



Thorneyholme Hall, Dunsop Bridge Lancashire, BB7 3BB.

Change of Use from Private Dwelling (C3) to a Hotel/Holiday Let (C1)

PLANNING STATEMENT

September 2022



PWA Planning is a trading name of Paul Walton Associates Ltd.
Registered in England and Wales no. 8605706. Registered Address:
316 Blackpool Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 3AE

2 Lockside Office Park
Lockside Road
Preston
PR2 2YS

01772 369 669
info@pwaplanning.co.uk
www.pwaplanning.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. PWA Planning is retained by Mr. Michael Reilly ('the Applicant') to progress a planning application for the conversion of a private residential unit (use class C3) into a bed and breakfast hotel/holiday let (use class C1) ('the proposed development') at Thorneyholme Hall, Dunsop Bridge Lancashire, BB7 3BB. ('application site'). The planning application is made to Ribble Valley Borough Council ('the Local Planning Authority') as a full application and relates to the red edge application site boundary defined by the submitted Location Plan (ref. 1178-PL-01A – Location Plan).

- 1.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Planning Statement will demonstrate that the proposals accord with the provisions of the relevant policies of the Development Plan, and moreover that there are other significant material considerations which indicate that planning permission ought to be granted. In addition, the statement will seek to demonstrate that there are no technical reasons which could hinder the grant of planning permission.

- 1.3. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application package, which includes the following documents: -
 - 1 APP form, relevant certificates and notices;
 - Drawn information: -
 - Location Plan (ref. 1178-PL-01A);
 - Proposed Site Plan (ref. 1178-PL-22G);
 - Annex Building (ref. 1178-PL-23G);
 - Existing & Proposed Ground Floor Plan (ref. 1178-PL54A);
 - Existing & Proposed First Floor Plan (ref. 1178-PL56);
 - Existing & Proposed Second Floor Plan (ref. 1178-PL57);
 - Existing and Proposed Elevations (ref. 1178-PL-58A);
 - Planning Statement (this document);

- Flood Risk Assessment; and
- Tree Survey.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site comprises of Thorneyholme Hall which was formerly a hotel premises and spa/leisure facilities before the subsequent conversion of the property to a private dwelling. The application site lies outside of the defined settlement of Dunsop Bridge, though is bound by further residential development to the east. Additionally, the site falls within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.2. The Hall's associated curtilage is made up of a garden area which immediately adjoins the dwelling to the east and south. Beyond this is a car park which was formally occupied by a ménage. The site is fairly flat and benefits from a number of mature trees on the edge of the curtilage, namely to the east, this will help filter views from public vantage points. The site where the existing outbuilding is located was previously partly occupied by a garage associated with the property. The river Hodder is situated to the north, with the wider surrounding area consisting largely of agricultural land and private dwellings, land use types synonymous with its rural location.
- 2.3. Most recently the site was granted planning consent to change use to a cookery school. The lessons were to be provided in the constructed outbuilding, originally consented as an extension to the garage, whilst Thorneyholme Hall would be used to provide accommodation to guests. The permission was granted under application 3/2021/1084, however due to the onerous nature of some of the conditions, there has been complications with regard to the operation of the school which have resulted in the need to explore alternative options. The Cookery School remains a fall-back option for the applicant.
- 2.4. A Location Plan showing the site within its wider setting is provided with the supporting documents (drawing ref: 1178-PL-01A). Additionally, see Figure 1 overpage for an aerial image of the Site in its closer setting:

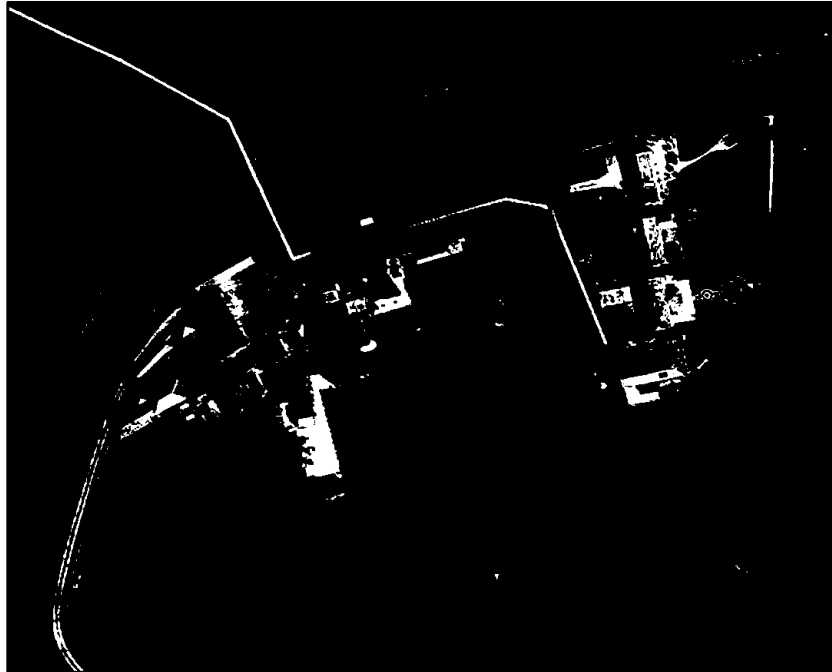


Figure 1: Aerial image showing the location of the site (not to scale)

- 2.5. The site lies within a rural location but does benefit from direct access to the local road network which links the site to Dunsop Bridge and wider transport routes and other larger settlements. Clitheroe is the closest larger settlement and is less than 10 miles away. From the site, access can be gained to a number of Public Rights of Way allowing for access to the wider area. Dunsop Bridge is a rural village where a number of local services are available.
- 2.6. The site is within an area identified by the Environment Agency's flood risk map as being subject to flooding. The majority of the site falls within Flood Zone 3 with a minor portion being detailed as Flood Zone 2. However, as part of a previous application submitted to the Council, it was successfully demonstrated that the entire site is in fact Flood Zone 2.
- 2.7. The online record suggests there are 2 known Tree Preservation Orders (references 124 and 77) within close proximity to Thorneyholme Hall, the site also lies within the Forest of Bowland AONB.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The proposal is for a change of use of Thorneyholme Hall from a private residential dwelling into a hotel or holiday let. This proposal includes both the Hall itself and the associated outbuilding, within the curtilage of the Hall. The Hall will be converted to provide a kitchen, two dining areas, two lounges, a garden room and ancillary rooms such as a utility room, store and toilets on the ground floor. Across the first and second floors, eight bedrooms will be provided in total.
- 3.2. The existing outbuilding, previously consented as part of the Cookery School, will be converted to provide a conference room, cinema, gym, treatment room and ancillary spaces such as toilets, a kitchen, office and store. For clarity the use of the facilities in the outbuilding will be solely to serve the users of the accommodation and not for other external commercial use.
- 3.3. Car parking for guests and staff will be provided on site through 10 spaces which will be created on an existing paved area towards the south of the site. The grounds and gardens of the hall will be retained and improved for use by the guests. The access to the parking is via a driveway which sits to the east of the dwelling and is lined by low lying lighting bollards. The drive and lights were approved as part of the previous cookery school application (3/2021/1084).
- 3.4. The proposed change of use will not require any alterations to the external elements of Thorneyholme Hall or the ancillary building. The internal layout of the hall is readily useable as a hotel or holiday let, which as noted was a previous use of the building.

PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 A search of Ribble Valley Borough Council's online planning register has been carried out in order to understand the planning history relevant to the site and the proposed development:

- **3/2021/1084:** Change of use from private dwelling to cookery school with accommodation. *Approved 28/01/2022.*
- **3/2021/0676:** Proposed outbuilding, ancillary to existing dwelling house. *Refused 02/09/2021.*
- **3/2019/0288:** Change of use from private dwelling to function venue and ancillary cooking school. *Withdrawn 17/05/2019.*
- **3/2017/0408:** Change of use from private dwelling to cookery school with accommodation. *Approved 22/08/2017.*
- **3/2015/0914:** Outline planning permission for 6no. holiday cottages with access. *Refused 06/05/2016.*

4.2 As noted in Section 2, the building proposed to be used for the cookery school was initially to be formed via an extension to the garage (as per app 3/2017/0408). The building wasn't erected in accordance with the approved plans, and this was later brought to the attention of the Council. Initially the Applicant tried to regularise the building through the submission of application 3/2021/0676, however this was refused. Following this a second application for the cookery school was granted, subject to conditions, which was representative of the onsite arrangement.

PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

5.1 As part of the progression of the proposals a formal pre-application request was submitted to Ribble Valley and allocated the reference number RV/2022/ENQ/00050. As part of the pre-app service a site visit was undertaken on the 3rd of August 2022, with access to the external and internal elements of the site provided.

5.2 Following the site visit a formal written response was issued on the 8th of August 2022. The following excerpts from the written response are those deemed most pertinent:

"Having reviewed the material submitted I believe that it is possible for the proposed development to satisfy criteria 4. (of Policy DMG2) as listed above by virtue of the provision of only eight rooms as part of the proposed hotel. In my view this will allow the development to maintain an appropriate scale in relation to the site location and the surrounding area, particularly as minimal external alterations are envisaged to accommodate the development notwithstanding the annex building which has already been erected."

"The conversion of Thorneyholme Hall to a hotel will introduce an increased level of choice and variety of tourist accommodation within the borough secured through the conversion of an existing dwelling and is therefore in accordance with Key Statement EC3."

"Whilst the proposed annex has introduced new built form to the site, it remains physically well related to an existing group of buildings and is of a scale and design suitable to the AONB. The existing scale and massing of the outbuilding (notwithstanding use) has previously been accepted subject to a condition relating to its visual appearance and I therefore see no reason to suggest its acceptability in terms of scale and massing has changed."

5.3 Whilst the response highlighted the need to take into account the existing tree coverage and parking requirements, it did issue a general conclusion that the proposals were

considered acceptable and would “*enhance the tourism economy in a sustainable manner*”.

- 5.4 The proposals as submitted have taken account of the comments made during pre-app and the positive and proactive approach taken by the LPA is welcomed.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that:

"where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise".

6.2. In this instance, the statutory Development Plan for the application site comprises of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 (2014), and Housing and Economic Development Plan Document (HED DPD). Additionally, key policy documents that comprise 'material considerations' include to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

6.3. An extract from the Proposals Map is provided at Figure 2, the site is located within an AONB (Policy EN2).

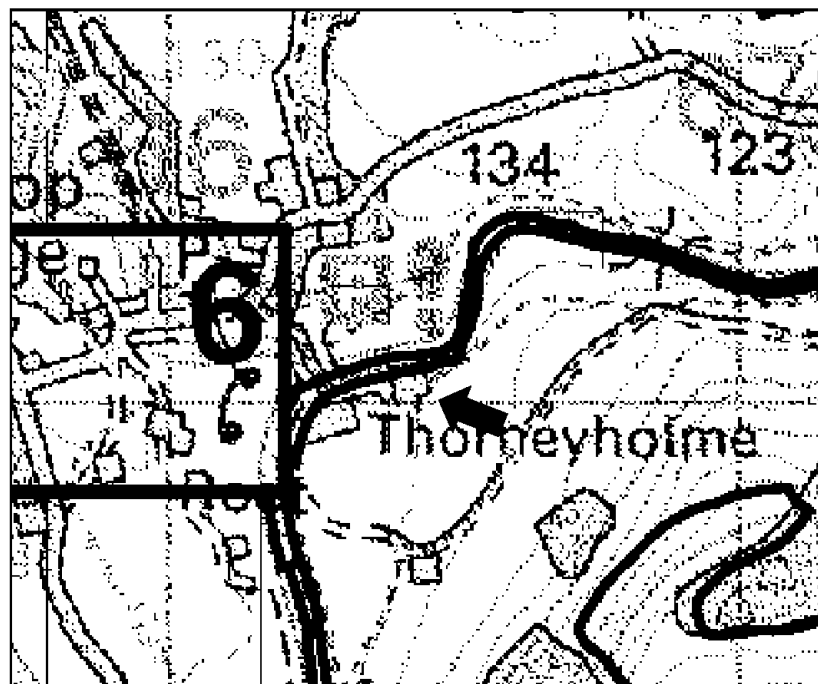


Figure 2: Extract from the Housing and Economic Development DPD Proposals Map

Development Plan

Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008 – 2028

6.4. The following Ribble Valley Core Strategy policies are considered to be relevant to the proposal at hand:

- Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy;
- Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development;
- Key Statement EN2: Landscape;
- Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets;
- Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development;
- Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy;
- Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations;
- Policy DMG1: General Considerations;
- Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations;
- Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility;
- Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands;
- Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection;
- Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy;
- Policy DMB3: Recreation and Tourism Development.

