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PLANNING STATEMENT

**IN RESPECT OF A FULL PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR THE ERECTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL
STORAGE BUILDING ON LAND**

AT

WHALLEY ROAD, LANGHO, BLACKBURN

Prepared by: Gary Hoerty BSc MRICS FAAV
Our Client: Mr J Lowther
Our Ref: Low/668/3551/GH
Date: February 2026



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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 Gary Hoerty Associates has been instructed by Mr Jack Lowther to submit a planning application on his behalf for the erection of an agricultural storage building on land off Whalley Road, Langho which will be used for storing agricultural plant, machinery and equipment used in connection with the farming of an adjoining four-acre parcel of agricultural land.
- 1.2 Mr Lowther currently has equipment stored in a number of shipping containers on the land adjacent to the site of the proposed building and has tractors, a JCB and farm implements such as a grass topper and a Cambridge roller stored outside on the adjoining caravan site which need to be stored inside a building to avoid them being stolen, vandalised, which has happened recently, and deteriorating in the weather as they are presently. The caravan site has now been developed and once it is brought into use it will not be an appropriate place to continue storing the applicants farm machinery and implements.
- 1.3 We set out in this Planning Statement the recent planning history of the property, a description of the application site, a description of the proposed development, details of the relevant planning policies against which the development will be assessed and provide the planning case for the approval of the proposed development.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 The application site is part of a parcel of land that sits between Greenfield House, Whalley Road, to the south (which is a large, detached dwelling located between St Leonards Church and the car park of the Petre Arms public house) and a relatively new housing development, Petre Wood Crescent to the north. To the west of the site there is a touring caravan site which is owned by the applicant and a building which serves this development. The land parcel within which the building is located has the access road to the caravan site passing through it and off this there is an access road into the parcel of agricultural land to the east of the application site. The parcel of land where the building is to be sited is enclosed by a mature evergreen hedge, it is regularly mown and its principal use for many years has been for caravan rallies.
- 2.2 We attach at Appendix 1 photographs of some of the farm equipment which will be stored within the proposed building in addition to this, smaller sundry items such as fencing materials and hand tools will also be stored in the building.
- 2.3 The location for the siting of the building has been selected on the basis that the building will be seen as part of a group of buildings and not in isolation, with the housing development on Petre Wood Crescent screening it from views from Longsight Road/A59 and the mature evergreen hedge along the eastern boundary screening it from views from the footpath that runs through the applicant's adjoining land parcel.
- 2.4 The application site is located within an area designated as Open Countryside in the adopted local plan and there have been no planning applications for its change of use from use as agricultural land and it is our understanding that the non-agricultural use that has taken place through the hosting of caravan rallies has been permitted development.

- 2.5 Although the site of the proposed building is technically in an area of land designated as Open Countryside, it is surrounded on three sides by built development, and it has more of an urban rather than a rural feel about it than would normally be expected for land designated as Open Countryside.
- 2.6 The adjoining development referred to above to the north and south extends significantly further east than the land parcel within which the building will be sited and the development of the proposed farm building in this location will not result in any visible intrusion of development into the wider open countryside because of the surrounding development the presence of an existing access track and mature vegetation.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposed development comprises the erection of a modern steel portal frame building which measures 18.3m x 9.14m and will have an eaves height of 3.66m and a ridge height of 4.88m. The proposed building will be clad on three sides with dark green box profile cladding, and the roof will be clad in natural grey fibre cement roof sheets. There will be two timber doors providing access into the building which will be sited centrally on the south facing gable.
- 3.2 In addition to the erection of the building the plans propose the creation of a small concrete yard in front of the southern elevation to join the access track.
- 3.3 Some tree planting is proposed along the south west elevation of the building for BNG purposes.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 A search of planning applications on the Council's website has revealed a number of planning applications in respect of the applicant's property which are listed below.
- 4.2 Planning application 3/2007/0989 was an application for a new building ancillary to agricultural land for the storage of machinery and equipment. The application was submitted on 18 October 2007 and was refused on 11 February 2008.
- 4.3 Planning application 3/2015/0074 was an application for the change of use of land to create a caravan park for 21 touring caravans/recreational vehicles and the erection of a storage building with a lean-to facilities block. The application was submitted on 14 January 2015 and refused on 16 October 2015. An appeal was lodged and given appeal reference App/T2350/W/16/3148370, the appeal was allowed and planning permission was granted on 15 July 2016. This development has been implemented.
- 4.4 Planning application 3/2017/0023 was an application for the discharge of conditions in respect of the caravan site approved under application 3/2015/0074. The application was submitted on 11 January 2017 and approved with conditions on 6 March 2017.
- 4.5 Planning application 3/2017/0191 was an application for the erection of a stable building for private use. The application was submitted on 23 February 2017 and was approved with conditions on 28 April 2017.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. Local Planning Authorities are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If it is to be approved, a development must satisfy as far as possible guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) and the relevant policies of the Council's Adopted Core Strategy. The Council also has an SPG in respect of agricultural buildings and roads which was adopted in March 1997 which is relevant to the determination of this application.

