

Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd

## GROUNDS OF APPEAL

Prepared for: Mr & Mrs Bonner

Property: The Old Dairy, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark, Clitheroe, BB7 3DG

Application Reference: 3/2025/0362

Decision Date: 6 August 2025

Appeal Against: Refusal of Planning Permission



Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd

Prepared By Simon Plowman MA MRTPI



REGISTERED IN ENGLAND COMPANY NO. 06279898

M10, MAXRON HOUSE, GREEN LANE, ROMILEY, STOCKPORT, SK6 3JQ

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## SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND TO THIS APPEAL

Planning application 3/2025/0362 was submitted on 21st May 2025 for a proposed two-storey side extension, modification of an existing window opening to form a new front entrance door, installation of solar panels and air source pump at The Old Dairy, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark, Clitheroe.

The application was refused on 6 August 2025 on the single ground that:

*"The proposed two-storey side extension by reason of its design, scale and siting would result in an incongruous and unsympathetic form of development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the surrounding area and the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The proposal is therefore considered to be in conflict with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMH5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy."*

This appeal challenges the council's assessment and demonstrates that the proposed development is entirely appropriate and policy compliant.

## APPEAL SITE

The appeal site comprises The Old Dairy, a converted agricultural building that forms part of a group of three dwellings arranged around a shared cobbled courtyard in Cow Ark. The property was converted from agricultural use to residential accommodation in 1989/1990 under planning permission 3/1989/0023 as part of a larger farm complex conversion.

The building is constructed from local stone with a natural slate roof, characteristic of traditional agricultural buildings in the Forest of Bowland area. The site lies within the designated Forest of Bowland National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and outside any defined settlement boundary.

The immediate context comprises the converted buildings of the former farm group, which together create a cohesive group of traditional stone buildings that maintain their agricultural character while serving modern residential needs.

## **APPEAL PROPOSAL**

The appeal proposal comprises a two-storey side extension that is subordinate in scale and set back from the main building with lower ridge height. The proposal also includes modification of an existing window opening to form a new front entrance door, installation of 12m<sup>2</sup> solar PV panels on the south-facing rear roof slope, air source heat pump installation, and an additional rooflight in Bedroom 3 to increase natural light.

The extension has been carefully designed to be subordinate to the main building through its reduced ridge height which maintains clear hierarchy with the original building. The set-back positioning ensures the original building line remains dominant, whilst matching materials using locally sourced reclaimed natural stone and slate provide continuity with the existing structure. The appropriate scale at 4m width x 7.8m length is proportionate to the existing building.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Paragraph 135 requires flexibility in design policies to allow for developments that add to the quality of an area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. Paragraph 139 confirms that significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design. Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) emphasises the importance of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets and their settings.

### **Ribble Valley Core Strategy**

Key Statement EN2 (Landscape) requires that the proposal conserves and enhances the Forest of Bowland National Landscape through sensitive design, appropriate materials, and subordinate scale. Policy DMG1 (General Considerations) requires that the proposal demonstrates high design quality through careful attention to scale, massing, materials, and relationship to surroundings. Policy DMG2 (Strategic Considerations) requires that the development respects the special qualities of the National Landscape through appropriate siting, design, and materials. Policy DMH5 (Residential and Curtilage Extensions) requires that the proposal accords with this policy through subordinate scale and sympathetic design.

### **Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) Guidance**

The proposal directly follows HELM guidance on "The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings" which specifically supports extensions that are "subordinate in scale and relate to the massing and character of the existing farmstead group."

## ASSESSMENT AND MAIN ISSUES

### 1. DESIGN QUALITY AND CHARACTER

**Council's Position:** The extension would be "incongruous and unsympathetic" due to design, scale, and siting.

**Appellant's Response:**

The council's assessment fundamentally misapplies design policy and fails to recognise the proposal's compliance with established guidance.

The ridge height is clearly lower than the main building, maintaining hierarchy, whilst the width of 4m represents an appropriate proportion to the existing building. The set-back positioning ensures the extension reads as secondary to the main structure, and the overall scale aligns with HELM guidance for extensions to converted farm buildings.

The proposal incorporates locally sourced reclaimed natural stone with random coursing that matches existing construction. Natural slate roofing replicates existing materials exactly, whilst traditional construction details include wet mortar struck verge and ridge tiles. White painted timber frames match the existing fenestration style.