6.5. **Key Statement DS1** seeks to outline briefly the locations in which growth will be focused. Whilst the policy doesn't specifically refer to function venues it does infer that new leisure development will largely be directed toward Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. Dunsop Bridge is mentioned as a settlement where development could be acceptable, however it would have to be focused around a local need or deliver regeneration benefits.

- 6.6. **Key Statement DS2:** Sustainable Development looks to mirror Paragraph 11 of the NPPF which details the sustainable development principle that seeks to guide both authorities and developers. The Statement details that:

"When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Framework. The Council will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and where relevant, policies in the neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

- 6.7. As discussed further within this statement, it is considered that the development can be considered sustainable development and therefore acceptable in the terms of this policy.

- 6.8. **Key Statement EN2:** Landscape, mainly focuses on protection of the Forest of Bowland AONB through ensuring development contributes to the conservation of the area by enhancing and protecting the landscape and character. The statement does offer more general coverage by linking the policy to the protection of all landscapes outlining that the Council expects all development to be in-keeping with the character of the local landscape.

- 6.9. In the Council's justification for the policy they state that:

"The Council will also seek to ensure that the open countryside is protected from inappropriate development. Developers should adopt a non-standardised approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity."

- 6.10. **Key Statement EN5:** Heritage Assets - Whilst Thorneyholme Hall is not a listed structure or detailed as a local listed heritage asset, it is accepted that the building is of historic architectural merit. The policy states that proposals should seek to avoid harming any such assets and make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness.
- 6.11. **Key Statement EC1:** Business and Employment Development, directs development towards the main settlements, it does acknowledge that priority will be given to brownfield sites in the development of employment-generating uses. Moreover, the policy also infers that development which will strengthen the wider rural and village economies will be supported in principle
- 6.12. **Key Statement EC3:** Visitor Economy, details those proposals which contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions.
- 6.13. **Key Statement DMI2:** Transport Considerations, relates mainly to new development and the need for it to be sustainably located. As this application relates to the expansion of a developed site, the proposals consideration against this policy is not thought to be determinative.
- 6.14. **Policy DMG1:** General Considerations assists in ensuring that development proposals are in line with numerous broad criteria by providing a series of overarching considerations regarding the quality of developments. The policy categorises the criteria under 6 headings which are as follows:
- Design;
 - Access;
 - Amenity;
 - Environment;
 - Infrastructure;
 - Other.

6.15. **Policy DMG2** outlines further strategic considerations. The policy assists in the interpretation of the development strategy and underpins the settlement hierarchy for the purposes of delivering sustainable development. Dunsop Bridge is considered a tier 2 settlement, with the application site falling outside the adopted settlement boundary. In such locations the policy details that development must meet at least one of the following considerations:

1. *"The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area.*
2. *The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.*
3. *The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.*
4. *The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
5. *The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.*
6. *The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation."*

6.16. **Policy DMG3:** Transport and Mobility focuses on ensuring that proposals are sufficiently provided for by public transport and that the associated infrastructure is fit to serve the proposed development. The policy lists a number of criteria which are to be considered within the context of the development strategy, the criteria generally focus around promoting sustainable methods of transport.

6.17. **Policy DME1:** Protecting Trees and Woodlands looks to provide protection against development which would be of detriment to existing woodlands and tree coverage. The policy details that applications where arboricultural implications are likely should be accompanied by the relevant assessments and necessary plans.

