

20809

Report in support of new dwellings at

Brownhill Farm, Birkenshaw



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1.0 Introduction

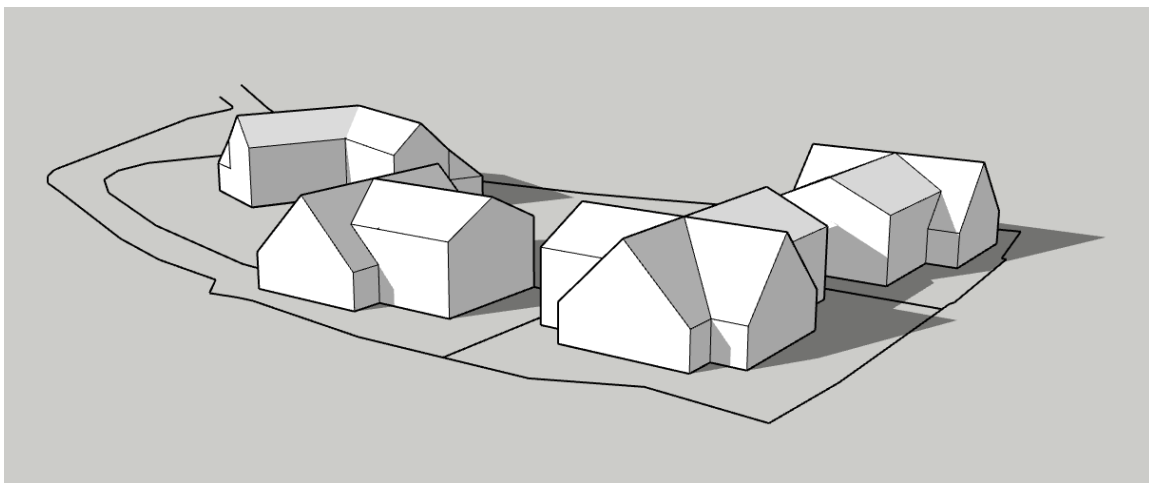
JG-D has been instructed by Mr B Draffan to prepare a planning application for the erection of 3 detached dwellings at Brownhill Farm, Birkenshaw.

Brownhill Farm is a former working farm with open grazing land ringing a farmhouse and loose collection of agricultural buildings. The landholding is bounded by residential development comprising a disparate mixture of styles and forms with a plot of allotments sharing the same site access - an unadopted road from Old Lane, approximately 500m from the junction with A58 Whitehall Road and 2.5km from Junction 26 M62.

The original farmhouse is an attractive two storey stone building with a single storey 'skirt' which has continuously evolved, most recently with alterations to the external elevations as part of Approval No. 2008/62/93593/E1. The neighbouring vacant agricultural buildings are less attractive, featuring brickwork, exposed steelwork and corrugated sheeting with elements in various states of disrepair. A planning application was submitted for the demolition of the existing agricultural buildings and the erection of 3 detached dwellings with integral garages – App no. 2019/62/91225/E and subsequently for alterations, part demolition and the erection of an extension to the existing farm buildings to create 3 dwellings – App no. 2019/62/92722/E. The former was withdrawn in February 2020, the later approved December 2019.

Although the conversion scheme was supported by both structural statements and a site Inspection by Kirklees Building Control the applicant considered the amount of remedial work required disproportionate and the resulting dwellings disappointing which has prompted this revised scheme.

Brownhill Farm is in Flood zone 1



2.0_Planning Context

The submitted development proposals have been formed around the following objectives;

The need to provide a high quality design in order to make a positive contribution to the local environment and the sensitive local setting;

The requirement to provide a well designed scheme which creates a high degree of amenity for its occupiers;

The desire to create additional family dwellings in Birkenshaw in response to Kirklees' housing needs and to help sustain the local community.

2.1 National Planning policy guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Chapter 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 13 – Protecting Green belt land

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

2.2 Local Planning policy is provided by the Kirklees Local Plan adopted 27th February 2019.

Relevant policies relate to the design of the scheme and its impact on its surroundings.

