

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

for

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

**Conversion of twin barn into 2 dwellings (including
removal & site upgrading of derelict outbuildings and former farmyard
structures).**

**Fooden Barn, Fooden Hall Farm, Fooden Lane,
Gisburn Road, Bolton by Bowland, BB7 4LS**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement is intended to accompany the planning application to convert the twin disused barns at Fooden Hall Farm into two dwellings in association with the upgrading of the former farmyard structures, outbuildings and building bases to form a shared residential curtilage and a return to a sympathetic countryside landscape (ie outwith the proposed residential curtilage) of the peripheral former farmyard areas.
- 1.2 In a different location, the conversion of structurally sound agricultural buildings, associated with an adjacent farmhouse and close to other dwellings, to residential use would almost certainly be permitted under the provisions of Class Q, subject to design, but that is not possible in this case due to the location of the application site on Article 2(3) land, being within the Forest of Bowland AONB. The application is therefore submitted as one for full planning permission, although broad government aspirations to maximise the use of accessible and convertible agricultural buildings for dwellings nevertheless has a bearing upon this minor development intention. Had the application been made under Class Q, no affordable housing need would have been triggered by this minor scheme for dwellings, similarly being the case for 'minor development'.



- 1.3 Another factor which has a bearing upon the application background is the site's relationship to the adjacent Fooden Hall Farm, a Grade II* Listed Building which has been in a state of disuse for several years, following the death of the late tenant farmer. The barns which are the subject of this application are not contained within the defined site of the Listed Building but nevertheless have a bearing upon the setting of the LB, in which event any works to alter the settings or use of the barns requires careful consideration. That aim is

reflected in the proposed sensitive design scheme together with the intention to minimise the proposed new residential curtilage and avoid domestic clutter which might impact upon the setting of Fooden Hall.

- 1.4 Similarly, just as any inappropriate alterations to the barns could have an injurious impact upon the setting of the Listed Building, so doing nothing with the barns or their presently compromised setting is not in the best interest of the LB, since the barn fabric and former farmyard surroundings would further deteriorate and significantly impact not only upon the historic qualities of Fooden Hall but would also adversely affect the aim of encouraging the sale and careful restoration of the Listed Building, so as to underpin preservation of the historic fabric, together with the long-term care and maintenance thereof.
- 1.5 In the recent past Fooden Hall was placed on the Historic England Buildings at Risk Register, with repairs to the fabric subsequently being undertaken in consultation with the statutory authorities, following the grant of Listed Building Consent by the Council. This demonstrates the owner's appreciation of the heritage status and willingness to safeguard its future. The Hall is presently empty and secured against further deterioration but early sale and careful restoration (steered by planning and historic building legislation) is an important aim both at local and national levels. The building sale is currently on hold since any purchaser would wish to be reassured that the adjacent barns and immediate context to the Listed Building can be sympathetically restored for compatible residential purposes to provide a quality setting, prior to committing to the substantial expenditure which the restoration of the Hall itself would involve. That is the purpose of this application for the barn upgrading, as a forerunner for the concurrent disposal of the whole site in two parcels by the present owner. That would enable interested parties to consider whether they wish to purchase just the Hall or the total collection of buildings but in the knowledge that the principle of barn conversion has been endorsed by the Council.



