high standards to which the Design Review Panel holds itself, and the projects it considers. In an appeal, an Inspector would be likely to give substantial weight to the views of the Design Review Panel on this basis.
- 4) The criticism in the Council's officer report, that the 'assessment of long-term visual effects in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal is based on the significant planting proposed to mitigate the development and not the proposed built-form', shows a misunderstanding of the LVA and the terminology used, and what it is that must be assessed under NPPF 84(e) and how.
- 5) The Design and Access Statement explains that landscaping is an integral part of the Growing House design. This does not mean that the proposed planting should

be considered solely as mitigation, in the sense of only being there to hide something that would otherwise be harmful. Instead, the integral nature of the landscaping in the design is intended to ensure that the overall composition (of combined built form and landscape appearance) is of exceptional quality.

The landscaping and the physical dwelling should not be treated as separate things, and the totality of what is proposed must be assessed, holistically, when determining whether the Growing House is of exceptional quality, and also having regard to the totality of the design-related documentation submitted with updated application. In particular, the consideration of impact on immediate setting is not a matter which should be judged solely by reference to landscape and visual impacts.

This is also clear in paragraphs 17, 27, 36 and 39 of appeal APP/F1610/W/19/3236430 (see Appendix 4) where the Inspector says:

17. *The proposal is more than just a building and the role of the landscape architect has been central to the location of the house and other elements within the site and the design of the immediate surroundings to the building.*
 27. *The scheme is more than just the house, and... the landscaping scheme would introduce appropriate planting and maintenance measures so that as a holistic proposal, the immediate setting would be enhanced.*
 36. *The quality of the architecture and landscaping combined would be a positive addition to the site and would enhance the stock of built form of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while conserving the natural features of the designated area.*
 39. *To conclude, the proposal of new house and landscaping together reach the standard sought in order to allow an isolated home in the countryside and accords with relevant Development Plan policies, and hence, planning permission should be granted.*
- 6) The Council did not treat biodiversity as a meaningful benefit of the scheme as it should have done. Ecological considerations are an essential part of the design of the Growing House and a clear benefit of the proposal. This is a freestanding planning benefit in its own right but, more fundamentally, the integration of ecological features into the design is one of the salient design characteristics which contributes to the exceptional design of the Growing House and the significant enhancement of its immediate setting. This is also clear in paragraph 24 of appeal APP/M1710/W/15/3010471 (see Appendix 4) where the Inspector says:
24. *Although there would no longer be an agricultural use, the proposals would ensure that part of the site would develop a more natural habitat and would significantly enhance the setting. The Framework also encourages*

improvements to biodiversity and I consider these would be significant benefits of the scheme. This is particularly so, as the area identified for biodiversity enhancement is quite large in proportion to the rest of the site.

Likewise, at paragraph 14 of appeal APP/L1765/W/22/3291091 (see Appendix 4) the Inspector says:

14. *Importantly, the proposal would significantly enhance biodiversity.... in a way beyond normal policy expectations as detailed in the Ecological Management Plan. Taken together, these points are sufficient to achieve a significant enhancement of the immediate setting.*
- 7) The incorporation of the remains of the roman road into the Growing House development is a feature of the proposal which is capable of contributing to an overall finding of exceptional design, and is of particular relevance to consideration of significant enhancement to the immediate setting.
- 8) Overall counsel concludes, and with reference to the appeal decisions in Appendix 4, that when the Council assessed and refused the previous application, it:
 - i) Failed to have sufficient regard to the rigorous design process that has been followed in developing the Growing House, and this is more than simply not considering the findings of the Places Matter Design Review Panel, but requires an actual consideration of the design intent and how that has been arrived at.
 - ii) Adopted an overly narrow consideration of the Growing House proposal by separating features such as the physical building, the landscaping and the ecological benefits, whereas NPPF 84(e) requires a holistic approach to be adopted to assess the totality of the design proposed.
 - iii) Adopted a particularly narrow approach to the consideration of the immediate setting of the Growing House. Applying NPPF 84(e), this is not limited to a visual assessment and, for example, ecological gains need to be considered.
- 9) For these reasons, the Council fell into error when considering the previous application.
- 10) In conclusion, the resubmitted planning application responds to the concerns raised by the Council and presents a strong case that the NPPF 84(e) exemption is satisfied and that planning permission should be granted for the Growing House.

Reason for Refusal 2:

- 3.16 The wording of this reason, and the Council's officer report, confirms that conflict with Policy, DMG2, Policy DMG3 and Policy DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, insofar that the

application site is considered to be an unsustainable location where future occupants would be reliant on private motor vehicle, will fall away if it is agreed that the Growing House proposal will satisfy the requirements of NPPF 84(e) as an isolated new home of exceptional design quality in the countryside.

Other updates:

- 3.17 Whilst not referred to in the reasons for refusal, this resubmitted application also addresses the comments made previously by Lancashire County Council (LCC) as Historic Environment (Archaeology) Advisor and Local Highway Authority, and updates the information regarding the roman road which crosses the site.
- 3.18 The LCC Archaeology comments refer to the watching brief which was carried out in October 2012 in connection with the installation of a water supply pipe by United Utilities and which currently runs across the western part of the proposed dwelling. The proposed site layout plan (01003A) has therefore been updated to show the United Utilities water pipe asset and its easement as existing, and the route of its proposed diversion to the east which will avoid any conflict with the dwelling footprint and the alignment of the roman road.
- 3.19 The LCC Highway comments confirm that there is no objection to the development subject to conditions, but requested that the proposed visibility splays for the dwelling access and the public car park access are increased from 43 metres to 60 metres to the west side, and from 43 metres to 56 metres to the east side. This is achievable within the adopted highway and land owned by the applicant, and without requiring the removal of any trees, and the proposed access layout plan (H4322-H-01 Rev P2) has been updated to show this.
- 3.20 The alignment of the Ribchester to Carlisle roman road which crosses the site has been confirmed using Lidar mapping data provided by the Roman Roads Research Association and indicates that the foundation of the road structure, at least, survives which can be excavated and preserved.

4 Planning policy

- 4.1 Relevant policy is provided in the adopted statutory development plan for Ribble Valley and in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) and the Planning Practice Guidance which are important material considerations.

