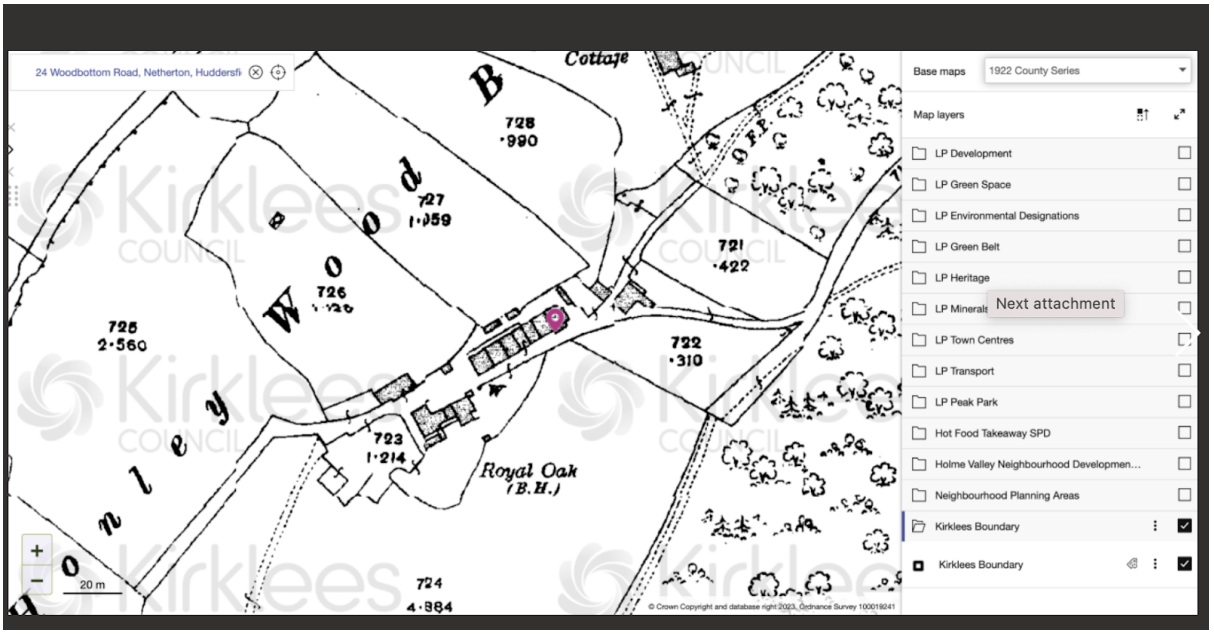
Justification statement - 24 Wood Bottom Road, Netherton, HD4 7DJ

This justification statement provides information to support the planning application for the extension of 24 Wood Bottom Road to make it into a family home for us - James Haywood and Rebecca Gwilliam - as the applicants, and our four children. As part of these works, we will make significant improvements to the eco performance of the house and the sustainability of the accompanying ten acres of land which we intend to maintain and manage to a high standard. We are also intending to explore utilising some of the land as a smallholding.

Location, setting and site context

24 Wood Bottom Road is located in the valley between Honley, Netherton and South Crosland on the site of a former rural hamlet. The property sits at the bottom of a track and cobbled drive, looking towards the Crosland Factory site and the new housing development there, although we have no direct view. Alongside the property at 24 Wood Bottom Road, there is a large derelict stone building, which was previously used as a workshop and mistle, and the aforementioned 10 acres of land. The land varies in nature but it is roughly 50/50 woodland and farmland.

Historical maps clearly show that the hamlet at points comprised a row of houses, a pub, a tannery, a barn, a separate house as well as several workshops and outbuildings, some of which still remain standing today on land in and around 24 Wood Bottom Road. You can see this in Map A (1955), with 24 Wood Bottom Road marked in pink.



(Map A - map of the area, 1955).

The most recent previous owner bought the site, which included the row of cottages, which were in different states of disrepair in the late 1980s. 24 and 26 were almost entirely standing, although 26 was in a poor state with a collapsed roof. The previous owner chose to make 24 and 26 into a single dwelling and, in doing so, pulled down the majority of 26 given

its poor state. He obtained planning permission to renovate the existing building, and is clear that this is not an extension of 24 Wood Bottom Road - as the planning decision states - but a combination of 24 and 26 Wood Bottom Road. He then rebuilt number 26 in its original footprint, forming a single dwelling as 24. The rest of the row of cottages now cannot be seen apart from the ruin of the second to last property in the row, which is in the corner of our garden.

