

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Application Ref:	3/2021/0254	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	11/05/2021	
Officer:	AB	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		REFUSED

Development Description:	Proposed extension to create a one-bedroom holiday apartment and construction of two single storey one bedroom holiday let units with parking.
Site Address/Location:	Wellsprings Hotel Clitheroe Road Sabden BB7 9HN

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
None received.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	
No objections subject to appropriate conditions.	
AONB Partnership:	
<p>The location for the proposals is clearly very visible within local and more distant views and could have significant landscape and visual effects. Overall, the applicant has not adequately considered the likely landscape and visual impacts of the proposal, with no LVIA (or even landscape and visual appraisal) offered.</p> <p>Without such information offering a detailed assessment of the proposal is difficult, but suffice to say my greatest concerns lie with the proposed detached holiday units to the SW of the main building complex.</p> <p>Based on the above, I would wish to object to the current proposals as they stand (on behalf of the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership).</p>	

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
No representations have been received.	

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 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 DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection
Policy DME3 - Site and Species Protection and Conservation
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:

This application relates to the site of a long-established restaurant, The Wellsprings, which is located on the slopes of Pendle Hill near the Nick of Pendle. The site is located in the open countryside and designated AONB between Clitheroe and the village of Sabden. Adjacent to the restaurant building is Pendle Ski Club and dry ski slope.

The existing restaurant is a one-and-a-half storey, white rendered building, with a seating capacity for 200 guests and associated car parking. Historically the building has been an Inn and a hotel.

There is a network of public footpaths in the surrounding area which is popular with walkers.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought to create a first floor over an existing single storey flat-roofed section of the restaurant building on the south side. The first floor would be created by extending the roof of the main building over the flat-roof section to provide a self-contained single storey, one-bed holiday unit. Access to the holiday unit would be via a new external staircase on the east (front) elevation facing Clitheroe Road. The eastern roof slope would contain two modest pitched roof dormers.

On the western side two large, pitched roof dormers are proposed that would provide access to an external first floor balcony area.

Also proposed is the erection of two detached single storey holiday units to the south-west of the restaurant building. Each unit would measure 8.2m x 7.8m and would have a flat roof up to 2.85 metres in height. The units would be timber clad with grey aluminium windows and doors. The units would be provided with a hot tub beneath an outdoor canopy. Each unit would have parking for one vehicle and would provide a single bedroom.

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"*. Policy DMB1 is also relevant to the application given the proposals represent expansion of an existing business and are designed to maintain and support the existing use. This is established within the submitted Business Statement which also refers to the benefits to the local economy.

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.

It is considered that the site, taken as a whole, would remain small-scale and would comply with the abovementioned policies 'in principle'.

Whilst regard must be given to the economic and social wellbeing of the AONB, Policy DMG2 confirms that the most important consideration is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area. In the AONB development is required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its design, use of materials, landscaping and siting.

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 proposals relate to a well-established group of buildings comprising the restaurant building, ski club clubhouse and associated paraphernalia. The proposed development would not therefore be isolated from other built form. In addition, the development is located directly adjacent to a classified road with good access to the surrounding highway network and the development is proposed to support an existing business.

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.

The immediate area is characterised as 'Unenclosed Moorland Hills' in the AONB Landscape Character Assessment and is described as having a 'strong sense of remoteness'. It is said that 'the Unenclosed Moorland Hills Landscape Character Type is considered to have very high visual sensitivity overall, as a result of the strong sense of openness and generally uninterrupted skylines,

coupled with strong intervisibility with adjacent Landscape Character Types.’ The AONB Landscape Character Assessment also states that, *‘in addition, there is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout (only partially disturbed at times of shooting). Landscape Character Sensitivity is considered to be high. As a result, overall capacity to accommodate change, without compromising the key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type is considered to be very limited, apart from change which reinforces positive attributes, such as habitat enhancements’.*

Regarding the detached holiday units, these would be afforded a high level of visibility and would fail to reflect local vernacular style in a highly sensitive landscape. The AONB Partnership has objected to the application with specific reference to the impact of the detached units and failure of the applicant to adequately consider the likely visual and landscape impacts.

The proposed roof extension above the flat roof of the existing building does not raise any particular design concerns. However, the proposed pitched roof dormers and bulky, timber clad external stairway access at the roadside would be afforded high visibility from the highway and public footpaths. It is considered that these elements would result in a negative impact on the appearance of the building.

To the rear, the large-glazed dormers and balcony would also be highly visible and bulky additions to the rear roof slope, visible when approaching the building by car from both directions along Clitheroe Road. There would also be some long-distance views from the north-west.

Having regard to the above, the proposals are contrary to Key Statement EN2 and policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 172 of the Framework.

Other Considerations

The County Highways Officer has raised no objection to the proposals despite an overall reduction in parking provision at the site. It is noted however that a number of parking spaces shown on the ‘proposed site’ plan are unusable, including spaces projecting onto the adjacent highway.

The application is accompanied by bat/barn owl survey which found no evidence of bats within the building, with roosting potential considered to be negligible. As such the proposed works are unlikely to cause disturbance to bats, result in the loss of a bat roost or cause injury or death to bats.

Concerns have been raised relating to the capacity of the existing septic tank and the proximity of the development to site ownership boundary. Regarding the first point, the applicant has provided a response from the septic tank installer which states there is sufficient capacity within the existing septic tank to cater for the proposals. Regarding details of land ownership, the applicant(s) are satisfied that all land required to implement the proposals are within their ownership.

Conclusion

Taking into account all of the above, it is considered that the proposals would result in undue visual and landscape impacts, failing to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty.

It is recommended that the application be refused.

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be refused for the following reasons:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The proposal, by virtue of its siting, design, external appearance and scale, would result in a prominent and incongruous form of development that fails to respond positively to or enhance the immediate context, being of detriment to the visual amenity and landscape character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 and paragraph 172 of the NPPF.