Development plan

- 4.2 For the purposes of this application, this comprises the Ribble Valley Local Plan Core Strategy covering the period 2008 to 2028. This confirms that the application site is located in a countryside area, outside any settlement, and within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. In this context, the most important policies for determining the resubmitted planning application are:

- Key Statement DS1 Development strategy
- Key Statement DS2 Sustainable development
- Key Statement EN2 Landscape
- Key Statement EN3 Sustainable development and climate change
- Key Statement EN4 Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Key Statement DMI2 Transport considerations

- Policy DMG1 General considerations
- Policy DMG2 Strategic considerations
- Policy DMG3 Transport and mobility
- Policy DME1 Protecting trees and woodlands
- Policy DME2 Landscape and townscape protection
- Policy DME3 Site and species protection and conservation
- Policy DME4 Protecting heritage assets
- Policy DME5 Renewable energy
- Policy DME6 Water management
- Policy DMH3 Dwellings in the open countryside and the AONB
- Policy DMB5 Footpaths and bridleways

Other material considerations

Forest of Bowland National Landscape Management Plan 2019 - 2024

- 4.3 Approved in November 2019, and informed by the Forest of Bowland National Landscape 'Landscape Character Assessment 2009', this is the current version of the statutory Landscape Management Plan for the Forest of Bowland.
- 4.4 It is the basis for identifying the aspects of the National Landscape which are critical in contributing to its natural beauty as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It explains that new development within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is expected to conform to a high standard of design; to be in keeping with local distinctiveness; and, fundamentally, that it seeks to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

4.5 This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The most relevant parts of the NPPF 2024 in this case are:

- Paragraph 2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- Paragraph 3 The Framework should be read as a whole including its footnotes and annexes.
- Paragraph 12 Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan (but only) if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.
- Paragraph 84 Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless..... the following circumstances apply:
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i) is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - ii) would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.
- Paragraph 131 The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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.
- Paragraph 137 Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Applicants should, where applicable, provide sufficient information to demonstrate how their proposals will meet the design expectations set out in local and national policy.
- Paragraph 138 Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.

- Paragraph 187 Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.
Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.
- Paragraph 189 Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.
- Paragraph 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.
- Paragraph 219 Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development 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.

5 Planning assessment

5.1 On the basis that the proposed Growing House is resubmitted as an isolated new home of exceptional design quality in the countryside, the issues to be considered in determining this planning application, and taking account of the previous reasons for refusal, are:

- 1) whether the application site is a justified and suitable location for the proposed dwelling having regard to local and national planning policies
- 2) whether the proposed development is acceptable in all other respects including:
 - a) the character and appearance of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape
 - b) heritage assets
 - c) residential amenity
 - d) trees and hedgerows
 - e) biodiversity
 - f) drainage and flood risk
 - g) energy and sustainability
 - h) ground conditions and mineral resources
 - i) access and highways

5.2 These issues are considered below and, after which, the overall planning balance is drawn.

Issue 1) The suitability of the site location for the proposed dwelling

5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers to the development plan as a whole and states, that 'if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.

5.4 The relevant policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan are therefore the starting point for decision taking however the NPPF 2024, and expressly NPPF 84(e), is a key material consideration in determining the resubmitted planning application in this case, and it establishes the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice where an isolated new home in the countryside of exceptional design quality is proposed.

Conflict with the Ribble Valley spatial strategy

5.5 The Growing House development is proposed in the open countryside outside a defined settlement boundary and, by definition, does not meet the requirements or exception criteria of Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Local Plan Core Strategy. There is, consequently, conflict with the spatial development strategy in Key Statement DS1, as the Council refers to in its pre-application response. However the conflict is limited, whereby the proposal is a single dwelling (rather than a multiple dwelling scheme) and the harm is solely 'policy harm'. There is no meaningful 'practical harm' to the development strategy as its continuing application and effectiveness as a development management tool is not undermined.

- 5.6 Also, whilst Policies DS1, DMG2 and DMH3 of the Core Strategy do not make explicit provision for isolated new homes of exceptional design quality in the countryside, they also do not explicitly resist them. The position is that the development plan is silent on the matter.
- 5.7 Therefore, and moreover, as the proposed development is put forward, expressly, on the basis of being an isolated new home in the countryside of exceptional design quality, the limited policy harm is also outweighed by the national policy exception at NPPF 84(e), and which must be referred to in the absence of a relevant development plan policy. As a material consideration in planning decisions¹ which is capable of outweighing conflict with the relevant policies of an adopted development plan², the NPPF justifies exceptions to be made to the restriction placed on the development of new dwellings in the countryside, and thereby any conflict with local spatial development policies, if the requirements and criteria of NPPF 84(e), which collectively determine that design is of exceptional quality, are met.
- 5.8 The Council acknowledges this in its officer report³ and, by inference in Reason for Refusal 2 of the previous application, where it confirms:

The application relies upon the proposal satisfying the requirements of Paragraph 84(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which if met, would allow the proposal to be treated as an exception to locally adopted development plan policies that seek to restrict the creation of new residential dwellings in isolated locations or outside of settlement boundaries.

As such, should the proposal satisfy the requirements of paragraph 84(e), the identified locational conflict(s) with Policies DMG2 and DMH3, as identified above, could be outweighed by the support afforded to such development by the Framework.

- 5.9 This is the correct approach in this circumstance and is confirmed by the Inspector in appeal APP/L3245/W/21/3289722 (see Appendix 4) where, at paragraph 14, they say:

14. *The plan does not specifically allow for exceptions, and is consistent with Framework paragraph 80 [now 84] insofar that isolated homes in the countryside are discouraged. However, the proposal accords with the Framework, including paragraph 80. There is not consistency between the Framework and the local plan, in that the former allows for exceptional development of this nature, and as the former post-dates the latter, I accord the Framework greater weight in my decision.*

Compliance with NPPF 84(e)

- 5.10 NPPF 84(e) says:

Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless..... the following circumstances apply:

¹ NPPF 2024

² Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and NPPF 12

³ Under the sub-heading Paragraph 84(e)

- e) *the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:*
- i) *is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and*
 - ii) *would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.*

5.11 As the Inspector confirms in paragraph 9 of appeal decision APP/L1765/W/22/3291091 (see Appendix 4), this means that NPPF 84(e):

.....provides 'in principle' support to isolated homes in the countryside when the design is of exceptional quality. To achieve this benchmark, the proposal needs to be truly outstanding by satisfying four tests. These being that the architecture would i) be of the highest standard, ii) help raise design standards more generally in rural areas, iii) significantly enhance the immediate setting and iv) be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area.

5.12 In interpreting and applying NPPF 84(e), in light of the Council's assessment of the previous application, the analysis of the appeal decisions (see Appendix 4) at paragraph 3.15 of this Planning Statement, together with the counsel opinion (see Appendix 3), confirms the following principles which are relevant in redetermining the Growing House application:

- 1) To be of an exceptional design and to achieve a significant enhancement of immediate setting, NPPF 84(e) does not mean that a proposed dwelling must be free standing and visually prominent so that it can be viewed by anyone. A proposed design can be purposely restrained so that only glimpsed and fleeting views are achieved.
- 2) Landscaping can (and where relevant must) be an integral part of a proposed design composition and be considered holistically with, and not separate to, the built form.
- 3) What falls to be judged in determining a proposal submitted under NPPF 84(e), is how the totality of the proposed development, including the built form and landscaping, sits within the existing setting.
- 4) The question of whether there is a significant enhancement of the immediate setting of a proposed dwelling must not be assessed simply and solely by reference to landscape and visual impacts, and other factors and benefits such as biodiversity net gain, ecological and heritage improvements are relevant and must be taken into account.

