

Application Number 07/2023/00457/FUL

Address Cedars Farm
Drumacre Lane East
Longton
Preston
PR4 4SD

Applicant Mr J Wignall

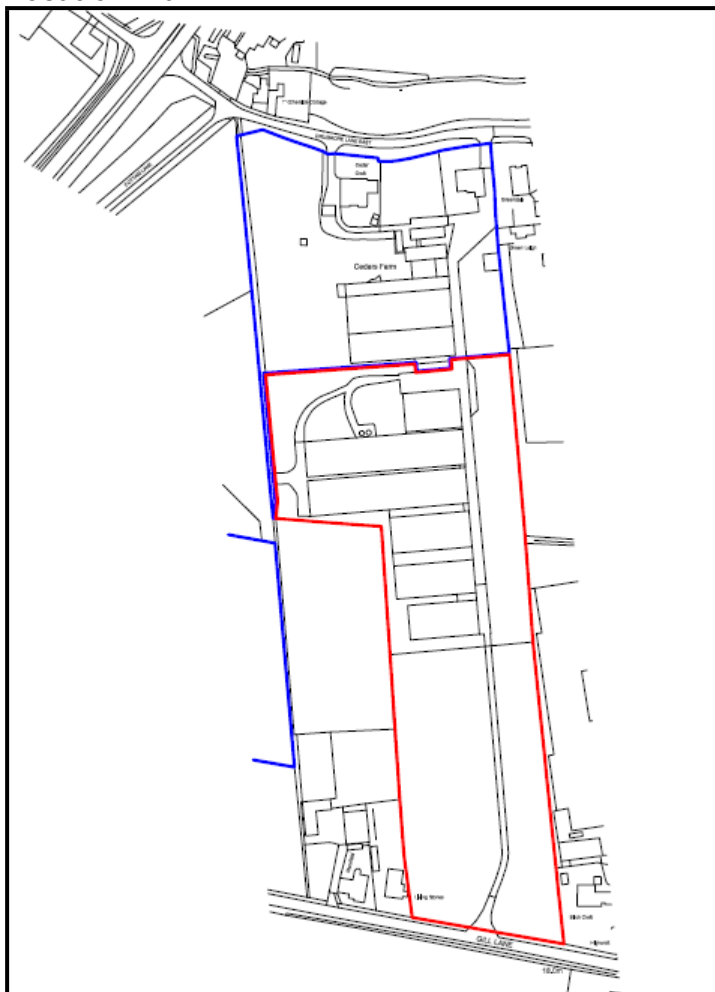
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Development Proposed change of use of former chicken farm buildings to E(g)/B8/B2 use including the external alterations and creation of car park and vehicle turning areas

Officer Recommendation **Approval with Conditions**

Date application valid 06.06.2023
Target Determination Date 05.09.2023
Extension of Time 22.09.2023

Location Plan



1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This application relates to buildings, part of the Cedars Farm complex located between Drumacre Lane East and Gill Lane in Longton. The buildings were used to produce eggs for the pharmaceutical industry. The proposal is for a change of use to E(g) /B8 /B2 use together with some external alterations and the creation of a car park. Proposed uses covered by the above parts of the Use Classes Order include, uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity (Class E(g)), storage uses (Class B8) and general industrial uses (Class B2). Such a change of use is permitted in the Green Belt as Local Plan Policy G2 allows for the re-use of existing buildings in the Green Belt provided the development does not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal is not considered to have a greater impact on openness than the existing situation and is therefore compliant with Policy G2.
- 1.2 Objections have been received with residents concerned that the proposal will result in an increase in noise and traffic. However, County Highways have no objections but consider there should be no access from Drumacre Lane East, and this can be secured by condition.
- 1.3 Environmental Health consider that the proposal is acceptable providing that conditions are imposed to protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposed conditions are to restrict the hours of use of the premises; ensure that the submitted Noise Report recommendations contained in paragraph 7.1.1 are implemented prior to the first use of the buildings/development and that no external plant or machinery is installed prior to a suitable Noise Impact Assessment being carried out.
- 1.4 It is considered that with these conditions in place, the proposals are acceptable, and the application is recommended for approval.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The application relates to part of the Cedars Farm site accessed off Gill Lane in Longton. The application site lies to the south of Cedars farmhouse which itself is accessed off Drumacre Lane East. To the west and east are residential properties along Gill Lane and to the north-east are residential properties on Drumacre Lane East. To the west is the A59 Longton By-pass. The site and surrounding area are within the Green Belt.

