

# Appeal Statement

Against refusal by Ribble Valley Borough Council of planning application 03/2020/0114

To convert a two disused agricultural building into 1no dwelling with associated curtilage and parking at

Barn at Crooked Field, Chipping Road, Chaigley, BB7 3LT

On behalf of Mr and Mrs Laycock

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## Introduction

The application was for the change of use of 2no agricultural buildings into a single dwelling at Barn at Crooked Field. Firstly, we applied via Class Q of the GDPO which was unfortunately refused. Therefore, we submitted a full application with a revised scheme, addressing the reasons for refusal on the decision notice. The reasons for refusal on both applications was the same, and so we appeal the latter of the two applications.

There are four reasons for refusal. In short, the application was said to be contrary to local plan policy as follows:

1. The building and materials are not worthy of retention by virtue of their intrinsic interest, potential or contribution of their setting with the defined Forest of Bowland AONB;
2. The design and external appearance are an incongruous form of residential development which is overtly domestic and suburban in appearance;
3. Not adequately demonstrated that the building to be converted has a genuine history of agriculture or rural enterprise;
4. The proposed conversion would result in the creation of a new residential dwelling, without sufficient or adequate justification, that does not benefit from adequate walkable access to local services or facilities - placing further reliance on the private motor-vehicle.

Our Appeal will set out that the materials and building are worthy of retention, and that their conversion will mean that the aesthetic of the buildings will be greatly improved and therefore complementary to their setting. Further, the design and external appearance will be improved by the conversion works, and the design is set to complement the other dwellings in the vicinity through sensitive choice of materials. The building does have a genuine history of agriculture, with that recorded in the purchase documents, deeds, and RPA maps dating back over forty years. Lastly, the conversion of the building would bring it back into use rather than remaining largely redundant. The building is accessible by foot, bicycle, bus and motor vehicle. Further, the current use of the buildings requires frequent travel to and from the site, and so it's conversion will in fact reduce the number of trips and length of journey to utilise it.

## Our proposal

Our proposal is for the conversion of 2no agricultural buildings into 1no dwelling. The earliest record of the buildings is in 1979 and their agricultural use is evidenced in supporting documentation (Item 4 to 7 inclusive). The two buildings have a roof cover joining them together. It is proposed to clad the building in stone to make the building more sympathetic to its setting by matching existing nearby dwellings. The applicants are keen to continue planting trees, as they have done for many years. They also wish to employ energy efficient solutions to energy consumption. The dwelling can be converted to meet the needs of the occupants with no further extensions or alterations, and it will meet their needs in the long term. The building is currently clad in timber with some walling exposed. It has not been well maintained which has led to a decline in the aesthetic. Therefore, permission to convert would see the building become more in keeping with the area and brought back into a viable use.

There is ample amenity space for future occupants, and room to enter and leave in a forward gear. There is good visibility in both directions on entering the highway. The building is just 2.6 miles from Clitheroe Town Centre, which can be easily accessed by bus, foot, bicycle or car. The building already collects rainwater and uses solar power for electrical energy.

**Use** –There is a genuine history of agricultural use which is evidenced in supporting documentation. The proposal is to convert it into a single dwelling for the applicant and his wife to live in. They have owned the building and nurtured the land for many years. The residential use would be in keeping with the other properties in the cluster, and would otherwise bring the building into an optimal use.

**Size and Scale** – The size and scale of the building is modest and will remain the same. No extensions are proposed to achieve the conversion. The scheme accounts for comfortable living for the occupants, including an integral garage for the storage of vehicles and domestic goods. The development will meet their needs for their lifetime, and no additional extensions or alterations would be required in order to facilitate the proposed use.

Layout – There is space for two bedrooms, two sitting areas, two bathrooms, dining kitchen and garaging in the property. The layout lends itself to easy and contemporary living. The dwelling has been designed in accordance with the Code for Sustainable Homes, as referred to in the Local Plan Policy.

Appearance – The current appearance is substandard in that the materials are nearing the end of their natural life. The timber cladding is tired and does not lend itself to the beauty of the nearby buildings nor its AONB setting. The conversion works would see the installation of windows the same as is existing in the building, and would see the walls clad in stone. This will greatly improve the look of the building and will be complimentary to the other buildings in the vicinity. We believe the proposal will greatly improve the setting and that significant weight should be given to this when considering the proposal. It would create a new dwelling that is in keeping with the others in the cluster.

