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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
| **Signed:** | **Officer:** | **LW** | **Date:** | **26/11/24** | **Manager:** | **KH** | **Date:** | **27/11/24** |
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| **Application Ref:** | 3/2024/0793 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 21/10/24 | **Site Notice:** | 21/10/24 |
| **Officer:** | LW |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **REFUSAL** |
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| **Development Description:** | Proposed conversion of existing garage and workshop to two-storey living accommodation and integral garage. Alterations to include new slate roof and timber cladding.  |
| **Site Address/Location:** | 1 Ferry Butts, Garstang Road, Chipping, PR3 2QJ |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| No comments received in respect to the proposed development.  |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **LCC Highways:** | No objection subject to conditions.  |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| Three letters of support have been received. The reasons for support can be summarised as below: * The proposal would enhance the aesthetic characteristics of the immediate vicinity and surrounding area;
* The proposed plans show a sympathetic remodelling of the structure which references its heritage;
* The proposed modifications would utilise the entire property whilst respecting the character and appearance of the neighbouring properties and local area.
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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 DMI2: Transport ConsiderationsPolicy DMG1: General ConsiderationsPolicy DMG2: Strategic ConsiderationsPolicy DMG3: Transport & MobilityPolicy DME3: Site and Species Protection and ConservationPolicy DMB1: Conversion of Barns and Other Buildings to Dwellings National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) |
| **Relevant Planning History:**3/2023/0738: Demolition of existing garage and workshop store and replace with two-storey extension of living accommodation and domestic garage (Refused). 6/10/1171: Joinery store and reconfiguration of two cottages into one (Approved).  |
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| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The application relates to a two-storey end-terrace property at no.1 Ferry Butts, comprising natural random stone to the external elevations, blue slate roof tiles and timber windows. The property benefits from a sizeable attached outbuilding which received planning consent under application 6/10/1171 as a commercial joinery workshop/store/garage, consisting of rendered block and a metal profile roof. The site to which the application relates is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, approximately 650m west of the defined settlement area of Chipping.  |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**Consent is sought for the conversion of the existing workshop into two-storey living accommodation and integral garage for domestic purposes. External alterations are also proposed including the incorporation of a new slate roof and timber cladding to the external elevations. Replacement windows and doors are also proposed throughout, as well as the addition of a new first floor window to the western facing side elevation and a set of bi-folding doors and roof lights to the rear.  |
| **Principle of Development:**Given the proposal seeks consent for the conversion of an existing workshop, outside of a defined settlement, to that of residential accommodation, Policy DMH4 is primarily engaged for the purposes of assessing the application. Policy DMH4 allows for the creation of new dwellinghouses through the conversion of existing buildings subject to such proposals meeting a number of criteria and reads as follows: *Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings 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 conservations 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.*
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 adequately mitigated.*

*The building to be converted must:*1. *Be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alternation, which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building. the council will require a structural survey to be submitted with all planning application of this nature. this should include plans of any rebuilding that is proposed*
2. *Be of a sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would harm the character or appearance of the building, and*
3. *The character of the building and its materials are appropriate to its surroundings and the building and its materials are worthy of retention because of its intrinsic interest or potential or its contribution to its setting, and*
4. *The building has a genuine history of use for agriculture or another rural enterprise.*

In this instance, the proposal involves the conversion of an existing structure to facilitate the extension of an established residential property and therefore it is acknowledged that not all of the criteria points within Policy DMB4 will be applicable in this case. Notwithstanding this, with respect to criterion 3 of the primary component of the policy, the criteria requires that the conversion should not result in any ‘*materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area’* and as such, should it be considered that the proposal would prove injurious to the landscape qualities of the area, the general support afforded by Policy DMH4 is considered to be fully disengaged. With respect to criterion 4 and the potential impact of the rural economy, it is understood that the building in question was originally granted consent as a workshop to be used by the occupant of no.1 Ferry Butts who carried out a joinery business on the premises. As such, the conversion of the workshop is unlikely to yield significant impacts upon the local economy to the extent that any measure or quantifiable impacts would be resulting, particularly when taking into account the small-scale nature of the operation that the building previously accommodated. The secondary component of Policy DMH4 relates to the nature of the building to be converted and sets out a number of explicit criterions. With respect to criterion 3, the existing structure was constructed in the 1960’s with solid masonary walls finished in sand cement render and a corrugated metal roof which, when considering the rural character of the area and adjacent built form, are considered to appear somewhat incongruous in their overtly industrial appearance. As such, the existing building is neither considered to possess intrinsic interest, nor is it considered to contribute to its setting, not only by virtue of its materiality but also by virtue of its largely industrial and utilitarian appearance. The building is therefore not considered to be worthy of retention.Furthermore, whilst a structural report has been submitted with the application which shows the building in question to be structurally sound and capable of accommodating future development with minimal alterations, it is proposed to incorporate a new slate roof and timber cladding to the external elevations. This is considered to amount to major alterations, with the resultant building having the appearance of a sizeable new structure rather than a conversion, which would detract from the landscape qualities of the area. As such and notwithstanding the other development management considerations, the proposal is not considered to accord with the aims and objectives of a conversion in respect to Policy DMH4. |