5.13 Before assessing the NPPF 84(e) criteria which determine if the design of a proposed dwellings is of exceptional quality, the pre-qualifying requirement which applies to all of the types of housing permitted by NPPF 84, is to determine that the Growing House qualifies as an 'isolated home in the countryside', in order that national policy is correctly engaged and applies in this case.

a) An isolated location

5.14 In its assessment of the previous application, the Council agrees in its officer report⁴ that this element of NPPF 84(e) is satisfied. It confirms:

Taking account of the distance of the site from the nearest 'settlement' it is considered that the proposed development would comply with and align with the key component of Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that the location and siting of the proposal would be in an 'isolated' location for the purposes of the Framework. As such, paragraph 84 can be 'engaged' for the purposes of assessing the proposal.

5.15 The test of 'isolation', in terms of the meaning of the word and its practical application, has been examined by the courts and the principal legal authorities⁵ have determined that:

- a) 'Isolation' is not determined by the presence or absence of existing houses, buildings and/or development⁶ in terms of their physical proximity to, or remoteness from, the site of a proposed new dwelling;
- b) 'Isolation' is determined by the presence or absence of an existing settlement in terms of its physical proximity to, or remoteness from, the site of a proposed new dwelling, and noting that a 'settlement' is undefined, and what constitutes a 'settlement' and whether a proposed development would be isolated from it, are matters of planning judgment for a decision maker on the facts of an individual case.

5.16 In this case, the application site is clearly physically separated from the nearest defined settlements of Longridge, Ribchester and Hurst Green which are several kilometres away, and the two existing properties and development located on Higher Road and within the immediate vicinity of the site, clearly lacks the necessary scale and characteristics to be classed as a hamlet, and does not amount to being an undefined settlement.

5.17 Therefore, it is demonstrated that the Growing House qualifies as a proposal for an isolated home in the countryside for the purposes of engaging NPPF 84(e). The Council also agrees with this conclusion as confirmed in its pre-application response dated 16th February 2024.

b) A design of exceptional quality

5.18 Having determined that the application site is a qualifying location so that NPPF 84(e) is engaged, the applicant and their design team consulted the Design Review service provided

⁴ Under the sub-heading Paragraph 84(e)

⁵ *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Others* [2018] EWCA Civ 610 and *City and Country Bramshill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government* [2021] EWCA Civ 320

⁶ This is also clear from the content of NPPF 84(a) concerning the development of new rural workers' dwellings as 'isolated homes in the countryside' and which are commonly located at or adjacent to farms and cannot therefore be remote from existing buildings and development.

by RIBA Places Matter to demonstrate that the design of the Growing House is of exceptional quality by meeting the requirements and criteria of NPPF 84(e)(i) and (ii). The re-submitted application is accompanied by a brochure of high-resolution CGI visualisations which illustrate the exceptional quality of the design.

5.19 A series of four Design Review panel meetings were held with RIBA Places Matter between February 2023 and August 2023, and these follow initial engagement with Places Matter in 2021 and 2022⁷. These earlier engagements considered a different scheme to that proposed now, whereby the proposed dwelling was positioned closer to Higher Road and began as a single storey, partially earth-sheltered, design.

5.20 The engagement with Places Matter during 2023 has been a rigorous iterative process whereby the Design Review panel has meaningfully tested the proposal against both parts (i) and (ii) of NPPF 84(e). The Design Review panel members were purposely selected to achieve this and included suitably-qualified architectural and rural landscape experts, including being purposely chaired by an eminent landscape architect given the location of the site within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

5.21 The four 2023 Places Matter Design Review panel reports are resubmitted with this planning application and enclosed in Appendix 1. When these are read together, they clearly demonstrate the positive progression and design evolution of the Growing House to the point, by the time of the last review dated 1st August 2023, it was concluded that:

- The Panel's recommendation is based specifically on the high quality of the proposals shown in these documents and we would expect that any planning consent condition the delivery of the project accordingly.
- All of the changes that have been made are very positive and it is in that context that the Panel supports the project. You [the applicant] have engaged with the Places Matter process in a very collaborative and cooperative spirit and that is commended.
- In summary, the Panel considers that [the Growing House] proposal meets the test set out in NPPF 84(e) and it is considered to be of an exceptional quality of design.

5.22 Collaboration between an applicant and a design review panel is usual practice and at paragraph 14 of appeal APP/F1610/W/19/3236430 (see Appendix 4), the Inspector highlights the approach where a successful outcome which satisfied NPPF 84(e) was achieved after three rounds of engagement with a design panel. This is a close parallel to the Growing House where the Places Matter Design Review Panel considered that the NPPF 84(e) threshold was reached on the fourth, collaborative, revision of the proposed design:

14. *Before embarking on the analysis [of the planning merits], it is noted that the scheme was subject to appraisal by the South West Design Review Panel on three occasions,*

⁷ The Council's design and conservation officer and head of planning were involved with the initial engagement with RIBA Places Matter.

in July 2017, February 2018 and November 2018. The Panel commended the constructive and thoughtful way in which the appellant had responded to their comments and suggestions at each stage. The third assessment concluded that the scheme had by that stage reached the requirements of paragraph 79 of the Framework.

5.23 It is recommended good practice, and the Council has advised in connection with other NPPF 84(e) schemes, that a proposal for a new isolated home in the countryside made on the grounds that it is of exceptional design quality, should be presented to a design review panel (e.g. Places Matter) for assessment before a planning application is submitted, and that officers will consider a Panel's expert feedback as material evidence in a planning decision.

5.24 This is also made clear in NPPF 138 which explains that 'local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.'