6.18. **Policy DME2:** Landscape and Townscape Protection states the proposals which induce significant harm to important landscapes or landscape features will not be supported. Such features are outlined as including:

- *"Traditional Stone Walls.*
- *Ponds.*
- *Characteristic Herb Rich Meadows and Pastures.*
- *Woodlands.*
- *Copses.*
- *Hedgerows and Individual Trees.*
- *Townscape Elements such as the Scale, Form, and Materials that Contribute to the Characteristic Townscapes of the Area.*
- *Upland Landscapes and Associated Habitats Such as Blanket Bog.*
- *Botanically Rich Roadside Verges (That are Worthy of Protection)."*

6.19. **Policy DMB1:** Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy, seeks to provide support for applications which look to support businesses within the Borough. A large portion of the policy relates to farm diversification or existing businesses, both of which are not applicable to the application at hand. However, the policy does outline that for proposals seeking to redevelop/convert existing sites to employment generating, uses will be assessed against a number of criteria. The latter two criteria relate to the loss of existing employment, which isn't a concern in regard to this application given the lawful use of the premises is at present C3 – dwellinghouse.

6.20. **Policy DMB3:** Recreation and Tourism Development, encourages development which would "*extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the borough*". It requires proposals to be well related to an existing group of buildings and not induce any landscape, design or infrastructure concerns. Additional protection is afforded to sites in the AONB, stating additional regard will be given to design, siting and scale.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- 6.21. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The golden thread running throughout the Framework is the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11) whereby developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social and environmental issues should be granted planning permission unless there are strong reasons that permission should not be granted.
- 6.22. Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 8 of the Framework as having three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental.
- 6.23. Chapter 14 of the Framework considers climate change, flooding and coastal change. Paragraph 159 states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk.

PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 7.1. The principle of development on the site is supported by Key Statement DS1 in the Core Strategy which states that development will be acceptable in Tier 2 villages such as Dunsop Bridge, as long as it meets proven local needs or delivers regeneration benefits. As a hotel would contribute to the local economy and encourage tourism within the local area, this new use can be seen as having a regenerating benefit to the local area. This is furthermore supported by Key Statement EC3 which aims to develop the visitor economy within the Ribble Valley. The provision of a hotel within an historic building and a rural setting will attract visitors to the local area.
- 7.2. Policy DMG2 tightly controls development in Tier 2 Settlements and the Open Countryside. However, it does state that development can be treated as an exception providing it is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area. In this case the proposal is small scale and would be appropriate for the rural area given that the application site was historically used for such a purpose and clearly benefits from the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the change of use.
- 7.3. Key statements EC1, DMB1 & DMB3 look to encourage economic growth and the growth of local businesses within the area, which this scheme will provide by creating jobs and utilising local suppliers in the area for sectors such as food and drink. This job creation and boost to local businesses is not possible with the site's current use as a dwelling meaning the conversion to a hotel will bring a significant boost to the local economy.
- 7.4. The conversion of the site will be compliant with key statement EN5 which relates to heritage assets as there will be no significant or detrimental changes to the site's exterior appearance. Also, the conversion of the site into a hotel will allow members of the public to use and enjoy a local heritage asset which is currently inaccessible.

- 7.5. There are several development plan policies relating to landscape and the protection of the Forest of Bowland AONB. The proposed development will not have a negative effect on the landscape or AONB as both the Hall and the outbuilding are existing structures. Furthermore, there will not be significant alterations to the exterior of the Hall or annex.

Design and Technical Considerations

Design and Landscape and Visual Impact

- 7.6. There are several development plan policies relating to landscape and the protection of the Forest of Bowland AONB. The proposed development will not have a negative effect on the landscape or AONB as both the Hall and the outbuilding are existing structures. Furthermore, there will not be alterations to the exterior of the Hall or annex.
- 7.7. This view is shared by the pre-app response which notes no unacceptable impacts on the AONB and instead comments that the conversion would not induce notable alterations to the hall and the annex building is well related to the existing building and has previously been adjudged as acceptable. Consequently, the development is viewed as suitable for the AONB.

