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PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

**APPLICATION FOR CONVERSION OF BARNs TO
1NO DWELLING, INCLUDING INTERNAL AND
EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS)**

**SPRINGHEAD FARM, SCHOLES MOOR ROAD,
HADE EDGE, HOLMFIRTH**

MR AND MRS CROMPTON

FEBRUARY 2016

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The proposal which forms the subject of this planning application seeks the conversion of 1 No barn (and associated lean-to) to 1 No dwelling, including internal and external alterations at a site known as Springhead Farm, Scholes Moor Road, Hade Edge, Holmfirth.

This statement is provided to assist the Council in the discharge of its development control function. It is considered that this statement clearly demonstrates to the Council that the proposal accords with planning policy and, when judged against this and all material considerations, it is the case that planning permission should be granted.

The submitted layout and elevation plans show how the building is to be converted and adapted. It is considered that the scheme will not give rise to issues of harm to the setting, character or openness of the Green Belt in this area. Indeed, the sensitive restoration of the buildings which will ensure their long term retention will enhance the character and appearance of the Green Belt in this area.

Whilst it is considered that the submitted plans demonstrate that the proposal can be undertaken without giving rise to issues of harm, the applicants remain willing to discuss all aspects of the proposal with the planning authority and will submit any further information as necessary. The application is also supported by a detailed structural report and a bat survey.

This statement proceeds to give details of the site, the proposal and background. Relevant Planning Policy and Central Government advice in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework is then outlined. The issues that the proposal raises are examined and finally the conclusion reached that permission should be granted for the proposal to proceed.

2.0 THE SITE, PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND

The subject site forms part of Springhead Farm a small scale farmholding. The subject building and lean-to form substantial stone/brick built buildings have previously functioned for agricultural purposes.

The buildings, owing to their age and form, are no longer suitable for modern agricultural purposes. The buildings form large and imposing traditional farm buildings located close to the existing farmhouse in an unobtrusive setting. Whilst they form structurally sound buildings, nevertheless it is clear that their condition is deteriorating. Without a beneficial use being found, the buildings will ultimately be lost. This proposal will ensure their retention through significant capital investment over the short term.

The scheme proposed is sensitive to the form and character of the buildings and specific reference has been taken from the English Heritage publication as to appropriate detailing and design. As outlined in the English Heritage report, without investment in such buildings these will be lost to future generations.

The scheme involves internal and external alterations as shown on the submitted plans. The proposal can be undertaken and retain the intrinsic rural character of the buildings. Nevertheless, the applicants remain willing to discuss issues of design and detail.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that in considering planning applications the determination with the development plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework also advises of a presumption in favour of development which accords with the Development Plan. The importance of the statutory Development Plan in the decision making process necessitates an examination of the relationship between the policies and proposals of the Plan and to Government Guidance.

3.1 Central Government Policy Advice – The National Planning Policy Framework

At Para 7 the advice sets out three dimensional for sustainable development which includes economic, social and environmental:-

“Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural built and historic environment”.

Para 9 goes on to state:-

“Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of built, natural and historic environment as well as in people’s quality of life.”

Para 14 goes on to state:-

“At the heart of national planning policy framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking...”

For decision taking this means;

- ***Approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay.”***

At Para 17 with regard to core planning principles these include:-

“Conserve Heritage Assets in the manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

Given the age of the buildings, it is reasonable to consider that they constitute a non statutory heritage asset.

Section 7 relates to requiring good design. At Para 56 it states:-

“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”

Section 9 relates to protecting Green Belt land. At Para 80 it sets out the five purposes of Green Belt. At Para 90 it sets out that the certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. These include:-

- ***“The reuse of buildings providing that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.”***

It is considered that this proposal conforms with that advice and a detailed building survey demonstrates that the buildings are structurally sound.

Section 12 relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It is considered that owing to the nature and age of the buildings, it is reasonable to consider them to be “non designated Heritage Assets”. It is considered that the proposal which will ensure the long term survival of these buildings would be a benefit to heritage considerations.

In respect of decision taking, Para 187 the advice states:-

“Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”

3.2 Local Planning Policy

The following UDP policies are considered relevant to the consideration of this application.

