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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
| **Signed:** | **Officer:** | **WH** | **Date:** | **07-11-23** | **Manager:** | **LH** | **Date:** | **9/11/23** |
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| **Application Ref:** | 2023/0620 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 22-08-23 | **Site Notice:** | 22-08-23 |
| **Officer:** | Will Hopcroft |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **REFUSAL** |
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| **Development Description:** | Proposed demolition of redundant barn and erection of farm worker's dwelling. |
| **Site Address/Location:** | Wood Top Farm Chipping Road Chaigley PR3 2TS |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| No objections.  |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **LCC Highways:** | Widened access and adequate visibility splays required along with re-instatement of field access.  |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| None received.  |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**Key Statement DS1: Development StrategyKey Statement DS2: Sustainable DevelopmentKey Statement EN2: LandscapeKey Statement EC1: Business and Employment DevelopmentPolicy DMG1: General ConsiderationsPolicy DMG2: Strategic ConsiderationsPolicy DMG3: Transport & MobilityPolicy DME2: Landscape & Townscape ProtectionPolicy DME3: Site and Species Protection and ConservationPolicy DME6: Water ManagementPolicy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONBPolicy DMH4: The Conversion of barns and other Buildings to DwellingsPolicy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local EconomyNational Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) |
| **Relevant Planning History:****2005/0961:**Renewal of outline permission 3/1995/0635 for an agricultural workers dwelling – Withdrawn**1999/0169:**Steel framed portal building extension to cover yard area between milking parlour exit door and new existing cubicle building – Approved with Conditions**1998/0509:**Extension for modernisation of cow housing, 390 sqm of new building – Approved with Conditions**1995/0635:**Outline application for an agricultural workers dwelling – Approved with Conditions |
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| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The existing site relates to an area of land opposite the agricultural complex known as Wood Top Farm, situated just off Chipping Road, Chaigley. The existing access is gated immediately off Chipping Road, with the red-line then heading north-east where it envelopes an existing dilapidated barn.With regard to the wider context, the site sits in a largely rural area approximately 1.9 miles east of Chipping with limited access to local services and amenities. It falls within the Forest of Bowland AONB.  |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**The proposal seeks permission for the erection of a farm workers dwelling following the demolition of the redundant barn. Access is to be gained off the existing gated access, with a gravel track leading into a permeable resin bound driveway where the proposed farm workers dwelling would be sited. The dwelling itself would be 2-storey 3-bed – primarily utilising a pitched roof but with significant reverse gable features resulting in a ‘T’ shape footprint. There is fenestration to each elevation, as well as a chimney breast to the south-west elevation with the roof reaching 8.3m to the ridge and 4.9m to the eaves. The materials are proposed to be natural stonework and render finish to the walls, and natural slate tiles to the roof. Furthermore, the application establishes a modest curtilage, bordered by a 1.8m high timber fence and incorporating a septic tank to deal with foul sewage. No details of surface water drainage have been submitted although the applicant indicates that it will be disposed of via a soakaway (i.e. infiltration).  |
| **Principle of Development:**The principle of development is required to be secured against CS Policies DMG2 and DMH3. DMG2 states that outside the defined settlement area, development must meet at least one of a number of criteria – one of which is that *‘the development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture’.*  In addition, DMH3 states that within areas defined as Open Countryside or AONB on the proposal map, residential development will be limited to *‘development essential for the purposes of agriculture…in assessing any proposal for an agricultural workers dwelling a functional and financial test will be applied’.* As such the Council have commissioned an independent agricultural adviser to assess the submitted financial and functional information in relation to the above, and provide a substantive response reaching the following conclusions:* *There is a clearly established existing functional need in relation to the landholdings that are based on Wood Top Farm.*
* *The labour requirement on these landholdings is calculated at around 4 full-time workers, 2 of which actively involved in the management of the unit should be resident on this farm to meet the existing functional need.*
* *The main farm house and Wood Top House are currently suitable to house 2 of the existing workers.*

As such it is evident that whilst there is an existing functional need for 2 resident workers, this need is fulfilled by the main farm house and Wood Top House. It is noted that the farm-workers resident in these dwellings are of increasing age and do not intend to vacate the dwellings once they cease work on the farm. However, this does not justify the provision of a further dwelling when there already exists the necessary number of agricultural worker dwellings. The proposed dwelling is not functionally or financially required and as such is not compliant with DMG2 or DMH3.  |
| **Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**As per Core Strategy Policy DMG1, development must:1. Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.
2. Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.
3. Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles.
4. Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.

