

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.								
Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	17/07/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	17/7/26

Application Ref:	3/2025/1002			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	20/03/26	Site Notice:	20/03/26	
Officer:	LW			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed extension of existing hardstanding within existing E/B2/B8 approved site. Including construction of 1.2m high stone retaining wall, weighbridge and associated cabin.
Site Address/Location:	Carr Hall, Whalley Road, Wilpshire, BB1 9LJ.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Wilpshire Parish Council objects to the application as the Council believes that the proposed parking along the spine road leading to Carr Hall is detrimental to the visual amenity of the Green Belt. The Council further objects to the application as it believes that neighbouring properties will be subject to more noise and possible light pollution. However, if the Officer is minded to approve the application, then Wilpshire Parish Council would ask that a condition is added to any approval to ensure that the pond on the spine road is protected as it is used by wildlife and amphibians have been seen in the pond by a Councillor.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objection.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Four letters of objection have been received with respect to the proposed development. The concerns raised within the letters can be summarised as below: • Road safety - large vehicles will be entering from/ exiting onto a very busy main road that already suffers from speeding and is close to a school; • Increase in traffic; • Negative visual impact in a rural area; • Potential for fuel and lubricant leaks to enter water course; • Impact on local wildlife; • Noise and light pollution;	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy: Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development Key Statement EN1: Green Belt Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1: Protecting Trees & Woodland
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME6: Water Management
Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2022/0414: Proposed electric quad motorsport facility with support building and car park (Refused).

3/2021/0755: Proposed change of use of Carr Hall to B2 (General Industrial) use, retaining the existing Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) use (Approved).

3/2020/0568: Leisure development including electric motorsport adventure facility and support building, café building, natural playground and 10 glamping pods (Refused).

3/2015/0547: Full application for change of use to a secure vehicle storage area, with ancillary development comprising the siting of 1no. welfare facilities cabin, 1no. drying room cabin and 3no. containers for storage (Approved).

3/2014/1044: Change of use from garden centre to B1 (office) and the retention of the existing B8 storage (Approved).

3/2004/1020: Redevelopment of existing site/ buildings for garden/ garden crafts centre. Amendment of permission 3/93/0196P (Approved).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site comprises Carr Hall, a mixed-use commercial and residential complex accessed from Whalley Road (A666), Wilpshire. The site includes a residential dwelling and land and buildings occupied by established Class E, B2 and B8 uses, together with associated areas of hardstanding utilised for external storage, vehicle parking and vehicular circulation.

The site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and within the designated Green Belt.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning permission is sought for the extension of the existing hardstanding serving the established Class E, B2 and B8 uses at Carr Hall. The development would facilitate the creation of 17 additional parking spaces and the installation of a weighbridge and associated control cabin to support the ongoing B2 and B8 activities operating from the site. A new stone retaining wall, measuring 1.2 metres in height, would also be erected along the northern edge of the proposed hardstanding extension.

Principle of Development:

The principle of employment use at Carr Hall has already been established through planning permission 3/2021/0755, which authorised the use of the site for Class E, B2 and B8 purposes. The current application seeks permission for the extension of the existing hardstanding area to provide additional parking, improved manoeuvring space for articulated vehicles, and the installation of a weighbridge and associated cabin to serve the established operations on the site.

Policies EC1 and DMB1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy support proposals that contribute to business growth and strengthen the local economy, provided they accord with other relevant policies of the development plan. In this regard, the proposed works would support the continued operation and efficiency of the existing businesses at Carr Hall.

Notwithstanding the above, the site lies within the Green Belt. Key statement EN1 of the Core Strategy seeks to maintain the overall extent of the Green Belt and safeguard the countryside from inappropriate development. Similarly, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) attaches great importance to Green Belt protection and establishes a presumption against inappropriate development except in limited circumstances.

The proposed extension to the hardstanding and the associated retaining wall is considered to constitute engineering operations. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF identifies engineering operations as a form of development that is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that it preserves openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

In assessing openness, regard must be had to both the spatial and visual effects of the development. Whilst the proposed hardstanding would be located within an area that is currently landscaped and free from built development, it would remain wholly within the established confines of an existing commercial site characterised by buildings, hardstanding and operational yard space. The development would not extend beyond the site's established boundaries or result in encroachment into the surrounding open countryside. Given its position within the existing employment complex and its limited visual and spatial effects, the proposed hardstanding and retaining wall are not considered to result in any significant loss of openness or to conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Accordingly, this element of the proposal is considered appropriate development.