Policy LP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy LP2 - Place Shaping

Policy LP7 – Efficient and effective use of land and buildings: *“To ensure the best use of land and buildings, proposals should encourage the efficient use of previously developed land in sustainable locations provided that it is not of high environmental value;”*

Policy LP21 – Highways and access

Policy LP22 – Parking

Policy LP24 – Design

Policy LP52 – Protection and improvement of environmental quality

Policy LP57 - The extension, alteration or replacement of existing buildings

Policy LP59 - Brownfield sites in the Green Belt

Brownhill Farm is not listed and not in a Conservation area. The closest listed building is Manor House, 55 Station Lane, List no. 1300051 which is >50m away from the application site.

3.0_Planning Assessment

Brownhill Farm presents the perennial issue of previously developed land within a Greenbelt setting. The former agricultural use prevents the adoption of Brownfield nomenclature for the application site although the farm ceased to operate >25 years ago and the existing barn buildings have slowly been absorbed into ancillary domestic use linked to the Farmhouse.

The principle of residential use was established by the conversion approved in 2019 but the applicant considers that scheme an opportunity missed and is keen to explore the possibility of creating three new bespoke dwellings benefitting from modern construction techniques and cutting-edge technology.

The updated NPPF states that *inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*. Exceptions are listed, however, which include outstanding architecture which would enhance its immediate setting. The applicant opines that the existing barn buildings and their conversion detract from the appearance of Brownhill Farm whereas the proposed scheme could provide a complementary addition to the existing farmhouse.

The application site is also an anomaly in that whilst '*isolated*' in the country it is surrounded by development on three sides (with two large industrial style interventions on the fourth side to the East in Swallow and Hill Top Farms) which at its closest point is ~80m away. Although this cannot be classed as infilling it does mean that the proposed development is never viewed in isolation but always with a 'built' backdrop. The scheme as proposed has a smaller footprint and volume than the existing buildings and matching eaves and ridge heights to remove any perceived impact on the openness of the Greenbelt.

It is proposed to introduce elements of external amenity space associated with the dwellings but these will be limited to the extent of the existing hardstanding. The garden space will be buffered by an area of wildflower meadow defined by post and rail fence to further screen any perceived domestication which it is believed will remove any impact on visual amenity.

In terms of residential amenity, the new development has been designed to respect the existing Farmhouse. The closest dwelling offers a single storey elevation to its host and indigenous hedging is proposed to screen external spaces. The more open elevation to dwelling 3 is oblique to the farmhouse and >25m distant. Each of the three new dwellings are orientated to benefit from the open aspect to the South and East and only obscured openings are proposed on any common elevations.

Although the original application for new dwellings on the site was withdrawn, a conversion scheme was approved as previously noted. Consultation responses linked to this application in terms of highways recommended improvements to the existing access including the provision of a passing place, the extension of the existing footpath from 128 to 136 Old Lane and a bus stop 'Clearway' all of which will be implemented with this scheme.



The central courtyard space has also been shown to accommodate a 11.65m Kirclees refuse vehicle.

Although the applicant is aware that the erection of new dwellings within the Greenbelt is discouraged, it is opined that the existing conversion approval, the improved architectural design and associated sustainability opportunities, the parameters of the site and the reduction in built form all contribute to the very special circumstances which would allow the scheme to proceed.

4.0_Design

4.1_Use

Brownhill Farm ceased agricultural activities last century and the former agricultural buildings have since been used for incidental and minor residential storage, falling into a varied state of disrepair. The residential use of the site has been established by the conversion scheme so dwellings are considered acceptable in principle.

4.2_Amount

The existing agricultural buildings comprise of five linked blocks of different proportions. The redevelopment consists of 3 detached dwellings. The existing agricultural buildings have a footprint of 876.5sqm and a volume of 3821.5cbm. The proposed scheme has a footprint of 574.2sqm (across three dwellings) - a reduction of 35% - and a volume of 3251.1cbm (a reduction of 15%).

4.3_Layout

The existing layout is based on a circuitous access road which rings Brownhill Farm, passing in part through the agricultural buildings. The proposed scheme seeks to close the Southerly leg with the redevelopment served by the existing Northern access road and a turning head sized to accept Kirclees refuse wagons. The dwellings broadly occupy the footprint of the existing development, arrayed to benefit from the outlook to the South and East. Parking and service spaces to the inner courtyard are offset by amenity spaces to the perimeter.

