



# **DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**CONVERSION/DEMOLITION AND RESTORATION OF  
FORMER AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS TO  
DWELLINGS AND THE ERECTION OF NEW  
GARAGES TO SERVE PLOTS 2-4 AND AN EXTEN-  
SION TO PLOT 5**

**AT**

**HELM FARM  
COLNE BRIDGE  
HUDDERSFIELD  
HD5 0PU**

**MAY 2023**

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*CLIENT:*

## Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the conversion/demolition and restoration of former agricultural buildings to dwellings etc at Helm Farm, Colne Bridge, Huddersfield.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with all other information submitted to support the application.

## Background

The existing site is located to the east of Colne Bridge and Leeds Road / Bradley Bar and is accessed along an unnamed metalled road from Bog Green Lane (the B6118). The site of Helm Farm contains two dwellings (known as Farr House) and a considerable number of agricultural buildings of various ages and in various states of repair.

Whilst there is an access from the site onto the adjacent Paul Lane to the east, this is not a public right of way and the applicant has formed a vehicular barrier here for site security and safety. The Calder Valley Greenway emerges from the former railway line onto this access just to the east of this barrier and continues along Paul Lane towards Mirfield.

The area is predominantly agricultural but there are a number of dwellings to the east of the site and the Yorkshire Shooting Centre lies to the south (served from Paul Lane).

The land is no longer being farmed by the applicant. Some buildings and the bulk of the land is rented out to others but a proposed new railway line is cutting through the farm with a compulsory purchase ongoing. This removes a large area of land from the farm and makes it difficult for continued farming.

The existing buildings on the site are a mixture of ages, styles, and materials in different stages of disrepair and dilapidation. The scheme provides for the retention of the existing farmhouse (Farr House) and for the conversion of three stone-built barns and a former stone-built stable block into five dwellings. Some modern agricultural buildings will be demolished which are very dilapidated and beyond economic repair. Some other modern agricultural buildings (portal frame structures) will remain but they are independent and separate from the proposed scheme and outside the scope of this application.

The site is within the green belt in the Kirklees Local Plan. There are no listed buildings on site and it is not in a Conservation Area. There are no Tree Preservation Orders.

There is no previous relevant planning history on the site.

## Planning policy and guidance

**National planning policy** is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

National planning policy and guidance is set out in National Policy Statements, primarily the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, and the Planning Practice Guidance Suite (PPGS), together with Circulars, Ministerial Statements and associated technical guidance. The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and is a material consideration in determining applications.

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development - The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development... achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent. These are economic, social and environmental objectives, as identified in paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

Chapter 4 - Decision-making - This highlights the importance of early engagement (pre- application discussions) as this has the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system for all parties (paragraph 39 of the NPPF). It highlights the importance of submitting the right information with any subsequent planning application, particularly where formal assessments are required (paragraph 43 of the NPPF).

Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places - The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. A list of what planning policies and decision should ensure is set out at paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

Chapter 13 – Protecting Green Belt land - The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Chapter 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change - the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future.

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

Other relevant national guidance and documents include -

MHCLG: National Design Guide (2021)

DCLG: Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (2015)

**Local planning policy** is provided primarily by the Kirklees Local Plan (LP).

The primary relevant policies within the LP are held to include -

LP1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

LP2 - Place shaping

LP21 - Highway safety and access

LP22 - Parking

LP24 - Design

LP60 - Re-use and conversion of buildings

The following are relevant Supplementary Planning Documents or other guidance documents -

Highways Design Guide SPD

West Yorkshire Low Emissions Strategy and Air Quality and Emissions  
Technical Planning Guidance (2016)

Waste Management Design Guide for New Developments (2020)

Housebuilders Design Guide SPD.

## Development appraisal

Whilst the proposed development of the site must be seen as a whole, it is considered that the primary material planning considerations in assessing the proposed scheme relate to the following issues –

1. Development in the green belt
2. Access
3. Other matters

### ***1. Principle of development in the green belt.***

It is considered that the proposed scheme meets the exception at paragraph 150 d) of the NPPF. This paragraph states that a local authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt with a small number of exceptions. The relevant exception in this case is held to be -

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

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*d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*

.....

This position is echoed by Local Plan policy LP60, which states -

*Proposals for the conversion or re-use of buildings in the Green Belt will normally be acceptable where;*

- a. the building to be re-used or converted is of a permanent and substantial construction;*
- b. the resultant scheme does not introduce incongruous domestic or urban characteristics into the landscape, including through the treatment of outside areas such as means of access and car parking, curtilages and other enclosures and ancillary or curtilage buildings;*
- c. the design and materials to be used, including boundary and surface treatments are of a high quality and appropriate to their setting and the activity can be accommodated without detriment to landscape quality, residential amenity or highway safety.*

With regard to part a) of policy LP60, a Structural Survey has been submitted to support the application which demonstrates that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion to a residential use.

In respect of part b) of policy LP60, the conversion of the existing stone barns will not introduce incongruous nor urban characteristics into the landscape to a point whereby redevelopment of the site becomes inappropriate.