5.25 This is emphasised in appeal APP/L3245/W/21/3289722 (see Appendix 4) where the Inspector placed weight on the rigours of the design process and independent review⁸ in considering whether the design of the proposed dwelling in that case was truly outstanding and reflecting the highest standards in architecture. Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 (extracts) of the decision explain:

7. *The proposal has had a protracted design process. Elements such as a central dome have been altered or eliminated and through a process of consultation and evolution, the scheme now proposes a neo-classical building that is set on high ground back from the river's edge, taking advantage of the varying site levels and existing woodland.*
8. *The design process has been subject to robust review to ensure that the development would not only stand as high-standard development in its own right but also be a positive addition to the rural setting.*
9. *I appreciate that appearance and design can be a subjective matter but consider that in this case, the rigorous design process has resulted in a proposal that successfully blends traditional and modern styles. It is coherent and would provide a legible building that is well integrated within both the altered and existing parts of the surrounding landscape. Its design achieves a very high standard of quality and in this regard, I consider that it passes the relevant test.*

5.26 Similarly, at paragraph 10 of appeal APP/L1765/W/22/3291091 (see Appendix 4) the Inspector notes:

10. *It is often helpful in reaching such a view [in assessing the merit of a proposal against NPPF 84(e)] to have the input of specialists, such as a multi-disciplinary design panel.*

⁸ By the Traditional Architecture Group (TAG)

- 5.27 It was therefore surprising, and unclear on what basis, the Council reached the view it expressed in the pre-application response of 16th February 2024 and, subsequently, its refusal of the previous application, that the Growing House is not considered to be a dwelling 'of exceptional quality'. The Council thereby ignored the views of the RIBA Places Matter expert design panel members and, as subsequently confirmed, did not seek its own, independent, expert design advice and relied solely on officers' unqualified opinion and judgment.
- 5.28 On the basis of the above, this resubmitted planning application demonstrates that the Growing House meets the four tests of NPPF 84(e) as follows.
- **Test 1 - 'truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture'**
- 5.29 As a purposely convened panel of the most-suited RIBA architectural experts and LI landscape experts to advise the applicant and design team, the process of critical assessment and the sequence of collaborative, evolving design advice and input provided by the Places Matter panel, and the overall concluding expert opinion that it has expressed, verifies how and why the architectural and landscape design of the Growing House is truly outstanding and reflects the highest standards in architecture.
- 5.30 The design has been thoroughly scrutinised and rigorously tested by architectural and landscape experts to ensure that it achieves the necessary quality appropriate to its setting and demanded by its location in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, and they are satisfied, and have endorsed the proposed design, on the basis that it meets the requirements of NPPF 84(e).
- 5.31 It is also important to acknowledge that the assessment of architectural quality can go beyond the appearance of a proposed dwelling and its landscape. This is confirmed by appeal APP/L1765/W/22/3291091 (see Appendix 4) where, at paragraph 12, the Inspector considered the experimental nature of the construction method in that case, together with sustainability and rainwater recycling measures. This is a strong parallel with the Growing House in terms of its conception as a living, 'growing medium' to facilitate a more self-sufficient daily life for the applicant and their family, by growing and cultivating year-round fresh produce on the dwelling, around the dwelling and in the dwelling, and by the use of innovative 'bio-receptive concrete' for its external walls.
- 5.32 For all of the above reasons, this requirement of NPPF 84(e) is therefore satisfied.
- **Test 2 - 'would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas'**
- 5.33 In appeal APP/L1765/W/22/3291091 (see Appendix 4), by finding that the proposed development was 'truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture', the Inspector makes the comment at paragraph 21 that:

21. *The design would be unique and outstanding, and thus reflect the highest standards of architecture. In so doing, it would be inspirational and would help raise design standards in rural areas as an example of best practice.*

5.34 It is clear that, if granted planning permission and implemented, the Growing House will be an exemplary development which demonstrates how outstanding contemporary rural design can be appropriate and achieved in Ribble Valley, such that vernacular reproduction or pastiche is not inevitable, provided the quality of the design and design process is of the highest order. And on this basis, it will be a development from which a wide range of residential and commercial future applicants and architects can draw inspiration, in terms of sensitive design, form, scale, appearance, materials, detailing and landscaping.

5.35 The outstanding design quality of the Growing House will also be carried forward into its implementation and construction. Its development will provide a wide range of opportunities for skilled tradespeople and craftspeople in Ribble Valley to employ and adapt traditional rural construction techniques and detailing for contemporary use, and to learn from the process.

5.36 This can be achieved as part of the process to procure and select a main contractor and sub-contractors for the Growing House by requiring them to implement an employment and skills plan which is focused on furthering traditional building skills, education and training opportunities, and apprenticeships, as well as general CPD and links to industry bodies and students studying construction, building, architecture and related courses at local universities and colleges.

5.37 The same approach will be applied to the landscaping and biodiversity proposals for the Growing House, whereby the applicant is already working with the Forest of Bowland National Landscape 'Hay Time Project' officer and Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the scheme can help to share knowledge, experience and public awareness of the benefits of reinstating, restoring and managing traditional upland hay meadows as one of our rarest habitats and a priority for conservation and enhancement in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

5.38 These and other methods of securing opportunities and sharing knowing to raise standards of rural design in connection with design and construction of the Growing House and its landscape proposals, can be achieved by suitable planning conditions. This requirement of NPPF 84(e) is therefore satisfied.

- **Test 3 - 'would significantly enhance its immediate setting'**

5.39 The NPPF (and PPG) does not prescribe how this requirement is to be achieved or measured and nor, as a matter of principle, is it stipulated that only a previously degraded setting can be enhanced. As several dwellings qualifying under the NPPF 84(e) exception (and previous versions) have been permitted on undeveloped sites in protected landscapes, it is also not the case that, as a matter of principle, the immediate setting of a proposed dwelling located within a National Landscape cannot be significantly enhanced. This is confirmed by appeal

APP/F1610/W/19/3236430 (see Appendix 4), where in setting out the main issue at paragraph 10 and allowing the appeal on the basis that NPPF 84(e) was satisfied, the Inspector says:

10. *This [the main issue] is whether the proposal reaches the standard of design sought in Framework paragraph 79(e) for an isolated dwelling in the countryside, and this analysis will take account of the location within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the landscape character of the area.*

5.40 The appeal decisions provided at Appendix 4 also confirm that the consideration of significant enhancement of immediate setting should not be judged solely by reference to landscape and visual impacts. Where relevant, factors such as ecological proposals, including innovative and sustainable design, woodland management and increased biodiversity net gain above the statutory requirement, and heritage proposals, can be taken into account and afforded weight.