4.4_Scale

The proposed dwellings match the form of the existing farmhouse, part two storey, part single storey with room in the roof accommodation. The dwellings match the eaves and ridge heights of the existing farmhouse although they follow the existing topography which rises to the North.

4.5_Landscaping

The site is currently almost wholly hard surfaced. The proposed inner courtyard will feature vegetation to soften the vehicular apron with indigenous species including tree and hedge planting subject to detailed design. Private amenity spaces will include natural screening and elements of dry stone walling. To further blend the development into the landscape it is proposed to create Wildflower meadow spaces with a haha feature defined by timber post and rail fencing.



4.6_Appearance

The proposed new dwellings have been prompted by the catslide form of the existing farmhouse building which is in part fully two storey/ part single storey. The building has two distinct faces with low eaves and smaller windows to the 'public' North-Western elevations and full height eaves and more generous openings to the 'private' South-Eastern elevations. The garden space to the South is further defined with a detached garage and stone wall to the East and established planting to the West.

The new development uses the same approach with the outer edges presenting low eaves and sweeping roofs to the surrounding landscape, screening linking two storey infill blocks.

The proposed development is accessed by the existing private roadway which passes in front of Brownhill Farm and opens to create a turning head linking all three properties. Elements of drystone walling are linked with soft planting to create defined approaches to each of the new dwellings:

Plot 1 is located parallel to the shared boundary to the existing farmhouse with a gable fronted block offering low eaves and a subservient form. This block contains a double garage and family room at ground floor with room in the roof bedroom accommodation above. A perpendicular block springs from the courtyard side with higher eaves and a shallower roof pitch containing living accommodation at ground floor and a double height circulation space linked to en-suite bedroom accommodation above. Externally Plot 1 features smaller scale openings to the Courtyard and folding sliding doors/ a glazed gable to the open fields.

Plot 2 is positioned in the South-Eastern corner of the application site and effectively turns the corner. The two storey form of Plot 1 is continued in an L-shape with a paired gable element addressing the landscape.

Internally a double height entrance leads to living and family spaces at ground floor alongside a double garage with en-suite bedroom accommodation above served from a runaround landing. The same architectural language of Plot 1 is used externally with solid elevations to the courtyard tempered by glazed elevations to the rear.

Plot 3 occupies the North-Eastern corner of the site with the same features as its neighbours - the Northern block offering low eaves to the boundary, the two storey block continuing the form of Plot 2.

Internally the large scale family space is located behind the double garage across the site whilst living accommodation is located in the perpendicular block.

5.0_Climate Change Mitigation

The issue of Climate change will be addressed through the construction of the proposed dwellings. The proposed envelope will exceed the current Building Regulations in terms of Part L and ASHP will serve underfloor heating/ provide hot water. Lights will be energy saving and will be fitted with timers whilst water saving devices will be fitted to all sanitaryware.



Recycling provision will also be provided.

6.0_Access

The proposals have been designed to respond to the existing levels and a level route is proposed from the parking apron to each new dwelling.

Internally all doors will achieve a minimum clear width of 800mm in the open position.

Any protection and/or fixed objects on circulation routes will not reduce the effective width of the clear space below 750mm.

The position of all accessible switches and socket points are to comply with the requirements of Approved Document Part M2, Section 8, diagram 29 - set between the zone of 400mm minimum above finish floor level and a maximum of 1200mm above finish floor level.

7.0_Ecology and Environment

The site is located within the Bat Alert area but the Consultation from the previous approval considered the likelihood of a roost within the existing buildings negligible. A biodiversity enhancement plan will be provided at the next stage.

8.0_Walkover Inspection

A walkover inspection of the site has revealed no evidence of subsidence. Concerns raised regarding potential shallow mineworkings encouraged intrusive testing and a report detailing the boreholes undertaken accompanies this application.

9.0_Incoming Utilities Assessment

The existing property benefits from services. Capacity studies will be undertaken

10.0_Drainage assessment

The EA's web-based flood zone map shows the site is located in Flood Zone 1.

The site benefits from existing drainage and this will be re-used.

SUDS will be utilized for the external areas in line with DCLG Guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens note.

