

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:		Date:		Manager:		Date:	
Site Notice displayed		Photos uploaded						

Application Ref:	3/2021/0280	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk	
Date Inspected:	13/5/2021		
Officer:	AD		
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		Decision	Refusal

Development Description:	Proposed conversion of barn to two dwellings and conversion of agricultural buildings to provide home office space and garages.
Site Address/Location:	Newhurst Farm Anna Lane Bolton By Bowland BB7 4NZ

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments received.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	
No objection subject to conditions (measures to ensure that users of the Public Right of Way are not exposed to any elements of danger during construction). Also informative re: planning permission does not entitle a developer to obstruct a right of way. LCC Footpaths: Consulted, no representations received. LLFA: No comment because LLFA Flood Risk Standing Advice should have been applied and development not listed in the 'When to Consult the LLFA' document or in the Development Management Procedure Order 2015. LCC Archaeology: No objection as ensures a future for this building. The site is of some historic interest and has an unusual porch and roof arrangement (Heritage Statement). Recommend that, prior to the conversion going ahead, that a more formal record of the building be made to level 2-3, as set out in 'Understanding Historic Buildings' (Historic England 2016). It may be appropriate for some of the external recording to be undertaken once the modern structures have been demolished (condition suggested).	

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Letter of objection received which makes the following points: Impacts privacy of Newhurst Barn garden; retain vegetation screen. Security – visitors to offices. Access/Traffic – Anna Lane is a narrow single track lane; floods; office traffic. Construction – difficult access for delivery vehicles. Disposal of sewage – current septic tank? The agent confirmed 9/6/21 that the applicants were the occupiers of the 'Newhurst Farm' conversion.	

RELEVANT POLICIES:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy

Key Statement EN2 – Landscape

Key Statement EN3 - Sustainable Development and Climate Change

Key Statement EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations.

Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations.

Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility

Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation.

Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets.

Policy DMH3 – Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB.

Policy DMH4: The Conversion of Barns and other Buildings to Dwellings

Policy DMH5 – Residential and Curtilage Extension.

Policy DME2 - Landscape and Townscape Protection

NPPF

NPPG

Relevant Planning History:

No pre-application advice has been sought in respect to the development.

3/1988/0227 – No details in MVM/Planning Archive.

3/1987/0131 – No details in MVM/Planning Archive.

3/1987/0677 – No details in MVM/Planning Archive.

3/1999/0896 – Conversion of barn into 1 no. dwelling, new sewerage treatment plant & soakaway to replace existing septic tank. Use existing outbuilding as domestic garage & associated external works. Barn 3 (adjoining farmhouse). PP granted 3/4/2000.

3/1999/0895 - Conversion of barn into 1 no. dwelling, demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of new replacement domestic garage and associated external works. Barn 2 and land. PP granted 4/4/2000.

3/1997/020N – Building for livestock housing. AD granted 21/7/1997.

3/1998/017N – In ground slurry store. AD granted 20/8/1998.

3/2000/0542 – New farm track serving Newhurst Farm. PP granted 28/11/2000.

3/2000/008N – Create stone hardcore road approx. 62m in length. Newhurst Farm. AD refused 4/4/2000.

3/2001/0173 – Single storey dining room extension and fenestration changes to approved barn conversion including new store to garage and associated external works. Barn 2 and land. PP granted 5/9/2001.

3/2001/0852 – Renewal of consent for conversion of barn to one dwelling. Barn 3. PP granted 12/12/2001.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

Newhurst Farm is an isolated steading within the Forest of Bowland AONB. However, the site is prominent because Public Footpath FP3 runs through the historic farm steading. Proposals relate to the only historic farm building still in agricultural use (residential conversion of an outbuilding and the conjoined barn to the historic farmhouse; also new build dwelling in assemblage).

The subject building is elevated in comparison to the rest of the historic steading and is a bank barn (unusual for the Ribbles Valley). It is also distinct in having had historic residential use (including an extension for this purpose). The submitted Heritage Statement identifies:

“The stone building is a bank barn in form, probably dating from the second half of the 18th century, and with a curious twin porch arrangement to its south-west side (as shown on the 1908 map), which appears to be original, and suggests it was intended to be shared by two occupiers. At the south corner of the barn is a domestic extension, late 18th or early 19th century, which communicated with the south-east bay of the barn, which was itself adapted to residential use” (5.1).

“set into ground which rises to the south-west, so as to permit direct entry to the upper floor (hayloft), via a ramp to the pair of cart entries (one of which is presently blocked), while the ground floor would have been used for housing cattle. The bank barn is not the predominant form in the local area, but the former barn to the south at Newhurst Farm is another example. As a building type it is more closely associated with Cumbria and adjoining areas” (5.2).