State of the current house and proposals for improvements - energy efficiency and sustainability

The house, in its current state, is a four bedroom house with one of the bedrooms being an occasional attic room which is up a spiral staircase. As a family of six, and with this house having a small living and kitchen area, we are proposing the extension to give us a much larger kitchen and living area and a much needed extra bedroom as currently, what was originally the dining room, we are having to use as a nursery / 5th bedroom for our youngest son.

As part of our proposals to extend the house, we want to put in place a downstairs toilet and shower room, and turn the current nursery into a flexible living space. With young children, in the short term, this will mean we can move the bedroom of our youngest son upstairs, but it also future proofs the house for us as we grow older. We see this as our home for life, and we want to create a home which can meet all of our needs as a family now, and in future. As our needs change with age, we would potentially live on one level utilising the downstairs bathroom and potential bedroom space, while still providing appropriate accommodation upstairs for our children.

Moreover, the property has not been modernised since it was originally restored in the late 80s / early 90s. In its current state it is not well set up or suited to modern-day living for a large family. However, there are very few properties in the local area that are suitable and affordable for a family of six to purchase in the current environment. This property has the potential to provide suitable modern living but also do so in a way that moves the house and its land to a much more sustainable footing, and improves the quality and visual amenity of the site.

The property currently has an energy efficiency rating of F, which is incredibly poor and, under new Government legislation, is so inefficient that it would not be allowed to be rented out (N.B. we have no intention of doing this). Many costly measures will be needed to improve the efficiency rating but they would also reduce the available living space within the house and, to justify the cost of these improvements, we would need to increase the value of the house. The measures we would need to undertake include:

- Replacement all of the windows in the property as the double glazing is old and has failed;
- Insulating the property by re-plastering all of the walls. This would need to be done using insulated boards as there is virtually no insulation in the house. Using this method is efficient for insulation purposes but it will reduce the size of all the rooms due to the thickness of the insulation and the plasterboard combined, making small rooms even smaller;

- Putting insulation into the roof as there is almost none there at the moment;
- Replace the 30 year old LPG boiler which is incredibly inefficient and uses large amounts of LPG monthly - most likely to be replaced with a new energy efficient heating system

The extension, that we have applied for planning for, will be far more energy efficient and insulated to the highest specifications. In the short term it will also shift the main point of living within the house. What this will allow us to do is then to go back to the original part of the property and renovate it, adding high quality insulation and energy efficiency measures (such as underfloor heating) therefore making the house markedly more energy efficient and cost effective as a living space.

As part of our long term plan to be more self-sufficient, as well as energy efficient, we also intend to:

- Provide all our own firewood*;*
- Utilise a natural water source on our land - a constantly running culvert which runs through our property. We will collect water from the culvert and this will be used for feeding animals and to watering the land, and anything been grown on this or in our garden / greenhouse;
- Since moving into the property we have already taken steps to improve the farmland. This includes having sheep grazing and a selection of rare breed pigs moving in imminently to help us restore the overgrown areas of land back to quality farmland.

The previous owner had not used the cottage in any way to support farming activities, which is why there is such a small kitchen and living area and no space for utility or boot rooms. The extension which would provide much needed space to enable us to undertake these activities.

