

Planning Statement

**CONVERSION AND EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS TO
PROVIDE FOUR DWELLINGS (INCLUDING REFURBISHMENT OF
EXISTING FARMHOUSE)**

OLDFIELD HOUSE AND FARM, OLDFIELD ROAD, HONLEY

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1. INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the submission of applications for full planning permission and listed building consent for a heritage-led scheme to provide restoration of an existing dwelling and the creation of three new dwellings. The scheme proposes a combination of restoration, conversion, extensions, as well as the demolition of modern buildings of low quality that make no positive contribution to the heritage significance of the site or the conservation area.

This application follows a recent approval for a very similar scheme (2023/93071 and 2023/93072). The primary difference is that one of the previously approved plots is now to be subdivided into two smaller dwellings. This approach was agreed with officers prior to submission and has full support. The scheme incorporates a few other minor design amendments but these are not considered to have any meaningful impact on the planning merits of the scheme.

The site comprises of a grade II listed dwelling house of 19th century origins that is of particular significance and interest due to its Georgian frontage and weaver's cottage rear. The site also contains a series of outbuildings. Some of these are historic buildings of heritage significance, and others are of no significance and actively detract from the significance and character of the site, the Oldfield Road Conservation Area in which the site is located, and the wider landscape character.

The application proposes an attractive scheme of restoration and redevelopment that retains and enhances the significance of the site and removes existing harmful elements. Not only would this enhance the historic significance, interest and character of the heritage assets, but would also safeguard the long-term future of them by gifting them new viable uses.

The site is within the Green Belt and the proposal also offers the opportunity to vastly improve openness compared to the existing situation. The impacts of the scheme on openness would be identical to the recently approved scheme. Although it could be argued that the development does not strictly fall under any of the 'closed list' of development types that are appropriate in the Green Belt, there are clear 'very special circumstances' that justify the development in the Green Belt. This issue is discussed in more depth below.

The proposal would deliver three additional houses, along with the refurbishment of the farmhouse, at a time of a national housing shortage and the benefits of the scheme in this regard should be afforded significant weight.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting plans and the suite of supporting technical documents which demonstrate the credentials of the scheme in more detail.

It is anticipated that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will adopt a progressive approach to this sustainable scheme. Given the planning history for the site, and the pre-application discussions that have taken place, it is anticipated that the application should be a simple one for officers to deal with.

This statement now proceeds to give details of the site. The details of the proposal are then set out. The planning merits of the scheme are then discussed in relation to relevant planning policies contained in the statutory development plan, together with Government guidance principally set out in the NPPF. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the proposal would deliver conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and would improve Green Belt openness.

2. THE SITE

The site lies to the northwestern side of Oldfield Road in the settlement of Oldfield. Oldfield itself lies a short distance to the south of the District Centre settlement of Honley and a short distance to the north of Netherthong village.

The site comprises of Oldfield House, a group of agricultural buildings and a small parcel of land to the northwest of the building group. Oldfield House is a grade II listed dwelling house. The remainder of the buildings within the site are in agricultural use and are a mix of historic and modern structures. Some of these are therefore of historic and architectural merit and others detract from the historic character of the site and the wider landscape setting.

Oldfield is a settlement that comprises of scattered houses and farmsteads of varying ages and building types. Local sandstone is the predominant building material, used almost exclusively, and its use makes a strong contribution to establishing the local vernacular.

The front half of the site, which contains all the buildings, is within the Oldfield Conservation Area. The paddock is outside of the conservation area, as shown on the extract from the LPA's Conservation Area Appraisal:



3. THE PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of site through the restoration, conversion and extension of the existing buildings to provide three dwellings in total (a net gain of two dwellings). More information about the proposal can be found in the accompanying plans by Studio Gedye Architecture. The key elements of the proposal are as follows:

- The existing grade II listed dwelling house is to be restored in order to remove historically inappropriate features that detract from its significance. This will result in significant heritage enhancement.
- The design solution for the farmhouse is exactly the same as the recently approved scheme.
- The existing modern farm buildings are all to be demolished and removed from the site. This is the same as the recently approved scheme.
- The other two existing buildings that are of heritage value are then to be sensitively converted to residential use, with extensions to make them function as family homes. The extensions are very sensitively linked to the historic buildings and would deliver considerable heritage benefit. The design of these elements is almost identical to the recently approved scheme.
- A detailed landscaping plan accompanies the scheme.

