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**APPEAL BY MR F THORNER AGAINST THE REFUSAL BY RIBBLE VALLEY  
BOROUGH COUNCIL TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE  
CONVERSION OF BROOK WOOD BARN INTO A SINGLE RESIDENTIAL  
PROPERTY**

**Appeal reference: APP/T2350/W/15/3138928**

**Written Statement of Case**

**LPA Reference: 3/2015/0453**

**November 2015**

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**APPEAL STATEMENT AGAINST THE REFUSAL OF RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE CONVERSION OF BROOK WOOD BARN INTO A SINGLE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY**

**1.0 Site Circumstances**

1.1 The site lies in open countryside within the Forest of Bowland AONB and is 2.8 kilometres to the east of the village of Chipping. The market towns of Longridge and Clitheroe are within 6.5 km and 8.7km respectively.

1.2 The application site is part of Cherry Tree Farm and is located 130 metres to the north-west of the main farm steading. The site is a former small holding with the residential accommodation, livestock housing and barn all being within the same structure. The total area of the site is 0.11ha including the 40 metre access track which leads to Chipping Road. See map below; images of the site are shown at Appendix 1 along with location plans.



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- 1.3 Brook Wood Barn is sited within its own curtilage with a small area of permanent pasture to the south of the barn, an area of hard standing to the north which has been used for machinery storage and a separate hard core access track to the main road.
  - 1.4 Access to the site is via the hard core track from Chipping Road, the main route between Chipping and Clitheroe. The track continues past the barn and links with the track from the farm yard to the north of the barn which is the access to the fields. The track from the road is also a public right of way, footpath (3-3-FP 35.) The Lancashire County Council mapping system, Mario, shows the footpath route as being along the south elevation of the barn and through into the adjoining field. However the actual way markers indicate the route to be past the barn along the eastern edge onto the farm track, then turning in a westerly direction into the field.
  - 1.5 The residential part of the barn was last inhabited approximately one hundred years ago. Since then the whole of the building has been used to house lambing sheep and calves or to store machinery. The hardcore area to the rear of the building has been used for agricultural storage for machinery and hardcore to repair tracks.
  - 1.6 Cherry Tree Farm and Brook Wood Barn have been farmed by the Thornber Family for four generations and is home to one of the oldest herds of pedigree Ayrshire cows in the country.
  - 1.7 The business is a family partnership but sadly one of the partners, Mr K Thornber, is deceased and his family need to be recompensed for his share in the business. The proposal to convert Brook Wood Barn would enable some capital to be released to cover part of his estate along with the sale of other assets and a business loan. Further detail can be found in the Business Appraisal submitted with the application.
  - 1.8 If planning cannot be gained for a change of use to residential the farm will be sold and the pedigree herd of cattle dispersed. The landscape of the AONB has come about due to the many small family run pastoral farms and small dairy herds. If the farm was to be sold it is inevitable that the land will be absorbed into a much larger unit and the house and buildings are likely to be sold separately.
- 2.0 Planning History**
- 2.1 Application 3/2015/0453 was submitted in June 2015 and subsequently refused on 21/08/2015 by Ribble Valley Borough Council Planning Committee.

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### **3.0 Proposed Development**

- 3.1 The application is to convert the redundant barn in to a single residential dwelling offering 4 bedroomed family accommodation.
- 3.2 The proposed plan is to maintain the original footprint of the barn and **retain all the existing openings**. No additional openings are proposed around the walls but it is proposed to add two conservation rooflights with anti glare glass to each side of the roof to ensure there is sufficient natural light in the bedrooms.
- 3.3 The existing small paddock to the south of the barn would be retained within the curtilage to create a garden area. The hardcore access track would be retained and the public right of way would be unchanged. The hardcore area to the north and east of the barn would provide parking and turning space for vehicles. There will be no further hard landscaping within the site.