- 1.6 In preparation to making this application, the owners have sought professional views of heritage consultant, Stephen Haigh, as well as an experienced planning consultant and have consulted Historic England, providing information on the barn conversion project. HE explained that it understood the need to address the condition of the barns and congratulated the owner for undertaking work to remove the Hall from the At Risk Register but felt that the barn proposal could have the potential to cause harm to the significance of Fooden Hall by the domestication and intensification of the barn use within its setting. HE felt that the proposals demonstrate insufficient balancing heritage benefits to the Listed Building and considered that the severing of the Hall from its curtilage structures could affect its own viability and long-term preservation, given its own vacancy and the need for internal repairs. Consequently, HE considered that any proposals relating to the barns should demonstrate that they would not prejudice the viability of the Hall and should instead look to secure heritage benefits for the Hall which would provide a justification for the harm that would result from the conversion, such as the restoration of its interior.
- 1.7 That comment, however, was an initial desktop response by the HE Inspector who felt unable to accept the owner's invitation to meet and view the interior and setting of all the buildings so that a more informed contextual analysis could be made. The owner and its professional consultants fully understand the importance of minimising any harm to the setting of a Listed Building and that is reflected in the professional analysis of the applicant's heritage consultant, a copy of which was forwarded to HE and is now appended to this application. That analysis concludes that any perceived harm to the setting of the Listed Building would be minor and would be offset by other significant benefits resulting from investment in the application buildings accompanied by sensitive upgrading of the surroundings. Those important considerations can only be appreciated through careful and balanced site analysis.
- 1.8 This planning and Listed Building (setting) application therefore provides an opportunity for full analysis of the proposal, together with site inspection, accompanied by careful consideration of the setting both as existing and proposed.

2 Application Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site forms part of a loose collection of buildings which contains three dwellings, commercial premises (stone yard) and letting accommodation which, together form a small hamlet at the end of a private track, extending 750 m south of Gisburn Road, approximately 1 km to the east of the village of Bolton by Bowland. Extant planning permission exists for the conversion of a further small barn (also owned by the applicants, approximately 150 m to the north of Fooden Hall) to residential use. A precondition of that permission was the (now completed) improvement of the track access with Gisburn Road to provide greater visibility for exiting motorists.
- 2.2 Therefore, although located some distance from the nearest (development plan) defined settlement (Bolton by Bowland), the application site has an established relationship with other dwellings and cannot be described as isolated. Additionally, the site is located at the intersection of three well used recreational public footpaths (0307029, 0307028 and 0307018) which provide pedestrian links into Bolton by Bowland and towards the village of Gisburn.

- 2.3 The Heritage Assessment which accompanies the application explains the history of the barns and their relationship to adjacent Fooden Hall, together with any perceived impact of the proposed conversion works upon the setting of the LB. The barns are separated from the Hall by the farm track extending down to the River Ribble (although that short section of the track is not part of the adopted public footpath system).



Adopted footpath 0307028, passing through the application site

- 2.4 The application site itself (and proposed joint residential curtilage) comprises some 1950 m² of now disused former farmyard and farm buildings, being bounded by the above-mentioned farm track on its southern boundary, by adopted footpath 0307018 on its eastern boundary and by an agricultural field boundary (and original farmyard perimeter) along its western boundary, with the remaining northern boundary cutting through what was part of the original farmyard. Public footpath 0307028 traverses the application site in a SW - NE (following the farm track leading from Gisburn Road) and would be incorporated into the development (without any footpath diversion involved) as improved residential and agricultural access.
- 2.5 The operational farmyard extended a short distance to the north and east of the proposed residential boundary and is still evident from piles of building materials and building bases - the intention being that, as part of the development, those areas will be restored as open landscape with indigenous vegetation, but would remain outside the residential curtilage (but within the blue edge application ownership boundary). A small single storey building will remain within the original farmyard area but outside the northern application boundary to continue its function as providing accommodation for fishing club members on the nearby River Ribble.
- 2.6 Land immediately to the east of the application site is poorly drained, fed from a spring, and partly culverted under the adjacent farm track, beyond which is a further natural spring flowing into the stream, which descends to the River Ribble.