Means of access for plots 1 and 2 is already established through the access to the existing development.

Car parking areas for plot 1 (three bed) represents approximately one third of total plot curtilage and it also has proposed garaging within an existing building. The garden area of plot 1 also represents approximately one third of total plot curtilage (nb the small area of hardstanding), with the footprint of the existing building to be converted representing the final third of plot curtilage.

Car parking areas for plot 2 (three bed) also represent approximately one third of the total plot curtilage but with the addition of a new garage (built from natural materials) and a secondary garden area. It should be noted at this point that a large, dilapidated agricultural building is to be demolished to allow for this development, which will represent a substantial net decrease in the amount of built form in this part of the site. The remainder of the plot includes a further garden area (nb the small area of hardstanding) and the footprint of the existing building to be converted represents the remainder of the total plot curtilage.

Means of access for plots 3, 4, and 5 will be from Paul Lane (the existing barrier preventing unauthorised access will be removed), with plot 5 being served from an existing farm track and plots 3 and 4 sharing a courtyard area and being served by an access that partly uses an existing farm track.

Car parking areas for plot 3 (three bed) and plot 4 (four bed) will be in the form of new garages on the site of the demolished, dilapidated agricultural building, with vehicular access to a courtyard. The garden area of plot 3 will be to the north of the building to be converted, again utilising a second area of a demolished, dilapidated agricultural building. The garden area of plot 4 is to the east of the property.

Plot 5 (two bed) will be served from its own private drive that is currently used as an access track to the farm. Access to the building will be from a courtyard area, with a garden area provided on the other side of the building. Car parking will be open, with no new garage proposed.

With regard to part c) of policy LP60, new boundary walls etc have been introduced into the proposed scheme for all units but these have been kept to a minimum in order to sub-divide the site and will be built using natural materials (stone) and agricultural-type post-and-rail fencing. Native species (thorns etc) will be planted behind these walls to form security and privacy.

Areas of hardstanding for vehicles and around buildings are proposed as setts or natural flags etc with gravel on a sub-base of crushed stone being used for the surfacing of the internal access roads, so as to avoid an "urbanisation" of the area. Materials will be of a high quality and the

overall design of the scheme (including demolition) will ensure that there will be a positive impact on landscape quality and highway safety.

In terms of residential amenity, the scheme has been designed to ensure that the privacy and security of both existing occupiers of Farr House and for the future occupiers of the five units to be created will be secured through appropriate space between buildings standards to prevent overlooking etc and providing for generous internal accommodation standards.

## **2. Access**

Access to the site for plots 1 and 2 will be from Bog Green Lane. This access road is metalled but not adopted and has existing passing places for vehicles. The applicant owns land adjacent to this access if further passing places are required. Whilst this access road already serves a number of dwellings near to Bog Green Lane, it is held that existing and/or proposed passing places will ensure that any limited intensification of this access road can be mitigated, especially as the access can currently be used for any number of large agricultural vehicles. As such, it is held that a small number residential vehicle movements per day will at least offset, if not improve, any highway safety issues by the removal of some (if not all) agricultural traffic on this access.

Access to the site for plots 3, 4, and 5 will be from Paul Lane. The existing security barrier will be removed to allow this access. Paul Lane is metalled and adopted. The Calder Valley Greenway emerges onto this access and works will be undertaken to avoid any conflict between the users of the Greenway and the occupiers of the site.

### ***3. Other material planning considerations***

A bat scoping and activity survey has concluded that some of the buildings have no potential interest to bats and can be demolished or developed at any time and without restrictions or requirements for a protected species licence. However, brown long-eared bats were confirmed as roosting in two buildings and will require a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence before works can commence. In order to gain the licence, further survey work will be required and this will take place between May and mid-July which is the optimal period for bat occupancy. This will allow a detailed method statement to be prepared and developed. Mitigation and compensation measure will be required. Consideration of swallows and barn owls will also be required.

A Structural Report concludes that, in general, the buildings are in relatively good condition given their age, and with generally minor repairs, accompanied by good design to provide additional structural support, the buildings are capable of conversion and adaptation to become dwellings. Some local elements of rebuilding external walls are recommended but it is noted that the overall percentage of rebuild equates to only approximately 6.5% of the existing external elevations. Considering the age of the buildings, this is not considered to be a significant proportion of the buildings and, given responsibilities to support a more sustainable construction sector, the reuse of a high proportion of the existing external fabric minimises the embodied carbon in the provision of dwellings on the site.

In terms of drainage, all plots will require package treatment plants for the foul drainage and surface water will discharge into soakaways subject to an acceptable percolation test with LABC.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it is considered that the proposed development will have a very limited impact on the purposes of including land within the green belt in terms of openness and with a reduction in the bulk, scale and mass of buildings within the green belt area of the site, there will be, in fact, an increase in openness.

Access to the site will have little or no greater impact on highway safety than the existing situation and any potential causes of conflict will be effectively mitigated.

As such, the proposed scheme is therefore held to satisfy the requirements of paragraph 150 d) of the NPPF and Local Plan policy LP60 and to be capable of approval, subject to any reasonable and necessary conditions.