

## **DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**SITE: LITTLE DUDLANDS FARM, RIMINGTON LANE, RIMINGTON BB7 4EA**

**PROPOSAL: CONVERSION OF TWO BARNS TO THREE DWELLINGS, CREATION OF CURTILAGES INSTALLATION OF NEW PACKAGE TREATMENT PLANT AND ERECTION OF NEW DOMESTIC GARAGE FOR FARMHOUSE.**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This design and access statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for the conversion of the barns into three dwellings. A separate Heritage Statement, Structural Survey and Protected Species Survey have been submitted with the application. The application seeks permission to convert two traditional stone barns into three dwellings creating gardens and garaging for the new dwellings and providing a replace

### **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

2.1 Little Dudlands Farm is located approximately 0.8km to the north of the village of Rimington. It comprises a stone farmhouse with two detached stone barns to the north separated by the original farm yard. To the west of the group are modern portal frame farm buildings and various timber and stone outbuildings. Around the farm house garden there are a variety of stone wall some topped with flat stones and those at the front topped with half round copings. The other stone walls near the farm yard are of the traditional dry stone construction. The farmyard between the farmhouse and the stone barn has the remains of cobbles beneath concrete and tarmac.

2.2 Vehicle access to the site is along a surfaced track from Rimington Lane. A public footpath number 13 also follows the track from Rimington Lane and continues north beyond the farm. Another footpath number 19 approaches the farm from the west running through the farm yard and then heading north east.

2.3 The Farmhouse is of a traditional construction and layout of painted stone and render under a blue slate roof with the main elevation facing south. The house appears to have been extended on its western gable in the past. The rear elevation of the house faces the farm yard. This elevation has seven windows within it. All the first floor windows light bedrooms. There is also a traditional arched topped stairs window. On the ground floor from left to right the window light a pantry, living room and utility.

2.4 The barns are substantial buildings built of random natural stone with stone detailing. The barns are of about equal size. The barn on the north side of the farmhouse (north barn) has a blue slate roof and appears to have been built in two sections. Both sections have 'cat slide' roofs on the northern side and there is a break in the ridge line between the two sections. This barn has a square

topped wagon entrance on the southern side facing the farm yard with a corresponding entrance on the northern side. The majority of the openings in this barn are at the ground level although there is a forking hole in the east gable. The barn to the north west of the farmhouse (west barn) has a stone slate roof over the main roof with blue slate on the single storey brick lean to on the northern gable. It has a covered wagon entrance on the main east elevation facing the farm yard and a corresponding opening on the western elevation. The ridge line of west barn is at right angles to the north barn and the farm house. The rear of this barn faces the newer yard area and modern farm buildings. The curtilage of the farm group is denoted by traditional stone wall and post and wire stock fencing.

2.5 The farmhouse and barns are set on the hillside within a group of buildings which includes a smithy which it in separate ownership. Little Dudlands also forms a group with other nearby dwellings which are all served by the same track. These include Holme End, Rimington Bridge End, and Bridge End Cottage. This area is designated as open countryside in the adopted Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan.

### **3 ASSESSMENT**

3.1 The following saved policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan are relevant to the proposal:

Policy G1- expect high standards of design quality.

Policy G5-outside main settlements/villages boundaries planning permission will only be granted for small-scale developments.

Policy ENV3-in the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape.

Policy ENV7 – development having an adverse effect on protected wildlife species will not be granted planning permission.

Policy H15 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to external impacts.

Policy H16 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to the building.

Policy H17 – allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings subject to various criteria relating to the scheme design.

The following elements of national policy are also relevant to the proposal.

3.2 Nation Planning Policy Framework, Section-“Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes” paragraph 55 promotes sustainable development in rural areas. Development for new dwellings in the countryside is acceptable in limited circumstances including where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting or the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset.

3.3 NPPF section-“Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” paragraph 128 requires applicants to provide information to describe the significance of any heritage assets including any contribution made by their setting. A separate Heritage Statement has been prepared. In making planning decision the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and putting it to a viable use consistent with their conservation is to be taken into account.

3.4 The main planning issues relating to this proposal are:

- the principle of the development;
- the suitability of the building for conversion;
- the landscape impact;
- the design of the scheme;
- impact on neighbours
- highway safety; and
- nature conservation interest.

Each of these issues is assessed in turn below.

