

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.								
Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	13/10/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	15/10/26

Application Ref:	3/2026/0281			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	24/04/26	Site Notice:	24/04/26	
Officer:	LW			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of one replacement self-build dwelling with garage and associated garden curtilage, hard and soft landscaping, new access drive off Longsight Road and the closure of the existing access.
Site Address/Location:	Bridgecroft, Longsight Road, Copster Green, BB1 9EX.

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

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	Considers that insufficient information has been submitted to fully assess the development's impact on the surrounding highway network and its users.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
No representations received.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy: Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development 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 DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – August 2026 Relevant Planning History: 6/9/113: Proposed bungalow and small holding (Approved).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:
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Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to Bridgecroft, a modest detached bungalow set within a generous residential curtilage, accessed directly from Longsight Road in Copster Green. The dwelling occupies a relatively large plot, with open land to the north-east forming part of a smallholding also in the applicant's ownership, which was historically associated with the original planning permission for the site.

The surrounding area is characterised by residential development set within a predominantly semi-rural landscape, with open fields and agricultural land forming a significant part of the immediate and wider setting.

The site lies just beyond the defined settlement boundary of Copster Green and within the Open Countryside. The site is not subject to any additional planning constraints or special designations.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought for the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of a replacement self-build dwelling, together with an integral double garage and new vehicular access. The proposal has been amended since initial submission in order to address design concerns raised by the Local Planning Authority.

The proposed dwelling would be arranged over three storeys and would provide substantial residential accommodation. At lower ground floor/ basement level, the development would incorporate a gym and plant/ storage areas. The ground floor would accommodate the principal living spaces, alongside ancillary annex accommodation comprising a separate kitchen, living area and ensuite bedroom, as well as the integral double garage and bin store. At first floor level, five ensuite bedrooms are proposed, each benefitting from dedicated dressing areas, with the master bedroom and bedroom four further benefitting from rear-facing balconies.

In terms of external appearance, the dwelling would be constructed using a palette of materials including limestone white K-render and buff sandstone ashlar, with a blue slate roof and black aluminium/ uPVC fenestration.

The proposal also includes alterations to the site access arrangements, comprising the closure of the existing access and the formation of a new centrally positioned vehicular access from Longsight Road, leading to a hard surfaced parking and turning area to the front of the dwelling. Private amenity spaced would be provided to the rear, including a terraced patio area and associated landscaping.

Principle of Development:

The application seeks permission for the demolition of an existing dwelling and its replacement with a new residential property outside of any defined settlement boundary. The site is located within the Open Countryside, where residential development is subject to the provisions of Policy DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Policy DMH3 strictly controls new residential development in the Open Countryside, limiting proposals to a defined set of circumstances. Of particular relevance in this case is the provision allowing for the rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings, subject to compliance with specific criteria. These include that the existing residential use has not been abandoned, that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape and that there is no need to extend the existing residential curtilage.

The application site is currently occupied by a lawful residential dwelling. The proposal seeks to replace the existing property within the same defined curtilage, without any encroachment into the adjoining land. As such, the proposal is considered to satisfy the first and third criteria of Policy DMH3.

In terms of landscape impact, whilst the replacement dwelling would be of materially larger scale and more contemporary design, this matter is considered in detail within the visual amenity section of this report. Subject to that assessment, and compliance with other relevant development management plan policies and material considerations, the principle of a replacement dwelling in this location is considered acceptable.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

The proposed development would not have a direct interface with any nearby residential properties and as such, no concerns are raised in respect of overlooking or loss of privacy.

Furthermore, adequate separation distances would be maintained between the proposed dwelling and nearby dwellings so as to safeguard residential amenity and ensure that no unacceptable adverse impacts would arise in terms of overshadowing, loss of outlook, or loss of daylight.

Taking account of the above, the proposal is considered acceptable with respect to impact upon residential amenity.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires development to be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature, as well as its scale, massing, style, features and building materials. Particular emphasis is placed on visual appearance and the relationship of development to its surroundings.

