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HB106/SA/AM/EW

22nd October 2026

Old Garage Site, Dunsop Bridge

UPDATED DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1. Introduction

This design and access statement has been updated to support the variation of condition planning application (dated 22.10.2026) for the redevelopment of the Old Garage Site in the centre of Dunsop Bridge. The application is further supported by the original detailed existing drawings, the planning statement prepared by Rural Solutions and the updated detailed proposed drawings dated October 2026. The majority of this document remains as per the previous design and access statement (dated 13th January 2022) save for a few small alterations to bring it in line with variations.

The proposal calls for a) the redevelopment of the footprint of the existing single storey garage building and St George's Chapel, b) the conversion and change of use of the ground floor of Puddleducks and reconfiguration of the first floor to form two residential units in total, c) the removal of the redundant metal storage shed and d) the reconfiguring of the existing site, to link all existing spaces and footpaths and provide better connectivity around this area of the village.

The existing garage buildings to the site are unsightly and beyond repair having reached the end of their economic life. St George's Chapel is no longer used by The Church and has been handed back to The Duchy and a change of use on the building has been included within the proposals. It is felt that the site is under used as a whole and given its location in the centre of the village of Dunsop Bridge and the geographical centre of England, it is considered that there could be so much more offered in this prime location for the local community and visitors to the area.

None of the buildings are listed nor form part of a Conservation Area but they are within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and as such, a design and access statement is required for the planning submission.

2. The existing arrangement

The Old Garage Site contains a collection of semi-industrial buildings within a very traditional village centre.

To the west of the site sits St George's Chapel, with its south facing gable tight to the adjacent highway behind which sits a traditional terrace of 3no stone faced residential buildings, with Puddleducks within the ground floor of the end terrace. Puddleducks is an established café which also operates a Post Office counter, it is a well supported business by the local community and visitors alike, it is however, limited by its size and fabric of the existing building.

To the east of the Old Garage Site and adjoining the garage building, there is a detached residential property, Forge House, again with its front elevation tight to the highway. Behind and alongside this property is the Council operated pay and display car park and public conveniences.

To the south of the site and across the main road, is the open “village green” which sits into the curve of the River Hodder providing a green open space for both people and ducks. To the rear, the residential properties have extended gardens out to the hedge line enclosing the playing fields.

All of the property described is within the applicant’s ownership and tenanted through The Duchy of Lancaster’s Whitewell Estate.

The Old Garage Site itself has buildings set back off the main road. As the original petrol filling station, this front area was historically where the petrol pumps were sited and acted as the garage forecourt. To the side of the garage building is an old, corrugated metal clad shed which was used for storage but is now obsolete. The land to the rear formed the rear yard to the garage and now is open “wasteland” with an element of United Utilities infrastructure (water pumping station) situated to the northwest corner.

The rear of the site the United Utilities equipment is accessed (an access route that must be maintained at all times) by the established service road, which extends from the entrance to the adjacent pay and display car park. Access to the front of the site is directly off the main road, the dropped kerbs facilitating direct access to the garage forecourt remain in place, so the frontage of the site has established direct “off road” access and egress.

The built form was a mixture of very traditional (single and double storey) stone faced buildings with slated roofs and a collection of semi-industrial buildings constructed of metal sheet, block / render, and composite panel roofs. Whilst the detail is incongruous with the use and age of the buildings and therefore, a reflection of the site history and heritage, the semi-industrial buildings are past their fabric life span and need to be extensively repaired but more sensibly replaced and the site given over to a better community use and focus for the community and visitors to Dunsop Bridge.

3. <u>The proposal</u>

The concept of this application is to regenerate a predominantly disused site in the heart of the village providing for the development of a community hub to develop a sense of place within the community and an anchor for future growth. A new community hub that serves the community first, but which also provides information and a focal point for visitors to the area. The synergy of the community hub elements are intended to support local residents, businesses and operations to evolve, grow and stay within the community.

The proposals include for the demolition of both the metal storage building and the main garage building. With the site cleared and all elements of underground petrol tanks etc removed, the site can then be re-established with a community “hub” building slightly smaller than the footprint of the existing main garage build.