#### Principle

3.5 Policy G5 is the starting point for consideration of this proposal. The policy allows for small-scale development, including “other small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area which would conform to the policies of this Plan”. The policy does not define what may be regarded as small-scale uses. However, the object of the policy is to protect the countryside from inappropriate development. The proposal is for the conversion of existing buildings within an established group of buildings, it does not introduce new built development into an area of open countryside. Thus, the nature of the proposal is considered to be appropriate to a rural area. This is borne out and amplified by reference to other policies that specifically refer to residential development and conversion of buildings in the countryside. This policy is broadly in line with the NPPF paragraph 55 which allows for the re-use of buildings in the countryside.

3.6 There are policies in the Local Plan which specifically relate to proposals for the conversion of barns to dwellings. Policies H2 and H15 refer to whether the building is one that is suitably located for conversion. The building is not an isolated building in the landscape where problems of 'urbanisation', with which policy is primarily concerned, might arise. This is not likely to occur since the conversion relates to an existing building, the proposed garages and garden areas are within the existing curtilage of the farm and farm buildings.

#### Building Suitability

3.7 The barns are regarded as being suitable for conversion with regards to criteria in Policies H15 and H16. In particular:

- the barns are within a group of buildings which includes a dwelling (which are also reasonably close to other residential properties) where services and utilities are already provided so that no additional expenditure by public authorities on the provision of infrastructure would be required;
- a structural survey is submitted with the application. It confirms that the buildings are structurally sound and capable of conversion without needing major rebuilding;
- the buildings are of sufficient size to provide suitable living accommodation without extension; and
- being of traditional form and materials, the character of the buildings and the materials they are constructed of are appropriate to their surroundings. The buildings are worthy of retention.

#### Landscape Impact

3.8 The scheme will have no damaging impact on the character or appearance of the landscape within which it sits and, thus, the proposal complies with the relevant criteria of Policies ENV1, H15 and H17. The proposed garden curtilages for the barn conversions are within an area close to the northern side of the barns which is separated from the fields beyond. Within this area are two modern outbuildings which will be demolished. The net effect of the loss of these buildings and their replacement with the proposed garages and gardens is positive and will have less impact on the landscape than the modern buildings they replace. In addition it is proposed to modify the land levels to create garden areas and driveways roughly level with the barns which will be beneath the ground level of the field. From the surrounding landscape only the roofs of the garages will be visible with the garden areas being screened by the rising ground. It is also proposed to replace the unsightly render and corrugated sheet garage that belongs to the farm house. This presently stands at the entrance to the farm yard and detracts from the group. It is proposed to replace it with a simple stone built garage next to the gable of the house.

3.9 There is no proposal to alter the vehicle access which will continue to be the private track which approaches from the south. The conversions will have very little impact on the visual amenities of the landscape and will make an improvement by the reduction in the number of modern outbuildings around the barns and house.

3.10 This complies with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 55 which requires the re-use of redundant or disused buildings also to include an enhancement to the immediate setting and paragraph 115 in that the re-use of this traditional farm building preserves the building for the future and its contribution to the cultural heritage of the area.

### Design

3.11 The proposed design of the conversions is of a high standard and complies with the various criteria and Policies G1 and H17. The barns are constructed out of random stone the east barn has a stone flag roof and the north barn a blue slate roof. The original openings in the barn are generally surrounded by natural stone jambs heads and sills. There is also evidence of breathing holes and earlier opening that have been in-filled.

3.12 The layout of the rooms within the barns have been informed by the position of the existing door and window openings to take best advantage of these and to ensure that the number of new openings is kept to a minimum. Please refer to drawings existing and proposed. On drawing 08 the new dwellings are denoted barn 1, barn 2, and barn 3. The scheme has resulted in a modest level of new opening within the barn walls and few roof lights. The large areas of unbroken walls and roof slopes have been retained which preserves the character of the buildings. In addition modern extension have either been rebuilt or removed. These include the rebuilding of the larger brick and render lean to on the north side of barn 1. This will improve the appearance of the building by being rebuilt in stone. The smaller red brick and render lean to on the southern side of barn 2 is to be removed. This presently interrupts the single plane of the front elevation of the north barn and intrudes into the farm yard area. Similarly the metal hopper attached to the west barn which is unsightly is to be removed and the unsympathetic modern garage to the farmhouse is to be demolished and replace next to the house thereby better revealing the original open area of the farm yard.