Similarly, Policy DP3 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires development proposals to respond to their context, including the history, character and features of their site and its setting, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings, such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings and the use of materials and architectural features.

The proposed replacement dwelling would be substantial in both its scale and footprint and adopts a relatively contemporary design approach, incorporating a combination of natural stone and render, extensive glazing, and external terrace areas. The dwelling would comprise a variety of roof forms, including gabled and single storey elements, which serve to break up the overall mass of the building and create a more varied built form.

As noted elsewhere within this report, the proposal has been amended during the course of the application. The original scheme comprised a split-level dwelling appearing as a two-storey building from the front and three-storeys from the rear.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the site benefits from a degree of visual screening from existing vegetation, concerns were raised regarding the scale and massing of the replacement dwelling, particularly the three-storey rear elevation. Given the land levels fall away to the rear of the site, it was considered that the development would appear particularly prominent from wider viewpoints, including Ribchester Road and the Public Rights of Way to the north.

Following discussions with the applicant, amendments have been made to reduce the prominence of the dwelling, particularly when viewed from the rear. The footprint of the building has been moved forward towards Longsight Road, where ground levels are higher, and both the finished floor levels and overall height of the dwelling have been reduced. Consequently, the lower ground floor would now function as a

basement level, with the previously proposed three-storey glazed feature to the rear elevation subsequently reduced to two storeys. The terraced patio has been revised and would extend across the full width of the dwelling, gradually stepping down from the finished ground floor level to the natural slope of the rear garden. Collectively, these amendments have significantly reduced the overall scale, massing and visual impact of the rear of the dwelling.

The proposed garage has similarly been amended, with its ridge height reduced and the structure linked to the main dwelling via a flat-roofed glazed connection. This further assists in reducing the visual bulk of the development, particularly when viewed from the north-eastern elevation, which otherwise presents a considerable building length.

Notwithstanding these amendments, the proposal would still result in a substantial increase in scale and massing compared to the existing bungalow, which is modest in scale and relatively simple in design. However, it is considered that the plot is capable of accommodating a larger replacement dwelling. In addition, the surrounding area is characterised by varied built form and lacks a strong sense of architectural uniformity, with neighbouring properties benefiting from a range of scales, forms, materials and design approaches. In this context, whilst the proposed dwelling would be considerably larger than the existing property, it would not appear so incongruous or visually intrusive as to result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the site or its surroundings.

Furthermore, the proposed palette of natural stone and render is considered appropriate and reflects the materials commonly found within the wider street scene, thereby helping the development integrate with its surroundings.

Taking account of the amendments made during the course of the application, it is considered, on balance, that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The development is therefore considered to accord with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the design objectives of Policy DP3 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways and Parking:

The application has been reviewed by Lancashire County Council Highway Authority and comments have been received.

In their initial consultation response, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) advised that insufficient information had been submitted to enable a full assessment of the development's impact on the surrounding highway network and its users. In particular, the application failed to demonstrate that adequate visibility splays could be achieved from the proposed new access onto Longsight Road (A59), a two-way classified road subject to a 40mph speed limit and carrying a high volume of traffic.

No details of visibility splays had been provided with the application and whilst the proposed re-location of the access to a more central position within the plot would likely improve visibility compared to the existing access, it remained necessary to demonstrate that appropriate splays could be achieved.

The Highway Authority also raised concerns about the width of the access, advising that the first 5m of the access should be a minimum width of 5m to allow two vehicles to pass, thereby preventing vehicles from waiting on the carriageway.

In response to these concerns, the applicant submitted additional information, including an amended site layout plan, visibility splay drawings and supporting correspondence from Focus Transport Planning.

The submitted information has subsequently been reviewed by the LHA. The Authority notes that the proposed access has been amended to provide a width of 5 metres for the first 5 metres measured from

the back edge of the footway and confirms that the revised access arrangement is acceptable from a highway safety perspective.