Policy D12 states:-

“PROPOSALS FOR THE REUSE OF BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT WILL BE CONSIDERED HAVING REGARD TO:-

- (i) THE DEGREE OF COMPLETENESS AND THE PERMANENCE OF THE BUILDINGS AND THE EXTENT OF DEMOLITION AND REBUILDING INVOLVED; AND***
- (ii) THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL AND THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT, THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, VISUAL AMENITY, LANDSCAPE AND WILDLIFE.”***

The submitted structural report demonstrates that the buildings are structurally sound. The proposal will not harm the openness of the Green Belt and will indeed enhance the visual amenity of the area by ensuring the long term

retention of these historic and traditional rural buildings.

UDP Policy D12A goes on to outline that conditions will be imposed to remove permitted development rights. It is confirmed that the applicant would have no objection to this.

It is clearly the case that there is no conflict whatsoever with the Development Plan.

3.3 Other Guidance - The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings – A Guide to Good Practice – English Heritage

This document published by English Heritage provides advice on the conversion of traditional farm buildings. The advice states:-

“Traditional farm buildings are amongst the most ubiquitous of historic building types in the countryside. They are not only fundamental to its sense of place and local distinctiveness, but also represent a major economic asset in terms of their capacity to accommodate new uses.” (TPC underlining)

In the introduction the advice states:-

“Historic farmsteads and their buildings make a fundamental contribution to the richly varied character of the English countryside.”

Whilst the advice states that the best option is for such buildings to continue in agricultural use, it recognises that this may no longer be viable. The advice states:-

“Reuse is inherently sustainable. These buildings represent a historic investment in materials and energy and contribute to environmentally benign and sustainable rural development.”

(TPC underlining)

Overall, it is considered that the advice sets out the importance of the retention of such buildings in the long term and this proposal conforms with that advice. Furthermore, it is considered that the buildings can reasonably be argued to form a ‘heritage asset’ (NPPF).

4.0 THE ISSUES

4.1 The Development Plan

The Development Plan is the starting point for the consideration of this application, as set out in 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Quite clearly by reference to the Development Plan, this refers applicants to national policy advice and, therefore, it is considered that the proposals fall to be considered against the provisions of the NPPF.

It is considered that this proposal conforms to the Development Plan for the following reasons:-

- (a) The proposal will not have a materially greater impact on the openness, character and visual amenity of the Green Belt than the existing use.
- (b) The buildings are structurally sound and capable of reuse without substantial rebuilding, alteration or extension.

It is considered, therefore, that the applicants are entitled to expect the “presumption in favour” of development which accords with the Development Plan to be weighed in their favour. The proposal also conforms with the NPPF and constitutes sustainable development. It follows that the proposal must now be examined against all other material considerations.

4.2 Other Material Considerations

4.2.1 The Impact on the Green Belt

It is considered that the conversion of the buildings to residential use will have no adverse impact on the Green Belt in that:-

- (i) The buildings will be converted as existing and will not have any adverse impact on openness.
- (ii) The domestic curtilage will be unobtrusive and carefully considered with native hedge planting and the development will not be harmful the open countryside.

4.2.2 Retention of Historic Rural Buildings

The grant of planning permission will ensure the renovation and restoration of these buildings which will be retained in a long term use and secure stewardship. The proposal will secure the retention of “non-designated heritage assets”.

It is considered that significant weight should be attached to this issue.

4.2.3 Structural Issues

The issue of the structural stability of the buildings is set out fully in the submitted report.

4.2.4 Bat Report

The application is supported by a bat report.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This application is submitted in full with all details for determination at this stage. It is considered that the proposed scheme provides for a sympathetic conversion which will ensure the retention of these historic farm buildings.

The text of this statement demonstrates that the proposal conforms to the Development Plan and the NPPF. As such, the applicants are entitled to have the presumption inherent in S38(6) weighed in their favour. In the absence of any harm, it is clear that the only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that planning permission should be granted.

Notwithstanding the above statement, the applicants remain willing to discuss all aspects of this proposal with the planning authority.