3. Planning History

- 07/1974/0929 Erection of Deep Pit Poultry Laying House. APV 19/02/1975
- 07/1974/0680 Proposed agricultural workers dwelling. APV 27/11/1974
- 07/1975/1084 Deep Pit Poultry Laying House. APV 21/01/1976
- 07/1977/0499 Erection of deep pit poultry house. APV 30/11/1977
- 07/1980/1126 Three Deep Poultry Houses. APV 29/04/1981
- 07/1980/0717 Double Garage and Farm Access. APV 03/09/1980
- 07/1984/0083 Rear extensions. APV 07/03/1984
- 07/1986/0423 Side extension and domestic double garage. APV 23/07/1986
- 07/1989/0202 Construction of vehicular access onto Gill Lane new private road and provision of additional car parking area. APV 23/08/1989
- 07/1992/0534 Front Dormer Extension, Conservatory to Side and Two Storey Rear Kitchen and Bedroom Extension. APV 30/09/1992
- 07/1992/0873 One Deep Pit Poultry Laying House, New Access Road and Car Parking Area. APV 28/04/1993
- 07/2006/0884/FUL Erection of 2 poultry houses (each 1810sq metre) to replace existing and recladding of existing packing, office, and staff welfare building. APV 26/10/2006

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The application proposes a change of use of the former chicken farm buildings to E(g)/B8/B2 use including the external alterations and creation of car park and vehicle turning areas. The application relates to 5 buildings on the site which are of a modern construction of block and cladding, having the appearance of agricultural buildings common in the area. The buildings are interconnecting, other than the southern-most building.
- 4.2 Proposed external alterations to the buildings include new roller shutter doors; new ramp and stair access; removal of silos. The proposal also includes a new staff and visitor car park to the north-western corner of the site for parking of 84 vehicles.

5. Summary of Publicity

- Neighbouring properties were notified, and a site notice posted with 2 letters of representation being received, objecting on the following grounds:
- Noise levels generated by quite a substantial increase in traffic and also the operating times
- Request that the opening times be considerate in minimising adverse noise outside of 0700-1800 and we assume that there would be limited or no activity during the weekend and bank holidays
- Have sought professional advice which raises the following questions and comments regarding the Noise Impact Report content and conclusions:
- Please provide statistical analysis for L90 noise data between 05:00 and 07:00
- Model assumes all vehicle entry is from Gill Lane, is that correct? Will this be conditioned?
- How will the proposed noise limit within the development be enforced? What will happen if they make more noise than this?
- ANC 4142 guide suggests that it may be more appropriate for the background sound level to be determined over the period of greatest interest. For deliveries during the daytime, might the period of greatest interest be between 08:00 and 09:00, when most deliveries occur?
- Please assess noise during the evening and compare against background sound level at the time of day when people are likely to be relaxing in gardens
- Will there be any weekend operations? If yes, please assess impact at the weekend
- No assessment of max noise levels is included, please include
- What will the noise level be when the roller shutter doors are open?
- Reverse alarm tonality feature correction should be included
- The report states that the author has been informed that more vehicle arrivals and departures occur between 08:00 and 09:00, please assess noise at this time of day
- 197 HGVs entering and 194 leaving between 06:00 and 21:00 is a lot between the hours of 06:00 and 21:00, almost one every two minutes. Is this correct? How does this compare with the existing facility?
- Will there be any chillers on the HGVs?
- Will there be any new plant? What are the noise limits for new items of plant?
- The sound insulation performance seems overly optimistic for constructions of this nature
- 4142 states that the representative background sound level is not the most frequently occurring. Please re-assess
- Please advise how many vehicles enter and exit the premises at the moment, this is important context