### **4.0 Government Guidance**

#### **4.1 National Planning Policy Framework**

- Paragraph 28 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- Paragraph 55 – Delivering a wide choice of quality homes
- Paragraph 56 – Requiring good design
- Paragraph 109 – conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Paragraph 115 – conserving landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB
- Paragraph 126 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **5.0 Local Planning Policy**

#### **5.1 Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley**

- Key Statement DS1 Development Strategy
- Key Statement DS2 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Key Statement EN2 Landscape
- Key Statement EN3 Sustainable development and climate change
- Key statement EN5 Heritage assets
- Policy DMG1 General considerations
- Policy DMG2 Strategic considerations
- Policy DMG3 Transport and mobility
- Policy DME2 Landscape and town protection
- 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

## 6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 The LPA decision to refuse planning permission is based on the following reasons:

***The proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the landscape within the AONB. The proposed conversion would be particularly harmful to views from within the AONB and from the local footpath network. The proposal is not a sustainable development as the occupants would be reliant on cars for transport.***

6.2 The LPA consultation received no objections from Aighton Bailey and Chaigley Parish Council. The highways consultee requested a condition to establish the layout of the site with regard to parking and maintaining access to footpath 3-3-FP 35.

6.3 The Lancashire County Council Archaeology Officer did not object to the application but requested that a condition be included that a "Programme of building recording and analysis" be carried out. This is to ensure that the features and design of the historic building are recorded and not lost as a result of the conversion.

6.4 No letters of objection were received from the AONB management team or other body and no statutory consultee objected to the application.

## **7.0 Appeal Considerations**

7.1 The reasons for refusal by the LPA against each policy are contested for the following reasons:

### **Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy**

By the nature of the project the conversion of this single barn to a dwelling does not fit with this policy. However not all development within the Ribble Valley will fit within the development hierarchy stated in this policy.

### **Key Statement DS2: Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

The application has been judged under the premise that the barn is situated in an unsustainable location and the occupiers will be reliant on car transport. However it is felt that sustainability covers a much wider area than just car usage.

With regard to redundant agricultural buildings Historic England states that **“Reuse is inherently sustainable. These buildings represent a historical investment in materials and energy, and contribute to environmentally benign and sustainable rural development”**

The carbon footprint for building a new house is in the region of 80 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. This would be reduced to less than 10 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> for a conversion.

Another major factor in the overall sustainability of the development would be the reduction in carbon emissions by incorporating renewable energy options. Most properties in a rural location such as this will be heated using oil. Based on the assumption that an average family house requires 20,000 kWh/year for heating and hot water this would produce 6.26 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> on an oil fired system. The proposed wood boiler would produce 0.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> for the same output giving a reduction of 5.76 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

An average 2.0 litre petrol family car covering 10,000 miles per year emits 3.0 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Assuming there are two cars in the household this equates to 6.0 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Whilst the nearest primary schools are in Chipping and the High Schools are in Clitheroe there is an existing bus service in both directions providing school transport which travels along Chipping Road, thus eliminating car journeys to and from school.

In summary, the conversion of an existing building has a much lower carbon footprint than the construction of a new family home. By installing a wood boiler for heating and hot water there will be a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> output of 5.76 tonnes per annum which goes a long way to offset the usage of two cars. In balance it is also likely that if the house were to be located in one of the villages or towns that most families run two cars, although the annual mileage may be lower.

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It is felt that the conversion of the barn incorporating renewable energy will be no less sustainable than the construction of a new house within a village location.

**Key statement EN2: Landscape**

The proposed conversion has been designed to fit with this policy. All external features will remain unchanged with the exception of the conservation roof lights which will be glazed with anti-glare glass and a powder coated frame to reduce visual impact.

If the barn is not converted to a new use it is likely to deteriorate rapidly, possibly collapse and become an eyesore within the AONB. There is a likelihood that further rubbish and other waste will be stored around the site which is surely detrimental to the setting and character of the area.