The main building is proposed as an envelope to accommodate a mix of uses. The proposals include a local farm shop where local suppliers can reach customers and locals can pick up essential grocery supplies without making lengthy car journeys to facilities outside of Dunsop Bridge. Alongside the community shop will sit community information and resource centre (including space for information on the AONB), a dedicated Post Office counter and café (potentially licenced café) with full facilities including toilets wi-fi, bike and car electric charging stations and extended parking.

The change of use proposals for St George’s Chapel is geared to provide a flexible space for community use, again reinforcing a reduction in traffic movements and adding sustainability and vibrance to the local community.

The proposals include for the Puddleducks facilities to relocated within the hub, ensuring that by having staff on hand, the delivery of the "services" can be regular and meaningful to both the community and visitors alike. The café and Post Office counter are to be re-established within the main community hub building and once fully operational, it is proposed to convert the ground floor layout of Puddleducks into a 3 bedroomed flat, reconfiguring the established first floor flat (with separate access) over.

The front of the site will allow pedestrians to transition onto and through the site to explore and link facilities and established footpath routes to the rear or simply to stop and enjoy the community space and activity and the south facing orientation across to the green and the ducks.

To improve the connectivity in the village (away from the public highway) the proposals open up the rear of the site and link across to the proposed arboretum, playing fields and car park / riverside walk beyond in addition to the linkage back to the existing and extended car park and drop off point.

The existing car park operated by Ribble Valley Borough Council will be retained and the existing access road to the site will be upgraded to allow traffic to move in both directions. To the side of this strengthened access will be an additional 20 car parking spaces with electric charging points. This access and parking will allow for a further 3no dedicated disabled parking spaces, a drop off point and turning head together with servicing ability for the community hub (deliveries and refuse collection etc). The additional parking spaces require a section of hedging to be removed but this is proposed to be replaced and further hedging positioned to ensure that the agricultural countryside feel of the site is retained. A net gain of 131 sq meters of hedging.

In addition to the obvious building proposals, it is intended that the scheme includes for service infrastructure improvements. These include the replacement of several older septic tank solutions with a new package treatment plant to ensure foul drainage from the area meets the exacting standards of the Environment Agency, the introduction of PV panels to the main hub roof to allow for electric generation which will be used to compensate for full electric heating via air source heat pump technology.

The design of the new buildings is presented after lengthy discussion and analytical consideration of the existing environment and what the new building needs to achieve. The main hub extends to the original garage footprint and builds up to present a building of presence but not one that overwhelms or over complicates the site. The internal space is set out to ensure a light, bright and airy solution that allows all the activities to support each other but at the same time, identify within their own space. Material finishes have been selected that compliment Dunsop Bridge but at the same time, make a positive long term contribution to the village as we move forward into 2026.

4. <u>Access</u>

All existing vehicular access arrangements are maintained and enhanced by the proposals. In addition to improvements to the rear vehicular circulation, the proposal provides for an additional 20 car parking spaces, with access to electric car charging, 3no dedicated disabled car parking spaces, again with dedicated electric car charging and full consideration has been made as to safe and practical delivery and service operations together with establishing a drop off zone to the rear.

Pedestrian access remains the priority with the proposal. Parking needs to be encouraged within the established and proposed additional parking areas to discourage ad hoc parking along the village green (to avoid parking charges) resulting in the blocking of the highway and in turn, reducing pedestrian safety. Along the "village green" the applicant proposes positioning timber posts to avoid cars being able to edge up onto the green to park, this will ensure that the pedestrian enjoyment of the space and across into the hub proposal is a clear as possible. Once onto the proposed site, pedestrians will be encouraged to use and enjoy both the north / south and east / west axis and facilities they support, allowing improved connectivity and safer pedestrian routes in and around Dunsop Bridge.

5. Disabled requirements
The community hub building and surrounding pedestrian areas, will be fully disabled access compliant so all the community hub elements will be accessible to all.

6. Conclusion
The proposal provides for a well-considered, sympathetic design solution which sits respectfully in its site and context, and we believe the application is supported by both local and national policy and should therefore, be approved with robust but achievable conditions as necessary.

Yours sincerely
Erica Wright Architecture Ltd



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