6. Summary of Consultations

- 6.1 **County Highways** provided comments based on all the information provided by the applicant to date. They have no objections to the principle of the proposed change of use,

but they initially had concerns over the proposed access plans. As such the plans were amended in line with County Highways comments and Site Plan 22.1034 P (00) 500 Rev F has now been submitted. The Highway Authority is satisfied that the plan now shows an acceptable passing place, E.V. charging and cycle storage. County Highways therefore have no objection providing conditions are imposed in respect of preventing access from the proposed development onto Drumacre Lane East; that the access road is 7m wide for a minimum of 15m into the site and any passing places are inter-visible; that the access road and any passing places are appropriately paved; that prior to the site becoming operational the car parking area is provided and appropriately surfaced, that electric vehicles recharging points are provided to the car park; that the cycle parking provision shown on the plans is completed prior to first occupation; and that facilities are available on site for the cleaning of the wheels of vehicles leaving the site during construction.

- 6.2 **Environmental Health** have reviewed the submitted Noise Impact assessment by PDA Acoustic Consultants. Having considered the submitted Noise Assessment, Environmental Health expressed some reservations about the impact this proposal may have on nearby residential properties, advising:

The PDA report refers to 'predicted' noise levels and areas of 'uncertainty', which, given the application is for B (8) Storage and distribution, and B (2) General Industrial use, gives rise to concerns.

The Design and Access Statement refers to '...not anticipated that the proposed use would operate at unsociable hours.'

The application will no doubt result in an intensification of use of the site, both in relation to use of the actual units and the number of vehicle movements to service the use of those units.

- 6.3 In considering the above bullet points, Environmental Health advise that it would be prudent to control and mitigate the impact of the development, and therefore recommend conditions are imposed to restrict the hours of operation; including by requiring that the PDA report recommendations contained in paragraph 7.1.1 are implemented prior to the first use of the buildings/development and that no external plant or machinery be installed at the development before a suitable Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out and been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Authority.
- 6.4 The applicant responded to the points raised by Environmental Health and the points of objection from a neighbouring resident via a submitted Noise Impact Assessment Letter Report. Environmental Health considered this letter report and confirmed that, further to the additional submitted comments and information, they are satisfied that the Noise Impact Assessment is robust and sufficient to demonstrate the proposal will have minimal impact on neighbouring properties. However, the comments in the original response still apply and the recommendation for the imposition of conditions remains.
- 6.5 **Greater Manchester Ecology Unit** raise no objections to the planning application on Ecology grounds

7. Policy Background

- 7.1 **NPPF: Chapter 13 Protecting Green Belt land**
- 7.1 **Policy G2: The Re-Use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Green Belt** allows for the re-use of existing buildings within the Green Belt subject to several specific criteria.
- 7.2 **Core Strategy Policy 17** advises that the design of new buildings will be expected to take account of the character and appearance of the local area and avoid demonstrable harm to the amenities of nearby residents.

8. Material Considerations

8.1 Green Belt

8.1.1 The application proposes the change of use of former chicken farm buildings to uses within E(g), B2 and B8 together with external alterations and the creation of a car park and vehicle tuning area.

8.1.2 The site is within the Green Belt where Local Plan Policy G2 allows for the re-use of existing buildings, provided the development does not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it. The policy requires that the building is of permanent and substantial construction, of sufficient size and suitable for conversion to the proposed use without the need for additions or alterations which would harm its existing form or character; would not result in an adverse impact in respect of noise, odours, emissions or traffic; and the building and site has access to a public highway available for use without creating traffic hazards and without involving significant road improvements which would have an undue environmental impact. Finally, the policy also specifies that preference will be given to the re-use of buildings in line with specific local economic and social needs and opportunities in the area. Each of these criteria are assessed below.