The proposed weighbridge and associated cabin are considered separately. The cabin, measuring approximately 2.2m by 1.8m with a height of 2.9m, constitutes a new building, whilst the weighbridge would introduce a permanent operational structure. These elements do not fall within any of the exceptions for new buildings set out in Paragraph 154 of the NPPF and therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt by definition.

The NPPF advises that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, which will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In this case, the physical scale of both the cabin and weighbridge is modest, resulting in only limited harm to openness. Furthermore, the structures would be viewed in the context of the existing employment site and established industrial activities.

The submitted Planning Statement explains that the weighbridge is required to enable vehicles entering and leaving the site to be weighed, ensuring compliance with legal load limits and facilitating the safe handling of incoming materials. The weighbridge therefore serves an operational function that is directly related to and necessary for the efficient operation of the established B2 and B8 uses at the site. When considered alongside the limited physical impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt, these operational requirements are considered to amount to very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the identified Green Belt harm.

Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, subject to consideration of the other material planning considerations.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

The nearest residential receptor to the proposed development is Carr Hall itself, with further dwellings located along Whalley Road. Having regard to the nature, scale and siting of the proposal, there are no concerns relating to overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, loss of outlook, or reductions in daylight to neighbouring residential properties.

Notwithstanding this, the proposed weighbridge has the potential to generate noise associated with vehicle movements and the loading and unloading of goods. The application was therefore reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, who initially raised concerns regarding the potential impact on nearby noise-sensitive receptors. In response, the applicant was requested to submit a noise assessment prepared by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant to demonstrate that the proposed development would not give rise to unacceptable noise impacts when assessed in accordance with BS4142:2024+A1(2019).

A Noise Assessment has subsequently been submitted in support of the application. The assessment concludes that noise arising from the operation of the proposed weighbridge would have a low impact on surrounding residential receptors. The findings of the assessment have been reviewed by the Environmental Health Officer, who has confirmed that no objection is raised to the proposal, subject to the weighbridge being operated during daytime hours only, as no assessment of night-time operations has been undertaken.

The applicant has confirmed that the weighbridge would operate between 07:00 and 18:00 on weekdays and Saturdays only. These operating hours are considered acceptable and can be secured by way of a planning condition.

Having regard to the submitted noise assessment and the advice of the Environmental Health Officer, it is considered that the proposed development can be adequately managed through the imposition of appropriate planning conditions. Subject to those controls, the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and is therefore considered acceptable with respect to residential amenity.

Third-party representations have raised concerns regarding the potential for light pollution arising from the development. However, the application does not include any external lighting, and no such works form part of the development for which permission is sought. In the absence of proposed lighting infrastructure, the development would not, in itself, result in additional artificial illumination or associated harm to residential amenity. Nevertheless, in the interests of safeguarding residential amenity and preventing excessive light spill or light pollution, a condition can be imposed requiring details of any external building-mounted or ground-mounted lighting to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

The proposal would involve the loss of an area of grassed landscaping to the front of the Carr Hall site and its replacement with additional hardstanding to accommodate the proposed parking provision, improved vehicle manoeuvring areas, weighbridge and associated cabin. The development would also include the construction of a 1.2m high stone retaining wall.

Whilst the proposal would inevitably alter the appearance of this part of the site through the loss of existing grassed areas and the introduction of additional hardstanding and built form, these changes must be considered within the context of the wider Carr Hall complex, which is characterised by established commercial and industrial buildings, operational yard areas and associated infrastructure. The proposed cabin and weighbridge are modest in scale and would be viewed as ancillary features associated with the existing employment uses.

Furthermore, the development would remain contained within the established boundaries of the site and would not represent a significance or incongruous feature within the surrounding landscape. The proposed retaining wall would be constructed in stone, providing an appropriate and sympathetic finish.

Taking these factors into account, it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the character, appearance or visual amenity of the site or the wider area and is therefore acceptable in this regard.

Highways and Parking:

The application has been subject to review by Lancashire County Council Highways, who have raised no objection to the proposed development. The Local Highway Authority is satisfied that the proposed internal alterations to the site would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on highway safety or the capacity of the surrounding highway network.

It is acknowledged that concerns have been raised through third-party representations regarding road safety and the potential for increased traffic generation. However, the proposal relates solely to operational improvements within an established commercial and industrial site, including the provision of additional hardstanding, parking spaces, improved manoeuvring areas, and a weighbridge to serve the existing Class E, B2 and B8 uses.

