


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Application Ref:	3/2020/0888	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	19/02/2021	
Officer:	AB	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		APPROVED

Development Description:	Construction of a single storey holiday accommodation, associated parking and amenity area.
Site Address/Location:	Land adjacent to Cottam Cottage Farm Writtenstone Lane Longridge PR3 2ZN

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
With regards to the above planning application, Longridge Town Council have no objections to make on the above planning application but would request that there is a condition within any potential permission that the properties remain holiday lets.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	
No objections.	
AONB Partnership:	
This could be acceptable in the location with existing and proposed screening. However, I would question the inclusion of ash as a species in the additional planting to provide screening due to the prevalence of ash-dieback disease within the Ribble Valley and AONB. Another deciduous species locally common would be ideal – species would depend on what overall effect the applicant is trying to achieve and how quickly they would like the screening established, e.g., alder, small-leaved lime, birch, rowan or aspen.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Two objection letters have been received and raise the following concerns:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is already significant holiday accommodation on the outskirts of Longridge. Geography and access to the farm means that holiday lets are likely to put its operation at risk.• There is already a noise problem from holiday accommodation to the north west of the farm.• Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should not be overdeveloped.• Additional traffic along farm track.• Development looks like a shipping container and would be totally out of place.• Proposed property is on a corner of the farm lane.• Development will only be the start of things.	

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
No relevant planning history.

RELEVANT POLICIES:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy: Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2 –Sustainable Development
 Key Statement EN2 – Landscape
 Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets
 Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development
 Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy
 Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations
 Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
 Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
 Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility
 Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodlands
 Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection
 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

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site is located approximately 2.7km north-east of the settlement of Longridge in an area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site comprises a small parcel of land adjacent to an established group of farm buildings including a farmhouse as well as Writtenstone Barn. The site is located to the south west of the group of buildings and is in common ownership with Writtenstone Barn where the applicant resides.

The site is within landscape character type ‘undulating lowland farmland’. The immediate area is open farmland. The site itself has a variety of fruit trees growing and is separated from the main field. Access to the site is via a single lane farm track from its junction from Lower Lane to the south which also serves Written Stone Farm, Cottam House Farm, Cottam House Cottage and Cottam House Farm.

Approximately 250m south west of the site, accessed from the farm track is Grade II listed Written Stone Farmhouse and boundary stone. However, given the intervening distance and scale of the development proposals it is not considered that there would any harm to the setting of these heritage assets.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought for the construction of a single storey, mono-pitched, one-bed holiday unit. The building is proposed to be split level to follow the contours of the land. The building would be partially supported on stilts and would be clad in vertical cedar boards with a sedum roof. The main aspect of the unit would be south-east facing to provide long distance views. On this elevation full height glazing with sliding timber doors panels, hot tub and elevated covered terraced area are proposed.

The proposed unit would measure 14.2m by 10m. A parking area, with access from the existing farm track, is proposed and the area surrounding the building would be bound by stock proof fencing.

Principle of Development

Core Strategy Key Statement EC3 relates specifically to the visitor economy stating that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged. The proposed development would contribute to the tourism economy and accords with the general intentions of Key Statement EC3. Key Statement EC1 ‘Business and Employment Development states that *“Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle”*.

The application site is located in the Forest of Bowland. Core Strategy Policy DMG2 requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations one of which is the following:

4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.

In terms of compliance with Policy DMG2, the proposal would constitute a small-scale tourism development.

Policy DMB3 relates specifically to recreation and tourism development. Tourism and visitor attractions are generally supported subject to the following criteria being met:

- 1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;*
- 2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;*
- 3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;*
- 4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;*
- 5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and*
- 6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.*

In the Forest of Bowland AONB additional criteria apply as follows: -

- 1. The proposal should display a high standard of design appropriate to the area.*
- 2. The site should not introduce built development into an area largely devoid of structures (other than those directly related to agriculture or forestry uses).*

The proposed unit would be located on land adjacent to an established group of buildings and the site is large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas. The surrounding area is not devoid of non-agricultural buildings. Whilst the majority of buildings in the immediate area are existing or former farm buildings there are a number of individual residential properties and 600-700m to the north-west of the site are Beacon Fell View Caravan Park and Green Bank (Holiday) Park. Consideration of the remaining criteria will be assessed below.