4. PLANNING HISTORY AND PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

The key planning history for the site relates to the recent approvals:

- 2023/62/93071/W - Demolition of modern farm buildings, alterations to existing farm house, conversion/ extension of farm buildings to form 2 dwellings with associated access and parking arrangements (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)
- 2023/65/93072/W - Listed Building Consent for demolition of modern farm buildings, alterations to existing farm house, conversion/ extension of farm buildings to form 2 dwellings with associated access and parking arrangements (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)
- 2022/62/91660/W - Demolition of modern farm building, alterations to existing farm house, conversion of farm buildings to form 2 dwellings with associated access and parking arrangements (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)
- 2022/65/91661/W - Listed Building Consent for demolition of modern farm building, alterations to existing farm house, conversion of farm buildings to form 2 dwellings with associated access and parking arrangements (within a Conservation Area)

The upshot of the previous applications is that the site benefits from extant permissions for a very similar scheme to that currently proposed. As set out above, the only differences on the current application are the subdivision of one of the previously approved plots and some minor design amendments.

The current application also includes further technical details (landscaping plan, phase II report, Remediation strategy, etc.) to avoid the need for any pre-commencement conditions.

5. ALLOCATION AND POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the Development Plan consists of the Kirklees Local Plan and the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Material considerations exist in the form of national policy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as updated in July 2021 and the suite of documents comprising National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

Allocations

The site lies within the Green Belt as designated under the provisions of the Local Plan. The site is also within the Oldfield Conservation Area, is within the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Area and is within a Mineral Safeguarding Area.

National

The NPPF is reflective of the guidance contained within the NPPG. The following sections of the revised NPPF are considered of direct relevance to the current proposal:

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Section 4 - Decision-making

Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land

Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The overarching message of the NPPF is that LPAs should adopt a positive and pro-active approach to planning proposals, particularly those that result in sustainable development. LPAs should not place unnecessary burdens on developers and should look to support appropriate schemes such as this.

Kirklees Local Plan

The following policies are of relevance:

- LP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- LP3 Location of new development
- LP7 Efficient and effective use of land and buildings
- LP11 Housing Mix and Affordable Housing
- LP20 Sustainable travel
- LP21 Highways and access
- LP24 Design
- LP27 Flood Risk
- LP28 Drainage
- LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP32 Landscape
- LP35 Historic Environment
- LP38 Minerals safeguarding
- LP52 Protection and improvement of environmental quality
- LP53 Contaminated and unstable land
- LP57 The extension, alteration or replacement of existing buildings
- LP60 The re-use and conversion of buildings

Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan (HVNDP)

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy 1: Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape Character of Holme Valley

Policy 2: Protecting and Enhancing the Built Character of the Holme Valley and Promoting High Quality Design

Policy 3: Conserving and Enhancing Local Heritage Assets

Policy 6: Building Homes for the Future

Policy 12: Promoting Sustainability

Policy 13: Protecting Wildlife and Securing Biodiversity Net Gain

6. ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

Sustainability

Notwithstanding the need to comply with Green Belt policy, the main emphasis of current national planning policy is to ensure proposals are compliant with the definition of sustainable development set out within the NPPF. Sustainability is multifaceted. The Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice is to be found throughout the Framework, taken as a whole. To achieve sustainable development, the Framework states that economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

The proposal would be wholly sustainable using the definition set out in the NPPF for the following reasons:

Social: The proposed development would result in the creation of three new dwellings and the refurbishment of the existing dwelling. All four dwellings at the site would provide high-quality housing for future occupiers in a sustainable location in the heart of Oldfield Village and a very short distance from the larger settlements within the Holme Valley, including the District Centre settlement of Honley. The proposal would not result in any adverse social impacts.

Economic: The site is no longer part of a working farm, and the proposal would make efficient use of the existing historic buildings and would provide growth and investment in the locality. Additional economic activity would be created during the construction phase. The new dwellings would be likely to provide additional custom at existing local services in the locality.

Environmental: The proposal would preserve the landscape character of the wider area. There would be no adverse environmental impacts arising from the scheme.

In terms of the location of the site for residential development, although the site is within the Green Belt it is still in a sustainable location. The site is within the heart of Oldfield village, and the new dwellings would therefore be located in very close proximity to existing residential properties.

In terms of local facilities and services, Oldfield benefits from a recreation ground that is a stones throw from the site. A vast range of local services and community facilities lie within the neighbouring villages of Netherthong and Honley. These include primary and secondary schools, doctors' surgery, places of worship, shops and food and drink outlets. Honley and Brockholes both have railway stations on the Penistone line and therefore provide public transport access to Huddersfield, Barnsley and Sheffield.