**Key statement EN3: Sustainable development and climate change**

The proposal can be recognised as a sustainable development as it re-uses the considerable resources already tied up in this historic building. The location of the property does mean that the occupiers will be essential car users but the carbon footprint of the car use can be offset by the use of renewable energy within the property as already discussed.

**Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets**

The presumption is in favour of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets within the borough. The Heritage Statement submitted with the application describes the building and its past uses. The recommended recording of the building and its features will ensure that the information is available for future generations.

The design of the proposed dwelling aims to preserve all the existing openings so that the history of the building will still be clearly visible. There will be no new openings around the walls which will preserve the appearance of the barn in its current form.

**Policy DMG1: General considerations**

The building has been designed to retain all the features of the historic barn so that it remains in keeping with its surroundings and is sympathetic to the surrounding landscape. The re-use of the building along with the incorporation of a renewable heating system ensures sustainability.

The existing access is safe and there is adequate parking within the site on the area which has historically been used for agricultural machines and tractors.

By maintaining the same footprint the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the surrounding area.

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The design incorporates features to accommodate protected species and to protect the heritage of this historic barn and dwelling.

**Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations**

The policy states that within the AONB consideration must be given to protecting, conserving and enhancing the landscape and character of the area. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings. 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 proposed conversion will re-use the existing barn without any changes to its footprint and without any changes to the existing openings. The only external change will be the addition of two conservation roof lights on each side of the roof to allow sufficient natural light in the bedrooms.

The existing boundaries around the curtilage of the site will remain but it is acknowledged that there is likely to be a washing line and possibly outdoor furniture within the garden area.

The hardcore area to the north of the barn is regularly used to park agricultural machines and tractors so it is deemed that parking family cars in the same area will not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the AONB.

**Policy DMG3: Transport and mobility**

The proposal is not a major application and will only provide accommodation for one family. There is public transport provision to all the schools in the area but it is acknowledged there will be a heavier reliance on cars in this location than for housing within local towns.

**Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the open countryside and AONB**

The barn is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for substantial reconstruction. The exterior design will not be altered so that the overall structure remains in keeping with the surrounding area. The conservation roof lights which will be added will be glazed with anti-glare glass to minimise any visual impact.

In its current state the barn can be converted, however the gable wall on the west elevation is deteriorating and within a short number of years will collapse. This substantial barn will then become an eyesore in the landscape as it will inevitably collapse. It is not suitable for modern agriculture and therefore it is not cost effective to repair and maintain in the current economic climate.

We feel strongly that this is an appropriate re-use of this historic barn.



**Policy DMH4: The conversion of barns and other buildings to dwellings**

Whilst the building is not adjacent to the farm yard it is located within the developed area of farm tracks and hardstanding and is only 130 metres to the west of the main yard. Wood Top Farm is a large dairy holding 230 metres to the west of Brook Wood Barn meaning that the barn is not isolated from other structures.

The conversion meets the planning policy in that it will not require any expenditure by public authorities and utilities to provide infrastructure and the design ensures there will be no detrimental impact on the landscape qualities of the area.

The proposals are consistent with the conservation and natural beauty of the area and conform with the guidance for the conversion of buildings within the AONB. A bat and barn owl survey has been carried out and mitigation measures included to accommodate roosting and nesting facilities for barn owls.

The barn is structurally sound and capable of conversion without any alterations to the external appearance and will accommodate four bedrooms for a family dwelling. All the features of the barn will be retained and the owners are happy to record all the features before work is commenced as recommended by Lancashire County Council.

This policy states that *“the re-use of existing rural buildings provides an important opportunity to preserve buildings that contribute to the areas character and setting, can usefully provide a housing resource and promote sustainability”*

*“The conversion of buildings should be of a high standard and in keeping with local tradition. The impact of the development, including the creation of a garden area and car parking facilities should not harm the appearance or function of the area in which it is situated. Access to the site should be to a safe standard ..”*

The proposal has been designed having regard to the HELM Hood Practice Guidance on the Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings.