- 2.7 The barns (as described in the Heritage Statement), originally served Fooden Hall Farm (until 2017) but are now disused. Nevertheless, despite some deterioration since 2017, they are structurally sound (as confirmed in the Building Survey which accompanies the application) and capable of conversion to 2 dwellings without the need for any extension of the existing building curtilage other than the rebuilding of an existing modern (concrete block) single story extension in a more traditional manner. Some new openings will be required for essential doors and windows to serve the new use in a Building Regulation compliant manner.
- 2.8 The application premises are located at the end of Fooden Lane, a regularly used, gravel track, which extends across open farmland from its junction with Gisburn Road for a distance of approximately 600m before passing through the collection of traditional stone buildings comprising Fooden Farm, Otters Barn and the established stonemasons business which (together with Fooden Hall Farm and its barns) have the appearance of a small rural hamlet. A seasonal certificated caravan site and two holiday letting cottages complete the hamlet.
- 2.9 Nearby Fooden Farm is a Grade II Listed Building but the dwelling is separated from the application site by agricultural land and garden screening (not owned by the applicant) and, being at a higher level would not be impacted by the proposed barn conversion works (as also confirmed in the Heritage Assessment).
- 2.10 Fooden Hall (farmhouse) lies beyond, and a lower level than, the above-mentioned buildings. The impressive principal elevation of the Hall faces south (away from the approach), with the rear of the building, having been altered over the centuries in a somewhat unsympathetic manner and being in a poor state of repair. Without doubt, restoration of the Hall as a viable residence would involve considerable expenditure

and require a careful program of works. The siting and orientation of the Hall impacts upon the existing setting of the barn and any building conversion intentions.

3 The Planning Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission and Listed Building (setting) Consent to change the use of the former agricultural buildings and their immediate context to residential (Class C3) use through careful restoration and alteration - leading to the creation of two dwellings, parking area, shared access and adjacent garden/terrace areas.
- 3.2 The accompanying SPA Building Survey confirms that both parts of the twin barn are structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for significant rebuilding, although both have deteriorated in recent years and will continue to deteriorate without a programme of repair and restoration. Essential maintenance is required, as would also be the need for extensive works of restoration and conversion to create two viable residential units.
- 3.3 The internal arrangement of the existing building will accommodate two separate dwellings, each using a pre-existing 'half' of the existing footprint. The building is of sufficient scale and proportion to create two viable, two-storey residential units. The proposal involves the rebuilding of the existing concrete block extension to the western elevation in a more suitable building material (natural stone, to blend with the existing main barn).
- 3.4 Existing door and window openings would be used to serve the new residential accommodation, but a small number of new openings will be required to meet building regulation requirements and respond to differing floor levels. These have been sensitively located and do not materially compromise the agricultural character of the existing barns. Proposed building materials are specified on the application drawing.
- 3.5 Car parking provision will be formed inconspicuously at the lowest site level (ie in the area used for the farm for garage in vehicle parking in the past) and will be contained by stone walling. This part of the site is already characterised by a series of derelict buildings, former vehicle hardstandings and boundary walls so the enclosed car park will not appear out of character with the historic land use. The end result will be a significant improvement over the existing, thus benefiting the character of the countryside as well as the setting of Fooden Hall.
- 3.7 Elsewhere, the residential curtilage is drawn tightly so as not to over domesticate the surroundings. The boundary will be defined by stone walling, fences and hedges, beyond which the remainder of the original farmyard will be cleared of existing detritus and derelict structures, to be subsequently restored as open landscape in a countryside manner.
- 3.8 The application comprises the following documents:-

- Application form
- Planning, Design & Access Statement – Willcock Consulting
- Ecology and Habitat Appraisal – Bowland Ecology
- Biodiversity Statement – Bowland Ecology
- BNG Metric – Bowland Ecology
- Heritage Statement – Stephen Haigh
- Building Condition Survey Report - SPA
- Existing site layout drawing 1:200 @ A1 TRI - 01
- Existing Building Floor Layout 1:100 @ A3 Dwg 35
- Existing building elevations 1:100 @ A3 Dwg 34
- Proposed site layout 1:200 @ A3 Dwg 31C
- Proposed floor layout 1:100 @ A3 Dwg 32A
- Proposed elevations 1:100 @ A3 Dwg 33C
- Location plan

3 Planning Policy

National Policy

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024), para 48, reminds local planning authorities that planning legislation requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At the heart of the Framework is the objective of sustainable development, summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.2 Three objectives flow from this aim.

- 1) an economic objective to help build a strong responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right place and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity
- 2) secondly, a social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment with accessible services that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being, and
- 3) thirdly, an environmental objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Local Planning Authorities are expected to reflect these key sustainable objectives within their individual development plan documents and policies as well as in their planning application decision making.