Ecology and Trees

- 7.8. The proposed development does not require any construction or alteration to the existing built form. Hence no impacts on the site ecology or trees are anticipated.
- 7.9. Notwithstanding this, a tree survey and tree constraints plan have been undertaken for the site to support the planning submission. The development involved the removal of 3 trees, all of which have been labelled as category U trees unsuitable for retention and removed in line with the previous permission on site. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in the context of this policy and would not induce any unacceptable impacts on existing tree populations.

Highways

- 7.10. The access drive, lighting and parking have already been adjudged as acceptable as part of the previous application and given the home already has 8 bedrooms it is not likely the change of use would induce a significant uplift in activity at the site beyond its lawful use.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.11. The Core Strategy does not contain any policies which relate directly to Flood Risk and Drainage. However as noted in section 5 of this statement, the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which states the EA's mapping is incorrect and the site actually lies within Flood Zone 2, as opposed to Flood Zone 3a. This position was accepted by the EA as part of the previous application associated with the site. Given the proposed building does not include living accommodation, the proposals are considered acceptable.
- 7.12. Regarding drainage it is proposed that the existing private drainage system will be sufficient to serve the extended site.

Residential amenity

- 7.13. The existing built form is set within expansive grounds that can accommodate for the needs of all future users without requiring further development. Hence it is not anticipated that development will encroach toward neighbouring properties. The previous planning permission for a cookery school represents a use which would likely result in more vehicle movements than that which is currently proposed. As such it can be assumed that impacts on local amenity and indeed any environmental implications of development are not considered of significant concern as to form part of the applications determination.

The Planning Balance/Summary

- 7.14. This section of the Planning Statement has succinctly detailed how the proposed development can be adjudged as acceptable in the context of the Development Plan and the Framework.

- 7.15. In summary, it is proposed that the development would be wholly appropriate in this location providing an appropriate economic activity and job creator. The vehicle movements and increase in people visiting the site will not be notably in excess of that associated with the approved cookery school use and the proposal is of a suitably small-scale representative of the settlement.
- 7.16. The proposed use would not induce any unacceptable impacts and to our knowledge there were no operational concerns put forward the last time the site operated as a hotel. The use of the outbuilding in the context of the proposed use is appropriate and necessary to ensure the hotel can cater to the needs of modern guests. Equally given the proposal would see Thorneyholme no longer operate as a large family home, it is not considered that the concerns raised over the scale of outbuilding in the context of a domestic annex and relevant to this proposal. The outbuilding is clearly subservient and works well in association with the main building, in the same way it would as part of the Cookery School use.

CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a requirement upon Authorities when determining planning applications to do so in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2. This statement has set out the planning policy relevant to the determination of the planning application and has assessed the proposed scheme in this context. Section 7 of the statement discusses the planning policy context, and it is concluded that the proposed development is in overall compliance with the relevant policies of the plan.
- 8.3. The scheme is supported by the necessary technical information and other evidence which clearly demonstrate that there would be no harmful impacts resulting from the proposed development and hence no reason that planning permission ought not to be granted.
- 8.4. For the reasons identified within this statement, it is considered that planning permission for the proposed development should be granted and the application is commended to the authority.

Appendices

Appendix A – Pre application response



RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Officer: Mark Waleczek **Direct Tel:** 01200 414581

Email: mark.waleczek@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Our Ref: RV/2022/ENQ/00050

Location: Thorneyholme Hall newton Road Dunsop Bridge
BB7 3BB

Proposal: Conversion of Hall and annex into a bed and
breakfast hotel.

Date: 08/08/2022

Council Offices

Church Walk

Clitheroe

Lancashire BB7 2RA

Tel: 01200 425111 **Fax:** 01200 414487

Pre-Application Enquiry Response

Dear Joshua,

I write further to your submission of a request for pre-application advice regarding Thorneyholme Hall, Dunsop Bridge. The enquiry seeks the Council's views on the proposed conversion of the existing hall and annex to a bed and breakfast hotel. Having undertaken a site inspection and meeting on 3rd August 2022, I write to formally advise on the acceptability of the proposed scheme on behalf of the Council. This includes matters in respect of the principle of development and the extent to which the scheme would have any adverse and material effect upon the character and appearance of the locality.