| **Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**The proposed openings featured to the front, rear and side elevations of the proposal would not have a direct interface with any nearby residential properties and as such, no new opportunities for direct overlooking or loss of privacy are anticipated as a result of the works proposed. Furthermore, it is not anticipated that the conversion of the existing structure into living accommodation itself would result in any undue impact upon the existing amenities of any nearby residents that would warrant the refusal to grant planning permission.  |
| **Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**The application site lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. With regards to development in the National Landscape, Key Statement EN2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that ‘*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.’* The site occupies a prominent position sited adjacent the main highway of Garstang Road, resulting in the development being immediately visible from the public realm.As part of the overall development, numerous external alterations are proposed to the existing structure, including the incorporation of timber cladding to the external elevations, a new slate roof and replacement windows and doors throughout. These alterations are considered to go beyond that of a conversion, significantly altering the visual appearance of the existing building and subsequently causing the proposal to appear more akin to a new structure, rather than one that is already assimilated into the landscape. Furthermore, whilst no extensions are proposed to the existing built form, the structure comprises a footprint measuring a maximum of 13.7m by 7.4m, with its conversion subsequently increasing the domestic footprint of the application property by approximately 140%. In this respect, it cannot be reasonably argued that the building would read as a subservient domestic extension, incidental to the residential use of the application property. The works proposed would therefore have the effect of increasing the visual prominence of the building insofar that it would fundamentally alter the character of the existing structure, resulting in the proposal appearing both incongruous and anomalous, particularly taking account of the overall design, size and scale of the building, as well as the rural character of the area and nearby built form. As such, taking account of the appearance of the building, in concert with the size and scale of the existing structure, it is considered that the proposed works would result in an unsympathetic, incongruous and discordant form of development that would fail to accord with the aims and objectives of Policies DMG1, DMG2, and DMH4 and Key Statement EN2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework insofar that the proposed development would be of detriment to the character and visual amenities of the surrounding area.  |
| **Highways and Parking:**Lancashire County Council Highways have been consulted in relation to the proposed development and raised no objection subject to the imposition of conditions. As a result of the proposed development, the number of bedrooms at the site would increase from three to four. For the site to comply with the Local Highway Authority’s parking standards three car parking spaces need to be provided on site. The site is able to provide 3no. car parking spaces and a turning area to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear on the existing hardstanding area adjacent to the building. As such, with the site complying with parking guidance, the LHA have no objection to the proposal.  |
| **Landscape/Ecology:**A Bat Survey has been submitted with the application, dated 15th January 2024. The report concludes that the building, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat was observed to have a negligible to low level of bat roost potential. No evidence to suggest use by bats was recorded within the building at a time of year when such physical evidence would be expected. Endoscope inspection of gaps also revealed no evidence to suggest use by bats. As such, the report concludes that the survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of the building and that the presence of a significant conservation value roost is unlikely. However, given some wide gaps are present behind the fascia boarding and metal panelling on the gable end of the existing building, reasonable avoidance measures are considered an appropriate approach to development. A Method Statement has been included within the report in order to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to bats. By following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures and Mitigation included within the report, it is concluded that the proposed work could take place whilst ensuring continued ecological functionality of the site. If the application were to be approved, this would be secured by way of a planning condition. The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as it is subject to the de minimis exception.  |
| **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 planning consent be refused for the following reason(s):  |
| **01:** | The proposal is considered contrary to Policy DMH4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 in that existing building and its materials are not considered to be worthy of retention by virtue of its lack of intrinsic interest, potential or contribution to its setting. Furthermore, the proposal would result in works above that of what would be considered reasonably necessary for conversion, which would have a damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area. |
| **02:** | The proposal would result in an unsympathetic, incongruous and discordant form of development, in terms of the resultant appearance of the building. The proposal is therefore considered to be in direct conflict with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2, and DMH4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.  |