5.41 The immediate setting of the proposed Growing House is grazing pasture surrounded by perimeter stone walls and hedges, and a woodland valley on the western side. The Forest of Bowland upland landscape and sloping topography of the site are also features of the immediate setting. In this context, the elements of the Growing House which are therefore considered to significantly enhance its immediate setting are:

- 1) As a dwelling which satisfies Test 1 of NPPF 84(e) by being ‘truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture’, the Growing House will relate well to the site and its physical addition will enliven the existing immediate setting. The design accentuates the sloping topography of the setting through its siting, form, scale and orientation without detriment to the prevailing wider landscape character of the National Landscape, it is designed so that it does not appear overly domestic and, through the process of design review, it has been purposely positioned and designed (by the addition of a first floor element) so that it can only be glimpsed from outside the site, whilst it will appear striking and of high quality within the site and its immediate setting.
- 2) The strengthening of existing landscape features and characteristics by new and enhanced hedgerow planting, new tree planting and new and repaired drystone walls around the site and their future maintenance and long-term stewardship.
- 3) Provision of a range of ecological biodiversity measures which are a fundamental and essential part of the design of the Growing House, and will be a clear enhancement of its immediate setting. These include:
 - The Growing House will be built, lived in and used as a ‘growing medium’ which will integrate with the landscape by using innovative ‘bio-receptive concrete’ for its external walls on which mosses, algae, lichens and ferns will grow to form a natural, living, organic surface, and, additionally, with vegetables, fruits and herbs (including espalier fruit trees, plums, gages, damsons, raspberries, blackberries, vines, leafy greens and climbing beans) grown on, around and inside the house. Embedding and

integrating food production, vegetation, plants and nature into all aspects of the Growing House is one of its salient design characteristics which contributes to the exceptional design.

- Additional native woodland and shrub planting to the internal facing edge of the perimeter woodland lining Cowley Brook, providing a renatured / rewilded habitat and enhanced woodland edge.
- The creation of new and restored species-rich, natural hay meadow habitat in association with the Forest of Bowland National Landscape 'Hay Time' Project, and its future management, across the majority of the immediate setting of the Growing House and covering more than 80% of the application site. This comprises Fields F1, F2 and F3 on Proposed Site Plan 01003A and Landscape Masterplan 12870-LUC-XX-00-DR-L-0101 P01.

A similar approach was taken in appeal APP/M1710/W/15/3010471 (see Appendix 4) where the proposal included an extensive wildflower meadow, new habitat creation and biodiversity net gain, and the Inspector concluded:

24. Although there would no longer be an agricultural use, the proposals would ensure that part of the site would develop a more natural habitat and would significantly enhance the setting. The Framework also encourages improvements to biodiversity and I consider these would be significant benefits of the scheme. This is particularly so, as the area identified for biodiversity enhancement is quite large [in area] in proportion to the rest of the site.

- The creation of new pond and wetland habitat within the site
- Additionally, the incorporation of the remains of the Ribchester to Carlisle roman road which crosses the site, by its excavation and permanent preservation which can be secured by condition, is a further feature of the Growing House proposal which will add to the significant enhancement to the immediate setting.



5.42 Taken as a whole, these measures will significantly enhance the immediate setting of the Growing House (as shown in the image above). They can be achieved without detriment to the protected landscape character of the Forest of Bowland as the siting of the dwelling in the landscape, and the retention of open fields and landscape features, ensures that prevailing landscape character is not compromised but, rather, is improved through the improvements to the immediate setting. This requirement of NPPF 84(e) is therefore satisfied.

- **Test 4 - 'be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area'**

5.43 The 'design vision' section of the Design and Access Statement, together with the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, also explains how the architectural and landscape design of the Growing House is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area and Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

5.44 Whilst the architecture is purposely contemporary, the Growing House has been informed by an appraisal of the local area and identification of its defining characteristics, in terms of the landscape character type; landscape features; the settlement form and pattern, comprising scattered farms, freestanding barns and dwellings; vernacular building types, forms and designs; and traditional building materials, boundary treatments and means of enclosure. Examples of stone walls, with lichens and mosses, within and near the site, and buildings in the local area, which have informed and inspired the design of the Growing House and choice of materials, are shown below.



- 5.45 The Growing House therefore uses a range of local vernacular materials and is a simple and low-key building form and design which does not detract from the landscape. The first floor of the dwelling, which is the only element that will be glimpsed in public views, is clad using local stone which will naturally weather, and the ground floor is built from bio-receptive concrete on which mosses, algae, lichens and ferns will grow to form a natural, living, organic surface, and the house is further enclosed and screened by drystone walls. The overall tone, colour and texture of building and its external facing materials, and hard landscape materials, therefore all blend with those visible in the surrounding landscape.
- 5.46 The same approach is employed with the soft landscape and planting strategy including green / wildflower roofs, native hedges, trees and woodland, and species-rich upland hay meadow. On this basis, and whilst an intentionally modern design, the Growing House is clearly sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.
- 5.47 It is also important to note that the Growing House does not have to reflect defining local vernacular building characteristics to be sensitive to them. The Growing House is physically separated and cannot be seen from the nearest settlements, and the same circumstance was considered in appeal APP/L3245/W/21/3289722 (see Appendix 4) where, at paragraph 13, the Inspector explains:
13. *Further afield, Fitz settlement and its listed buildings are on higher land but are not visible from the site. The building is visually and physically separate and takes no design cues from the settlement. However, neither the building nor other parts of the*

site to be developed would affect the settlement or its constituent buildings, and accordingly, the proposal would be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area.

5.48 On the above basis, this requirement of NPPF 84(e) is therefore satisfied.

Conclusion on Issue 1)

5.49 It is demonstrated that the Growing House is a design of exceptional quality which is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and which will help to raise standards of rural design in Ribble Valley, and will significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

5.50 The criteria of NPPF 84(e) are very clearly met and therefore, by exception, the isolated location of the Growing House in the countryside beyond a defined settlement boundary, is suitable, and therefore acceptable, having regard to local and national planning policy.

5.51 Additionally in this respect, the Council considers in its refusal of the previous application, that the proposal will conflict with Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 on the basis that the application site is not within walking distance of local services and facilities and will be largely reliant on access by private car. This point was considered by the Inspector in the allowed appeal APP/T2350/W/24/3339770 of 8th August 2024 for an isolated new dwelling on land adjacent to Further Lane, Mellor. At paragraphs 72 to 74 of the decision letter, the Inspector confirms:

Paragraph 72 As the site is isolated, the exception set out in paragraph 84(e) of the Framework is engaged. Having regard to my conclusions above, the proposal therefore benefits from that exception.

Paragraph 73 Given the implicit acceptance in paragraph 84(e) of the likely inherent unsustainability of such sites in transport terms, and my comments above, this reinforces my finding that there is no overall conflict with Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy.

Paragraph 74 Taking the above together, having regard to both the development plan and relevant material considerations, I find the appeal site is a suitable location for the development proposed, having regard to its location outside of any defined settlement boundaries and the likely reliance on the private car.

5.52 The conclusion that the proposed isolated location of the Growing House in the countryside beyond a defined settlement boundary is acceptable, having regard to local and national planning policy, is therefore not overturned by the limited accessibility of the application site.