8.2 Impact on the openness of the Green Belt

8.2.1 The supporting statement indicates that the site has been used for production of eggs for the pharmaceutical industry where they were packaged and sent to laboratories and the site was serviced by a range of commercial vehicles. Based on this, it may be that the site could be considered as a previously developed site as it was operated as a commercial business. The proposal does not include the construction of new buildings and re-use of the existing buildings will not have any impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

8.2.2 However, the formation of the car park represents an engineering operation. The NPPF advises that such developments are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The location of the car park is surrounded on three sides by existing buildings and to the south and east of landscaping mounds. The proposed car parking areas are within the site and will be viewed in the context and backdrop of the existing buildings on the site and it is therefore considered these additional areas of hardstanding will not unduly impact on openness. As such, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than existing situation.

8.3 Suitability for Conversion to Proposed Use

8.3.1 Policy G2 advises that a building should be of *'permanent and substantial construction, of sufficient size and suitable for conversion to the proposed use without the need for additions or alterations which would harm its existing form or character'*

8.3.2 It is considered this requirement is primarily aimed at traditional rural buildings which are of traditional construction worthy of retention in their current form. In respect of the buildings subject of this application, it is noted that the supporting statement indicates that the buildings are relatively modern, constructed of block work with profile cladding with an appearance common to other agricultural buildings in the area. Essentially, the buildings are purpose-built chicken sheds whilst commonplace in rural settings, they are not considered to be of any particular architectural merit.

8.3.3 The proposal includes the insertion of several new roller shutter doors so that the buildings are accessible for the proposed commercial use and associated commercial vehicles.

8.3.4 It is considered that the proposed alterations to include new roller shutter doors are not excessive and are considered not to detract from the form or character of the buildings.

8.3.5 Although a structural survey is normally required for conversion of buildings in the Green Belt in order to consider the condition of the existing structure and identify the extent of any re-building work, it is noted that the buildings are vacant and cannot be re-entered until 27 October 2023 due to Avian Flu. Given this unfortunate situation and the fact that the buildings were in use until Autumn 2022 and visually appear to be in good condition, it is considered that the requirement for a structural survey can be 'waived' in these circumstances.

8.4 Access, Parking and Highway Issues

8.4.1 In terms of access, the proposal will utilise the existing access from Gill Lane. The supporting statement advises that the access has already been used by large commercial vehicles associated with the previous use of the site. The secondary Drumacre Lane East access will be limited to domestic access only associated with the existing farmhouse.

8.4.2 The application proposes the introduction of a passing place on the access road to facilitate a safe means of access to the site avoiding the need for vehicles to wait on Gill Lane to be able to enter the site.

8.4.3 In terms of parking and turning areas, the application proposes a new staff and visitor car park in the northwest corner of the site contained within the existing buildings on the site. The proposed car park incorporates a total of 84 car parking spaces in order to comply with the Council's parking standards. The car park is proposed to be screened with a mound to avoid any potential medium or long-distance views of the site.

8.4.4 An extended hardstanding area is proposed to the east of the main building in order to provide for articulated vehicles to park up for loading and unloading directly from the proposed shutter doors and for vehicles to access the proposed car park. The hardstanding again provides sufficient space for articulated vehicles to turn around.

8.4.5 County Highways initially advised that, whilst there are no objections to the principle of the proposed change of use, this would be subject to demonstrating safe and suitable access for all as required by NPPF. County Highways recommended that the site access be widened, and a suitable passing place be provided. Given the size of vehicles which would utilise the site, the access road should be 7m wide for a minimum of 15m into the site and any passing place should have suitable inter-visibility. The Highway Authority also advised that the applicant should confirm how commercial vehicles would be prevented from entering/ leaving the site from Drumacre Lane East and that electric vehicle charging points and cycle storage should be provided.

8.4.6 Following County Highways comments, an amended plan and e-mail correspondence have been submitted which address these concerns. The agent confirms that *"In terms of vehicular access from Drumacre Lane East the access from this road is owned and controlled by the applicant providing access to their dwelling. This access is gated as can be seen on the location plan. A further gate is located between the applicant's home and the proposed employment use where the red and blue edges meet. The applicant has full control of this access and will not permit its use for commercial traffic. The Gill Lane access was originally developed by the applicant to stop vehicles using this access. The existence of two gated points in the applicant's control will stop any operators utilising this access. Furthermore, any businesses operating from the buildings will be advised of the access with the Drumacre Lane access not being identified as an access or egress from the site."*

8.4.7 The Highway Authority have been reconsulted and have confirmed that the proposed site plan, drawing number 22.1034 P (00) 500 Rev F, now shows an acceptable passing place, E.V. charging and cycle storage and that there are no objections in principle subject to the imposition of appropriately worded planning conditions as referred to in paragraph 6.1 above.