#### Barn 1

3.13 Barn 1 is to be converted to one dwelling. This barn has a covered wagon entrance facing the original farm yard. This opening is to be fully glazed to let the maximum amount of light into the main living area. This glazed screen is set back from the outer face of the barn to retain the hood effect over the entrance area and the shadowing effect it creates. It also allows the original exterior opening to the harness room above the stables to be retained. The ground floor rooms of barn one

are to be lit by using the existing openings in the building. There are very few first floor windows in this building except for the harness room. The first floor bedrooms are to be lit by a combination of a modest number new window openings and roof lights. Bed 1 is lit by a skylight. Bed 2 (the harness room) is lit by an existing openings which will be at floor level. This opening is modified to increase light. At the present time this part of the building is obscured from view by a substantial freestanding feed hopper which is to be removed. Bed 3 and bed 4 have a single new window in the walls. On the north side of barn one there is an existing red brick single storey lean-to which is in a poor condition. It is proposed to rebuild this part of the barn in natural stone to the same proportions and repeat the original window opening except for the centre window which will be replaced by double glass doors. This is on the northern side of the building which is the least visible in the landscape so introduction of the glass door will not be particularly visible and the replacement of the brick lean to with a stone lean to will improve the visual appearance of the building.

## Barn 2

3.14 Similarly the main living area of barn two is to be lit from the existing wagon entrance on the south elevation of the barn and the corresponding opening in the northern elevation of the building. A single new window is proposed on the ground floor to light the dining area. This window is opposite the utility room in the farm house and bedroom above and is proposed to be obscure glazed to avoid a loss of privacy to the occupiers of the farm house. On the southern elevation a first floor window is proposed to light bedroom two. This overlooks the yard area and therefore does not affect privacy. Bedroom 1 is lit by a skylight. One new first floor window is proposed on the north elevation at first floor and this is tucked under the eaves it lights bedroom three. The roof lights on the north roof slope light bathrooms. Only one roof light is proposed on the south roof light and this only lighting to the main bedroom, bedroom 1. On the southern elevation there is a small single storey rendered brick lean-to. It is of a later construction to the main barn and it is proposed to remove it to better reveal the historic appearance of the barn.

## Barn 3

3.15 Barn three is the smallest of the conversions providing two bedroom accommodation. This building directly faces the rear of the farmhouse at a distance of 10m which has the potential to create a loss of privacy to the occupiers of the farmhouse unless the windows positions are carefully considered. Drawing 04 shows the position of the windows in the farmhouse and notes that there is only one habitable room window on the ground floor but all the first floor windows light bedrooms. We have indicated therefore that all the ground floor windows on the southern elevation of barn 3 are to be obscure glazed. An open plan living arrangement has been chosen for the ground floor of this conversion. It is proposed to alter an existing ground floor window on the north elevation to create double glass doors. The main source of light to the ground floor and view from the dwelling

will be to the north through these proposed double glass doors. The existing forking hole in the eastern gable of the barn is used to light bedroom one. All the other first floor rooms are to be lit by roof lights, one to each room. Spread so that there will be two roof light on the north roof slope and one on the south roof slope.

#### Curtilage creation

3.16 As previously described under the landscape section above the gardens areas for barns 2 and 3 will be on the north side of the north barn with vehicle access off the eastern end of the farm group. The gardens are to be separate from the field beyond and each other by a dry stone wall. Barn 1 has access from the existing farm track which runs to the south of the farmhouse and around the existing modern farm buildings. Barns 1 will have a garden to the north and to the west and will again be separated from the modern farm buildings by a dry stone wall.

3.17 The cobble area of the farm yard is to be renovated. A small private area in front of the barn conversion is provided by low stone wall similar to the stone wall at the rear of the farm house.

#### Neighbour Amenity

3.18 The change of use of the barns to dwellings is compatible with the existing residential use of the farmhouse. Each property will have its own garden area and parking area. The use of obscure glazing ensures that there will be no loss of privacy.

#### Highway Safety

3.19 No alterations to the existing vehicle access are proposed.

#### Nature Conservation

3.20 A protected species survey is submitted with the application. The report states at section D.5 that building 1 (north barn) has features that range from having low to moderate-high potential value for roosting bats and low-moderate potential value for hibernating bats. Building 2 (west barn) also has low to moderate-high potential value for roosting bats and low-moderate potential value for hibernating bats. Building 3 the timber store has negligible potential value for roosting or hibernating bats and building 4 the modern agricultural building has low potential value.

3.21 The report suggests that mitigation and compensation measure for bats and birds will be required. The applicant is content to provide these in accordance with the recommendations in the report, the details of which can be agreed by condition. The proposal complies with Policy ENV7.

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