5.2 We set out below extracts from the relevant documents to facilitate the assessment of the application proposal against the principal appropriate policies and guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024)

5.3 The NPPF 2024 is the main national planning policy guidance influencing planning decision making in England. It states that the main purpose of the planning system in the country is the achievement of sustainable development; and that, for decision taking this means that proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

5.4 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is set out in paragraph 11 which states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that for decision taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

5.5 The adopted local plan has up to date policies that support development which is needed for the purposes of agriculture. The development of the proposed building is sustainable development.

5.6 Section 6 of NPPF relates to "Building a strong, competitive economy" and paragraphs 88 is particularly relevant to this application as it relates to "Supporting a prosperous rural economy".

5.7 Paragraph 88 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed beautiful new buildings;*
- b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”*

5.8 The approval of this application is fully supported by this policy as the development relates to an agricultural business.

Council’s Core Strategy 2008/2028 – A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Adoption Version

5.9 We comment below on the Key Statements and Policies within the Adopted Core Strategy that we consider to be relevant to the determination of this application.

Key Statement DS2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development.

5.10 Key Statement DS2 identifies that the Council, when considering development proposals, should take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The policy states that where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or specific policies in that framework indicate that development should be restricted. We do not consider that there will be any adverse impacts that arise from the implementation of the proposed development and the development is supported by the relevant policies of the local plan.

Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development

5.11 Key statement EC1 indicates where the majority of employment development will take place, which is towards the main settlements and in enterprise zones/sites. However, it states *“developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle”*. As agriculture is an industry that exists in the countryside area it follows that agricultural development has to take place in the countryside unlike the majority of other employment development.

Policy DMG1: General Considerations

5.12 This is a general development management policy which states that, in determining planning applications, all development must satisfy a total of twenty criteria relating to matters of design, access, amenity, environment and infrastructure.

- 5.13 With respect to design, the building is designed for its intended purpose, which is as a storage building for agricultural machinery and equipment, it is a modern steel portal frame building the height of which is dictated by the size of machinery that will use the building, its overall size is dictated by the volume of storage that is required. The choice of materials used in the external finish of the building are in accordance with the Council's adopted SPG on agricultural buildings with different materials and colours being used for the walls and roof. The roof will be clad in natural grey corrugated fibre cement sheets, and the walls will be clad in dark green colour coated box profile steel sheets.
- 5.14 The proposed building will be sited adjacent to existing development, and it will be seen as a part of the existing built form, it will not be an isolated building.
- 5.15 There is good access from the public highway to the site on a well made track.
- 5.16 There are no specific environmentally designated areas near to the site, a BNG assessment has been carried out and there is a recommendation that the applicant plant four native trees which he is happy to do. There will be no adverse ecological impact from the proposed development.
- 5.17 The development will not adversely affect any public infrastructure.
- 5.18 Overall, in our opinion, the development undoubtedly complies with the relevant requirements of Policy DMG1.

Policy DMG 2: Strategic Considerations

- 5.19 Policy DMG2 requires development to be in accordance with the Core Strategy Development Strategy and to support the spatial vision and identifies certain forms of development that are acceptable outside of the settlement areas, its states:

WITHIN THE TIER 2 VILLAGES AND OUTSIDE THE DEFINED SETTLEMENT AREAS DEVELOPMENT MUST MEET AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

- 1. *THE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY OR SOCIAL WELL BEING OF THE AREA.*
- 2. *THE DEVELOPMENT IS NEEDED FOR THE PURPOSES OF FORESTRY OR AGRICULTURE.*
- 3. *THE DEVELOPMENT IS FOR LOCAL NEEDS HOUSING WHICH MEETS AN IDENTIFIED NEED AND IS SECURED AS SUCH.*
- 4. *THE DEVELOPMENT IS FOR SMALL SCALE TOURISM OR RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS APPROPRIATE TO A RURAL AREA.*
- 5. *THE DEVELOPMENT IS FOR SMALL-SCALE USES APPROPRIATE TO A RURAL AREA WHERE A LOCAL NEED OR BENEFIT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED.*
- 6. *THE DEVELOPMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE ENTERPRISE ZONE DESIGNATION.*

- 5.20 The building is needed for the purposes of agriculture and is therefore an acceptable form of development in the open countryside.
- 5.21 The policy makes reference to the need for development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. As we have already set out the land on which the proposed building will be sited is quite well enclosed by existing built form and on the one side where it isn't there is a tall mature evergreen hedge, consequently the building will have minimal visible impact upon the character of the landscape.