This policy supports the re-use and conversion of this traditional stone barn as the design takes account of the guidance provided by Ribble Valley Borough Council and Historic England.

**Policy DME2: Landscape and townscape protection**

The proposal will maintain the existing trees, hedgerows and boundary fences thus maintaining the landscape in its present form.

One of the main issues is the potential visual impact of the development within the Forest of Bowland AONB. It is acknowledged that there will be a very localised impact on the public footpaths in the immediate vicinity. Photographs of the area immediately around the barn have been collated to illustrate the site in its current state (Appendix 1).

Cars will be parked in place of agricultural machinery and the rubble and waste stored adjacent to the barn will be removed thus improving the visual appearance of the site. Photographs have been taken from a number of points on the public footpaths with the location of the photographer being marked on the map - see Appendix 2.

Photographs have been taken from public roads or rights of way at locations of between 1 km and 3kms from the site. Due to the topography of the site and the surrounding land the photographs have all been taken from higher ground looking down onto Brook Wood Barn and Cherry Tree Farm. The points where the photographs have been taken are marked on maps and included at Appendix 3.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1** The proposed development has been submitted to assist in preserving a small family dairy farm, typical of those found in the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 8.2** The main issues around the refusal of planning consent are the potential visual impact and the sustainability of a dwelling in this location.
- 8.3** The careful design of the conversion has sought to ensure that this historic building is preserved in its current form with no changes to the structure or the curtilage of the building. The existing access and hardstanding will remain as will the hedgerows, trees and other boundary features. Vehicles parked adjacent to the barn will simply replace the agricultural equipment.
- 8.4** The sustainability of the proposal was simply judged against the essential car use for a family living in this location. However there are other important considerations such as the re-use of a substantial stone barn as well as the incorporation of a renewable heating system.
- 8.5** We feel that the proposed conversion clearly meets with the majority of National and Local Planning Policy.
- 8.6** In light of the information provided in the application and additional information in this statement we respectfully request that the Inspector allows this appeal.

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# Appendix 1

Photographs of current site

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**Photographs of Brook Wood Barn illustrating the relationship to Cherry Tree Farm, Wood Top Farm, the hardcore tracks and hardstanding area.**



