

Ribble Valley Borough Council

DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT - REFUSAL

Ref: CB

Application No:	3/2014/0689/P
Development Proposed:	Demolition of existing derelict barn and erection of two holiday cottages, creation of off street parking and siting of septic tank at land at the junction of Higher Road with Stoneygate Lane, Longridge.

CONSULTATIONS: Parish/Town Council

Parish Council - No objections to this proposal.

CONSULTATIONS: Highway/Water Authority/Other Bodies

Environment Directorate (County Surveyor) – Object to the proposal.

CONSULTATIONS: Additional Representations

No representations have been received.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan

Policy G1 - Development Control.
Policy G5 - Settlement Strategy.
Policy ENV1 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Policy ENV7 - Species Protection.
Policy T7 – Parking Provision.
Policy RT1 - Recreation

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Submission Version including Proposed Main Modifications

Key Statement DS1 - Development Strategy.
Key Statement EN2 – Landscape.
Key Statement EN4 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets.
Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism
Policy DMG1 – General Considerations.
Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations.
Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection.
Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation.
Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets.
Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility.
Policy DMI2 – Transport Considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework

Achieving Sustainable Development.
Core Planning Principles.
Section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes.
Section 7 – Requiring good design.
Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
Section 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

POLICY REASONS FOR REFUSAL:

RT1/ DS2, DMB3/ NPPF - Unsustainable location - reliant on the private car.

G1, ENV1, ENV3/ EN2, DMG1, DMG2 - Design harmful to visual amenity.

G1, T7/ DMG1 Inadequate parking provision, detrimental to highway safety.

COMMENTS/ENVIRONMENTAL/AONB/HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES/RECOMMENDATION:

The application relates derelict/ dilapidated stone structure that is overgrown with vegetation and has no roof or upper walls that is located within a field to the south of the crossroads where Stoneygate Lane, Higher Road, Forty Acre Lane and Old Clitheroe Road all meet. The application site is located on the west side of the road, opposite the New Drop Inn PH.

Permission is sought for the 'conversion' of the dilapidated structure and the creation of two holiday cottages. The cottages would be semi-detached, each would be two storeys in height, and each would have a single storey addition on the gable where the entrance to the cottages would be located. Each cottage would have an area of curtilage at the side. One parking space is proposed for each cottage and the parking area would extend from the south facing gable.

Principle of development

The Framework seeks to promote sustainable rural tourism and leisure facilities which respect the character of the countryside. Paragraph 28 of the Framework indicates that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

The appeal site is located from the nearest service centre of Longridge, 2.3 miles away, and the smaller settlements of Ribchester (2.5 miles) and Chipping (4.4 miles). However, there are several tourist attractions in the locality as well as public footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways into the AONB. It is noted that the applicant has made no case for the proposal in this respect and whilst there are tourist attractions for walkers, birdwatchers, cyclists and angler in the wide AONB. There are no tourist attractions in close proximity to the application site.

The nearest smaller settlements offer basic amenities with the key service centre of Longridge being to offer services and amenities such as banks, pubs and restaurants. However, there is no bus service running along Old Clitheroe Road and Higher Road or from Stoneygate Lane to Forty Acre Lane and vice versa. The nearest bus route and operational bus stop is located down the hill from the application site in front of the former Halls Arms, now a business centre, that similar to the Newdrop Inn and the application site is located on the junction of a cross roads. This bus stop is located 0.56 miles from the application site where buses run from Clitheroe to Longridge. However, there is no pavement along the road and it is unlit, therefore, it is not safe for walkers to walk along and thus it is highly likely that users of the holiday cottages would be heavily reliant on the private car for accessing services and amenities as well as any tourist attractions. Thus, although there are tourist attractions in the locality, visitors to the proposed development would be dependent on the private car to visit other tourist attractions and to access basic services, amenities and entertainment. The proposal is thus contrary to Policy DS2 of the emerging Core Strategy which requires proposals to meet the sustainability requirements of the Framework.

Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy of the emerging Core Strategy requires that proposals will contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy including new accommodation or associated with existing attractions respectively. On the basis that it would provide holiday accommodation located close to three nearby attractions, the proposed development would accord with Core Strategy Key Statement EC3. However, it would not be sustainable given the remote location and the limited range of tourist attractions in the immediate locality. Moreover, the appeal scheme would be inconsistent with the underlying sustainability

objectives of the Framework in terms of the reliance on the private car for visits to many other tourist attractions in the area and for access to other essential services.

Furthermore, it would provide only minor benefits to local employment in terms of work for the appellant and his family. Also it would conflict with Local Plan Policy G5 which requires that permission will only be granted for small scale tourism developments which are appropriate to the local economy and the rural area. It would also be contrary to Local Plan Policy RT1, which states in the supporting that tourism development should be of benefit to the local economy.

In addition, the proposal is for the conversion and extension of a derelict house. The building to which the application relates has no roof and only partly complete walls. It is in a state of serious disrepair. The Structural Appraisal submitted with the application, does not include the parts of the barn that were inaccessible, the LPA is therefore not convinced of its accuracy, particularly because at the time of my site visit, whilst I walked round the outside areas of the structure, I was unable to access the internal areas of the barn due to it being overgrown with vegetation, which includes a tree which has seeded within the four walls. However, notwithstanding this, the survey states:

“The building at present is derelict and from the overgrowth that covers the full floor area it suggests this has been the case for a number of years. The walls to the building are in need of some serious repair work and the building does not currently have a roof. There are going to have to be major remedial works carried out in all areas including the floors, walls and roof, if the building is to be re-used or converted.”