Netherthong village is less than 400m from the application site as the crow flies, and less than 1km by road. Honley is about 500m / 1.5km respectively. The facilities and services within Netherthong and Honley are therefore easily accessible to residents of Oldfield by means of foot, bicycle or car. This is a sustainable location for additional dwellings.

Policy LP3 and the Spatial Development Strategy acknowledge that windfall developments will make an important contribution to meeting the LPA's housing targets and delivering the housing needs for the area. It is important that windfall developments such as this reflect the settlement's size and function. Development opportunities within Oldfield are very limited indeed by the inclusion of the settlement within the Green Belt. As such, this is a rare opportunity to provide a very limited number of new homes that will contribute to the vitality of the settlement, without placing any burden on the good range of services and facilities in the locality. It will be demonstrated further below that the three additional dwellings would

cause no harm to the openness of Green Belt, the significance of heritage assets or to landscape character (indeed the proposal would deliver benefits in these respects). The scale of the development proposed is therefore entirely appropriate for the Oldfield settlement and fully accords with policies L1, LP3 and the Spatial Development Strategy.

The proposal would not result in any material harm and the presumption in favour of sustainable development must be applied. The broad principle of development must therefore be considered acceptable.

Green Belt

The NPPF states that new development is inappropriate within the Green Belt, with defined exceptions provided in the 'closed list' of development types set out in paragraphs 149 and 150.

The proposal comprises different forms of development:

1. Restoration of the listed dwelling house.
2. Conversion of existing buildings.
3. Extensions to existing buildings.
4. Demolition of non-heritage buildings.

Most elements of the scheme (conversions, refurbishments, demolition) would be classed as appropriate forms of development. Furthermore, historic maps for the site suggest that the current extensions would not be disproportionate when viewed in the context of the buildings that existed in 1948:



1964-67 OS MAP (closest available map to 1948)

However, as it is difficult to be exact in relation to the size of the original buildings on the site, this assessment works on the assumption that the LPA will conclude that the development proposal as a whole is technically a form of development that is inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that *"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances"*.

Paragraph 148 goes on to clarify that *"Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."*

In this instance, there are truly clear and convincing very special circumstances that overwhelmingly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness. There are four very special circumstances that are of particular importance and must be considered cumulatively:

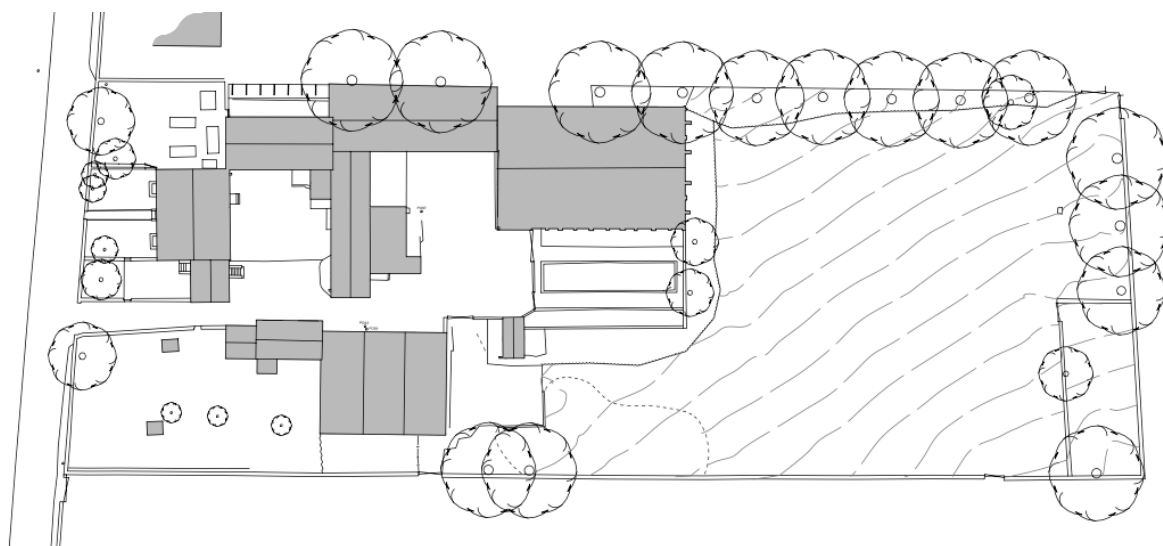
1. Benefits to Green Belt openness.
2. Enhancement of heritage assets.
3. The fallback position.
4. Delivery of sustainable, high-quality housing.