**Looking east to the main holding at Cherry Tree Farm**



**View from the farm track to the north of the barn with Wood Top Farm in the back ground**

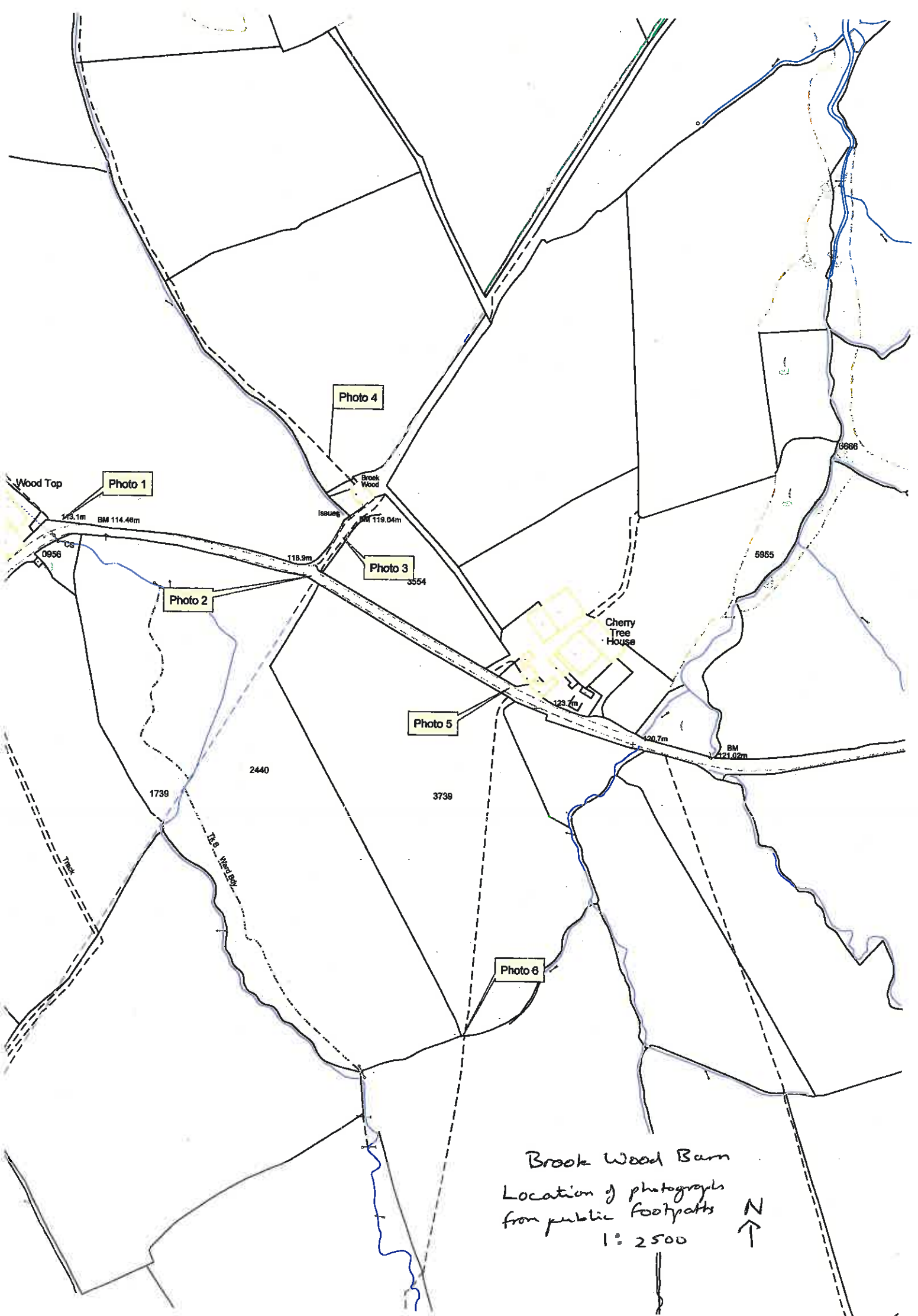


Looking to the south down the access track with mature trees by the roadside

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## Appendix 2

Photographs taken from public footpaths in the immediate vicinity of the barn





**Photographs taken along footpaths close to the site – see plan with reference numbers**



**1 - Stile from road adjacent to Wood Top Farm at the start of 3-3-FP 34**



**2 – Taken on the main road opposite to the site entrance looking along Footpath 3-3-FP 35**





**3 – Taken on the footpath along the access track 3-3-FP 35**



**4 – looking along the north elevation of the barn from Footpath 3-3-FP 35**



**5 – Looking west along Chipping Road from the front of Cherry Tree Farmhouse**

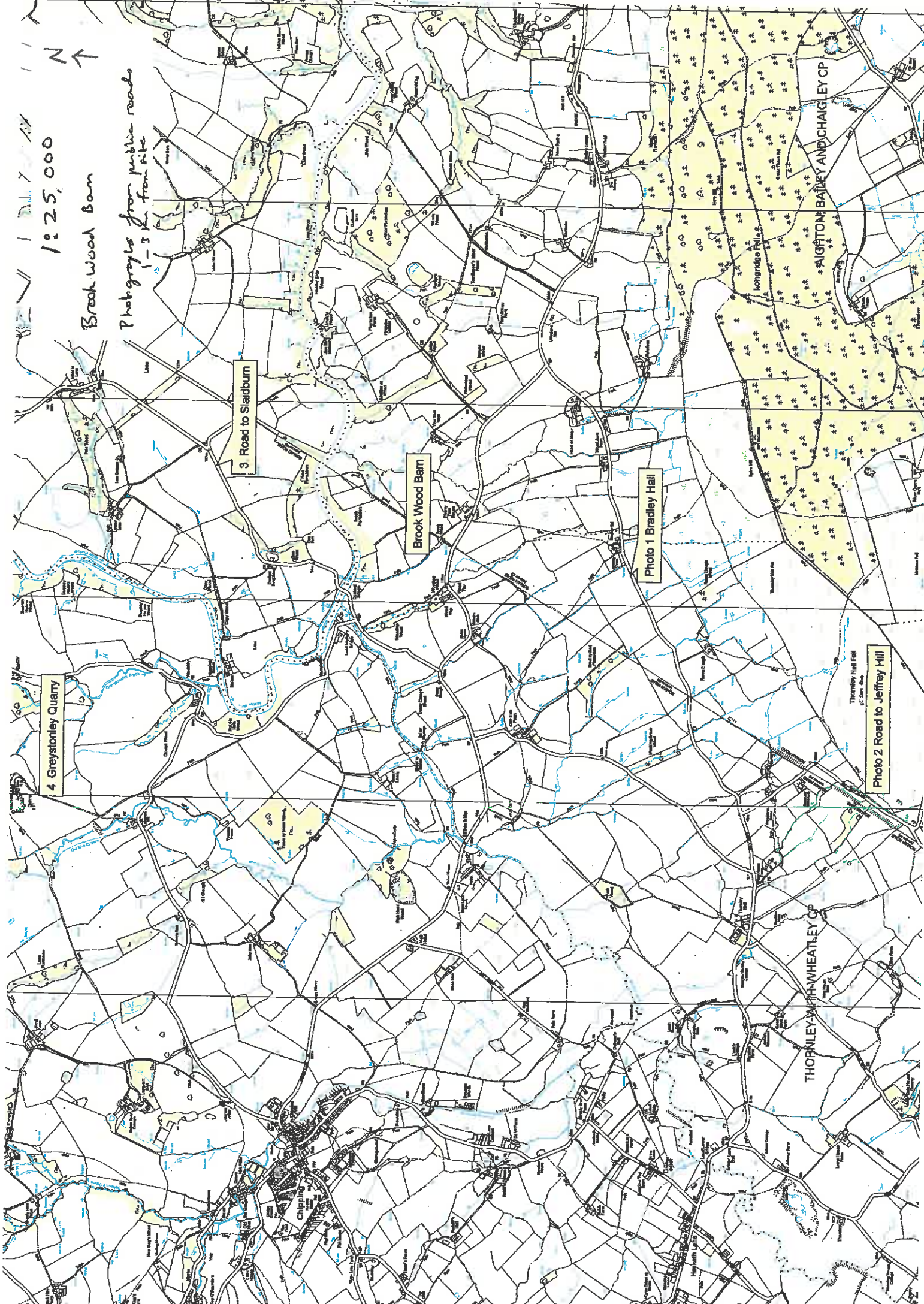


**6 – Looking north towards Brook Wood Barn from Footpath 3-3-FP 36**

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## Appendix 3

Photographs taken from between 1km and 3km from the site to show illustrate the wider viewpoint