The Council's Building Inspector for the area also confirms that the building would need to be completely rebuilt and therefore the proposals cannot be classed as a conversion. On this basis the proposal would not comply with paragraph 55 of the Framework. Moreover, the proposal is also contrary to policies DMH3 and DMH4 of the emerging Core Strategy.

Design and Visual Amenity

The roadside barn/ structure is located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a nationally designated landscape, at a key road junction, on land which rises upwards towards Jeffrey Hill.

The Forest of Bowland landscape character maps designate the land as Moorland Fringe. The north side of the cross roads is designated Enclosed Moorland Hills. The fringes of moorland areas are transitional enclosed landscapes between the inhospitable moorland fells and the more intensively farmed land of the lowlands. The transitional rolling enclosed landscape of the Moorland Fringe skirts the edges of the Moorland Hills and links the upland to the lowland landscape.

The application site is located on rising land on the west side of the road opposite the New Drop Inn PH. The road is wide and has fields on each side. Although the dilapidated structure and the proposals is/ would be located opposite the New Drop Inn, given the wide nature of the road and the rolling wide ranging landscape, the proposals would appear isolated from other built form.

The existing building is characteristic of dilapidated traditional agricultural buildings within the landscape. The historic barn runs parallel with Stoneygate Lane. With only the lower section of the barn existing, the existing structure highlights the sense of openness which exists on the west side of the road. The erection of new build semi-detached properties on this rising land, at a key road junction, would result in the proposed cottages appearing visually prominent within the landscape. Being in close proximity to the cross roads the proposals will inevitably detract from the sense of openness that currently exists in the locality and this would be to the detriment of visual amenity.

In addition, the LPA has serious concerns with the design of the proposed cottages; they are suburban in their design and are overly symmetrical. Their suburban design would appear wholly out of context with the rural landscape character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would significantly detract from the visual amenities of the landscape.

The introduction of two holiday-let units with associated car parking, cycle/refuse storage and landscaping along with other domestic paraphernalia would create a significant intensification of the site and have an urbanising effect. This would substantially harm the character of the countryside and the AONB.

Furthermore, the creation of a car parking area at the southern end of the cottages and an area of curtilage, including hard surfacing, at the northern end would result in the urbanisation of the open countryside in which the proposal would be set. In addition, with no existing site plan submitted it is unclear whether the boundary trees and hedgerow would remain or be replaced. Insufficient information has been submitted to establish if the proposal accords with Policy DME1 of the emerging Core Strategy and Policy ENV13 of the Local Plan which concerns itself with landscape protection and the retention of trees, hedgerows, and other landscape features.

The proposal would conflict with Local Plan Policy G1 and emerging Core Strategy Policy DMG1, both of which require that new development be sympathetic to the existing and proposed land uses in terms of size, intensity and nature. Furthermore, it would conflict with emerging Core Strategy Policy DMG2 and DME2. Policy DME2 refers to significant harm to important landscapes. DMG2 states that all development should be considered in context and with regard to the land use within the open countryside development. Additionally it would conflict with Local Plan Policy RT1 and emerging Core Strategy Policy DMB3, which explain that the Borough will approve developments that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the Borough subject to several criteria including that development should be physically well related to an existing group of buildings¹ and should not undermine the character, quality or visual qualities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting materials or design.

Moreover, the proposed development would also conflict with emerging Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and emerging Core Strategy Key Statement EN3. Emerging CS Key Statement EN2 relates to landscape and requires that the Forest of Bowland AONB will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Emerging Core Strategy Key Statement EC3 refers to overall improvements to the environment.

Highway Safety

The Highway Authority has raised objections to the proposals. The proposal is for two, two-bed holiday cottages and whilst the parking standards for a 2 bed dwelling would suggest only 1 parking place being required, as a holiday let the 2 bedrooms may be occupied by extended family arriving in 2 cars. This would result in on street parking close to a crossroad junction. This would not be acceptable.

In addition the parking for the property fronting Higher Road is remote from the entrance of the northern most cottage. This would increase the likelihood of parking taking place on the highway/verge close to a crossroad junction. Furthermore, there is no footway link shown along the frontage of the properties which would suggest that any visitors, possibly with luggage etc., would be required to walk in the carriageway.

Due to the above concerns and the likelihood of parking on the highway close to a crossroad junction and the safety implications of pedestrians in the carriageway the Highway Authority recommend that the application be refused on highway safety grounds, and the LPA share this view.

Notwithstanding the above, the proposal would utilise an existing field gate, the Highway Authority question if there is an alternative gate to field and if so where is it. If it does not have an alternative access then the Highway Authority need to know where it is to be located so they can assess the highway safety implications.

To conclude this section of the report, the proposals would conflict with Policy DMG3 which requires proposals to provide adequate parking and turning facilities and for development to be in locations that are accessible by other means rather than being solely reliant on the private car.

Conclusion

Taking all of the above in to account; the location of the proposed holiday cottages is isolated from services, amenities, and nearby visitor attractions. The occupiers of the holiday cottages would therefore be solely reliant on the private car for visiting such places. The proposal is therefore DS2 and DMB3 of the emerging Core Strategy and Policy RT1 of the adopted Local Plan.

The proposal would also result in the unacceptable urbanisation of the AONB and would significantly detract from the landscape and scenic beauty of this important landscape due to its incongruous suburban design detracting from the landscape qualities of the locality.

The proposal would also be detrimental to highway safety, given the inadequacy of the parking provision and the parking provision being remote from the northern most unit, leading to the likelihood of cars being parked on the highway close to a cross roads junction.

The proposal will thus be refused on this basis.

RECOMMENDATION: That permission be refused.