“While there are twin cart entries in the south-west side, there appears to have been only a single winnowing doorway in the opposite, north-east side ... This is now blocked up, but is notable for the quality of its tripartite lintel, with joggled skewbacks to the central member. Intact original openings in this side of the building are otherwise confined to a regular arrangement of breathers, in two rows, and a ground floor doorway at the right-hand end, but there are various other openings, which have either been inserted, or altered” (5.3).

“The roof structure appears entirely original, is constructed from local hardwood, and contains four trusses of uniform design, with king-posts and V-struts, very typical of the 18th century. However there are also small ridge braces, which are a much less common feature of such roofs. The rafters are very irregular and short in length, which contributes to the roof's distinctive appearance” (5.8).

“20th century additions to the building are all single-storey, and include a rendered blockwork lean-to against the north-east elevation, and similarly built shed at the north-west end. These are associated with the post-war expansion of dairy farming. There is also a small 20th century brick privy attached to the south-west elevation of the barn, in the angle with the left-hand cart entry. None of these have any architectural or historic significance” (5.10).

“Overall, the building is significant for its evidential, historic and aesthetic values” (6.1).

“The barn is a well-built, traditional, 18th century farm building, of bank barn form, unusual for its twin porch arrangement, and for the division of its ground floor into two unequal parts. Its stonework and surviving original roof structure are of relatively high quality, although it lacks ornamentation, as is typical for the locality. The historic adaptation and extension to provide domestic accommodation confer additional interest. However, extensive modern changes to the barn itself, which principally affect the

ground floor, have led to the loss of some historic character and fabric. Its setting has also been compromised by its presently very cluttered surroundings, brought about by the large number of 20th century additions” (6.2).

The barn is a non-designated heritage asset. ‘Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings’ (Historic England, 2017) identifies *“Most traditional farm buildings date from the 19th century and only a very small proportion, usually older and more architecturally significant buildings, are protected through listing. The vast majority form part of farmsteads that include other traditional buildings”* (page 2).

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the agricultural historic barn to two dwellings and modern agricultural additions to home office space and garaging.

A Design & Access Statement identifies:

“The proposal for consideration includes the conversion of the existing traditional stone barn to form two dwellings, one of four bedrooms and one of three bedrooms. In addition there will be the provision of garaging, both by the conversion of an existing outbuilding and provision of underground garaging. The smaller dwelling will have external workspace to provide for homeworking by conversion of an existing outbuilding. The large modern cattle building is to be taken down to enable the completion of the proposal. The current use of the site is agricultural”.

A Structural Inspection and Conversion report identifies:

“Both buildings were found to be sound and in good structural condition being suitable for conversion”.

A bat survey identifies:

“Proposed work is considered unlikely to affect an existing roost of natterer's bats with suitable mitigation and timing of works ... By following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures that follow the development can take place, ensuring the Continued Ecological Functionality of the site, while avoiding a breach of the Habitat Regulations. An EPS development licence, supported by further survey work, will be applied for post planning permission being granted, demonstrating that satisfactory mitigation and enhancement works are sufficient to avoid offences being committed under the Habitat Regulations”.

Windows and doors are proposed dark stained timber. Many openings (including incongruous modern openings in size and proportion) are to be reused but proposals also include new openings and rooflights (e.g. in accommodation of a new second floor to Property 2) and the conspicuous partial opening of the top of the winnowing door and enlargement of adjoining breathers (*“regular arrangement of breathers, in two rows”* – HS 5.3).

“Significant aspects of the interior would be retained where possible” (Heritage Statement). However, the plans identify *“Existing timber trusses to property No 2 to be removed and replaced with steel ones to achieve head-height for second floor”* (*“The roof structure appears entirely original”* – HS 5.8).

The large modern cattle building is to be taken down (Structural Report) but two other modern additions (*“20th century additions to the building are all single-storey, and include a rendered blockwork lean-to against the north-east elevation, and similarly built shed at the north-west end ... None of these have any architectural or historic significance”* - HS 5.10) are to be retained and modified. That to Property 1 includes an overtly domestic horizontally emphasised triple-light at the prominent (neighbours; public footpath) NE elevation.

The distinct entrance bank to the bank barn is to be replaced with a terrace and double-garage.

The proposed residential curtilages are not differentiated and appear to be c. x3-4 the size of the existing historic building footprint.

Character (including cultural heritage) of the Forest of Bowland AONB:

The proposals are harmful to the character (including cultural heritage) of the Forest of Bowland AONB because of the overtly domestic and incongruous alterations proposed to the prominent (elevated; public footpath) and interesting (retention of historic detail including evidence of residential use to some elements, unusual bank barn form and stone roof and walls) C18 vernacular building (a non-designated heritage asset). The works of concern are:

Loss of the bank to the distinct bank barn including replacement with a terrace and double-garage;

Glazing of incongruous modern openings including 4-light window to the SE elevation.