The application does not seek permission for any intensification or expansion of the approved uses operating from the site, nor does it introduce any new land use that would be expected to generate a material increase in vehicle movements. Rather, the proposed works are intended to improve the efficiency, circulation and management of vehicles within the site. Consequently, there is no substantive evidence to suggest that the development would result in a significant increase in traffic or give rise to adverse highway safety implications.

Having regard to the advice of the Local Highway Authority, the proposal is considered acceptable in highway safety and traffic terms.

Landscape/Ecology:

Concerns have been raised through third-party representations regarding the potential effects of the proposal on the local environment and wildlife.

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Plan, all of which have been considered as part of the assessment of the proposal.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies the site as forming part of an established industrial complex comprising areas of closely mown grassland, ornamental hedgerows, scattered young trees, a small artificial water feature, ephemeral vegetation and extensive areas of built development and hardstanding. Whilst the site falls within a wider SSSI Impact Risk Zone, the report concludes that, having regard to the small-scale nature of the development and the absence of any direct or functional hydrological connections to designated sites, significant ecological effects are unlikely to arise. The appraisal further advises that no additional ecological surveys are necessary and concludes that, subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures, including precautionary working methods and the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), the proposal would not be subject to any overriding ecological constraints. The recommended measures can be secured by planning condition.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has also been submitted. This identifies five individual trees within the development area, all of which have been categorised as Category C specimens, indicating trees of low quality and limited arboricultural value. The assessment confirms that the removal of the five Category C trees is necessary to facilitate the development. However, given their limited individual or collective arboricultural value, the resulting impact is considered minor. In addition, although the adjacent Carr Hall Woodland Tree Preservation Order lies nearby, it falls outside the application site and would not be directly affected by the proposed works. With appropriate implementation of BS5837:2012 complaint working practices, including exclusion zones, contamination precautions and controlled plant movements, it is concluded that retained off-site trees will be safeguarded through construction. This can be secured via a planning condition.

In terms of BNG, the submitted BNG Plan identifies a loss of 0.14 habitat units, equating to a biodiversity loss of 15.54%, together with no net loss of hedgerow units. To achieve the statutory 10% BNG requirement, the scheme would therefore require an uplift of 0.24 habitat units and 0.01 hedgerow units. The Plan acknowledges that opportunities for on-site habitat creation are constrained by the site's established industrial character and limited available space. Whilst on-site measures, including replacement tree planting and enhancement of retained grassland areas, would provide biodiversity benefits, these measures alone would not be sufficient to achieve the required 10% net gain.

Consequently, the proposed BNG strategy adopts a hybrid approach, combining on-site habitat enhancements with the purchase of off-site biodiversity units through an appropriate habitat bank or other approved off-site provision.

The submitted evidence demonstrates that the development is capable of achieving the statutory BNG requirements, subject to the approval and implementation of an appropriate BNG Plan and the securing of any necessary off-site provisions in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements.

Having regard to the findings of the submitted ecological, arboricultural and biodiversity assessments, and subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposal is not considered likely to result in unacceptable harm to ecological interests, protected species, trees or landscape features.

Other Matters:

Pollution

Third party representations have raised concerns regarding the potential for fuel, oil or lubricant spillages to enter nearby watercourses. However, the proposal comprises operational improvements to an existing commercial and industrial site and would not introduce any activities substantially different from those already taking place under the established use of the site. The development therefore does not involve the intensification of land use or any processes that would materially increase the risk of contamination beyond that associated with the site's existing lawful operations.

The applicant has confirmed that the site benefits from an existing oil interceptor which captures surface water runoff from the current hardstanding and parking areas before it is discharged beneath the adjacent road and into the nearby stream. It is understood that this interceptor was installed as part of the original development of the Class E, B2 and B8 buildings and has sufficient capacity to accommodate runoff from the proposed development, given that the works are contained within the established Carr Hall site.

Furthermore, the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal recommends the preparation and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating standard pollution prevention measures to protect the nearby watercourse during the construction phase. The appraisal concludes that, subject to the implementation of these measures, any potential environmental effects can be effectively avoided or appropriately mitigated. The submission and implementation of a CEMP can be secured through a planning condition.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable risk of pollution to nearby watercourses or harm to the wider environment.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

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

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