

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	07/10/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	9/10/26
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Application Ref:	3/2026/0647			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	15/09/26	Site Notice:	15/09/26	
Officer:	LW			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Variation of condition 2 (plans) on permission 3/2026/0140 for proposed demolition of existing dwelling, and replacement with one new dwelling (self-build), outbuilding and garage.
Site Address/Location:	Rose Hill Farm, Whalley Old Road, Billington, BB7 9JF.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments received.	

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

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 EN1: Green Belt
Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
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 DME5: Renewable Energy
Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2026/0649: Proposed creation of new access lane (Waiting determination).

3/2026/0140: Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with one new dwelling (self-build), outbuilding and garage (Approved).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to a detached, two-storey dwelling known as Rose Hill Farm (formerly Smalley's Farm House). The property is finished in render with a grey slate roof and combination of timber and uPVC framed windows and doors. It includes an integral double garage and benefits from a large, detached outbuilding.

The site is accessed via an existing track taken from Whalley Old Road to the east, which also serves several other residential properties.

With respect to topography, the site sits at a notably lower level than Whalley Old Road, with land levels falling towards the north in the direction of the railway line.

The site lies outside of any defined settlement boundary and is located within the designated Green Belt. The surrounding area is rural in character, predominantly comprising a mix of agricultural land and sporadic residential development.

To the east of the site lies Smalley's Farm Biological Heritage Site, which is an area of ecological importance. To the west is Mytton Fold Golf Course, separated from the site by open grazing land also within the applicant's ownership. A Public Right of Way runs to the south and west of the site, affording views of the proposal site and surrounding countryside.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning permission was granted under application reference 3/2026/0140 for the demolition of the existing dwellinghouse and outbuilding and construction of a replacement self-building dwelling, together with a detached garage and outbuilding.

The current application seeks a number of amendments to the approved scheme as follows:

- Incorporation of a part sub-terranean WC and store at ground floor level of the main dwelling;
- Incorporation of a basement level to the outbuilding, together with the addition of a ground floor balcony, fenestration alterations and land level changes to the rear to create a sunken terrace;
- Increase in the depth of the garage by approximately 3m.

Accordingly, permission is sought under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act to vary the approved plans conditions and substitute the approved drawings associated with planning permission 3/2026/0140 with the revised plans submitted as part of the current application.

Principle of Development:

The application site lies within the designated Green Belt. Whilst the principle of demolishing the existing dwelling and outbuilding and constructing a replacement dwelling, outbuilding and garage was established under planning permission 3/2026/0140, the amendments proposed under the current application must be assessed against both local and national Green Belt policy.

Key Statement EN1 relates solely to development within the defined Green Belt and states that *'the overall extent of the green belt will be maintained to safeguard the surrounding countryside from inappropriate encroachment. The development of new buildings will be limited to the purposes of*

agriculture, forestry, essential outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt, and which do not conflict with the purposes of its designation’.

Since the grant of planning permission under application 3/2026/0140, an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been published, dated August 2026.

Policy GB7 of the NPPF states that new development within the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless it falls within one of a closed list of exceptions. Of relevance to this application is exception (b), which permits the replacement of an existing building provided that it is of permanent and substantial construction, lawful in planning terms, and that the replacement building is for the same use and is not materially larger than the building it replaces.

The NPPF does not define what constitutes a “materially larger” replacement building. Whilst assessments commonly have regard to increases in footprint and volume, the exercise is not purely quantitative and must also consider the resulting scale, bulk, massing and visual perception of the development.

The amendments proposed under the current application would increase the overall quantum of development approved under application 3/2026/0140 through the provision of a part-subterranean WC to the main dwellinghouse, a basement level beneath the approved outbuilding opening onto a new sunken terrace, together with a new ground-floor balcony, and an increase in the depth of the garage.

It is acknowledged that the additional accommodation within the dwellinghouse and outbuilding would be set into the ground and would therefore have a more limited visual impact than equivalent above-ground development. However, these elements nevertheless represent an increase in the scale and extent of built development at the site. Furthermore, the excavation works required to facilitate the part subterranean WC, basement accommodation and sunken terrace would introduce additional engineered features which were not present within the approved scheme.

It is also important to note that the development approved under application 3/2026/0140 was only considered acceptable following multiple rounds of amendments that reduced the overall scale and massing of the proposal. Those amendments were fundamental to the conclusion that the replacement dwelling, outbuilding and garage would not, on balance, be materially larger than the buildings they were intended to replace. The additional floorspace and volume now proposed would cumulatively erode those reductions and increase the overall scale of development beyond that previously assessed and found acceptable.

Furthermore, whilst locating elements of development below ground level can, in certain circumstances, mitigate visual impacts, this does not negate the fact that such accommodation contributes to the overall scale and quantum of development. Such measures should therefore be viewed as supplementary design solutions, rather than as a means of overcoming fundamental concerns relating to the size and scale of the proposed development.

Having regard to the cumulative increase in floorspace, volume and built form, it is considered that the proposed amendments would result in a replacement development that is materially larger than the existing buildings. Consequently, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of exception (b) of Policy GB7 of the NPPF and would therefore constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

Policy GB6 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Such circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm arising from the development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The supporting information submitted with the application explains that the proposed amendments are intended to reinstate accommodation that was removed during the determination of application 3/2026/0140 in order to address concerns regarding the scale and acceptability of the scheme.