The officer's report criticises specific elements without considering the overall design approach. The three front rooflights provide necessary natural light while maintaining the agricultural character. Similar arrangements are common in sensitive barn conversions and align with sustainable design principles. The covered terrace enhances the indoor-outdoor relationship appropriate to modern residential use while using traditional materials and proportions. The contemporary glazing respects the building's character while meeting modern thermal performance requirements, following established precedent in heritage building adaptations.

### 2. LANDSCAPE AND SETTING IMPACT

**Council's Position:** The proposal would harm the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

**Appellant's Response:**

The assessment of landscape impact is fundamentally flawed. The building line is maintained as the extension does not project beyond established footprint pattern. Materials continuity through matching stone and slate ensures visual integration, whilst the scale appropriateness of the subordinate extension maintains the building's agricultural character. The existing courtyard arrangement provides screening context that limits wider landscape visibility.



The proposal demonstrates National Landscape compatibility through traditional materials that respect local distinctiveness. The agricultural character is preserved through subordinate design approach, whilst sustainable elements including solar panels and heat pump support National Landscape management objectives. Enhancement is achieved through sensitive adaptation of the heritage building.

### **3. HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS**

The council's assessment notably found neutral impact on the Grade II Listed Lees House Farm, confirming appropriate separation and design sensitivity.

The proposal actively enhances the heritage value of the converted farm building by maintaining agricultural character through appropriate materials and scale. It improves functionality while respecting historic fabric and follows established precedent, as the building has extensive history of approved alterations including applications 3/2000/0651, 3/2001/0887, 3/2002/0664, 3/2008/0679, and 3/2008/0680.

### **4. PRECEDENT AND CONSISTENCY**

The planning history demonstrates the council's previous acceptance of sensitive extensions to this building group. Application 3/2000/0651 concerned original barn conversion with associated works. Application 3/2001/0887 involved alterations to approved barn conversion scheme. Application 3/2002/0664 concerned further alterations and extension to garage. Applications 3/2008/0679 & 0680 involved internal and external alterations.

This extensive history of approvals establishes clear precedent for sensitive adaptation of these heritage buildings.

### **5. SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

The proposal actively supports sustainability objectives through several measures. The solar PV installation provides 12m<sup>2</sup> of panels generating renewable electricity, directly supporting Policy DME5 and Key Statement EN3. The new construction exceeds current Building Regulations standards for thermal efficiency. The air source heat pump provides renewable heating technology reducing carbon emissions. Enhanced natural light from additional rooflights reduces artificial lighting requirements.

These elements align with both local policy and National Landscape management objectives promoting sustainable development.

## **6. COMPLIANCE WITH HELM GUIDANCE**

The council's supporting statement specifically references HELM guidance, which clearly supports the proposal: "Extensions are supported that are subordinate in scale and relate to the massing and character of the existing farmstead group."

The proposal directly complies with this guidance through subordinate scale via reduced ridge height and set-back positioning. It maintains character relationship through matching materials and construction methods whilst preserving the farmstead context by maintaining the courtyard group arrangement.

## **7. OFFICER ASSESSMENT ERRORS**

The delegated report contains several assessment errors. The officer applies overly restrictive design standards not supported by policy requirements for subordinate extensions to heritage buildings. No weight is given to sustainability benefits, heritage enhancement, or compliance with HELM guidance. Previous approvals for this building group demonstrate acceptance of contemporary interventions within traditional frameworks. Specific criticisms of individual elements fail to assess overall design coherence and policy compliance.

## **AMENDED DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

The appellant notes that amended designs were submitted during the application process to address initial concerns, but these were not accepted by the officer. This demonstrates willingness to engage constructively with the planning process and adapt the proposal to meet legitimate planning concerns.

The current proposal represents a balanced design solution that respects heritage character through appropriate materials and scale. It meets functional requirements for modern family accommodation and supports sustainability objectives through renewable energy technology. The proposal maintains landscape quality through sensitive siting and design.

## **COUNCIL'S ACCEPTANCE OF EXTENSION PRINCIPLE AND PROCEDURAL CONCERNS**

The application timeline and officer correspondence reveal fundamental flaws in the Council's approach that directly contradict the subsequent refusal decision.

### **Application Timeline and Officer Delays**

The application was submitted on 6th May 2025 but was not validated until 23rd May 2025 due to required clarifications. Significantly, on 20th June 2025, planning officer Maya Cullen contacted the architect stating: *"I am still making an assessment of the scheme and have not yet had the chance to review the application in detail."* This

admission, made four weeks after validation, demonstrates that no proper assessment had been undertaken during the majority of the statutory determination period.