These planning benefits amount to very special circumstances are discussed in the following sections of this statement. The conclusion will be reached that the benefits of the development far outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness.

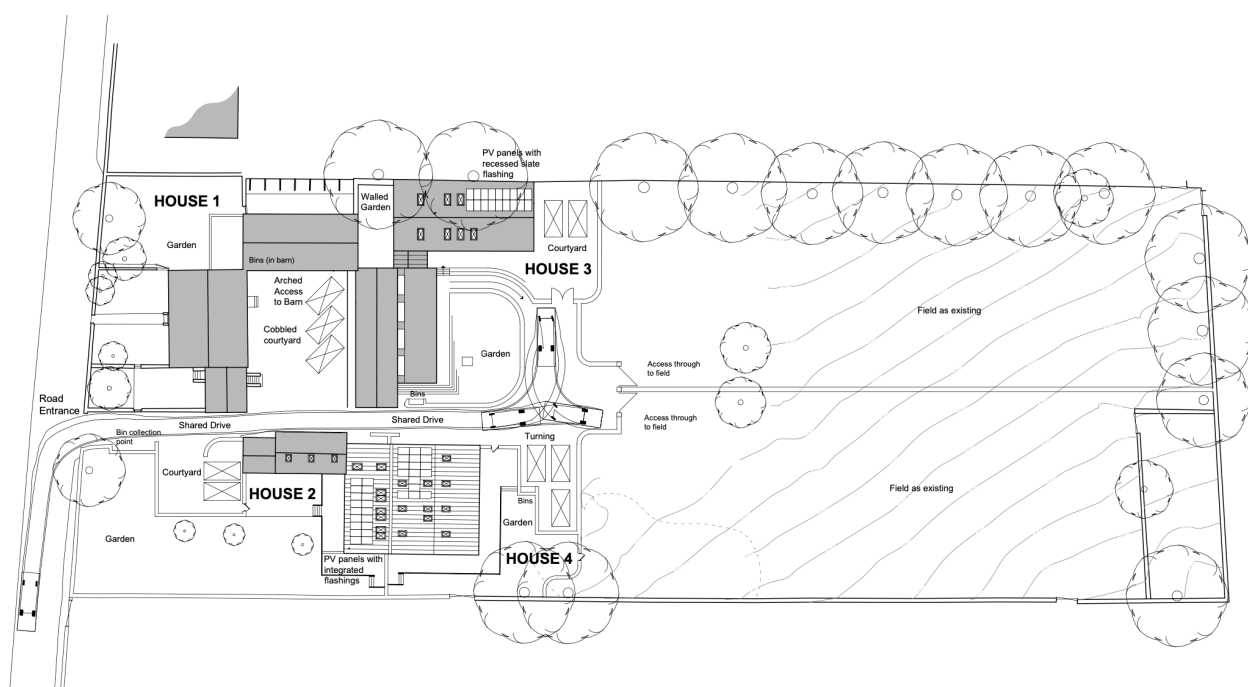
1. Benefits to Green Belt Openness

Openness has a spatial and visual aspect. In terms of visual considerations, the proposed development would result in a huge reduction in built form at the site compared with the existing situation.

The comparative site plans illustrate the significantly smaller footprint of the site post-development, compared with the existing situation:



Existing layout



Proposed layout

It should also be noted that the redevelopment results in a significantly more tight-knit group of buildings overall, with the most north-westerly part of the development being closer to the road and main dwelling house than is currently the case. In other words, buildings would not project as far towards the open countryside as a result of the development that in the case now, reducing the sprawl of buildings into the open countryside. Whilst the images above are compelling in their own right, the significant reduction in building footprints only tells part of the story. The development would also deliver a vast reduction in the volume of buildings too. The proposed layout and volume of built form within the site is identical to that recently approved.

The areas around the buildings are all part of the former farmyard and were all previously used for everyday functions associated with agricultural use. As such, there is no increase in the intensity of the use of the land as a result of all agricultural use ceasing, the modern farm buildings being removed, and two new dwellings being introduced. This also means that there would be no harm to openness though the introduction of domestic paraphernalia, parking spaces and gardens, since the areas of the site in which these features would be sited were all previously part of the well-used farmyard.

