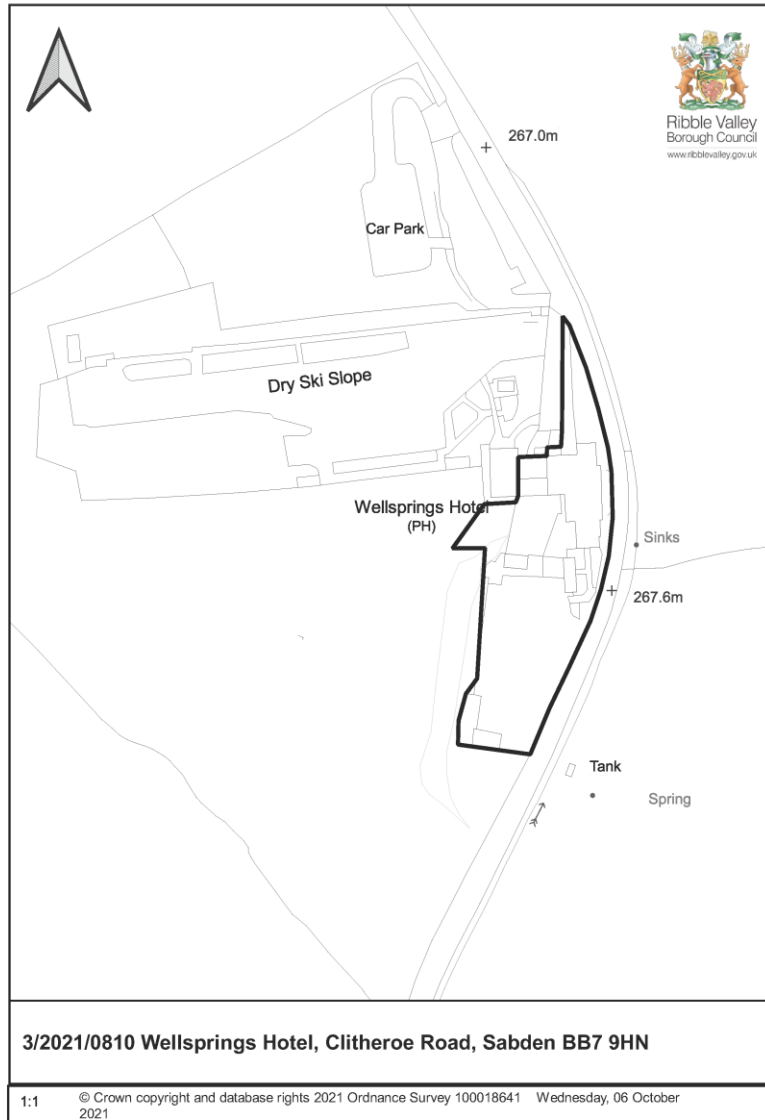


APPLICATION REF: 3/2021/0810

GRID REF: SD 377285 438978

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF TWO SINGLE STOREY ONE BEDROOM HOLIDAY LET UNITS WITH PARKING (RESUBMISSION OF 3/2021/0254) AT WELLSPRINGS HOTEL, CLITHEROE ROAD, SABDEN BB7 9HN



CONSULTEE RESPONSES / REPRESENTATIONS MADE:

PARISH COUNCIL:

This expansion is in the AONB and if allowed will add to an already existing 'hotchpotch' of buildings that have no cohesion and are 'untidy'. Access and egress will be a problem due to cars already being double parked along the highway as and when customers visit the site.

The car park will be reduced in size which we understand is already utilised as a 'helipad' - question whether or not permission has been granted in this regard.

We also question why no Environmental Impact Report has been carried out. There also appears to be no Highways report.

ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE (COUNTY SURVEYOR):

No objection subject to conditions.

AONB PARTNERSHIP:

Regarding the resubmission of the previously refused scheme for holiday units, these would still have landscape and visual effects across quite a wide area of the local landscape due to the elevation and prominence of the site. In addition, the amount of glazing on the western elevation of the units would likely introduce significant light spill during hours of darkness. Finally, the holiday units will only add to the collection of functional buildings already at Wellsprings, but on another part of the site slightly separate from the existing buildings.

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS:

No representations have been received.

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.1 This application relates to the site of a long-established restaurant, The Wellsprings, which is located on the slopes of Pendle Hill near the Nick of Pendle. The site is located in the open countryside and designated AONB between Clitheroe and the village of Sabden. Adjacent to the restaurant building is Pendle Ski Club and dry ski slope.
- 1.2 The existing restaurant is a one-and-a-half storey, white rendered building, with a seating capacity for 200 guests and associated car parking. Historically the building has been an Inn and a hotel.
- 1.3 There is a network of public footpaths in the surrounding area which is popular with walkers.

2. Proposed Development for which consent is sought

- 2.1 This is a re-submission of a previously refused planning application for a proposed extension to the restaurant building to create a one-bedroom holiday apartment and the construction of two single storey one bedroom holiday let units.
- 2.2 The applicant has chosen not to pursue consent for the restaurant extension – this application relates only to the construction of two single storey one bedroom holiday let units - and the applicant has made amendments to the design of the holiday apartments to take account of the refusal of the previous planning application in May 2021 for the following reason:

The proposal, by virtue of its siting, design, external appearance and scale, would result in a prominent and incongruous form of development that fails to respond positively to or enhance the immediate context, being of detriment to the visual amenity and landscape character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 and paragraph 172 of the NPPF.

- 2.3 The proposed detached single storey holiday units would be located to the south-west of the restaurant building on part of the site used for outdoor space and decking and car

parking. Each unit would measure 8.2m x 7.8m, on the same footprint as the previously refused proposal. The main alteration relates to the roof which was previously flat and is now proposed to be a 'green' gabled roof up to 4.4 metres in height. The revised design also incorporates a small element of stonework in the form of a low-level plinth along the south elevation.