### **Officer's Explicit Acceptance of Extension Principle**

On 16th July 2025, Ms Cullen sent correspondence to the architect that fundamentally contradicts the later refusal decision:

*"In its current form, we do not feel the design of the extension is appropriate to the converted barn, particularly with the shallow roof and high eaves height. We can agree an extension of time to amend the extension. It is suggested that this is moved more centrally within the flank wall, with a lower eaves height. Please can the number of roof lights on the front elevation also be reduced."*

This correspondence unequivocally demonstrates that the Council accepted an extension was appropriate in principle at this sensitive location within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The officer's statement "we can agree an extension of time to amend the extension" explicitly confirms acceptance of the development concept, with concerns limited to specific design details.

### **Unreasonable Time Pressures and Process Deficiencies**

Despite the application taking the full eight-week determination period, Ms Cullen demanded an immediate response from the architect, stating: *"Please can you let me know as soon as possible, ideally by 2pm today how you wish to proceed with the application."* This unreasonable time pressure, imposed after the officer's own significant delays in assessment, demonstrates poor practice and prevents proper consideration of amendments.

### **Failure to Engage Constructively**

The architect responded constructively to the officer's suggestions, making amendments as close to the planning officer's advice as possible whilst requesting dialogue: *"I would be very grateful if we could discuss the revised design and/or explore another option or compromise on the original proposal as we look to obtain permission within this application. I am happy to agree to another extension of time if required."*

No opportunity for informal discussion was offered despite the architect's clear willingness to engage. This failure to facilitate dialogue represents a missed opportunity to resolve concerns collaboratively and contradicts good practice in development management.

### **Contradictory Assessment Approach**

The concerns raised by Ms Cullen were specific technical design matters including shallow roof pitch, high eaves height, and number of rooflights. These are detailed design considerations rather than fundamental policy objections relating to the National Landscape designation, heritage impact, or development appropriateness. The officer's suggestion of specific amendments including repositioning the extension more centrally and reducing eaves height demonstrates these were resolvable technical matters.

### **Inconsistent Decision-Making**

The single refusal ground claims the extension would be "incongruous and unsympathetic" and conflict with multiple policies (EN2, DMG1, DMG2, DMH5). However, Ms Cullen's earlier correspondence clearly indicates these policy concerns could be addressed through design amendments rather than representing fundamental objections. The subsequent refusal after offering to facilitate amendments represents an unreasonable change in approach from collaborative problem-solving to outright rejection.

### **Local Support and Context**

The application was submitted with full support from neighbours, demonstrating local acceptance of the proposal. Furthermore, a previous extension directly adjacent to and visible from the nearby Grade II Listed Lees House Farm was approved under application 3/2020/0149, establishing clear precedent for sympathetic extensions in this sensitive location.

The Council's approach demonstrates procedural deficiencies, inconsistent assessment, and failure to engage constructively with a development that their own officer explicitly accepted in principle. The refusal contradicts the officer's earlier position and represents an unreasonable approach to development management.

### **CONCLUSION**

This appeal should be allowed for the following reasons.

The proposal fully accords with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2, and DMH5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, as well as national planning policy. The extension demonstrates high design quality through subordinate scale, appropriate materials, and sensitive detailing that respects and enhances the character of the converted farm building.

The proposal positively contributes to the heritage value of the building while enabling sensitive adaptation for modern residential use. The design directly follows established government guidance for extensions to converted farm buildings. The proposal

actively supports climate change objectives through renewable energy technology and enhanced thermal performance.

The development conserves and enhances the Forest of Bowland National Landscape through appropriate siting, scale, and materials. Extensive planning history demonstrates the acceptability of sensitive alterations to this building group.

The council's refusal is based on an overly restrictive interpretation of design policy that fails to recognise the proposal's compliance with established guidance and policy requirements. The proposed extension represents exemplary practice in the sensitive adaptation of heritage buildings within protected landscapes.

**The appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions.**

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Prepared by Simon Plowman MA MRTPI on behalf of Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd at the request of *Mr & Mrs Bonner*

Enclosures:

- Submitted planning statement with the application – copy below
- Copy of Helm Guidance attached separately
- Extract of Helm Guidance below

HELM guidance extract:

Page 37 and 38 of the Historic England Publication: "Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse" published 2017. Policy DMH4 of the RV Local Plan references this guidance.

Under section 3.11 it states: "Overtly domestic extensions such as porches and conservatories are alien in character and can rarely work successfully within the context

of historic farm buildings. However, a carefully designed extension or new structure might be considered alongside a farm building if this will safeguard the significance of the main structure." And "Whether contemporary in design or based on an existing structure, extensions and new buildings should be subordinate in scale and relate to the massing and character of the existing farmstead group."