Issue 2) Whether the proposed development is acceptable in all other respects

a) Effect on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape

- 5.53 NPPF 189 requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, and that the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Additionally, NPPF 190 requires that planning permission for major development should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.
- 5.54 In this case, it is clear that the Growing House is not major development within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. There is no statutory definition of 'major development' within a National Landscape in the NPPF or PPG, and NPPF FN67 confirms that the assessment is a matter for the decision maker, taking account of 'the nature, scale and setting' of a proposed development and whether it could have a 'significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated.'
- 5.55 The 'nature' and 'scale' of the Growing House is a single, freestanding, residential dwelling. Single dwellings are a common form of development in the Forest of Bowland, and are widespread, with several examples in the surrounding area of varying sizes and designs. The 'setting' of the Growing House is also towards the bottom of the sloping application site in a mostly concealed location where it cannot be widely seen from public vantage points. These factors clearly characterise the Growing House as limited and, thereby, 'minor' development.
- 5.56 The Forest of Bowland National Landscape was designated on 10th February 1964 as a landscape of national significance due to its key characteristics of:
- the grandeur and isolation of its upland core area
 - steep escarpments of the moorland hills area
 - undulating lowlands area
 - serenity and tranquillity
 - distinctive pattern of settlements
 - wildlife
 - historic and cultural associations
- 5.57 It is a landscape characterised by human settlement and isolated farms and dwellings are a visible, defining, feature. The Growing House is proportionate and will fit this pattern and characteristic, and as this resubmitted planning application demonstrates, it will not have a significant adverse impact on the Forest of Bowland purposes of designation, whereby:
- The application site is outside the upland core area
 - The application site is outside the steep escarpments of the moorland hills area
 - The application site is outside the undulating lowlands area
 - The proposed dwelling will not harm serenity and tranquillity
 - The proposed dwelling does not harm the distinctive pattern of settlements

- The proposed dwelling will not harm wildlife
- The proposed dwelling will benefit, and not harm, the historic and cultural associations of the area

5.58 For these reasons, the Growing House is not major development and the exception and public interest tests of NPPF 190 are not engaged. Therefore, applicable policy context for determining the resubmitted planning application is NPPF 189 and the corresponding local Policies EN2, DMG1, DMG2 and DME2 of the Core Strategy.

5.59 To assess the Growing House against these policies, the resubmitted planning application is supported by an updated Landscape and Visual Appraisal which is based on a 2 km study area around the site. Its scope of receptors and viewpoint locations was agreed by the Council at the pre-application stage, and, having originally recommended at the first Places Matter Design Panel Review, that a Landscape and Visual Appraisal should be produced due to the location of the Growing House within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the initial version was presented at the second Design Review and the Design Panel members agreed with the findings. It describes the key issues and constraints affecting the site and proposed development in relation to landscape character, visual amenity and the special qualities of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Landscape effects

5.60 The Council refused the previous application on the basis that the Growing House proposal will harm the immediate landscape of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape within and surrounding the site, and in particular, by resulting in the loss of undeveloped pasture.

5.61 Whilst the Growing House proposal would develop the site insofar that a new building would be erected where there is not one currently, this is somewhat of a 'technical' objection because the inherent consequence of NPPF 84(e), and permitting outstanding architecture in isolated locations in the countryside, is that undeveloped sites will be developed. This applies regardless of whether a proposal is made in the countryside, the Green Belt or, in this case, a National Landscape.

5.62 The resubmitted planning application must therefore be considered in principle with this inevitability in mind and, as emphasised in the submitted counsel opinion (see Appendix 3), it follows that as the definition of exceptional quality at NPPF 84(e) requires a qualifying proposed development to significantly enhance the immediate setting of a site, it is the case that if the Growing House meets this test then, consequently, the concern raised by the Council in Reason for Refusal 1, about impact on the National Landscape in this location, cannot arise. This is also made clear in paragraph 10 of the Inspector's decision in appeal APP/F1610/W/19/3236430 (see Appendix 4).

5.63 Notwithstanding the above, it is also the case that the loss of the pastoral field within the application site is very limited, and the balance will be retained and significantly enhanced as new and restored, species-rich, natural hay meadow habitat in association with the Forest of

Bowland National Landscape 'Hay Time' Project. The Growing House and its curtilage will occupy just 18% of the total application site area, and the updated Landscape and Visual Appraisal demonstrates that the proposal will have a limited effect on landscape receptors.

- 5.64 The development of a single dwelling at the application site is not out of keeping with the Moorland Fringe landscape character area (D:11 Longridge) of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (see Figure 3 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal Appendix A), and it will not have a significant impact on landscape features including the National Landscape itself and the boundary hedgerows (including trees) and drystone walls, and which will be mostly retained and incorporated into the layout.
- 5.65 The results of the updated Landscape and Visual Appraisal confirm that there are no residual landscape effects which are classified as being of 'greater importance' and, at Year 15, following establishment of the proposed landscape mitigation features, which reflect the key local landscape characteristics including drystone walls, native trees, scrub, reinforced hedgerows and species-rich hay meadow, the proposed development will result in only minor to moderate-minor adverse effects the pastoral field and National Landscape. There will also be a minor beneficial effect on boundary hedgerows and boundary drystone walls.

Effects on visual amenity

- 5.66 It is important to recognise that the Growing House has been designed, in iterative collaboration with the RIBA Places Matter Design Review Panel, to minimise its visual impact on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.
- 5.67 It is located on the lower part of the sloping site, responding to terrain and in line with the natural contours and levels of the land, and does not impose itself on the topography. Admittedly, its visual presence will not enhance its immediate setting but a prominent building in this location would plainly not be appropriate. The dwelling therefore has a purposely restrained 'landscape-led' presence to respect its visual context. This enables only fleeting glimpses to be seen from Higher Road and public viewpoints, and the design uses natural stone materials and colours which will weather, and including 'bio-receptive concrete' on which mosses, algae, lichens and ferns will purposely grow to form a natural, living, organic surface, so that the building will not appear unduly prominent or stark in the landscape.
- 5.68 The merit of a similar approach is recognised in paragraphs 14, 16 and 19 of appeal APP/L1765/W/22/3291091 (see Appendix 4) where the Inspector concluded that:
19. *Given the sensitive and considered response to the landscape setting of the site, the appeal scheme would not appear stark or incongruous, and therefore the appeal site is not one that inherently fails to lend itself to such a proposal.*
- 5.69 Figure 4 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal Appendix A demonstrates that there is no public access to the application site and the nearest footpaths are FP-0335002 which is approximately 165 metres to the east and FP-0335004 which is approximately 160 metres to

the south. There are no other public rights of way adjacent to the application site and, overall, the site is not visible or prominent in longer range views.