The proposal for which advice is sought includes the change of use of Thorneyholme Hall from a private residential dwelling into a Hotel. This proposal includes both the hall itself and an associated outbuilding which is also found within the curtilage of the property. It is thought that the Hall will be converted to provide a kitchen, two dining areas, two lounges, a garden room and ancillary rooms such as a utility room, store and toilets on the ground floor, with eight bedrooms provided across first and second floors. The existing outbuilding is proposed to provide a conference room, cinema, gym, treatment room and other ancillary space with 10 car-parking spaces to be provided for the provision of parking for guests and staff within curtilage to the south of the property.

It is acknowledged that this request for pre-application advice follows an extensive planning history relating to this site. Under planning reference 3/2017/0408, consent was granted in 2017 for the change of use of Thorneyholme Hall from a private dwelling to a cookery school with accommodation. The ancillary accommodation was to be provided in the Hall itself, with the cookery school created through an extension to a detached garage. Following this consent, the cookery school was not erected in accordance with the approved plans and has since been the subject of two applications seeking its regularisation (3/2021/0676; 3/2021/1084). The most recent application for a proposed cookery school with ancillary accommodation was granted, subject to conditions, which was representative of the current onsite arrangement.

Despite this consent, it is known that the detached outbuilding is yet to be in use as a cookery school as is stipulated within the most recent consent (3/2021/1084) due to the conditions placed on hours of operation and as such the development has not been implemented. Consequently, until either this extant consent is fully implemented, or alternatively a further consent relating to the outbuilding and its use is granted, the outbuilding remains unlawful. It is with this context that this pre-application submission has been made.

Relevant Core Strategy Policies:

- Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy
- Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy

- Key Statement EN2 - Landscape
- Policy DMB1 - Supporting Business Growth
- Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development
- Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodland
- Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
- Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
- Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Principle of Development:

The Ribble Valley Core Strategy seeks to direct development to those locations to which it is deemed most sustainable. Primarily this includes the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. Elsewhere, development is managed to reflect the extent to which new development can be accommodated using a tiered settlement approach.

Thorneyholme Hall is a substantial dwelling with eight bedrooms and extensive living accommodation which lies outside of any defined settlement boundary, within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy DMG2 seeks to limit residential development in such locations to that which meets explicit criteria. This criterion includes:

1. *'The development should be essential to the local economy or social wellbeing of the area.*
2. *The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.*
3. *The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.*
4. ***The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.***
5. *The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.'*

Having reviewed the material submitted I believe that it is possible for the proposed development to satisfy criteria 4. as listed above by virtue of the provision of only eight rooms as part of the proposed hotel. In my view this will allow the development to maintain an appropriate scale in relation to the site location and the surrounding area, particularly as minimal external alterations are envisaged to accommodate the development notwithstanding the annex building which has already been erected. This further enables the proposed development to satisfy policy DMG2 in respect of the protection of the AONB which states:

'The most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. 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.'

Applications which support the local economy and tourist attractions in the borough benefit from further support in principle through Key Statement EC3 which states:

'Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new

attractions will be supported, in circumstances where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to local communities and employment opportunities.

The conversion of Thorneyholme Hall to a hotel will introduce an increased level of choice and variety of tourist accommodation within the borough secured through the conversion of an existing dwelling and is therefore in accordance with Key Statement EC3.

Notwithstanding the in-principle support found within policy DMG2 and Key Statement EC3 for employment generating tourism developments, a more specific criteria-based approach for the development of tourism and visitor facilities in the borough is outlined within policy DMB3. This states that planning permission for such developments will be granted subject to the following criteria being met:

1. *The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;*
2. *The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;*
3. *The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;*
4. *The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. it should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;*
5. *The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and*
6. *The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.*

In the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the following criteria will also apply:

1. *the proposal should display a high standard of design appropriate to the area.*
2. *the site should not introduce built development into an area largely devoid of structures (other than those directly related to agriculture or forestry uses).*

In the AONB it is important that development is not of a large scale. In the AONB and immediately adjacent areas proposals should contribute to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape.'