- 2.4 The proposed units would be predominantly clad with vertical timber boarding with grey aluminium windows and doors. The units would be provided with a hot tub beneath an outdoor canopy in the north-west corner to take advantage of long-distance views. Each unit would provide a single bedroom with shared living and kitchen space.

3. **Relevant Planning History**

3/2021/0254 - Proposed extension to create a one-bedroom holiday apartment and construction of two single storey one bedroom holiday let units with parking. Refused.

4. **Relevant Policies**

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development

Key Statement EN2 – Landscape

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 DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection

Policy DME3 - Site and Species Protection and Conservation

Policy DME6 – Water Management

Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development

National Planning Policy Framework

5. **Assessment of Proposed Development**

5.1 **Principle of Development:**

5.1.1 Core Strategy Key Statement EC3 relates specifically to the visitor economy stating that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged. The proposed development would contribute to the tourism economy and accords with the general intentions of Key Statement EC3.

5.1.2 Key Statement EC1 'Business and Employment Development' states that "*Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle*". Policy DMB1 is also relevant to the application given the proposals represent expansion of an existing business and are designed to maintain and support the existing restaurant use. This is established within the submitted Business Statement which also refers to the benefits to the local economy.

5.1.3 The application site is located in the Forest of Bowland. Core Strategy Policy DMG2 requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations one of which is the following:

4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.

5.1.4 It is considered that the site, taken as a whole, would remain small-scale and would comply with the abovementioned policies 'in principle'.

5.1.5 Whilst regard must be given to the economic and social wellbeing of the AONB, Policy DMG2 confirms that the most important consideration is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area. In the AONB development is required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its design, use of materials, landscaping and siting.

5.1.6 Policy DMB3 relates specifically to recreation and tourism development. Tourism and visitor attractions are generally supported 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 AONB additional criteria apply as follows: -

- 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).*

5.1.7 The proposals relate to a well-established group of buildings comprising the restaurant building, ski club clubhouse and associated paraphernalia. The proposed development would not therefore be isolated from other built form. In addition, the development is located directly adjacent to a classified road with good access to the surrounding highway network and the development is proposed to support an existing business.

5.1.8 A Business Statement has been submitted with the application setting out that the proposed tourist accommodation would create a new income stream for the business and would also draw in new customers to the existing restaurant.

5.2 Design and Visual Appearance:

- 5.2.1 Great weight is afforded to the conservation and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland AONB as stated in the Framework and reiterated in Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy which requires the Forest of Bowland to be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development in such areas should be of a high standard of design and should be in keeping with the character of the landscape.
- 5.2.2 The immediate area is characterised as 'Unenclosed Moorland Hills' in the AONB Landscape Character Assessment and is described as having a 'strong sense of remoteness'. It is said that '*the Unenclosed Moorland Hills Landscape Character Type is considered to have very high visual sensitivity overall, as a result of the strong sense of openness and generally uninterrupted skylines, coupled with strong intervisibility with adjacent Landscape Character Types.*' The AONB Landscape Character Assessment also states that, '*in addition, there is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout (only partially disturbed at times of shooting). Landscape Character Sensitivity is considered to be high. As a result, overall capacity to accommodate change, without compromising the key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type is considered to be very limited, apart from change which reinforces positive attributes, such as habitat enhancements*'.
- 5.2.3 The detached holiday units would be afforded a high level of visibility and would result in new built form in a highly sensitive landscape. It is noted that since the previously refused scheme the applicant has sought to amend the design of the holiday units. In particular, the design incorporates a 'green' roof to reduce the visibility of the units in the landscape. Whilst this results in some improvement, the proposals would still result in landscape and visual effects across a wide area of the local landscape due to the elevation and prominence of the site. The AONB Officer comments that 'the amount of glazing on the western elevation of the proposed units would likely introduce significant light spill during hours of darkness and that the holiday units would only add to the collection of functional buildings already at Wellsprings, but on another part of the site slightly separate from the existing buildings'.
- 5.2.4 Taking into account the AONB Officer's comments and having regard to the particular characteristics of the site, it is considered that whilst the proposed development would be commercially beneficial for the existing business and would give rise to some modest economic benefits for other local hospitality businesses, this would not outweigh the harm to the AONB landscape that would arise from the provision of two new detached buildings on an open part of the site that is highly visible from short and long-distance views in a landscape that is considered to be highly sensitive to change.
- 5.2.5 Having regard to the above, the proposals are contrary to Key Statement EN2 and policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 176 of the Framework.

5.3 Highway Safety and Parking:

- 5.3.1 The County Highways Officer has raised no objection to the proposals despite an overall reduction in parking provision at the site. There is currently parking for up to 67 cars and this would be reduced to 62 spaces as a result of the development

proposals. However, the County Surveyor considers this to be sufficient to serve the business and has raised no concerns.

5.4 **Other Considerations:**

5.4.1 Concerns were previously raised relating to the capacity of the existing septic tank. The applicant has provided a response from the septic tank installer which states there is sufficient capacity within the existing septic tank to cater for the proposals.

6. **Conclusion:**

6.1 Taking into account all of the above, it is considered that the proposals would result in undue visual and landscape impacts, failing to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty.

RECOMMENDATION: That the application be REFUSED for the following reason:

1. The proposal, by virtue of its siting, design, external appearance and scale, would result in a prominent form of development that fails to respond positively to or enhance the immediate context, being of detriment to the visual amenity and landscape character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 and paragraph 176 of the NPPF.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/planx_details.php?appNumber=3%2F2021%2F0809