

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.								
Signed:	Officer:	BT	Date:	1/10/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	2/10/26

Application Ref:	3/2026/0460			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	17/7/26 & 25/9/26	Site Notice:	17/7/26	
Officer:	BT			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				
				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Variation of condition 2 (approved plans and documents) on planning permission 3/2022/0082 (as varied under planning permission 3/2023/0816) to account for design development involving the redevelopment of the old garage site to provide new building that includes a cafe, community shop, retail unit, post office, community spaces together with a separate store/plant room.
Site Address/Location:	The Old Garage Site, Newton Road, Dunsop Bridge, BB7 3BB.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Bowland Forest (Higher) Parish Council:	Consulted 10/7/26 – no response.

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objections subject to conditions.
Lead Local Flood Authority:	No comments to make.
RVBC Countryside:	Consulted 10/7/26 – no response.
RVBC Environmental Health:	No objections.
Environment Agency:	No objections subject to adherence with standing advice.
United Utilities:	No objection subject to condition.
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service:	No objections subject to adherence with standing advice.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
None.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Key Statement EN2: Landscape

Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets

Key Statement EC1: Business And Employment Development

Key Statement EC2: Development Of Retail, Shops And Community Facilities And Services

Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy

Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1: General Considerations

Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations

Policy DMG3: Transport And Mobility

Policy DME3: Site And Species Protection And Conservation

Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets

Policy DME6: Water Management

Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth And The Local Economy

Policy DMB3: Recreation And Tourism Development

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:**3/2026/0326:**

Proposed change of use from agricultural land to arboretum with open public access (Pending)

3/2025/0318:

Approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (materials), 4 (location of existing water mains and sewers), 5 (drainage scheme), 6 (construction traffic management plan), 9 (cycle storage), 10 (surface water drainage car park), 11 (delivery and servicing plan), 13 (bird and bat boxes) and 14 (electric vehicle charging points) on planning permission 3/2023/0816 (Approved)

3/2024/0544:

Proposed provision of GRP Substation to house ENWL infrastructure, plant room building and associated alterations to site layout including repositied bin store, cycle store and boundary treatment alterations (Approved)

3/2023/0816:

Redevelopment of the old garage site to provide new building that includes a cafe, community shop, retail unit, post office, community spaces together with a separate store/plant room (pursuant to variation of condition 2 (plans) on permission 3/2022/0082) (Approved)

3/2022/0082:

Redevelopment of the old garage site to provide new building that includes a cafe, community shop, retail unit, post office, community spaces together with a separate store/plant room (Approved)

3/2001/0847:

New external staircase and formation of new first floor doorway to create separate access for self-contained living accommodation (Approved)

3/2000/0319:

Convert store room and small front shop area to village tearoom and continue existing business (Approved)

3/1989/0058:

New car park (Approved)

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a former garage site located in the village centre of Dunsop Bridge. The site in question comprises an area of hardstanding which previously accommodated a single storey garage building which has since been demolished. The residential property of Forge House lies directly adjacent to the East of the former garage building with Dunsop Bridge pay and display car park and public toilets lying immediately to the East of Forge House. St. Georges Church, No. 1 and No. 2 Ivy Cottages, Puddleducks Tearoom and Dunsop Bridge Post Office lie immediately adjacent to the West of the former garage building. The River Dunsop lies opposite to the application site on the Southern side of Newton Road with playing fields and woodland lying to the North of the site. The wider area comprises a mixture of woodland, agricultural land and open countryside with the application site lying within the Forest Of Bowland National Landscape.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning consent was granted as part of application 3/2022/0082 for the demolition and replacement of the site's existing garage building with a new community hub building comprising a community café and shop, information desks, post office counter, kitchen, store, admin office, retail unit, toilets and outdoor seating. Additional works approved included the conversion of the existing Puddleducks Tearoom into two residential flats, the construction of a detached plant room and store to house ground source heat pump equipment, the installation of on-site bike storage and electric vehicle charging points, creation of additional car parking spaces and a change of use of the St. Georges Church building to accommodate therapy rooms and additional community uses. Further works approved included the construction of a gabled roof link extension to adjoin the new community hub building to St. Georges Church. Design amendments to this consent were subsequently approved under planning application 3/2023/0816. The current application seeks further amendments to the design of the development approved under application 3/2023/0186. Accordingly, consent is sought to replace the approved plan numbers forming part of previous planning application 3/2023/0816 with revised plans and information submitted as part of this S73 application.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals for development to consider the effects of development upon existing amenities.