8.5 Impact on Residential Amenity

8.5.1 There are residential properties to the north-east which are adjacent the access road, namely Green Leigh and Greendale. These properties are reasonably close to the buildings, circa 90m. The proposal has the potential to create noise and disturbance to neighbouring residential properties and therefore a noise impact assessment has been submitted with the application which concludes:

“The assessment indicates that the development will not result in an adverse impact at the nearest noise sensitive receivers in accordance with the recommendation described within BS4142:2014. This is therefore an indication that the proposed scheme is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.”

8.5.2 A number of residents have objected to the proposal on the grounds of the potential for noise from increased traffic and the proposed use of the building. Comments have also been made which query the robustness of the submitted noise assessment.

8.5.3 Environmental Health have considered the Noise Impact Assessment and advise that it is robust. However, they consider that an unrestricted use of the site would have the potential to impact nearby residential properties. Therefore Environmental Health consider it would be prudent to control and mitigate the impact of the development and therefore recommend conditions are imposed to restrict the hours of operation to 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday; 0800 to 1300 Saturdays with no use on Sundays and Bank Holidays; that the PDA report recommendations contained in paragraph 7.1.1 must be implemented prior to the first use of the buildings/development and that no external plant or machinery be installed at the development without a further Noise Assessment.. The proposed conditions are considered reasonable and necessary to protect residential amenity.

8.5.4 With the inclusion of the requested conditions, it is considered the proposal will be acceptable in terms of noise and disturbance and consequently would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity for the neighbouring residents.

8.6 Economic and Social Needs

8.6.1 In terms of Policy 2 and the criteria that *‘preference will be given to the re-use of buildings in line with specific local economic and social needs and opportunities in the area’*

8.6.2 It is considered that the proposal will bring the site back into economic use to the benefit of the local economy. In terms of social needs, this will only be of benefit if it provides employment for local people.

8.7 Biodiversity

8.7.1 An Ecological Assessment by Rachel Hocking Ecology dated 14 April 2023 was submitted in support of the application and which advises the following:

No impacts to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites are anticipated due to the absence of any impact pathways. Small areas of improved grassland and tall ruderal herb may be lost to facilitate improved access. These habitats are of negligible importance and no specific measures are required to compensate for their loss.

No direct impacts to hedgerows or scattered trees are anticipated. There is a low risk of hedgerows or trees being damaged through soil compaction or mechanical damage during construction.

There is a low risk of pollution from silt or other materials entering the wet ditch during the construction phase.

No impacts to bats or their roosts are likely to result from the proposed development. No impacts to foraging or commuting bats are likely to result from the proposed development.

No impacts to birds are likely to result from the proposed development.

The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enhance the natural and local environment by providing net gains for biodiversity. Habitats on the site are of very low ecological

importance and the proposed development would not result in any impacts significant beyond the site level.

Opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements include:

Planting native trees

Creation of wildflower grassland

Improving hedgerow condition through more sensitive management

Creation of a wildlife pond

Creation of bee banks on south facing slopes of bunds

8.7.2 The Ecological Assessment recommends that measures to avoid the accidental pollution of the hedgerows, trees and wet ditch should be followed during construction.

8.7.3 Any enhancement measures should be detailed within a Biodiversity Management Plan and these measures could be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition.

8.7.4 GMEU have considered the Ecological Assessment and confirm they raise no objections to the proposals on ecology grounds.

9. Conclusion

9.1 The proposal is for the re-use of existing building in the Green Belt. Policy G2 allows for buildings to be re-used providing that the proposals meet the criteria set out in the policy. An assessment has been carried out and the proposal is found to be in accordance with the policy requirements and therefore the application is recommended for approval subject to the imposition of conditions.