Materials – The roof covering is corrugated steel sheeting and will be replaced with a zinc roof covering that is of similar weight. The structural survey completed on the barn (Item 10) confirms that the existing structure can support the new roof and the conversion works as proposed. The windows will be double glazed, white UPVC units which will ensure that the dwelling is energy efficient. This compliments the other energy efficiency details referred to later in this statement. The doors will be timber and the walls are to be clad with stone (example at Item 11). It is believed that this scheme is both appropriate and beneficial to the host building and its setting.

Access, Visibility and Parking – Access is achieved by following a small track from the adopted highway. There is adequate visibility on entering and leaving the highway in accordance with the Manual for Streets. There is also excellent space for manoeuvring the vehicles within the site to as to enter and leave in a forward gear. The car will be parked in the garage as indicated on the plan so as to reduce domestic paraphernalia being kept outside of the dwelling to the detriment of the AONB.

Landscaping – The applicant has planted thousands of trees since he took over the site over a decade ago. He is keen to continue to plant native trees long into the future. There is ample space for amenity area. There is plenty of tree and hedgerow cover, but a gap in the hedgerow for a field access does show the building. For this reason, we feel there is a strong argument for allowing the appeal on the basis of aesthetic, as this would be greatly improved by the scheme. A requirement for a detailed landscaping scheme could be secured by condition.



As you can see, the building appears low due to a natural rise in the topography of the land. While the new materials will be sympathetic to the setting, the applicant is more than happy to plant additional trees

should this be required. While no landscaping is currently proposed, the applicant would be agreeable to this, and this detail could be dealt with by condition should the council require it.

Location – The building is within a cluster of other dwellings, as below.



Visual Impacts – There will be no increase in visual impact of the building as a result of the proposal. In fact, impacts would be reduced due to the aesthetic improvement of the building. The building is not set to alter in size or shape, and so it cannot be said that the conversion would have any detrimental visual impact, especially as provision is made for the storage of private motor vehicle.

Sustainability – The development is just 2.6 miles from the main town centre. The property is not isolated due to being in a cluster of buildings, and it can be accessed by bus, cycling, foot, or by motor vehicle. The building itself is designed to be as sustainable as possible, through rainwater harvesting and installation of an electric vehicle charging point, and a whole view of the sustainability of the development should be taken.

To surmise, we find that there are many merits in this proposal and hope that the Appeal Inspectorate will view the Appeal favourably. This site has been subject to two planning applications which were subsequently refused. We felt the second refusal did not adequately assess the new submission. We will now explore in detail the reasons for refusal and the relevant policies that are in support of the scheme. The local plan policies are lengthy, and so only the relevant part for discussion will be supplied within our appeal statement. For a full reading of the relevant plan policies, this can be viewed in the Design and Access Statement supplied.

### Reasons for Refusal 3/2019/0891

- 1. The proposal is considered contrary to DMH4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that that the building and its materials are not considered worthy of retention by virtue of their intrinsic interest, their potential or contribution to their setting within the defined Forest of Bowland AONB.***
- 2. The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2, DMH3 and DMH4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy by virtue of its design and external appearance in that the proposal would result in the introduction of an incongruous form of residential development which is overtly***

*domestic and suburban in appearance which fails to reflect local distinctiveness, vernacular style or acknowledge the special qualities of the area or contribute or enhance its setting.*

- 3. The proposal is considered contrary to Policy DMH4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that it is not considered nor has it been demonstrated that the building to be converted benefits from a genuine history of use for the purposes of agriculture or a rural enterprise.**
- 4. The proposed conversion would result in the creation of a new residential dwelling, without sufficient or adequate justification, that does not benefit from adequate walkable access to local services or facilities - placing further reliance on the private motor-vehicle contrary to the aims and objectives of Key Statements DS1, DS2, DMI2 and Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework presumption in favour of sustainable development.**

We will therefore explore policies DMH3, DMH4, DMG1, DMG2, DMG3, DS1, DS2, DMI2 of the core strategy, and Key Statement EN1, DS1, DS2 and DMI2.