Enlarged breather openings to prominent NE elevation (disrupting regular pattern of historic breathers).

Partial unblocking and glazing of the winnowing door to the NE elevation (which confuses interpretation of building function).

Rooflights are prominent (entrance elevation to the bank barn) and conspicuous in the stone slate roof. Only necessary because of the formation of a new second floor in Property 2.

Retention and modification of incongruous and utilitarian modern agricultural buildings. Including overtly domestic horizontally emphasised triple-light window and glazed triple-door to the prominent NE elevation addition and two sets of double-width doors to the NW elevation addition.

The treatment of two new openings to the SW elevation of Property 2 appears to match the historic domestic windows in the SE elevation – this confuses an understanding of the historical development of the building.

Stained timber is not an appropriate finish for a historic residential or agricultural building.

The residential curtilages are extensive – no details provided on use.

The proposals to the heritage asset are contrary to Key Statement EN5 and Policies DME4 and DMG1. Key Statement EN5 (*“Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits”*) which reflects NPPF 197 on non-designated heritage assets (*“a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”*). Policy DME4 identifies that the Borough Council will not support alterations to *“buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset”*. Policy DMG1 identifies that *“all development must protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings”* and *“all development must: Design 1. be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 Building in Context Principles (from the CABE/English Heritage building in Context Toolkit. 2. 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”*.

The most relevant Building in Context Principle in respect to the harmful alterations to the historic building is Principle 3 - A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context.

The National Design Guide (2021) is particularly relevant at C1 and C2:

“Well-designed new development is integrated into its wider surroundings, physically, socially and visually. It is carefully sited and designed, and is demonstrably based on an understanding of the existing

situation, including: the landscape character and how places or developments sit within the landscape, to influence the siting of new development and how natural features are retained or incorporated into it” (paragraph 43).

“Sensitive re-use or adaptation adds to the richness and variety of a scheme and to its diversity of activities and users” (paragraph 47).

“Well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by: the history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences” (paragraph 48).

The proposals are contrary to Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 which seek the retention of the AONB's local distinctiveness and its building's vernacular style and scale.

The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan (April 2014 - March 2019) identifies *“The natural beauty of AONBs is partly due to nature, and is partly the product of many centuries of human modification of ‘natural’ features ... The area was designated as a landscape of national significance due to a variety of factors, including... The landscape’s historic and cultural associations ... The distinctive pattern of settlements ... Collectively these historic and cultural elements of the environment serve to enrich the landscape’s scenic quality, meaning and value”*. See NPPF 172 ‘important consideration’.

Key Statement EN2 requires: *“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 ... 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”*.

Policy DMG2 requires: *“in protecting the designated area of outstanding natural beauty ... 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. The AONB Management Plan should be considered and will be used by the council in determining planning applications”*.

Policy DMH4 requires that barn conversions: *“are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area”*. Policy DMH4 also suggests that the proposed conversion to two dwellings, with retention of modern utilitarian extensions (with superficial re-cladding of historically incongruous structures) and alterations/loss of important fabric to the walls (windows) and C18 roof of Property 2, is too intensive: *“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 ... 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”*.

The large residential curtilage will result in an elevated and prominent residential garden contrary to Policy DMH4 *“There would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests”*. This is also identified in Policy DMH5 *“The (curtilage) extension will not cause visual harm to the landscape”*.

‘Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings’ (Historic England, 2017) identifies:

“The relationship of the farmstead to its farmland should be respected while meeting the needs of the new use. Ideally the curtilage needs to be kept as minimal as possible. Enclosed private areas and the paraphernalia associated with domestic use need to be carefully sited and contained, particularly in

relation to public views and the surrounding landscape. Extending gardens into what has been farming land usually requires planning permission” (page 19).

Residential Amenity:

The agent (19/5/2021) has responded to the comments of the local resident in respect to overlooking, proposed retention of screening/further landscaping, drainage, highways and use of offices. The local resident’s concerns in respect to residential amenity are matters of detail which could be overcome by conditions in respect to site landscaping.

Highways:

The opinions of LCC Highways have been considered in respect to the local resident’s concerns.

Bats:

The protection of bats could be ensured by mitigation and appropriate conditions.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

In consideration to the impact of proposed works to the prominently sited vernacular bank barn and its contribution to the natural beauty of the Forest of Bowland AONB (and the benefits of removal of some of the modern utilitarian structures from the site) it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

The proposals are harmful to the character (including cultural heritage) of the Forest of Bowland AONB because of the overtly domestic and incongruous alterations proposed to the prominent (elevated; public footpath) and interesting (retention of historic detail including evidence of residential use to some elements, unusual bank barn form and stone roof and walls) C18 vernacular farm building (a non-designated heritage asset). This is contrary to Key Statement EN2 and EN5 and Policy DMG1, DMG2, DME4 and DMH4.