1:25,000

Brook Wood Barn

Photographs from public roads  
1-3 from site

3 Road to Sladburn

Brook Wood Barn

Photo 1 Bradley Hill

4. Greystonley Quarry

Photo 2 Road to Jeffrey Hill

THORNLEY WITH WHEATLEY CP

SIGHTON BAILEY AND CHAIGLEY CP

Longridge Falls

Thornley Hill Fall  
1/2 mile SW



**Photographs taken 1 km – 3 km outside the site from public roads at higher elevations**

**1 – View taken from public road to the west of Bradley Hall – 0.96km**



**Wood Top Farm**

**Brook Wood Barn**

**Cherry tree Farm**

**2 – View of Brook Wood Barn from the road leading up to Jeffrey Hill and Longridge Fell  
2.3km**



**Wood Top Farm**

**Brook Wood Barn**

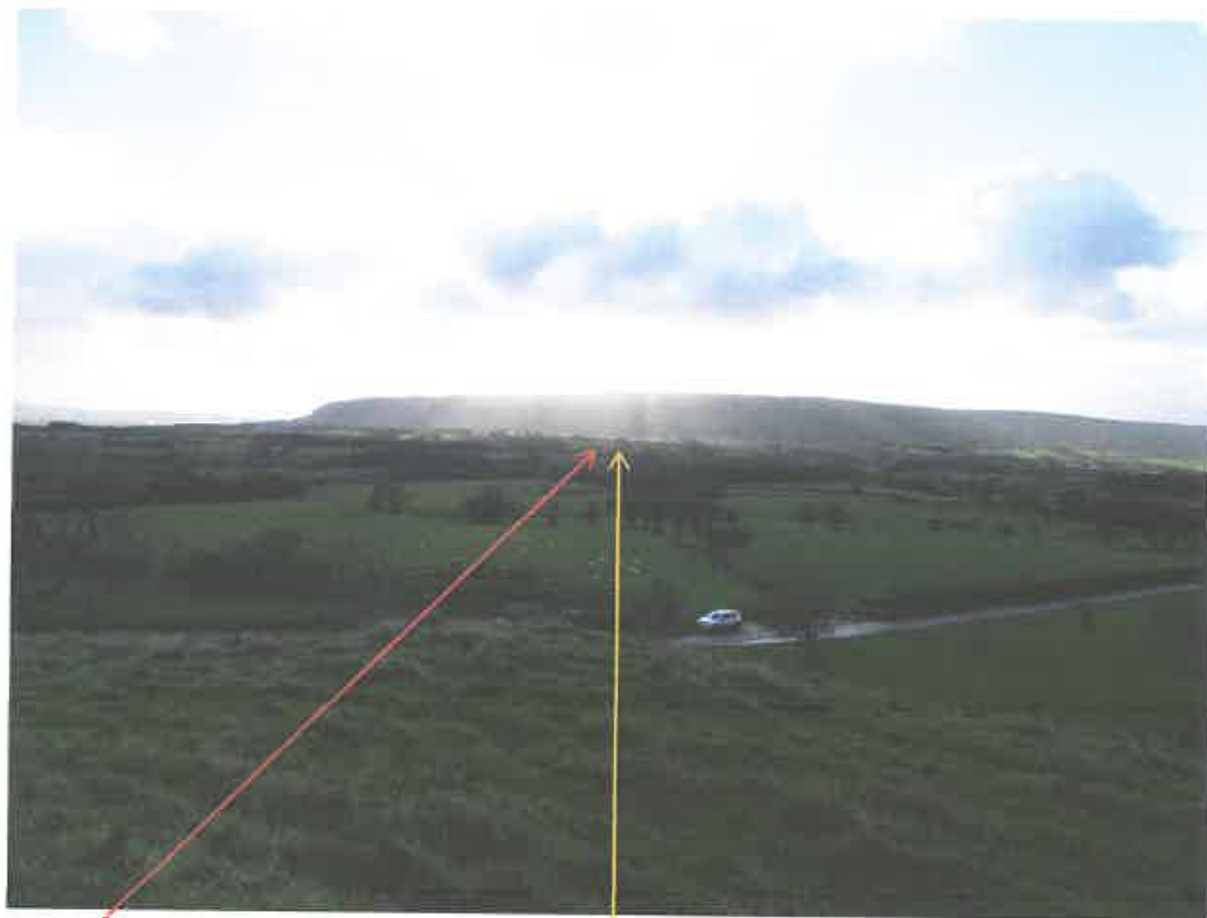
**Cherry tree Farm**

**3 - View from the road to Slaidburn to the north of Brook Wood Barn – 1.15km**



**Brook Wood Barn**

**4. View from Greystoneley Quarry to the north west of Brook Wood Barn – 2.5 km**



**Cherry Tree Farm**

**Brook Wood Barn**