Having undertaken an assessment of the scheme in respect of the above criterion, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with policy DMB3 insofar as the development would involve the conversion of an existing building which could be achieved and function in its proposed use with minimal alteration relative to existing form. Whilst the proposed annex has introduced new built form to the site, it remains physically well related to an existing group of buildings and is of a scale and design suitable to the AONB. The existing scale and massing of the outbuilding (notwithstanding use) has previously been accepted subject to a condition relating to its visual appearance and I therefore see no reason to suggest its acceptability in terms of scale and massing has changed.

Whilst consideration has been given to criteria 4 of policy DMB3 relating to vehicular movements and the relationship of the site to the highway network, it is not considered that this proposal would present a level of traffic or highways related activity significantly different to that which would otherwise occur within the extant consent whereby the highways implications of the development were deemed acceptable. However, should the annex and its associated uses (conference room, cinema, gym) be available and marketed for use by non-guests of the accompanying Hotel, this judgement may change.

In summary, the principle of development as proposed is considered acceptable insofar as that the development would enhance the tourism economy within the borough in a sustainable manner, having the potential to increase economic activity and create a small number of jobs whilst introducing only a minimal level of built form to the site which itself is of a design suitable to the surrounding area. This is in accordance with Key Statements DS1, EC3 and policies DMG2 and DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Layout and Site Arrangement:

Whilst I have no significant concern in respect of the proposed site plans accompanying this pre-application, at this stage I have the following observations:

- The provision of 10 car parking spaces for the use of both guests and staff is likely to be inadequate relative to the demands at peak times. Consideration should be given to further provision, including space for cycle storage to promote modes of sustainable and active travel in accordance with policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.
- Increase the provision of tree planting/green areas within the main body of the site – potentially intermediate planting between some parking bays.

Design and External Appearance:

In respect of the design and external appearance of the proposal I have the following summarised observations:

- Where possible, an application will benefit from avoiding any alterations to the existing Hall and overall site arrangement where possible.
- The most recent consent requires the staining of the erected outbuilding within 3 months of consent which so far has not been completed. Given the visual prominence of the existing outbuilding in its current form, similar mitigation is likely to be necessary as part of any further application.

Landscape and Ecology:

The site location benefits from a significant level of tree cover which are of high amenity value and include some specimens protected through Tree Protection Orders. As a result, an arbicultural impact assessment will be required and there is an expectation that existing tree cover will be retained wherever possible.

Conclusion:

As such, taking account of all matters raised, it is the opinion of the authority that the principle of the development could be supported subject to matters of detailed design, appearance and site layout being found acceptable should an application be submitted.

Submission Requirements:

Should you proceed to submission of a full application, based on the nature of the proposal and constraints identified above, it is my opinion that the Local Planning Authority would require the following information as a minimum to accompany such an application to allow for an accurate assessment:

- Application forms
- Location plan
- Existing and Proposed Site Plan
- Elevations and floor plans of all proposed buildings and ancillary structures (dimensioned)
- Existing and proposed land levels
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Ecological Appraisal (where applicable)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Detailed landscaping proposals (planting type/species/density)
- Bat Survey (where applicable)

Please note the aforementioned required information may not be exhaustive and is provided on the basis of the level of information submitted. Failure to provide required information is likely to result in an application being made invalid until such information is received or potentially refused on the basis of insufficient information.

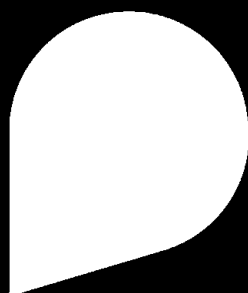
Please also be advised that Lancashire County Council provide a separate, chargeable pre-application service for highway related matters. You should contact the County Council directly to discuss any such issues - <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/business/business-services/pre-planning-application-advice-service/pre-planning-application-highways-advice-service>

The above observations have been provided on the basis of the level of information submitted and the comments contained within this response represent officer opinion only, at the time of writing, without prejudice to the final determination of any application submitted.

Should you wish to discuss any of these matters further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Mark Waleczek
Planning Officer (Development Management and Policy)
mark.waleczek@ribblevalley.gov.uk



www.pwaplanning.co.uk

2 Lockside Office Park
Lockside Road
Preston
PR2 2YS

01772 369 669
info@pwaplanning.co.uk
www.pwaplanning.co.uk