Policy DME 2: Landscape and Townscape Protection

- 5.22 This policy identifies that development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape features and sets out a list of relevant landscape features of which only "hedgerows and individual trees" might have been of any relevance to this application, however the proposed development does not adversely affect either. The proposal does not therefore contravene any of the requirements of Policy DME 2.

Policy DME 3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation

- 5.23 This policy states that development proposals that are likely to adversely affect any of eight specified species or habitats that are granted special protection will not be granted planning permission, the proposal does not adversely affect any of the identified species/habitats.

Policy DMB 1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

- 5.24 Policy DMB1 indicates that the Council will support proposals that are intended to support business growth in the local economy provided such proposals are in conformity with other relevant policies of the local plan. The proposed development is in full conformity with all the relevant policies and policy DMB1 clearly supports the proposed development.

Councils adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance: Agricultural Buildings and Roads

- 5.25 The Council adopted the above-mentioned SPG in March 1997 and we make reference to it because as far as we are aware it remains a material consideration, and it is as relevant today as it was when it was adopted in 1997. In recent years the amount of development that can be undertaken by farmers as permitted development has increased twice firstly it increased from 465m² to 1,000m² and more recently it has increased to 1,500m², this was in recognition of the fact that modern farm machinery is now much larger than it was when the 465m² allowance was introduced and also that farms have become larger as smaller farms have been amalgamed and the resultant larger farms have taken advantage of economies of scale.
- 5.26 The SPG acknowledges that agriculture and forestry are industries and that *"the development and maintenance of a healthy farming economy is essential to the national interest and appearance of the countryside."*
- 5.27 At paragraph 1.3 the SPG states:

From time to time new agricultural buildings will be required for the efficient running of a farm. It has to be accepted that modern farm buildings are designed to be functional and that farming methods often require large industrial style buildings which can sometimes appear intrusive and out of place in the countryside.

- 5.28 The proposed building is a modest-sized modern steel portal frame building which has a relatively low eaves height and a typical roof pitch.
- 5.29 At paragraph 1.5 the SPG says that permission will not be granted for buildings that have a seriously detrimental impact on the visual character of the area. The development proposed in this application will not in our opinion have any detrimental impact on the visual character of the area.
- 5.30 There is guidance in respect of the siting of agricultural buildings on page 4 of the guidance and in respect of this we would comment that the proposed development does not adversely affect any features of interest, it will be seen as part of an existing developed area and will not be situated in an isolated location, the building is not on the skyline and the siting takes advantage of existing vegetation for screening.
- 5.31 The SPG advises using different coloured materials for the roof and walls which the proposed building does, and it states that dark brown or dark green colour coated steel cladding for walls is normally satisfactory for new farm buildings.
- 5.32 Having regard to the SPG we are firmly of the opinion that the building is fully compliant with the guidance.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposed development comprises the erection of a modern steel portal frame agricultural building which will be used for the storage of agricultural machinery and equipment. The building is required in order to reduce the risk of the machinery and equipment being stolen or vandalised and to protect it from the damage that the weather causes.
- 6.2 The size of the building is appropriate for the amount of machinery and equipment that the applicant owns and uses to maintain the land that he owns.
- 6.3 We note that nearly twenty years ago an application for similar development was refused, however since that time there has been other development in the immediate locality of the application site which has altered the character and appearance of the area around the application site such that the proposed building will not have any detrimental effect on the appearance of the locality. The ability to house the farm machinery and equipment within a tidy modern farm building will be preferable to these items being stored outside on the application site.
- 6.4 The applicant could at the present time make a strong argument for the development of the field within which the application site is located for housing development given that it is in a sustainable location and the Council is unable to demonstrate that it has a five year housing land supply, however he does not want to develop his land in that way, he wants to keep it in its existing use and the provision of the building will assist him in this objective. We consider this situation to be relevant to how the Council determines this application.

- 6.5 We consider that we have demonstrated in this Planning Statement that the proposal represents sustainable development that is in compliance with NPPF and the relevant policies of the Council's adopted Core Strategy and the adopted SPG regarding farm buildings.
- 6.6 Therefore, in order to comply with paragraph 11 of NPPF and Core Strategy Key Statement DS2 we consider that permission should be granted without delay subject to any reasonable conditions that the Council considers to be necessary.

G Hoerty

Gary Hoerty BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV

APPENDIX 1

Photographs of some of the applicant's farm equipment