3.4 Importantly, those policies and decisions made from them should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-making this means:-

- a) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or
- b) where there are no relevant development plan policies, grant permission unless the application of policies in the Framework provides a clear reason for refusal or the adverse impacts of so doing would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The local development plan (RV Core Strategy) with its objectives of delivering sustainable high quality development to meet locally identified needs is therefore the starting point for decision-making.

3.5 Consequently, planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:-

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development,
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping,
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities),
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit,
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks, and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

3.6 Para 96 of NPPF promotes healthy and safe communities, confirming that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods and active street frontages; and
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion , and
- c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

3.7 NPPF (2024) importantly strengthens environmental controls through Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment by:-

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

- 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;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- 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; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

3.8 NPPF (Section 17) advises that *"in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."* (Para 207)

"Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (Para 208)

Para 209 advises that *"where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision"*.

3.9 Para 210 further advises that *"in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."*

The Framework provides further guidance on application determination, advising that *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.* (para 212)

- 3.10 Moreover, *“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional,* (para 213)

- 3.11 *Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use. (para 214).

- 3.12 *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use,* (para 215).

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

- 3.13 The principal Aim of the Council’s development plan (Core Strategy) is its focus upon sustainable development - directing new development and investment wherever possible to its sustainable settlements (Policy DS2). Whilst Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley are defined as the principal settlements to which the majority of new business and residential development will be directed, the Council acknowledges that its villages and rural areas and also serve a valuable, albeit scattered, complimentary residential role.
- 3.14 Location outside defined settlement boundaries has a clear bearing upon new development intentions as explained by Policy DS1 which states that in allocating development, the Council will have regard to the AONB, Green Belt and similar designations when establishing the scale, extent and form of development to be allocated under this strategy. The relevant constraints are set out as part of the strategic framework

included in the plan. Development that has recognised regeneration benefits, is for identified local needs or satisfies neighbourhood planning legislation, will be considered in the Borough, including small-scale development in smaller settlements that are appropriate for consolidation.

- 3.15 Development requiring permission and located outside settlement boundaries (and especially within the Green Belt or AONB) will be restricted to limited appropriate rural uses but will include the replacement of existing dwellings of suitable scale and design as well as the sensitive conversion of suitable former agricultural buildings.
- 3.16 Policy DMG2 establishes controls within the Tier 2 Villages and outside the defined settlement areas, where 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 agricultural
 - 3 the development is for local needs, housing, which meets an identified need and is secured as such
 - 4 the development is full small-scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area
 - 5 the development is full small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated or
 - 6 the development is compatible with the Enterprise zone designation
- 3.17 DMG2 also explains that within the Open Countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the reuse of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.
- 3.18 Furthermore, in protecting the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Council will have regard to the economic and social well-being of the area. However, the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding, where possible, habitat fragmentation. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the reuse of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting.
- 3.19 Policy DMG1 establishes a series of more detailed controls governing the precise manner in which new development should take place, relating to:-
- a high standard of building design
 - compatibility with existing development and land uses
 - suitable density, materials and layout
 - recognition of the code for sustainable and lifetime homes, together with sustainable construction techniques
 - safe access and parking

- protecting public rights of way and access
- having no adverse effect on the amenities of the surrounding area and
- avoiding adverse impact upon the natural environment.
- The reuse of existing developed sites in preference to greenfield development