Whilst the desire to recover previously omitted accommodation is acknowledged, this represents a private benefit to the applicant and does not amount to a very special circumstance capable of outweighing the identified harm to the Green Belt. Furthermore, the accommodation in question was removed through a series of amendments that were fundamental to the Council's conclusion that the approved development would be acceptable in Green Belt terms.

In the absence of any other considerations that would clearly outweigh the harm arising from the proposal, very special circumstances have not been demonstrated. As such, the proposed development is considered contrary to national Green Belt policy.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

The nearest residential properties to the proposal site are Smalley's Farm approximately 100m to the west, West Lodge 230m to the southwest and Arlington Grange approximately 220m to the south. Given these separation distances, the proposed development would not result in any significant undue harm upon the existing amenities of any nearby residents by way of overshadowing, loss of outlook, daylight or privacy.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that development must *'be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity, and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials'* and *'particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings'*.

Similarly, Policy DP3 of the NPPF states that *'development proposals should respond to their context (their 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'*.

As noted elsewhere within this report, the development approved under application 3/2026/0140 underwent a number of amendments during the determination process in order to achieve a more coherent and balanced form of development. These amendments established a clear hierarchy between the principal dwelling and ancillary structures, whilst also reducing the overall massing and visual spread of built form across the site.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the additional accommodation proposed within the outbuilding would be positioned below ground level, the submitted plans indicate that the basement level would open directly onto a new sunken terrace. In practical terms, this would create a two-storey outbuilding with a maximum footprint of approximately 16.1m by 7m. Although sectional drawings have not been submitted, the proposal would clearly increase the scale, complexity and domestic presence of the outbuilding beyond that previously approved.

During the assessment of application 3/2026/0140, concerns were raised regarding the size and prominence of the outbuilding. In response, amendments were secured to reduce its footprint and simplify its design, resulting in a more restrained linear form that was considered appropriately subordinate to the principal dwelling. The introduction of a basement level and associated sunken terrace would significantly increase the amount of accommodation contained within the structure and would undermine the rationale that led to the outbuilding being considered acceptable in the first instance. Consequently, the proposal would erode the clear distinction between the principal dwelling and ancillary accommodation that formed a key element of the approved scheme.

Furthermore, whilst setting development below ground level can assist in reducing the visual impact of development, this approach should complement the site's natural landform and a development that is acceptable in its own right. It should not be relied upon as the principal means of accommodating additional floorspace that would otherwise give rise to concerns regarding the size and scale of development.

Similarly, the proposed extension to the detached garage would increase the scale and visual presence of what is already a substantial additional ancillary building. The garage approved under application 3/2026/0140 comprised a relatively modest double garage with an attached store and plant room. The current proposal seeks to increase the depth of the building by approximately 3m, resulting in a structure with a maximum footprint of approximately 9.8m by 13.9m. This increase would further add to the cumulative extent of built form on the site and would reduce the subordinate appearance expected of a domestic garage building.

When considered cumulatively, the enlarged garage and outbuilding would materially increase the scale and intensity of ancillary development within the site. The proposal would undermine the carefully balanced design approach secured under application 3/2026/0140 and would result in a more extensive and visually dominant form of development. As such, the proposed amendments are considered to detract from the overall composition of the approved scheme and would fail to adequately respect the character of the site and its rural surroundings.

In this respect, Policy DP4 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should '*not allow the quality of approved development to be materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes proposed following its initial approval (for example through changes to approved details)*'.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy DP3 and DP4 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking:

The application has been subject to review by Lancashire County Council Highways who raise no objection to the proposed amendments. The Local Highway Authority note that there are no proposed changes to the site access, nor are there any significant changes relating to parking within the site which would result in highway safety concerns.

Landscape/Ecology:

The proposed amendments have the potential to impact upon trees within or adjacent to the site by virtue of bringing built development and engineering works closer to the root protection areas of retained trees than the previously approved scheme. However, an updated Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan has not been submitted in support of this application.

If the Local Planning Authority were minded to approve the application, it would have requested this information be submitted prior to determination. However, in the absence of this information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development can be accommodated without resulting in harm to nearby trees. Consequently, the proposal fails to adequately assess and address its impact on important landscape features and is therefore contrary to Policies DME1 and DME2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, which seek to protect and enhance the natural environment and safeguard protected trees. The proposal would also conflict with Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires development proposals to conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic and nature conservation value, including established trees and hedgerows wherever possible.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be refused for the following reasons:

01:

The proposed development would result in a replacement dwelling which would be materially larger than that of the existing in as much that the cumulative size and scale of the development would significantly extend the visual impression of built development at the proposal site compared to the existing. The proposal therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been put forward which would outweigh the harm identified by reason of inappropriateness. As such, the development is considered contrary to the provisions of Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

02:

The proposal would materially increase the scale and intensity of ancillary development within the site. The proposal would undermine the carefully balanced design approach secured under application 3/2026/0140 and would result in a more extensive and visually dominant form of development. As such, the proposed amendments are considered to detract from the overall composition of the previously approved scheme and would fail to adequately respect the character of the site and its rural surroundings. The proposal is therefore considered to be in conflict with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy DP3 and DP4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

03:

The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development can be accommodated without resulting in harm to nearby trees. Consequently, the proposal fails to adequately assess and address its impact on important landscape features and is therefore contrary to Policies DME1 and DME2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seek to protect and enhance the natural environment.