Overall, the development would result in a significant reduction in built form, would not result in encroachment of built form or associated domestic features into areas that did not previously contain buildings or form part of the farmyard, and represents a scale of development that would not intensify the use of the site in comparison to the established agricultural use. As such, the development would improve openness compared to the established situation. The development would not conflict with any of the other purposes of the Green Belt. It would be counter-productive to refuse an application for development for reasons of inappropriateness when the development would actually improve Green Belt openness. This therefore forms the first highly significant very special circumstance.

2. Heritage Benefits

As set out above, Oldfield House is a grade II listed building. The site is within the Oldfield Conservation Area. The non-listed historic farm buildings that are to be retained are also considered to be heritage assets. The proposal is a heritage-led scheme of restoration and redevelopment that will enhance the designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Oldfield is a historic farming and weaving village that lies within the Netherthong Rural Fringe landscape character area. It comprises of scattered dwellings and farmsteads along either side of the road. Previous applications have been accompanied by detailed heritage statements and, in the most recent delegated reports, officers confirmed the heritage benefits of the previous scheme:

“Officers have noted that the conversion and external and internal alterations of the existing farmhouse and agricultural buildings would be an enhancement to the existing site. It would bring the buildings, including the existing farmhouse back into use, which are currently left to fall into despair. The Listed Building, would also remain the dominant feature at the site, given its overall height and prominent location, along the highway.”

The heritage implications of this scheme are near identical to the recently approved scheme. It is not therefore considered necessary to repeat the full heritage benefits of the scheme in this statement as this is set out in the earlier reports from The Jessop Consultancy and has already been broadly agreed with the LPA.

Overall, the development scheme will deliver very significant enhancement of the heritage assets within the site. Because the site makes an important contribution to the character and significance of the Oldfield Conservation Area, it follows that the development will also deliver enhancement of the character and significance of the conservation area. The

proposals therefore accord with the guidance contained within section 16 of the NPPF and local plan policies LP35 and Policy 3.

The enhancements to the heritage assets is a highly significant benefit that amounts to a very special circumstance to which a great deal of weight should be given in the planning balance.

3. Fallback position

The site benefits from recent planning approvals for alternative schemes. The most recent approvals are for a near identical scheme and there would be no public benefits to forcing the applicant to implement that scheme. The current proposal delivers one extra family dwelling via the subdivision of one of the previously approved dwellings. Given the local and national pressures to deliver housing, it is considered clear that the current scheme is preferable to the recently approved scheme – it effectively gives the LPA the opportunity to deliver one extra dwelling with no adverse impacts. The proposal delivers clear planning benefits when compared to the fallback position.

4. Delivery of Sustainable Family Housing

As set out further above, the LPA are reliant on windfall schemes such as this to meet the housing needs of the district. The scheme would deliver very high-quality new family housing that would provide an excellent standard of housing amenity for future occupiers.

Summary in respect of Very Special Circumstances

The scheme would deliver significant planning gains and benefits that amount to clear and convincing very special circumstances. The threshold for very special circumstances set out in paragraph 148 of the NPPF is met and the proposal should therefore be supported.

Having demonstrated that very special circumstances clearly exist, it shall not be demonstrated that there are no other technical planning considerations that would prevent planning permission from being granted.

Other Issues

Issues relating to residential amenity, highways, trees, structural stability, land stability, land contamination, mineral safeguarding, flood risk and drainage have all been fully dealt with under the recent permissions.

There are no material changes in these respects and it is not considered necessary to repeat all points at this stage. However, it is worthy of note that the proposal is accompanied by a full range of technical documentation to avoid the need for any pre-commencement conditions

7. CONCLUSION

It is considered likely that the LPA will conclude that the proposed development taken as a whole is, by definition, inappropriate development within the Green Belt. However, it has been demonstrated above that there are very clear and convincing benefits arising from the development that would overwhelmingly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness. As such, very special circumstances exist which justify the development.

The benefits in respect of Green Belt openness, heritage enhancement and housing delivery are compelling and must be afforded significant weight. Issues relating to the fallback position have been clarified and this provides an overwhelming factor in favour of the proposal. The proposal would have exactly the same impacts as the recently approved scheme but with the additional benefit of 1 extra dwelling being delivered at the site.

The proposal represents a rare opportunity to deliver significant planning gain and it is anticipated that the LPA will help this opportunity to be realised. The Applicant is willing to discuss any issues that may arise during the consideration of the proposal with the LPA.

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