10. Recommendation

10.1 Approval with Conditions.

11. Recommended Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. The development, hereby permitted, shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted approved plans Dwg 22.1034 P (00) 500 Rev F Proposed Site Plan; 22.1034 P (00) 501 Rev C Proposed Site Elevations; 383-23-6 Widened Access
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development
3. No commercial vehicles accessing the development hereby approved shall access the site from Drumacre Lane East. The applicant is responsible for ensuring the existing gates at the site are fully utilised to prevent access to and from the proposed development onto Drumacre Lane East.
Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to be in accordance with Policy G17
4. Prior to the development becoming operational, the access road needs to be 7m wide for a minimum of 15m into the site and any passing places should be inter-visible.
Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to be in accordance with Policy G17
5. Prior to buildings being brought into use, the access road and any passing places shall be appropriately paved in tarmac, concrete, block pavements, or other materials which have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to be in accordance with Policy G17

6. Prior to the site becoming operational the car parking area shall be surfaced or paved in accordance with a scheme to be approved by the Local Planning Authority and the car parking spaces and manoeuvring areas marked out in accordance with the approved plan. The car parking area shall thereafter be always kept free of obstruction and available for the parking cars.
Reason: To allow for the effective use of the parking areas and to be in accordance with Policy G17
7. Prior to the site becoming operational, the Electric Vehicle Recharging facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved site plan 22.1034 P (00) 500 Rev F
Reason: To support sustainable transport objectives and to contribute to a reduction in harmful vehicle emissions in accordance with Policy 3 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy
8. Prior to the site becoming operational the cycle parking provision shown on the approved site plan 22.1034 P (00) 500 Rev F shall be completed. The area shall thereafter be always kept free of obstruction and available for the parking of cycles only.
Reason: To ensure the provision and availability of adequate cycle parking and the promotion of sustainable forms of transport in accordance with Policy 3 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy
9. For the full period of construction facilities shall be available on site for the cleaning of the wheels of vehicles leaving the site and such equipment shall be used as necessary to prevent mud, stones and debris being carried onto the highway. Provision to sweep the surrounding highway network by mechanical means will be available and the roads adjacent to the site shall be mechanically swept as required during the full construction period.
Reason: To prevent stones, mud and debris being carried onto the public highway to the detriment of road safety in accordance with Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan
10. The operating hours of the development hereby approved shall be restricted to 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday; 0800 to 1300 Saturdays; No use on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 17 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy a
11. The design recommendations (noise mitigation measures) in paragraph 7.1.1 of the Noise Impact Assessment reference J004384-7056-JW-01 dated April 2023 by PDA Acoustic Consultants shall be adhered to at all times when the buildings are in use.
Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 17 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy
12. No external plant or machinery should be installed at the development before a suitable Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 17 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy
13. No development shall commence until or details of the landscaping of the site including wherever possible, the retention of existing trees and hedges have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The submitted scheme shall also include full details of the proposed landscaped mounds. The

approved scheme shall be implemented in the first planting season following completion of the development, or first occupation/use, whichever is the soonest. The approved scheme shall be maintained by the applicant or their successors in title thereafter for a period of 5 years to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. This maintenance shall include the replacement of any tree or shrub which is removed, becomes seriously damaged, seriously diseased or dies, by the same species or different species, and shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The replacement tree or shrub must be of similar size to that originally planted.

Details submitted shall be compliant with 'BS 8545 : 2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations' and shall where appropriate include details of trees and hedges to be retained or removed, root protection zones, barrier fencing, and a method statement for all works in proximity to those trees or hedges to be retained during the development and construction period. Details shall also indicate the types and numbers of trees and shrubs, their distribution on site, those areas seeded, turfed, paved or hard landscaped, including details of any changes of level or landform and the types and details of all fencing and screening.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity of the area in accordance with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G8 in the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026

12. Relevant Policy

South Ribble Local Plan

Policy G1 Green Belt

PolicyG2 The Re-Use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Green Belt

Central Lancashire Core Strategy

Policy 17 Design of New Buildings