We surmise our grounds for appeal as follows:

1. The proposal in fact accords with policy DMH4 as the building has value due to the length of time that it has been there. It forms part of the character of the area due to it having been there so long and is therefore worthy of retention. The materials are worthy of retention in that a structural survey has shown that the building is capable of conversion, and the scheme of works proposed will in fact enhance the rural setting as they will match the other dwellings in the cluster.
2. We assert that the proposal in fact accords with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2, DMH3 and DMH4, as the design and external appearance have been sensitively considered to make the building appear more in keeping with the other buildings in the cluster. The layout is proposed to remain the same to preserve the authenticity of the barn. The garage proposed reduces domestic paraphernalia that will be visible on site. The vernacular in the cluster is mixed in regard to size and shape, but the stone appearance is consistent throughout.
3. The proposal accords with DMH4 as we have demonstrated a genuine history of agricultural use, including deeds and RPA payments in relation to the barn.
4. The proposed conversion would result in a new residential dwelling. The justification is that it enables the building to be retained and brought into a viable use. The building is not isolated in that it sits within a cluster. The conversion works are sustainable with regards energy consumption and meeting the needs of a family throughout a lifetime due to the internal configuration of the building proposed. The site can be accessed on foot, cycling, bus or private motor vehicle. We find that there are many elements of this scheme that do qualify it as sustainable, and we hope that the Appeal Inspector will agree in this case.

## DMH3

We find that our proposal accords with criteria 2 of policy DMG3, which deems that “appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings [is acceptable] providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.”

Our proposal accords because the dwelling is suitably located amongst a cluster of other dwellings, in a location that can be accessed by bus, foot, bicycle or vehicle. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) acknowledged the need for accommodation in rural areas, especially for the older generation who wish to downsize their accommodation but remain living locally. The conversion would improve the aesthetic of the building and make it more in keeping with the local land use and the materials of other dwellings and buildings in the cluster. It would see the repair of the building which would be highly beneficial to the area. Further, the building is proven to be structurally capable of conversion without complete or substantial reconstruction through the structural survey supplied by a suitably qualified agent. Therefore, we assert that the proposal accords with policy DMG3.

## DMH4

This policy allows the conversion of buildings where certain criteria apply. We find that our proposal accords with every criterion in this policy

The conversion of this building does comply with policy DMH4 because the buildings are not isolated in the landscape. There are a number of other residential properties in the vicinity and these buildings are part of a cluster of structures. The conversion would be funded privately by the applicants. The design of the building has been altered to be more sympathetic to its original design, including smaller window openings to match those existing. The size and shape of the building would not alter, and so it cannot be said to have any detrimental effect on the landscape qualities of the area. In fact, the materials proposed would be much more sympathetic to the area. The proposal would have no negative impact on the rural economy. A landscaping scheme can be secured by condition to help shield the building from view should the council require it. The design and materials have been sensitively selected, as to improve the aesthetic of the building promotes the natural beauty of the AONB. The building is not important for conservation, but its re-use would have no detrimental impact on the conservation of the AONB through careful design.

A structural survey has found that the building is structurally sound and capable of the conversion works proposed without the need for any new structural elements. The layout has been guided by the applicants, and it will meet their needs accordingly and for their lifetime. The buildings can comfortably accommodate two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a lounge and a modest kitchen diner without any extensions or alterations. Garaging space has been retained to show that no new buildings will be required to facilitate the residential occupancy of the building.

The materials of the building are the same as when it was built. We propose to clad the building in stone cladding, as this would be more sympathetic to the other dwellings in the cluster. We also find it imperative to note that permission to convert the buildings to a dwelling would improve the aesthetic of the building which has become worn in recent years. The building being allowed to dilapidate would cause detrimental harm to the character and setting of the area. Furthermore, the conversion would bring the buildings back into a viable use, and would contribute to the housing land supply in Ribble Valley.

The buildings have a genuine history for agriculture. The earliest mention of the building dates back to 1979 where the conveyance of the land details the structure upon it. Evidence of this is supplied (Item 5-7). In 1997, the previous owners of the buildings were served an enforcement notice, where the use of the land and building was detailed as agricultural. Evidence of this is supplied (Item 4). It is important to note that the policy states that there must be a genuine history of agriculture, and that the agricultural use does not have to be current in order to meet the requirements of the policy. We provide a letter from 2010 addressed to the applicants with their RPA single farm payment and SBI number being confirmed.

To surmise, we find that the proposal accords with Policy DMH4 and therefore the principle of converting the building to a dwelling is justified.

## Policy DMG1

Policy DMG1 is a lengthy policy regarding design principles. It refers to the Code for Sustainable Homes, which we believe the design adheres to. We will address the policy constraints in order.