- 3.20 Policy DME1 explains the importance of protecting existing trees and woodland, whilst policy DME2 explains the development proposals will be refused if they significantly harm important landscape or landscape features.
- 3.21 Policy DMH3 establishes limitations for dwellings in the open countryside and AONB but clarifies (DMH3 – 2) that the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings will be permitted, providing they are suitably located in their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.
- 3.22 Policy DMH4 addresses the conversion of barns and other buildings to dwellings, confirming that permission will be granted where:-
- 1) the building is not isolated in the landscape, i.e. it is within a defined settlement or forms part of an already group of buildings, and
 - 2) there need be no unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure, and
 - 3) there would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservation interests, and
 - 4) there would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy, and
 - 5) the proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area, and
 - 6) that any existing nature conservation aspects of the existing structure are properly surveyed and, where judged to be significant, preserved or, if this is not possible, then any loss be adequately mitigated.
- 3.23 Policy DMH4 continues to advise that the building to be converted must be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alteration which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building. The Council will require a structural survey to be submitted with all planning applications of this nature. These should include plans of any rebuilding that is proposed. The new dwelling should also be of sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would harm the character or appearance of the building.
- 3.24 Finally DMH4 states that acceptability of the proposal is also dependent upon the character of the building and its materials being appropriate to its surroundings and the building and its materials worthy of retention because of its intrinsic interest or potential, or its contribution to its setting. The building should also have a genuine history of use for agriculture.
- 3.25 The explanatory (DMH4) text explains that the reuse of existing rural buildings provides an important opportunity to preserve buildings that contribute to the area's character and setting and can usefully provide a housing resource and promote sustainability. The conversion of buildings should be of a high

standard and in keeping with local tradition. The impact of the development, including the creation of garden areas and car parking facilities (or other additions) should not harm the appearance or function of the area in which it is situated. Access to the site should be to a safe standard and be capable of being improved in a safe manner without harming the appearance of the area.

- 3.26 The text also explains that proposals will also be determined having regard to the Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) Good Practice guidance on the conversion of traditional farm buildings.

4 Planning Considerations

- 4.1 The application is to establish two new residential units adjacent to an existing collection of traditional residential and agricultural buildings within the open countryside through the conversion of the existing double barn adjacent to Fooden Hall. Although not statutorily Listed in their own right or included within the Listed site of Fooden Hall, the barns form part of the now unused group of former agricultural buildings associated with now disused Fooden Hall Farm, and their presence & conversion could have an impact upon the setting of the Listed Building. This application takes that into account both procedurally and in its design intentions.





- 4.2 In recent decades the barns have fallen into disuse and their condition has consequently deteriorated. The related farmyard setting has also fallen into disrepair, with several semi derelict buildings and structures now being evident - whilst the main barns remain structurally sound and capable of conversion without significant extension or major rebuilding (as the accompanying Building Survey confirms).



4.3 Without doubt, the sensitive repair of the barns, together with the removal and subsequent landscape restoration of surrounding existing structures, farmyard clutter and general rubbish would benefit the local landscape but would particularly benefit the setting of Fooden Hall. However, such works and associated expenditure would inevitably have to form part of a scheme to use the buildings and immediate site for more beneficial purposes which – logically - will take the form of a sensitive residential scheme. Such action would be consistent with Core Strategy policy DMH4 in its sustainable principles and would provide two worthwhile rural dwellings in place of the existing derelict site and structures, in as much that:-

- 1) the twin barn is not isolated in the landscape and forms part of a well-established existing group of rural dwellings and other buildings;
- 2) their conversion would not require unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities on the provision of infrastructure, such infrastructure already being in place;
- 3) there would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservation interests;
- 4) there would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy;
- 5) the proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area and AONB aims, and
- 6) any existing nature conservation aspects of the existing structure have been properly surveyed and matters of nature conservation interest will be adequately addressed through mitigation and replacement

4.4 The cautionary approach taken by Historic England in its desktop analysis is noted, together with its support for the principle of upgrading the condition of the barns and their presently despoiled setting. However, the applicant is confident that a detailed site inspection would have provided the Inspector with a better understanding of the process by which the entire collection of buildings (including, eventually, the Hall) would benefit from the proposal.

4.5 The application is intended as a precursor to the eventual marketing of the whole site in two parcels which would give a prospective purchaser of the Hall reassurance that the dilapidated farmyard site would benefit from upgrading and investment, whilst at the same time providing an opportunity for the purchaser to bid for both sites were it considered that a more extensive, combined residential development was preferable. The application is not submitted as one for 'enabling development', linked to the further restoration of the Hall, but is intended as a key step towards the eventual restoration of the whole site by third parties.