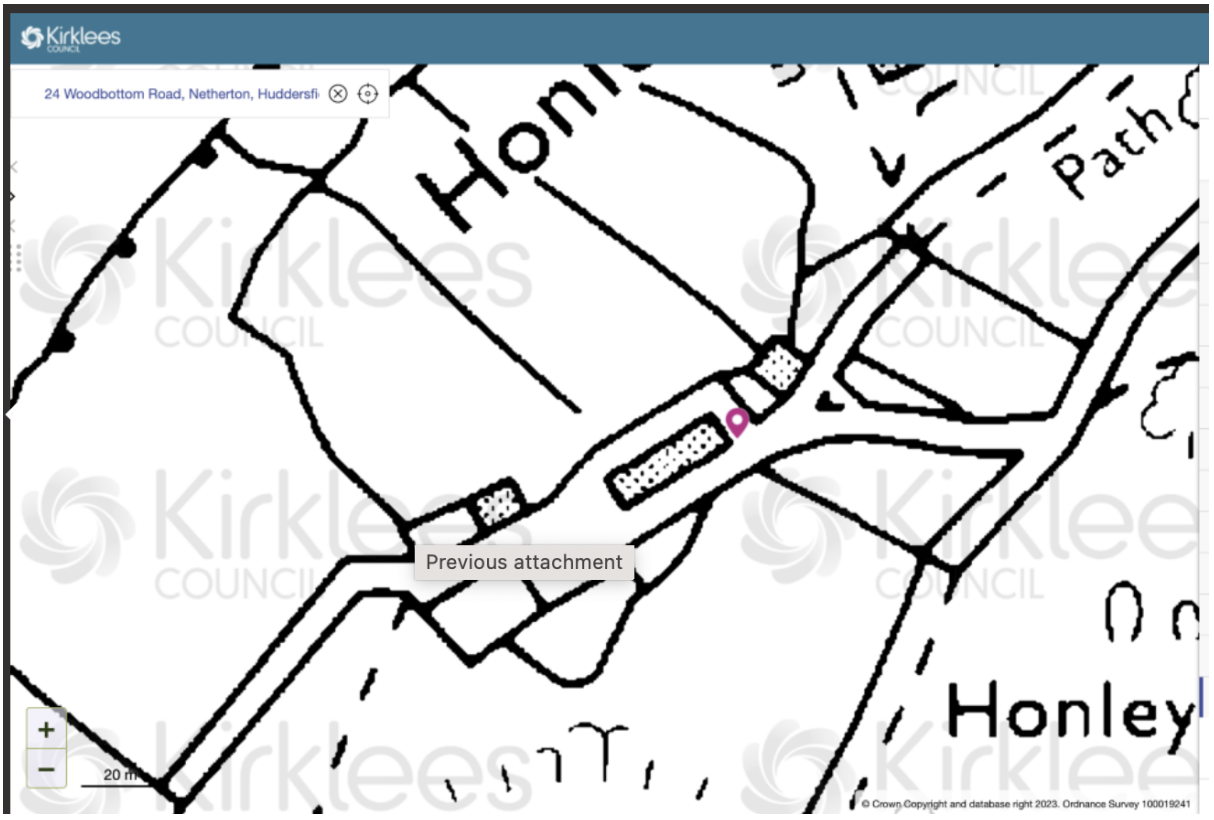
Impact on the open character of the green belt

Other than our immediate neighbours at 33 Wood Bottom Road, the house is not overlooked by any other properties. There is also a row of large leylandii which the owners of 33 Wood Bottom have already grown as a privacy barrier between the two properties.

The extension will sit at the side of the property facing down the valley. The front door and all living areas already face in the same direction - downwards and looking across our garden and land, away from the cobbled drive. The house is built on a slope so the rear side of the property, past which the cobbled drive runs, gives the appearance of being a single storey dwelling. As such, and due to the topography of the land, which slopes towards the bottom of the valley, only a small portion of the extension will actually be visible to the very small number of people who may walk past, given the remote nature of the property.

On the front side of the property, the impact on the open character of the green belt will also be minimal. The property is well hidden by woodland, which would not be impacted in any way by the extension, leaving the current views of the property in almost the exact same state unless standing almost directly in front of the proposed extension.

As to the impact of the building on the land itself, the volume of the extension will represent a small percentage of the volume of the original buildings that were on this site. The overall footprint will remain significantly smaller than what was here in the not too distant past.



(Map B - 1990. 24 Wood Bottom denoted by pink dot)

This map shows where the row of cottages was at the side of our property, clearly indicating the size of the original footprint of cottages and buildings, even in the 1990s.

The plans submitted demonstrate our full intention to complete this renovation in a way which is sympathetic to the local style. For example, all the stone, including the ashlar window and door surroundings will be reclaimed and the property will be pointed in traditional Huddersfield iron pointing, just as the original house has been done and how the original row of cottages and hamlet buildings would also have been finished.

That said, we also understand the need to define between the new and the old, which is why we would like to include the glass link between the existing property and proposed extension. This modern and simple glass link, allows the new extension to clearly read as a current addition to the original dwelling, whilst the extension itself will be traditional in its materials and construction it will have a more contemporary feel. The glass link allows the gable end of the original cottage to be seen through the glass.

Conclusion

Our overall aim for 24 Wood Bottom Road is to create a vastly improved energy efficient and, as far as possible, self-sustaining house. With the proposed extension in place the

house would combine both suitable modern living for a large family, which is difficult to come by in the local area, and in a way that is in keeping with traditional styles of the Holme Valley, with a negligible impact on the open character of the green belt.

We hope that this statement, and the submitted plans, provide enough detail for this application. However, should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact A+DP architects.