### **DESIGN**

The proposal conforms to the 8 Building in context principles as there is clear value in retaining the building as it has been in situ for over 60 years and so forms part of the recent history of the site. It is structurally capable of conversion, and the retention of the building will improve the aesthetic. The building relates well to the geography and history of the site, with agricultural buildings and conversions in rural Ribble Valley commonplace. The character and identity of the building will be upheld through sensitive choice of design and materials. The dwelling would sit happily in its current location as it would be within a cluster of other dwellings. The important views of the AONB would not be detrimentally harmed as the scale, size and structure are to remain unaltered. It respects the scale of the neighbouring properties as it will remain as existing, which is smaller in height than the buildings surrounding it. High quality build

methods and materials will be chosen in order to respect the authenticity of the setting. The new view that the dwelling would bring would be an improved and location sensitive design.

Paragraph 2 of the policy is conformed with through the new design. The building is set to remain the same size and shape, but it to be clad with stone and the window openings reduced to give a more traditional appearance.

As the layout of the buildings will remain as existing and because the materials will be akin to those in the immediate vicinity, paragraph 3 is met.

Rainwater goods are to be gathered and stored for use on the garden and for washing and toilets. The building has a south facing roof that would lend itself to solar panels. The applicants currently have some solar panels on site for generating electricity for lights and power tools at the site.

Considering the aims and objectives of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the dwelling will be designed with energy efficient principles in mind, with provision made for items including but not limited to:-

- Cavity wall insulation
- Roof insulation
- Electric Vehicle Charging Point
- Rainwater harvesting for use on the garden and for flushing toilets
- Composting of food waste
- Provision for recycling facilities
- New, energy efficient boiler
- Smart meter for measuring gas and electricity use responsibly
- Installation of a water meter
- Double glazed windows

The dwelling has been designed with lifetime principles in mind, with a single storey and accessible door openings proposed. There are no detrimental ecological impacts envisaged for the development, but provision for bat and bird boxes are proposed.

<b>Lifetime Principle</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
1a: Non-communal parking space to be a minimum of 3.3m wide.	The garage measures internally at 3.7m and so meets with this requirement.
2: The distance from the car parking space of Criterion 1 to the dwelling entrance (or relevant block entrance or lift core), should be kept to a minimum and be level or gently sloping. The distance from visitors parking to relevant entrances should be as short as practicable and be level or gently sloping.	The distance from the garage to the main house is just 4.2m. There is a door closest to the house to enable ease of access for the occupants.
3: The approach to all entrances should preferably be level (no gradient exceeding 1:60 and/or no crossfall exceeding 1:40) or gently sloping. A 'gently sloping' approach may have a gradient of 1:12 for a distance of up to 2 metres and 1:20 for a distance of 10 metres, with gradients for intermediate distances interpolated between these values (e.g. 1:15 for a distance of 5 metres, or 1:19 for a distance of 9 metres - see Figure 3.1). No slope should have a going greater than 10 metres long.	The land between the two buildings is level.
4: All entrances should: a) Be illuminated b) Have level access over the threshold; and c) Have effective clear opening widths and nibs as specified below.	A light next to the entrance door can be installed. The access over the entrance door is level. There is ample space for a wheelchair compatible door, with an access width of over 1500mm in both directions of the access.
5: Communal Stairs	N/A.
6: Movement in hallways and through doorways should be as convenient to the widest range of people, including those using mobility aids or wheelchairs, and those moving furniture or other objects. As a general principle, narrower hallways and	All doorways are shown at 900mm which is adequate for wheelchair access.

landings will need wider doorways in their side walls. The width of doorways and hallways should conform to the specification below.	
7: There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and basic circulation space for wheelchair users elsewhere.	1500mm turning shown on plans. Criteria met.
8: A living room / living space should be provided on the entrance level of every dwelling (see Appendix 1 for definition of 'entrance level').	All single storey so meets criteria.
9: In dwellings with two or more storeys, with no permanent bedroom on the entrance level, there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient temporary bed-space.	All single storey with two bedrooms so meets criteria.
10: Where an accessible bathroom, in accordance with Criterion 14, is not provided on the entrance level of a dwelling, the entrance level should have an accessible WC compartment, with potential for a shower to be installed – as detailed in the specification below. (See Appendix 1 for definition of entrance level).	Ground floor bathroom provided.
11: Walls in all bathrooms and WC compartments should be capable of firm fixing and support for adaptations such as grab rails.	Bathroom walls can be reinforced to provide grab rails.
12: Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwellings	N/A.
13: Structure above a main bedroom and bathroom ceilings should be capable of supporting ceiling hoists and the design should provide a reasonable route between this bedroom and the bathroom.	The building is structurally capable of conversion works proposed as per the structural survey. Additional members are proposed to reinforce the timber structure currently holding up ceiling, and so this will be planned for accordingly to comply.
14: An accessible bathroom, providing ease of access in accordance with the specification below, should be provided in every dwelling on the same storey as a main bedroom.	Ample space for turning of wheelchair on same storey as main bedroom with suitably sized access door.
15: Windows in the principal living space (typically the living room), should allow people to see out when seated. In addition, at least one opening light in each habitable room should be approachable and usable by a wide range of people – including those with restricted movement and reach (see Note 1).	There are outlook windows in every room of the proposed dwelling where seating is and so this criterion is met.
16: Location of service controls Service controls should be within a height band of 450mm to 1200mm from the floor and at least 300mm away from any internal room corner.	Can be implemented if necessary.