- 5.70 Figure 7 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal Appendix A shows the zone of theoretical visibility around the application site and areas of woodland and forest. There are no available views from public receptors to the north, other than from Higher Road, and there is only a small number of localised receptors to the east around Stoneygate Lane and one to the west at Cuckoo Hall Farm where parts of the development will be visible. These are shown in Viewpoints 2, 3 and 4 in Appendix A. There are more-distant receptors further south (represented by Viewpoints 5 to 10) but the application site is indistinguishable and/or screened in the wider landscape from that distance and the change in views will be imperceptible.
- 5.71 The results of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal show that there are no residual visual effects which are classified as being of 'greater importance' and, at Year 15, following establishment of the proposed visual mitigation features, including the extensive hay meadows, native tree, scrub and hedgerow planting, together with the planting on the exterior of the Growing House which will have matured and weathered, the proposed development will not be prominent in the landscape. It will result in only a minor adverse effect on close range visual receptors and will have a negligible effect on longer-range views within and from the edge of the National Landscape.

Conclusion on the effect on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape

- 5.72 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal shows that the Growing House will have a very limited and localised landscape and visual impact and there will be very limited harm overall to the landscape character, visual amenity and the special qualities of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. Despite the Council's refusal of the previous application, the updated evidence accompanying this resubmission therefore confirms that with regard to its siting, form, massing, design and materials, the proposed development is acceptable within the National Landscape and there is no conflict with Policies EN2, DMG1, DMG2 and DME2 of the Core Strategy and NPPF 189.

b) Effect on heritage assets

- 5.73 The application is accompanied by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA) which has been produced to assess (prior to on-site investigation) the significance of the remains of the Ribchester to Carlisle roman road which crosses the site and is visible in places as a surface earthwork feature. The road is not a scheduled monument and is therefore a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of determining the resubmitted planning application and assessment under NPPF 216.
- 5.74 The DBA confirms that the Growing House will be positioned clear of the alignment and width (circa. 12 metres) of the roman road and side ditches, and therefore it will not harm its significance and will not have an adverse heritage impact. Cowley Brook Farm to the north of

the application site on Higher Road, is also identified as a non-designated heritage asset as a post-medieval farmstead. The Growing House is proposed 140 metres south of the farm and at a lower contour further down the slope of the hillside. It will not therefore harm the setting and significance of the farm. Overall, there is no conflict with NPPF 216 and Policies DME4 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy on this basis.

- 5.75 In addition, it is proposed as part of the application, to excavate and permanently preserve the remains of the roman road. Lidar mapping data provided by the Roman Roads Research Association indicates that, at least, the foundation of the road structure can be preserved and a section will be displayed as a heritage asset which members of the public will be able to view. A small visitor car park, which will be kept locked, will be provided adjacent to Higher Road for members of the public wishing to view the remains to book by appointment and use. A scheme to carry out i) the archaeological excavation, ii) the means of permanently preserving the remains, and iii) the construction and operation of the public car park can be secured by planning condition or obligation.
- 5.76 This is a significant heritage gain (public benefit) which carries favourable weight in the planning balance whereby NPPF 219 encourages applicants and local planning authorities to look for opportunities to 'enhance or better reveal' the significance of heritage assets in connection with new development proposals.

c) Effect on residential amenity

- 5.77 There are only two properties within the immediate vicinity of the application site, at Cowley Brook Cottage and Cowley Brook Farm, on the opposite side of Higher Road. The Growing House is located 140 metres south of Higher Road at a lower contour, as shown on Proposed Sections B-B and D-D (plans 04002 and 04003), and designed to ensure that it sits at a level which protects the amenities of the neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, daylight / sunlight, orientation and outlook.
- 5.78 On this basis the proposed development is compatible with adjacent development so that the residential amenity of neighbouring residents is protected, and it therefore accords with the design and amenity requirements of Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy and the relevant policies of the NPPF 2024.

d) Trees and hedgerows

- 5.79 The application is accompanied by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Constraints Report prepared by Bowland Tree Consultancy. This shows that there are five individual trees, two groups and a single hedgerow along the application site frontage on Higher Road.
- 5.80 By utilising the existing field access positions as the entrance for the Growing House driveway and the entrance for the proposed visitor car park for people viewing the roman road (assuming that it can be excavated and preserved), the proposed development does not result in the loss of any of these trees and hedgerow, as shown on the proposed site plan

(drawing 01003A) and the proposed access layout plan (drawing H4322-H-01 Rev P2). The other surveyed trees are those forming the woodland belt within the western part of the application site and forming the valley side of Cowley Brook. These were assessed as a woodland group and it is confirmed that the woodland will not be adversely impacted by the proposed development and will be positively managed and enhanced (rewilded) as part of the package of on-site biodiversity net gain improvements.

- 5.81 The development is therefore acceptable and in accordance with Policies DME1 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy and the relevant policies of the NPPF 2023.

e) Ecology including Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.82 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment including an extended Phase 1 habitat survey was carried out in June 2021 and updated in 2024, with the aim of identifying any potential ecological constraints in connection with the Growing House.
- 5.83 The results are submitted with the application and confirm that the site has limited ecological value, comprising semi-improved grassland and no Priority Habitats and other notable habitats present. Although located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the development will not have an adverse effect on any statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites. The trees and woodland within the site may be suitable for roosting bats and nesting birds, and the dry stone walls could support reptiles and amphibians, but no further surveys are required to determine the application.
- 5.84 Compensatory planting and habitat enhancement is proposed including native and tree, plant and hedgerow species in the landscape planting proposals, and especially the new and restored hay meadow at Fields F1, F2 and F3 (see Proposed Site Plan and Landscape Masterplan) in association with the Forest of Bowland Hay Time Project, and the wooded valley of Cowley Brook which will be managed, 'rewilded' and extended with new native scrub planting. The development will also feature rainwater harvesting and clean wastewater recycling systems to provide water for irrigation, and water from a natural spring within the site will also feed a new pond and wetland habitat area and fill a livestock drinking trough which will attract deer, birds and other wildlife. Bird nesting and bat roosting boxes will also be incorporated into the development together with habitat improvements for reptiles, amphibians, insects and ground mammals.
- 5.85 A biodiversity impact assessment has also been carried out and is submitted with the application. This shows a baseline habitat of 17.92 units on site. These will mostly be retained and the proposed new landscaping and ecology enhancements will add area and hedgerow habitat units to achieve an on-site net gain of 19.73% and a hedgerow gain of 135.4%. These gains are well beyond mandatory requirements and should attract greater weight than ascribed in the Council's assessment of the previous application.
- 5.86 The ecological appraisal and biodiversity net gain assessment therefore demonstrates that the Growing House is feasible and acceptable in ecological terms, and can deliver bio-

diversity net gain and ecological enhancement for fauna suited to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and especially the contribution to the Forest of Bowland Hay Time Project and rewilding of the woodland along the valley of Cowley Brook. The proposed development is therefore compliant with Policies DS2, EN4, DME3 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy and NPPF 187.