The application is supported by a Business Plan stating that the applicant already runs a small holiday cottage company providing some employment by using local cleaners as well as local trades to renovate and maintain their properties. The applicant states that there is an increasing demand for eco-friendly sustainable stays for couples and that UK cottage holidays are projected to continue to increase due to the uncertainties of Brexit and Covid-19. This is supported by letters from Sykes Holiday Cottages holiday letting company which support the proposals for more holiday accommodation in the area.

Effects Upon the Landscape/Visual Amenity

Great weight is afforded to the conservation and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland AONB as stated in The Framework and reiterated in Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy which requires the

Forest of Bowland to be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development in such areas should be of a high standard of design and should be in keeping with the character of the landscape. Policy DMB3 requires that new tourism and visitor facilities should 'not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials and design'.

The application site is located on sloping land which rises towards Longridge Fell to the north/north-east. As such, the site is elevated above Lower Road to the south. Existing mature trees and undulating land screen some views, although there are mid-distance views of the site along stretches of the highway and, in addition, a bridleway follows the path of the farm track and passes directly to the north of the proposed unit of holiday accommodation.

It is noted that the application site is seen against a backdrop of long-distance views of tourism development at Beacon Fell View Caravan Park and Green Bank (Holiday) Park. When experienced from Lower Road the aforementioned sites are approximately 1km away. The proposed holiday unit would be around 300m from Lower Road. The building would be experienced in the context of adjacent residential and agricultural buildings that form an identified group.

In terms of its size and scale, the proposed building is of single storey height although provides a generous floor space area being 14.2 metres in length. The adopted design approach breaks from the traditional appearance of the vernacular buildings in close proximity which are constructed mainly from natural stone and slate with gable roofs. The building is designed to emulate the grey concrete retaining walls in close proximity once the cedar cladding material weathers. The design also seeks to avoid any grounding of the structure which is elevated above the land such that existing ground/vegetation can be retained.

Taking into account the characteristics of the site, the relationship with existing built form and the design of the unit, it is not considered that the development would be unduly prominent owing to its use of natural materials, split level design and sedum roof which would enable the building to blend into its surroundings. The AONB Partnership has not raised any concerns.

Effect on Residential Amenity

The proposed unit of holiday accommodation would be to the east of Writtenstone Barn. There is an acceptable separation distance and no habitable room windows on the side elevation of the proposed holiday unit facing Writtenstone Barn to impact negatively on privacy.

Objectors have raised the issue of noise associated with tourism use however, due to the size of the proposed accommodation it is not likely to be occupied by large groups that would be most likely to generate noise/disturbance.

Impact on Trees and Ecology

The site contains a number of trees and hedgerows although the majority of trees appear to be of low quality. Nonetheless, the proposed unit has been sited to avoid unnecessary tree removal though some tree removal is proposed due to tree condition. There is an existing field gate access that would be utilised although a short section of hedgerow would require removal to widen the access.

In the event that permission is granted, any removal of vegetation would be required to take place outside of the nesting bird season unless a pre-commencement check to confirm the absence of nesting birds has been carried out by a licensed ecologist.

The proposals also incorporate additional native tree planting to aid screening and provide biodiversity enhancement.

Highways

The application is submitted with a Highways Statement which sets out that an increase in traffic would not be perceptible nor would it have a detrimental impact on highway safety. The County Highways Officer has raised no concerns.

It was noted on a visit to the site that the access track is in a poor condition. The access track is not owned by the applicant and therefore they are not in a position to make improvements to the surface. However, the Highways Officer has raised no concerns in relation to its condition nor has he requested any information regarding passing places along its length.

Conclusion

Considering all of the above it is recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning consent be granted.