## ACCESS

There is ample space for parking shown on the plans. There is safe access to the site both into the site itself and from the road. There is good visibility in both directions. There is no impact on any public right of way.

## AMENITY

The conversion will not have any adverse impact on the surrounding area, with no overshadowing or privacy impacts. No impacts on air quality will result.

## ENVIRONMENT

There are no local SSSI's heritage sites, local nature reserves, conservation areas, protected areas or species to be affected. The only impact could be said to be on the AONB, but the building will be the same dimensions as existing and so that impact will be minimal. Cars will be stored in the garage area, and the applicants have always maintained



the site through extensive landscaping and planting to improve the area. The aesthetic improvement of the building through conversion works will enhance the environment. The use of a previously developed site is supported by this policy.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

There will be no loss of public or open space as no additional structure is proposed. The conversion of the building will not cause any detriment to the infrastructure. The applicants wish to self-sustain wherever possible. They are currently travelling to and from the site regularly, and these vehicle movements will reduce on permission of the conversion.

## **OTHER**

No additional development would be prejudiced by the proposal.

To surmise, the proposal accords with each element of DMG1 with regards to design of the conversion, in that it can support a family throughout a lifetime and utilises all energy efficiency measures that are available to it.

## Policy DMG2

We find that the proposal accords with policy DMG2 as it is (1) essential for the social wellbeing of the area, and (5) the development is for a small scale use appropriate of the rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report was adopted in 2008. Section 8.8 recognises that there is an aging population then is set to increase. Furthermore, section 4.4 recognises that there is a lack of appropriately sized housing for older people, with properties across the borough ranging from 4 to 8 bedroom properties with a low occupation rate per dwelling. It was identified that there is a lack of one and two bedroom properties that can meet the need of people over 60. Section 9.2 goes further, identifying that there is a lack of bungalow accommodation across the borough. Section 11.3 found that 22.9% of residents were over 60, and the proposal accords with policy DMG2 as the development is meeting a need for rural housing. The NPPF finds in paragraph 78 that “To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.”

The site is just 2.6 miles from Clitheroe, which is a Tier 2 settlement in Policy DS1. Clitheroe is a small town centre which needs people to shop locally in order to prosper. Therefore, rural housing as with our proposal goes some way to support a prosperous rural economy, which has importance placed on it by the NPPF. Paragraph 79 also supports the development, as the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting as agreed by Subsection C. Subsection E requires outstanding design and enhancement of the immediate setting. The many sustainable living principles and energy efficient factors of the application, along with a great aesthetic improvement, therefore accords with Point E: *“the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and - would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”*

To surmise, while the site does fall outside of the settlement of Clitheroe, Policy DMG2 supports the development as it meets two of the criteria required for properties outside of settlements, namely criteria 1 and 5. Therefore, we believe that the proposal accords in full with the aims and objectives of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy DMG2.

Policy DMG3 provides as follows.

On the face of it, the proposed conversion is in a relatively rural location, standing at 2.6 miles out of the town centre. However, the travel time is just 7 minutes into the centre, so we would argue that it is still very accessible and journeys by motor vehicle would be short. Furthermore, the applicants could walk, cycle, or take the 645 bus route into the town centre. The site benefits from ample turning space and an internal parking area. There is space for the storage of a private motor vehicle incorporated into the scheme, which meets the needs of the applicants and future

generations without having a negative impact on the AONB setting. An electric vehicle charging point would be installed in order to ensure that vehicular transport is as sustainable as possible.

It is important to note that the siting of the dwelling proposed is fixed due to being a conversion rather than a new build, and we find that appropriate weight should be given to the benefits of the proposal balanced against the limited transport options.

Therefore, while opportunities for transport are smaller than they would be in a town setting, the proposal accords with policy DMG3 as there are suitable alternatives for transport available to ensure.