The LHA has also reviewed the visibility splays demonstrated on the submitted drawings and considers them to be acceptable. Whilst the achievable visibility splay to the right on exit from the site falls short of the full 120-metre requirement, the visibility available would represent a notable improvement over the existing situation. Given this enhancement, the LHA is satisfied that a departure from the standard requirement can be accepted in this instance.

The LHA therefore concludes that the additional information has satisfactorily addressed its previous concerns and raises no objection to the proposed development. However, it recommends that the construction of the new access and the provision and ongoing retention of the approved visibility splays be secured by planning condition to ensure they are implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved plans.

Having regard to the comments of the LHA, and subject to the imposition of the recommended planning conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of highway safety, access and parking provision.

Landscape/Ecology:

The application has been supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (August 2025), a Bat Activity Survey Results Report (September 2025) and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment with an accompanying Arboricultural Method Statement (April 2026).

Ecology

The site lies with the Impact Risk Zone of the Red Scar and Tun Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located approximately 7.7km to the west. Given the limited scale of the proposal, together with the separation distance, the development is not considered likely to result in any adverse effects on the SSSI. No non-statutory designated sites are identified within 1km of the application site.

The site comprises a bungalow within an overgrown residential plot. Overall, habitats on site are considered to be of low to moderate ecological value.

Himalayan balsam, an invasive non-native species, is present across the site. Appropriate measures for its control and eradication are recommended and can be secured by planning condition.

No evidence of badgers was recorded on or adjacent to the site.

With regards to bats, both the existing bungalow and garage were assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats due to structural features and defects. Subsequent emergence surveys confirm the absence of bats, with only low level of activity recorded within the site. Notwithstanding this, the development provides an opportunity for biodiversity enhancement. Mitigation and enhancement measures, including bat roost features and sensitive external lighting design, can be secured by condition.

The site and surrounding habitats provide suitable nesting opportunities for birds. As such, it is advised that vegetation clearance and demolition works be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season, unless a pre-commencement check by a suitably qualified ecologist confirms the absence of active nests. This, together with the provision of additional bird nesting features, can be secured via condition.

Trees

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies a substantial number of trees and groups across the site, with the majority categorised as B and C grade, alongside a small number of category U trees unsuitable for retention.

The proposed development necessitates the removal of several trees, including three category B trees, due to their proximity to the development footprint. However, this loss could be mitigated through replacement planting.

The formative pruning of multiple trees would also be required either to enable the installation of boundary fencing and/or to bring them under management. However, these works would have no adverse impacts on tree health and longevity.

A minor section of root protection area from tree T14 lies within the foundation area of the proposed wall at the site access point. However, given the small percentage of potential disturbance (less than 5% of the total RPA), the proposed foundation excavations are not expected to cause any long-term harm to the adjacent tree. However, as a precautionary measure, it is recommended that excavations within the RPAs are undertaken using techniques sympathetic to tree roots.

Tree protection measures during construction are proposed within the submitted Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement, which can be secured by condition. Subject to their implementation, retained trees can be adequately safeguarded.

It is also recommended that soil assessment be undertaken to determine whether the soil is shrinkable, and that foundation design is undertaken in line with detailed guidance given in the National House Building Council Publication *Building near trees, Chapter 4.2*. Consideration should also be given to how the proposed tree removal may affect soil conditions and the stability of any future foundations.

Post development, it is recommended that a detailed tree risk assessment is undertaken to identify any potential hazards obscured during the initial tree survey. This should be used to inform an arboricultural management strategy, with trees inspected regularly for safety and management by a suitably qualified arboriculturalist.

Subject to compliance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and the implementation of recommended mitigation, protection and enhancement measures, the proposal would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on ecology or arboricultural interests.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposal relates to a self-build dwelling. Whilst the self-build exemption from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements no longer applies for new planning applications made on or after 6th August 2026, this application was submitted in April 2026 and therefore still benefits from the self-build BNG exemption. This has been secured via the submission of a Self-Build Unilateral Undertaking.

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 permission be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.
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