f) Drainage and flood risk

- 5.87 Due to its elevated location and sloping topography, the application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a very limited annual probability of flooding of less than 1 in 1000. It is also at very low risk of surface water flooding and there are no recorded instances of historic surface water flooding or flooding associated with Cowley Brook.
- 5.88 The Growing House is designed to be highly sustainable and will collect (harvest) and recycle rainwater and surface water run-off. Where excess run-off is to be drained, this will be stored in an attenuation tank and piped to outfall into Cowley Brook at a greenfield run-off rate plus climate change allowance. Foul drainage will be piped to a Wastewater Package Treatment plant and treated outfall will also discharge to Cowley Brook subject to an EA permit. These arrangements are shown on the proposed site plan (01003A) and described in the Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy report submitted with the application.
- 5.89 On this basis, the proposed development is safe from the risk of flooding and can be provided with surface water and foul water drainage infrastructure. It is therefore in accordance with Policies EN3, DME6 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy and relevant policies of the NPPF 2024.

g) Energy and sustainability

- 5.90 The application is supported by a detailed Sustainability and Energy Statement by Beechfield Consulting Engineers. This, together with the Design and Access Statement, summarises the sustainability features of the Growing House in terms of its construction and occupation, including the use of resources, waste minimisation and recycling and pollution minimisation. The report also confirms that the dwelling will follow Passivhaus standards and achieve energy performance that significantly exceeds Part L (2001) building regulation requirements. By using PV and air source hot water renewable energy technologies, the development can also achieve a 101.73 CO₂ reduction rate and will therefore be 'zero carbon' in terms of regulated energy demand.
- 5.91 The Growing House proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies DS2, EN3, DME5, DME6 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy and the relevant policies of the NPPF 2024.

h) Ground conditions and mineral resources

- 5.92 The application is accompanied by a Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment and a Mineral Resource Assessment, both prepared in May 2024, to assess any ground contamination and/or ground gas risk, and any potential for commercial mineral extraction.

- 5.93 The ground assessment shows that, based on historic mapping, the application site has always been in greenfield agricultural use and the risk of significant contamination being present, and a potential risk/s to human health requiring ground remediation, is therefore considered to be very low. Similarly, no on or off site sources of toxic ground gases have been identified and therefore no ground gas precautions are required for the development.
- 5.94 On this basis, the Growing House development is considered to be safe and acceptable to human health in terms of ground contamination, and is in accordance with Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy and the relevant policies of the NPPF 2024.
- 5.95 In terms of mineral resources, the application site is within a safeguarding area and overlies sandstone (Pennine Gritstone). The small site area combined with its location in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and environmental, noise and traffic impact, together with the availability of sandstone aggregate product from other quarries in Lancashire, mean that extraction, notwithstanding a technical feasibility assessment of the depth of the bedrock (and which is at least 12 metres below ground level), is uneconomic and not viable to extract.

i) Access and highways

- 5.96 The application is supported a short Transport Statement and the proposed access layout plan (H4322-H-01 Rev P2) prepared by PSA Design. It confirms that the Growing House can be provided with safe and suitable vehicular access arrangements from Higher Road, which can also accommodate emergency and servicing requirements, and will re-use and upgrade the existing field gate and provide adequate visibility splays without having to remove any sections of the frontage hedgerow and trees. As a four bedroom single dwelling, the proposed development will generate a very low volume of traffic, and between no more than 6 to 8 two-way vehicular trips per day. The visitor car park for members of the public to use to view the remains of the roman road which crosses the site, will generate infrequent vehicle trips and, consequently, the overall development will have a negligible impact on the operation of the local highway network and no further analysis is required.
- 5.97 It is demonstrated that the proposed development is therefore acceptable in terms of safe access and highway network operation, and there is no conflict with Policies DMI2, DMG3 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy and the relevant policies of the NPPF 2024.

Planning balance

- 5.98 This resubmitted planning application for the erection of the Growing House on land at Higher Road, Longridge, is made in accordance with the national policy exception provided by NPPF 84(e) which justifies the development of isolated new homes in the countryside outside defined settlement limits, where their design is of exceptional quality.
- 5.99 The application site is an isolated location, meaning that NPPF 84(e) is engaged, and the Growing House proposal is a design of exceptional quality, endorsed by RIBA Places Matter Design Review, which is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and

which will help to raise standards of rural design in Ribble Valley, and will significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

- 5.100 Notwithstanding its location in the countryside and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the Growing House proposal does not conflict with relevant landscape policies EN2, DMG2 and DME2; heritage policy DME4; sustainability and biodiversity policies DS2, EN3, EN4, DME3 and DME5; transport policies DMI2 and DMG3; and general development management policy DMG1 of the adopted Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 to 2028.
- 5.101 Because of its countryside location outside a defined settlement, there is a conflict with spatial development policy DS1, countryside policy DMG2 and housing policy DMH3 of the Core Strategy, and consequently, the Growing House would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole.
- 5.102 The Growing House proposal is supported by NPPF 84(e) however which is an important material consideration, and the up to date version of which, post-dates the adopted development plan. In this instance, the balance of considerations is such that a decision other than in accordance with the development plan is therefore justified.
- 5.103 The Inspector in appeal decision APP/L3245/W/21/3289722 (see Appendix 4) also notes that where a development plan does not contain an exceptional design policy, the NPPF should be preferred.
- 5.104 Overall, it is therefore demonstrated that, having regard to the development plan and all material considerations, there is a clear and compelling case for planning permission to be granted in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

6 Summary and conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of the resubmission of a planning application for a proposed new dwelling, known as the 'Growing House', on land at Higher Road, Longridge.
- 6.2 The application is made in accordance with the policy exception provided in NPPF 84(e) which justifies the development of isolated new homes in the countryside where their design is of exceptional quality.
- 6.3 The Growing House proposal is in accordance with the relevant landscape, biodiversity and general development management policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan Core Strategy 2008 to 2028 and, insofar as there is a conflict with spatial development, countryside and housing policies, material considerations, and expressly the countryside policy exception at NPPF 84(e), indicate that a decision other than in accordance with the development plan, is justified in this case.
- 6.4 Consequently, it is demonstrated that having regard to the development plan and all material considerations, there is a clear and compelling case for planning permission to be granted in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Appendices

Appendix 1

RIBA Places Matter Design Review Reports:

- 1) PM_2023_007 : 15.02.2023
- 2) PM_2023_012 : 26.04.2023
- 3) PM_2023_017a: 30.05.2023
- 4) PM_2023_025b: 01.08.2023

Appendix 2

Correspondence between the applicant
and RIBA Places Matter

Appendix 3

Counsel opinion

Appendix 4

Relevant appeal decisions

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