Key Statement EN2 provides as follows.

The landscape and the character of the AONB is set to be preserved and enhanced by the aesthetic improvements that the proposal will bring. The stone cladding will mean that the proposed dwelling will have a similar look to those other dwellings in the cluster. Provision has been made for the internal storage of private motor vehicles to reduce domestic paraphernalia. The scheme proposes the continued planting of trees to further shield the development from view. The dwelling will also retain its current size, scale and shape with no extensions proposed, which means no negative impacts are to be found on the countryside setting. We therefore find that the proposal accords with Key Statement EN2.

Key Statement DS1 provides as follows.

The proposal does not fall in any of the areas listed in the policy, which is intended to drive development to Tier 1 and 2 areas. However, this is a conversion rather than a new build and so the siting of the proposal is fixed. While we accept that the proposal is 2.6 miles out of the settlement boundary of Clitheroe, we find that the wealth of policies in the local plan are supportive of the proposal, most importantly policy DMH4. Being outside of the settlement boundary is mitigated by the quality of the proposed scheme, the short distance from Clitheroe, the connectivity of bus and cycle routes to the centre, provision for internal vehicle storage, and the aesthetic benefits of preserving the building for use by an identified section of the community, namely for single storey properties in Ribble Valley for the over 60's as identified in the SHMAR.

Key Statement DS2 provides as follows.

We have discussed at length the ways that the scheme confirms to a wide range of sustainability principles both geographically and specific to the building. We have shown that the scheme accords with many of the local plan policies and the scheme would benefit both the building and the local area, and we find that the scheme should therefore be viewed favourably by the council. The proposal will meet the identified need for single storey accommodation for over 60's, as identified in the SHMAR. To be able to bring the building into viable use would be a positive result both for the applicant's, the building itself, and Ribble Valley. There would be no adverse impacts of the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the local plan and the NPPF.

Key Statement DMI2 provides as follows.

This policy should be regarded with minimal weight as the proposal is for a conversion rather than a new build development. The proposal is not for new development, but for conversion of an existing structure. The dwelling is on a bus and cycle route, but can also be served by motor vehicle (with internal storage of this provided for). The applicants are already travelling to the site a number of times a week, and the permission to convert would reduce vehicle movements. The provision of an electric vehicle charging point is incorporated to make vehicle travel more sustainable, which accords with the policy which provides that "sustainable travel improvements will be supported".

## Conclusion

We assert that the building is worthy of retention as every building forms an important part of the history of the local area. It is structurally sound and capable of conversion, and the conversion would enhance the beauty of the AONB by improving the aesthetic of the buildings. The design would see the buildings blend better with other stone built dwellings in the immediate vicinity and throughout the rural Ribble Valley.

We find that the design and external appearance will match the houses in the local area which are stone built. The design is sensitive to its setting and its rural in its proposed stone built appearance.

The building has a genuine history of agriculture, with evidence of this supplied from 1979, 1997 and 2010.

The proposed conversion would result in the creation of a new dwelling, but this is a conversion rather than a new build. We have demonstrated that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the harm, and that the proposal would accord with the strategic aims of Ribble Valley to secure single storey, two-bedroom dwellings to meet the needs of an aging demographic and rural housing requirements. The dwelling itself is designed to be as sustainable as possible in accordance with the Code for Sustainable Homes. It cannot be said to be in an isolated location as it is in with a cluster of other dwellings. Furthermore, while it is in a relatively rural location, occupants can access the town centre by foot, bicycle, bus and private motor vehicle.

For the reasons stated above, and following a comprehensive assessment of the local plan policies, we find that the proposed conversion should be viewed favourably due to the benefits of the scheme as demonstrated to be in accordance with said policies.

We propose the conversion of 2no agricultural buildings into 1no dwelling for the applicants to live in permanently. The conversion of the building would see it blend with other surrounding dwellings to be more appropriate both within the cluster and on the wider view of the AONB. The visual impacts would be improved as a result of the proposal, and only a small portion of the building is visible from the road due to the natural topography of the land. Additional landscaping can be secured by condition should the council request this. The development would meet the needs of the applicants both now and in the future due to the consideration of lifetime principles. The access, parking and visibility are all adequate for the proposed use.

There is ample indoor and outdoor amenity space without the needs for future extensions. The internal design of the scheme accords with the Code for Sustainable Homes, and will meet an identified need for single storey dwellings for the over 60's. It is just a short distance from the town centre. The development accords with the policies of the local plan and the NPPF, and we hope to see this Appeal upheld.