In this sense the application is considered acceptable given it sits largely in isolation on the south side of the road and away from any adjacent dwelling (the closest being approximately 110m south-west). There will be no undue impact on amenity or quality of life by way of appearing dominant or overbearing, loss of privacy or loss of sunlight. Furthermore, the dwelling is NDSS compliant internally with a reasonable private amenity space to the rear of the dwelling, ensuring the occupiers will not experience any undue impact on amenity or quality of life. The proposal is therefore compliant with DMG1 (Amenity).  |
| **Visual Amenity and Impact on the landscape and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*****Visual Amenity and Design***As per CS Policy DMG1, all 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.In addition, CS Policy DMG2 states that *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.*In this sense with specific reference to materiality, the proposal can be given some merit. The materials used are complementary and reflective to that of the surrounding area. However, Officers do have concern surrounding the fairly significant contrast in roof forms, in addition to the use of vertical glazed features on the south-west elevation which forces a vertical emphasis. This is directly contrasting and somewhat jarring with the general style of fenestration in the remaining elevations, which are more modest in nature, as well as wide and narrow which is overtly horizontal in nature resulting in a mixed and visually conflicting elevation styles. Matters of scale and massing are to be discussed below, as they are considered to have an adverse impact on the landscape and AONB. ***Impact on the landscape and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty***In this sense Policy DME2 and Key Statement EN2 are engaged. CS Policy DME2 outlines that development proposal will be refused which significantly harm a number of important landscape or landscape features. This ties into Key Statement EN2, which states 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. The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced. 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.It is also necessary to reflect back on the Principle of Development, which (under DMH3) was required to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the landscape in relation to the new dwelling (although as noted the LPA consider the principle unacceptable regardless). It is noted that there is an existing barn building to be demolished – this is extremely dilapidated, not suitable for retention and visually intrusive to the landscape. However, the scale and massing of this existing building is fairly minor – it is approximately 5.3m tall with a simple shallow pitched roof, and modest in its square footprint at 4655mm x 5615mm (26sqm). It is also inherently agricultural in nature, albeit in a poor state of repair. Conversely, the proposed building is substantially larger both in footprint and in height and evidently a significantly greater intrusion into the landscape and AONB. This is particularly prevalent given the siting – south of the road, adjacent to no other built development and directly obstructive of the landscape which includes sights of Longridge Fell. The building will be introducing an overtly domestic form of built development, including domestic miscellanea that further erodes the existing nature of the area, and as such is considered to detract from the conservation of the natural beauty and is not compliant with DME2 or EN2.  |
| **Highways and Parking:**The Local Highways Authority (LHA) have commented that the dwelling is located off Chipping Road which is subject to a 60mph speed limit. The LHA are aware that an existing field access is present and will continue to serve a farm track alongside the proposed dwelling. Therefore, the access should be widened to support vehicle movement both for the proposed dwelling and its agricultural use. Such an access should be 6m wide for at least 5m into the site. There is also an existing (redundant) access fronting the derelict farm building which should be reinstated prior to first occupation. The proposed access works and reinstatement work will need to be undertaken as part of a section 278 agreement.To ensure adequate intervisibility between highway users at the access a visibility splay set 2.4 metres back from the near edge of the carriageway and extending 201 metres along the nearside carriageway edge in both directions should be provided. The LHA require the applicant to provide accurate details of the sight line requirement before determining the application (to ensure they can be achieved). The sight line requirements may be reduced if the applicant can provide an acceptable traffic study, which indicates the 85th percentile traffic speeds are less than those detailed above.As the application is to be refused on matters of principle and design it was not considered appropriate to request the above revised plans / information from the agent. Nor has the agent chosen to submit this having reviewed the LHA comments online. Therefore based on the submitted information there are highway safety concerns with the access as shown. No further issues with regard to Highways were identified in terms of parking and turning provision. Cycle storage and provision of an electric vehicle charging point could be secured by condition.  |
| **Landscape/Ecology:**The application is accompanied by a bat survey assessing the barn for likelihood of bats. Following assessment, the Council has some concerns with the methodology used and so cannot comment on or condition any of the findings or recommendations. However, taking the pictures and desktop information submitted into consideration, coupled with the dilapidated condition of the building, it would seem the proposed development does not risk negative impacts on roosting bats. |
| **Other Matters:**It is noted that application sits within a 1 in 30 chance of surface water flooding and as such the standing advice from the LLFA applies. Details of surface water drainage have not been provided, although it is noted that applicant has selected ‘soakaway’ within the application form. A detailed surface water drainage scheme could be secured via a pre-commencement condition.  |
| **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**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 planning consent be refused for the following reason(s). |
| **01:** | The proposal has evidenced that there is a functional and financial need for two resident agricultural workers, but it has been assessed that this need can be met by existing accommodation in or adjacent to the agricultural complex. As such there is no evidenced functional or financial need for an additional (third) agricultural workers dwelling. The proposal would therefore amount to inappropriate development outside of a settlement boundary and would fail to satisfy Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies DMG2 and DMH3.  |
| **02:** | The proposal, by way of the provision of a two-storey residential dwelling and associated domestic curtilage which is sited separately from the existing pattern of development, would comprise an unacceptable intrusion into the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that detracts from the visual and landscape character of the area. As such it would fail to comply with Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies EN2, DME2, DMH3 and DMG1, together with the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 130).  |
| **03:** | The proposed access arrangements are considered insufficient to support vehicle movements both for the proposed dwelling and the agricultural field. Furthermore insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate a suitable visibility splay can be achieved. As such the proposal would fail to comply with Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies DMG1 (Highways) and DMG3. |