



# **PLANNING STATEMENT**

## **EXTENSION AND ALTERATIONS**

### **AT**

**WOLFSTONES HEIGHTS FARM  
WOLFSTONES ROAD  
HOLMFIRTH HD9 3UU**

**SEPTEMBER 2014**

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*CLIENT: MR R BUTTERFIELD*

## Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for extensions and alterations at Wolfstones Heights Farm, Wolfstones Road, Holmfirth.

## Site appraisal and summary of the proposed development

The property is residential and is located approximately 1.5km to the west of the village of Netherthong. The dwelling is situated immediately to the south-east of the residential property of Wolfstones Heights and has open land in all other directions. The site is accessed from Wolfstones Road which lies immediately to the west of the property. This access is also a public right of way (footpath). An alternative existing access drive is situated to the north of the property and has a junction with Wolfstones Road some 150 metres to the north.

The site lies within the green belt in the development plan. The property is not a designated heritage asset, although Wolfstones Heights is listed (grade II).

The proposed scheme consists of the erection of a largely subterranean garage immediately to the north of the host dwelling. This will necessitate the diversion of the public footpath along the line of the secondary access. An extant permission for the underground extension of the existing garage (see below) will be given up by the applicant should this application be approved.

## Planning history

There have been a number of planning applications made on this site, most of which have been approved and some of which have not been implemented. Of particular significance in respect of this application is an extant permission for the construction of an underground extension to the existing garage (2012/62/90095/W).

## Pre-application discussions

Pre-application discussions have been held with officers of the LPA in respect of the principle of development in the green belt and its potential impact on designated heritage assets. Without prejudice, officers have been broadly supportive of the principles of development, subject to appropriate details being submitted as part of any application for development.

In addition, discussions have also been held with officers from the Public Rights of Way team within the Council in respect of the proposed footpath diversion. Again, officers have been broadly supportive with regards to the principle of the diversion and the proposed re-alignment

## National and local planning policies

**National planning policy**, in respect of the proposed development, primarily concerns green belt matters and the support for a prosperous rural economy.

The site lies within the green belt. With respect to extensions to buildings, paragraph 90 of the NPPF states –

*“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:*

*.....*

*the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building*

In Section 12: “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment”, paragraphs 128 and 129 state –

*128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary....*

*129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*

Section 12 goes on to state, at paragraphs 132 and 134 –

*132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting....*

*134. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

**Local planning policies** are contained within the Kirklees Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1999 (saved policies 2007).

Policy BE1 is a general design policy and the first two parts of this policy state –

*“All development should be of good quality design such that it contributes to a built environment which:  
i creates or retains a sense of local identity;  
ii is visually attractive;.....”*

Policy BE2 relates to the design of new development. It states that -

*“New development should be designed so that:  
i it is in keeping with any surrounding development in respect of design, materials, scale, density, layout, building height or mass;  
ii the topography of the site (particularly changes in level) is taken into account;  
iii satisfactory access to existing highways can be achieved; and  
iv existing and proposed landscape features (including trees) are incorporated as an integral part of the proposal.”*

As the proposed development is in the green belt, policy D11 applies –

*“Proposals for the extension of buildings within the green belt will be considered having regard to:  
i the impact on the openness and character of the green belt;  
ii the size of the extension in relation to the existing building which should remain the dominant element;  
and, in the case of traditional buildings,  
iii the effect on the character of the existing building.*

*In the case of proposals to extend buildings which have already been extended the proposal should have regard to the scale and character of the original part of the building.”*

Policy T10 refers to highway matters in the context of new development. This policy states that –

*“New development will not normally be permitted if it will create or materially add to highway safety or environmental problems or, in the case of development which will attract or generate a significant number of journeys, if it cannot be served adequately by the existing highway network and by public transport. Proposals will be expected to incorporate appropriate highway infrastructure designed to meet relevant safety standards and to complement the appearance of the development.”*

## Development appraisal

It is considered that there are four issues to be addressed in the assessment of the proposed scheme – the impact on the openness and character / appearance of the green belt; the impact on the setting of the nearby listed building; the impact of the footpath diversion; and the impact on vehicular access.

### Impact on the openness of the green belt

With respect to the principle of development within the green belt, it is considered that the proposed scheme represents development that is not inappropriate in the green belt.

Since the approval for the underground extension to the existing garage in 2012, a further application for a small single storey extension has been approved but it is contended that the cumulative effect of this recent permission (plus other previous approvals) is not sufficient to determine that the effect of the proposed development is sufficient to represent a disproportionate extension to the host dwelling, particularly if a previous approval is given up.

It is held that the applicant's willingness to give up the 2012 extant permission via a legal agreement means that, in effect, there would be a "like for like" impact should the proposed development be approved. The high quality of the materials to be used in the build, plus the design of the build to include a grassed roof to the underground garage, means that the net effect on the openness of the green belt and the character and appearance of the area would be neutral in respect of the current position.

There will be no impact on the openness of the green belt or the character and appearance of the area due to the alternative access being used for vehicular traffic. This access already exists and no further works are proposed, save for the re-positioning of entrance gates.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development meets the criteria laid out within paragraph 89 of the NPPF and UDP policy D11, as well as the design criteria as laid out in UDP policies BE1 and BE2.

### **Impact on the setting of a designated heritage asset**

The nearest point of the underground element of the proposed development will be situated some 14 metres from the rear elevation of the listed building (Wolfstones Heights) and will not impinge upon its curtilage. The visual impact of the underground garage, when viewed from the rear elevation of Wolfstones Heights, will be the same as now, as the roof of the proposed development will be grassed and hidden behind the existing boundary wall.

Therefore, for the purposes of paragraphs 132 and 134 of the NPPF, it is considered that the proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and that the public benefit of providing for underground garaging in this green belt location outweighs any limited harm.

### **Impact of the footpath diversion**

The principle of the diversion of the public footpath to enable the development has been broadly accepted by PRow officers, and the proposed re-aligned route is considered to be an acceptable alternative route to officers. The re-routing of the footpath will not only enable the underground garage but will also provide for additional safety and security to the occupiers of Wolfstones Heights Farm (for example, an incident occurred in the past whereby the house was broken by someone using the public footpath whilst the occupiers were upstairs).

The impact of the re-alignment on the openness of the green belt and the character and appearance of the area is considered to be acceptable. A planting scheme will be implemented along the length of the footpath, which will run along the line of the alternative access but which will be separated from it by the new landscaping. This landscaping (to be agreed) will use natural species appropriate to this setting and location and will form a natural feature appropriate to the character and appearance of the area.

### **Access**

Finally, the use of the alternative access as the sole means of access will improve highway safety in this location. The existing access is also the line of the existing public footpath which has the propensity to create conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. This is compounded by the steep gradient at the junction of the access with Wolfstones Road, and this also increases the potential for vehicle conflict at this point.

The diversion of the public footpath, physically separated from the alternative vehicular access, will therefore improve highway safety and the junction of the alternative access with Wolfstones Road will improve visibility when vehicles use this access or approach this access on Wolfstones Road.

The proposed development is therefore held to meet UDP policy T10.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed scheme does not represent inappropriate development within the green belt and does not impact on the setting of the listed building. The diverted public footpath will improve highway safety by removing the potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, as well as improving the vehicular access to the site.

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