I am of the considered opinion that the proposal as submitted has been carefully designed to work with the form and character of the existing building. This is because you have ensured the roof pitch is the same, you have matched materials and have sited to minimise obscuring an existing opening. You will see the examples on pages 37 and 38 show best practice examples here you can see a new roof flying over an original structure with the same pitch but ridge offset – this is similar to what you have designed.

Of course you could amend so that it works but I think as submitted the scheme provides balance and is clearly subordinate to the existing building. Examples in the screen shot from Historic England: (on next page)



#### Images 57-60

**57** This carefully designed new extension has used the walls and footprint of an old piggery. A new link has been made to the main barn.

**58-59** An archive and office have been inserted into the shell of a disused building on a working farm. Two new timber structures sit within the old walls with a new roof over-sailing each.

**60** A new building for garaging with living accommodation over has been skilfully incorporated into this courtyard group.



#### Image 56

This small extension to a brick barn has a simple modern character that avoids domestic references.

Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd

Planning, Design and Access Statement  
Two-Storey Side Extension  
The Old Dairy, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark, Clitheroe, BB7 3DG

April 2025



PLAN:8 TOWN PLANNING LTD

Prepared By Simon Plowman MA MRTPI

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## Planning, Design and Access Statement

Two-Storey Side Extension at The Old Dairy, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark, Clitheroe, BB7 3DG. Prepared for: Mr & Mrs Bonner

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### Introduction

- 1 This Planning DAS Support Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr & Mrs Bonner to accompany a full planning application for a two storey side extension. Also proposed is to modify an opening for a new entrance. The property is a barn conversion (converted from agricultural use under planning permission 3/1989/0023) and is located within the designated Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2 The proposed development includes:
  - A two-storey side extension
  - Reconfiguration of the en-suite layout with an enlarged gable end window
  - Modifications to an existing opening to form new entrance
  - Additional rooflight in Bedroom 3 to increase natural light over the mezzanine level
  - Installation of surface-mounted PV solar panels (12.0m<sup>2</sup>) on the rear roof slope
- 3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings which illustrate the existing property and the proposed development.

### Site and Context

- 4 The Old Dairy is one of three dwellings situated around a shared cobbled courtyard in Cow Ark, within the Ribble Valley area. The property was converted from agricultural use to residential accommodation in 1989/1990 as part of a group conversion of redundant farm buildings that formed part of a larger farm complex.

- 5 The site is located within the designated Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and outside any defined settlement boundary in the Ribble Valley Local Plan. The immediate context comprises the converted buildings of the former farm group, which together create a cohesive group of traditional stone buildings arranged around the central courtyard.
- 6 The existing building is constructed from local stone with a natural slate roof, characteristic of traditional agricultural buildings in the area. Windows and doors are of painted timber construction, reflecting the authentic character of the conversion while providing modern thermal performance.

### Planning Policy Context

- 7 The following policies from the Ribble Valley Local Plan are relevant to this application:

**Key Statement DS1:** Development Strategy

**Key Statement DS2:** Sustainable Development

**Key Statement EN2:** Landscape

**Key Statement EN3:** Sustainable Development and Climate Change

**Policy DMG1:** General Considerations

**Policy DMG2:** Strategic Considerations

**Policy DME2:** Landscape & Townscape Protection

**Policy DMH3:** Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB

**Policy DMH4:** The Conversion of Barns and Other Buildings to Dwellings

**Policy DME5:** Renewable Energy

- 8 While Policy DMH4 contains guidance primarily focused on new barn conversions, it does establish important principles for the treatment of converted farm buildings, stating that further extensions should not "harm the character or appearance of the building." Reference is made in DMH4 to "Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) Good Practice guidance on the Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings." Within HELM guidance it is clear that extensions are supported that are "subordinate in scale and relate to the massing and character of the existing farmstead group." The design approach in the plans presented by Monks Architectural Design follows this ethos.

## Design Approach

- 9 The design approach for the proposed extension seeks to respect and enhance the existing character of the barn conversion while providing additional functional living space. Key principles include sensitive detailing and subordinate scale as discussed below.

## Scale and Massing

- 10 The proposed extension represents a subordinate extension being set back ensuring that the extension remains visually subordinate to the main structure. The ridge height is lower, and eaves tie in with the existing building, maintaining a coherent roofline and ensuring the extension reads as an integral part of the overall structure rather than an addition.