4.6 The barn conversion application would involve no physical change or harm to the fabric of the Listed Building, only modest change to its setting. Fooden Hall's relationship to the nearby barns will remain in terms of context, character and scale, as confirmed by the accompanying heritage assessment. The sensitive nature of residential conversion will retain the agricultural setting, but with significant improvements to the broader context through removal of the dilapidated structures and broader upgrading of the local environment, together with sensitive landscape restoration.

- 4.7 As the heritage consultant concludes, any harm to the setting of the Listed Building will be minor and will be positively balanced by improvements to the fabric of the barns which will underpin their retention and onward maintenance, supported by long-term occupation and care. The important contextual improvements would serve to encourage wider investment in the historic setting - an important material consideration to any balanced assessment of this application.
- 4.6 The need to avoid any adverse impacts upon the sensitive (AONB) landscape has been fully recognised through the intended removal of derelict structures, by landscape restoration and by new planting. New (traditional mixed hedgerow) screening belts will be planted, thereby minimising any impact on important views for passers-by on the retained public footpaths, also avoiding any material impact upon (residential) Fooden Hall and the two other Class C3 dwellings within the hamlet. Significant additional benefit will accrue from the sensitive conversion of the existing barn building and its surroundings, as well as from the improved setting to (and increased prospects of the eventual restoration and permanent occupation of) Fooden Hall itself.
- 4.7 Finally, any perceived loss of biodiversity is addressed in the accompanying Biodiversity Statements and, due to its very small amount, would be met, off-site through the purchase of BNG credits from a registered Habitat Bank.
- 4.8 The application is accompanied by a Habitat Assessment/ Bat Survey which concludes that, with suitable mitigation, there will be no significant long-term impact upon protected species. Emergence surveys confirm that the barns contain three occasional/transitional/opportunistic/non-breeding day roosts for a small number of soprano and common pipistelle bats - for which compensatory provision will have to be made within the renovated building. The proposed scheme makes such provision in the roof space. The survey also identified that a barn owl is possibly using the open barn as seasonal habitat which will require a nesting bird check to be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing. Compensatory nesting provision for a barn owl would be required if evidence of existing active nesting is identified. Such provision can be conditioned and can be provided on land owned by the applicant. A Licence for any habitat disturbance and replacement would be required from Natural England, post planning approval.
- 4.9 The survey also advises that an otter and water vole check should be made on the nearby watercourse prior to works commencing, following which any Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be taken during the works period.
- 4.10 The reuse of disused agricultural buildings for sensitive residential projects is broadly acknowledged as acceptable by central government, as well as the Council's own development plan policies. In most instances such conversion would be development permitted under Class Q, but in this instance the sensitive location of the premises requires a full application to be submitted.
- 4.11 The proposed scheme acknowledges the proximity of Fooden Hall and the need to safeguard any impact upon the setting of the Listed Building, both in terms of the barn conversion and also in the sensitive treatment of the immediate surroundings. The proposed residential curtilage has been tightly drawn so as to exclude some of the peripheral parts of the original farmyard - where careful restoration of the rural

landscape is proposed. The peripheral area is excluded from the red edge boundary but is appropriately blue edged should the authority wish to condition the manner of landscape restoration.

- 4.12 Although located within the open countryside, the application site forms part of an existing collection of residential and former agricultural buildings, some of which have been converted to holiday lets. This is therefore not an isolated development and is connected by a well-used metalled track back to the public highway. The site is also located centrally at the intersection of three popular public footpaths, those having been protected and incorporated into the development with no required diversions.
- 4.13 The proposal will create two worthwhile new dwellings which are a gain in planning policy terms but will also deliver a worthwhile improvement to the setting of Grade 2* Fooden Hall and thus assist the eventual aim of encouraging the permanent restoration of the Hall as an important and well-maintained historic dwelling.
- 4.14 The proposal accords with the policies of the adopted RVBC Core Strategy as well as the sustainable, ecological and heritage aims of NPPF.