In this instance, analysis shows that the design changes proposed to the development as previously approved would have no undue impacts upon the amenity of the adjacent neighbouring occupants of Forge House or No.1 and No. 2 Ivy Cottages. Consequently, it is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents and would therefore be compliant with the aims and objectives of Policy DMG1.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Policy DP3 (1) of the NPPF states:

'Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings.'

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides general design guidance as follows:

'All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing and style...particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.'

With respect to development in National Landscapes, Policy N4 (1) of the NPPF states:

'Development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas.'

The above is reiterated within Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy:

'The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.'

Policy DME5 of the Core Strategy seeks to support the use of renewable energy schemes, subject to assessment of the visual impact of the proposal, including design, colour, scale and impact upon the surrounding landscape, with a greater degree of scrutiny to be applied to proposals for renewable energy schemes within or close to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

In this instance, the proposal seeks to introduce numerous changes to the design and external appearance of the development as previously approved. These changes include the omission of a previously approved link extension and introduction of a lean-to element to the Western elevation of the community hub building which would comprise a bulky and largely unsympathetic projecting gable feature and shallow sloping roof profile that would be at odds with the sloping symmetry of the community hub's Western roof profile, with the proposed lean-to element as a whole reading as a bulky and asymmetrical addition to the hub building. The proposal also seeks to introduce horizontal cladding to all external elevations of the community hub building (with the exception of stone plinth sections) which would be noticeably at odds with the natural stone vernacular of buildings within the immediate and wider locality. Further alterations proposed include the introduction solar panels to the main Eastern and Western roof slopes of the community hub building which would cover the large majority of the building's roof slopes with the solar panels also being highly visible in the public realm with the remainder of the development. In this instance the application site occupies a rural setting with roof mounted microregeneration equipment being predominantly absent on properties in the immediate area therefore it is considered that the proposed solar panels would read as overtly modern and incongruous features that would be predominantly at odds with the rural character of the area. Moreover, the proposed development as a whole would be largely visible in the public realm from within and around the application site and would therefore carry a discernible visual impact.

Accordingly, the proposed development by virtue of the bulk, massing and asymmetry of the proposed western lean-to extension and proposed introduction of cladding and microregeneration equipment would constitute an incongruous and unsympathetic form of development which would detract from the rural character and visual amenities of the area. As such, the proposed development would have a harmful impact that would neither enhance or conserve the visual amenities of the surrounding National Landscape and would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies DP3 (1) and N4 (1) of the NPPF (2026) and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DME5 of the Core Strategy.

Highways and Parking:

The proposed development has been subject to review from Lancashire County Council Highways who have raised no objections to the proposed development on the basis that the changes proposed would not

significantly alter the previously agreed scheme in terms of highway impact. In light of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would have any undue impacts upon highway safety as such the proposal satisfies Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy (highways).

Landscape/Ecology:

No ecological constraints were identified in relation to the proposal.

Flood risk:

The proposed development has been subject to review from the Environment Agency who have raised no objections to the proposal with respect to flood risk.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

One of the uses of a Section 73 application is to seek a minor material amendment where there is a relevant condition that can be varied. There is no statutory definition of a 'minor material amendment' however generally speaking this is considered to include any amendment where its scale and/or nature results in a development which is not substantially different from the one which has been approved. In this instance, the changes sought to the originally approved development are considered to amount to a development that would be substantially different from the proposal approved under planning application 3/2023/0816 in terms of design and external appearance and as such are not considered to fall within the realm of a minor material amendment.

Furthermore, the proposed development by virtue of the bulk, massing and asymmetry of the proposed Western lean-to extension and proposed introduction of cladding and microregeneration equipment would constitute an incongruous and unsympathetic form of development which would detract from the rural character and visual amenities of the area. As such, the proposed development would have a harmful impact that would neither enhance or conserve the visual amenities of the surrounding National Landscape and would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies DP3 (1) and N4 (1) of the NPPF (2026) and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DME5 of the Core Strategy.

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

RECOMMENDATION:

That the variation to condition 2 be refused for the following reason:

- 01:** The changes sought to the originally approved development would amount to a development that would be substantially different from the development approved under planning application 3/2023/0816 in terms of design and external appearance and as such would not fall within the realm of a minor material amendment. Furthermore, the proposed development by virtue of the bulk, massing and asymmetry of the proposed Western lean-to extension and proposed introduction of cladding and microregeneration equipment would constitute an incongruous and unsympathetic form of development which would detract from the rural character and visual amenities of the area. As such, the proposed development would have a harmful impact that would neither enhance or conserve the visual amenities of the surrounding National Landscape and would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies DP3 (1) and N4 (1) of the NPPF (2026) and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DME5 of the Core Strategy.