## Materials and Construction

- 11 The extension will be constructed using locally sourced reclaimed natural stone laid with random coursing and joints to match the existing building. This ensures visual continuity and maintains the authentic character of the former agricultural building. New walls will be carefully tied into the existing structure to create a seamless transition.
- 12 The roof will be finished with natural slate and ridge tiles to match the existing roof covering, maintaining the visual integrity of the building. Traditional details such as wet mortar struck verge and ridge tile details will be replicated in the extension.
- 13 Window and door frames will be of matching style and material (white painted timber) to the existing openings, ensuring a consistent appearance throughout the property. The new glazed screen for the dining area will use white powder-coated aluminium slim profile frames incorporating thermally efficient glazing, providing a contemporary element that respects the traditional character.

## Layout and Function

- 14 The proposed extension and internal alterations have been designed to improve the functionality of the dwelling while respecting its historic character:

**Ground Floor:** The extension creates an enlarged kitchen/dining space and provides a new covered patio area, enhancing the

connection between indoor and outdoor living spaces. An improved entrance is proposed.

**First Floor:** The extension accommodates an enlarged master bedroom (Bed-1) with en-suite bathroom and improved circulation space. The reconfiguration also includes a home office/dressing area, reflecting modern living requirements while respecting the building's historic fabric.

## Sustainable Design Features

- 15 The proposal incorporates several sustainable design elements:
- **Solar PV Panels:** 12m<sup>2</sup> of surface-mounted photovoltaic panels on the south-facing (rear) roof slope to generate renewable electricity.
  - **Thermal Efficiency:** The new construction will meet or exceed current Building Regulations for thermal performance, reducing energy consumption.
  - **Natural Light:** Additional rooflights will increase natural daylight, reducing the need for artificial lighting.
- 16 These features align with Key Statement EN3 (Sustainable Development and Climate Change) and Policy DME5 (Renewable Energy) of the Ribble Valley Local Plan.

## Impact Assessment

### Impact on Character and Appearance

- 17 The proposed extension has been carefully designed to respect the character and appearance of the existing barn conversion:
- **Scale and Proportion:** The extension is subordinate to the main building and maintains appropriate proportions.
  - **Materials and Detailing:** The use of matching materials and traditional construction techniques ensures visual continuity.
  - **Form:** The extension maintains the simple rectangular form of the original barn, avoiding complex shapes that would detract from its agricultural character.

- 18 The design approach follows established precedents for extending converted agricultural buildings, maintaining their character while allowing for sensitive adaptation to meet modern living requirements.

### Impact on the AONB

- 19 The proposed development has been designed to minimize its impact on the Forest of Bowland AONB:
- **Visual Impact:** The extension maintains the established building line and uses matching materials, ensuring it will appear as an integral part of the existing building group rather than an intrusive addition.
  - **Scale:** The modest scale of the extension ensures it will not dominate the landscape or detract from the natural beauty of the area.
  - **Sustainability:** The incorporation of renewable energy technology (solar PV) aligns with AONB management objectives to promote sustainable development.

### Impact on Neighbouring Properties

- 20 The proposed extension will not have any significant impact on neighbouring properties:
- **Privacy:** The extension maintains appropriate distances from neighbouring properties and does not introduce new overlooking windows.
  - **Light:** Due to the orientation and position of the extension, there will be no significant overshadowing of neighbouring properties.
  - **Outlook:** The extension respects the established building arrangement around the courtyard and will not impair the outlook from neighbouring properties.

### Access Considerations

- 21 The existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements to the property will remain unchanged. The property benefits from ample on-site parking via the existing parking area, and this will not be affected by the proposed development.
- 22 Internally, the reconfiguration improves circulation and accessibility with wider doorways and improved layout. The ground floor entrance hall

has been widened to improve accessibility, and the new kitchen/dining layout provides better functionality.

## Conclusion

- 23 The proposed two-storey side extension at The Old Dairy represents a sensitive and high-quality addition to this converted barn. The design respects the character and appearance of the existing building through appropriate scale, massing, and the use of matching materials and traditional construction techniques.
- 24 The proposal aligns with relevant local planning policies, particularly those relating to design quality (DMG1), protection of landscape character (DME2), and the sensitive treatment of converted agricultural buildings (DMH4). The incorporation of renewable energy technology supports sustainability objectives (EN3 and DME5). Furthermore, the proposal aligns with *“Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) Good Practice guidance on the Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings”* as the proposed extension is subordinate in scale and suitably relates to the massing and character of the existing farmstead group.
- 25 The extension will provide improved living accommodation that meets the needs of the occupants while preserving and enhancing the character of this former agricultural building and making a positive contribution to the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 26 For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.