

PLANNING STATEMENT

re

OUTLINE APPLICATION

For

Demolition of existing stable block and store

and

Erection of 3 No. dwellings including means of access, appearance, layout and scale

at Mount Pleasant, Plains Lane

Marsden, Huddersfield HD8 6AN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application seeks approval for demolition of the existing stable block and store and outline planning permission for the erection of 3 No. dwellings.

1.2 Though the application is submitted in outline, formal approval is sought for means of access, appearance, layout and scale leaving landscaping as the only reserved matter.

1.3 The list of documents submitted is set out in Appendix A.

1.4 The application site is, of course, defined by the red line on Drawing 37/2405/01. Other land within the applicants' ownership is shown edged in blue.

1.5 The applicant's background information sets out that they purchased the site in 2022 with the specific purpose of achieving their vision to achieve two connected projects: -

- Firstly, a community food growing project potentially involving a mix of shared growing space, small community orchard and some private allotments.

- Secondly, a terrace of three modest self-build homes built to Passivhaus standard.

1.6 The background information sets out in some detail Jan's past, current and future vision for this site for the benefit of refugees, asylum seekers and the local community.

1.7 Also set out in the background information is Chris' pioneering work on Passivhaus construction and retrofit.

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE

2.1 The overall site within the red and blue lines as shown on Drawing 37/2405/01 in the applicants' ownership is currently largely vacant grassland but with tree and shrub planting and communal gardening, but also contains unused stables on a substantial hard-standing and a former store building, the latter in a very poor state.

2.2 Vehicular access to the stables is currently gained via a gate at the south-western corner of the site up a steep, grass track.

## 3.0 THE PROPOSALS

3.1 Drawing 37/2405/13 sets out the general intentions for the overall site within applicants' ownership

3.2 The existing buildings will be demolished.

3.3 The vast majority of the overall site i.e. within the blue line, will be used to enhance bio-diversity by further development of growing areas, including allotments and enhancement of tree and shrub planting as set out in the background information supplied by the applicants.

3.4 Those works, being agricultural will be undertaken without the need for planning permission.

3.5 Those works which require planning permission from the subject of this application.

3.6 3No. relatively modest houses will be built in a terraced form, essentially replicating the existing, unused stable building. They would be built on a self-build basis to a certified Passivhaus standard, building on Chris Herring's and Bill Butcher's vast professional experience.

3.7 A new vehicular entrance will be formed from Plains Lane, roughly central to the site frontage giving access to parking for residents of the three dwellings, their visitors and for volunteers and visitors to the community growing project. Two disabled parking spaces are shown.

3.8 Note that the probable siting of a store/shelter in connecting with the growing project is shown close to the top of steps from the parking area but approval for this is not sought at this stage.

3.9 Included as part of this submission is a Design Statement prepared by the scheme's architects, Hawdon Russell Architects. It supplements the drawings submitted and particularly sets out how the design of the proposed dwellings has drawn reference from the form of the existing stables.

3.10 The similarities of the before and after situation is well illustrated by the submitted photomontages.

#### 4.0 ASSESSMENT

4.1 I have no doubt that the community growing proposals will elicit full support. It is only in respect of the provision of parking spaces that approval is sought as part of this application.

4.2 The land lies within the Green Belt as shown on the Proposals Map which forms part of the Kirklees Local Plan. In my view the only issue of potential concern with the proposals is their greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of the provision of a new access and parking.

4.3 It is however argued that the package of proposals now put forward and the sensitivity of the proposals to what currently exists are such that, if the proposals are considered to fall short in respect of national and local Green Belt policy, very special circumstances exist to justify a favourable response to this application.

4.4 I now set out the key policy considerations relevant to the proposal, making reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Kirklees Local Plan (KLP).

#### 4.5 GREEN BELT – NPPF

This includes paragraph 142 which sets out that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness.

Paragraph 152 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 153 includes 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.

Paragraph 154 sets out that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate, but lists a number of exceptions including –  
g) ... the partial or complete development of previously developed land (excluding temporary buildings) which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

#### 4.6 GREEN BELT - KLP

- Chapter 19 includes paragraph 19.8 – “It is important that development which is appropriate, or where very special circumstances exist, is not harmful to the visual amenity of the Green Belt and proposals should have regard to all other relevant policies in the plan. These include the use of high-quality materials, a design that is sensitive to its Green Belt setting, consideration of the amenity of neighbours and in all cases that any impact on openness is kept to a minimum.

- Policy LP56 relates to facilities including for outdoor recreation. As such the development of a community food growing resource is relevant.

- The policy requires that proposals should include that

a) the scale of the facility is no more than is reasonably required for the proper functioning of the use of the land to which it is associated and b) that the facility is unobtrusively located and designed so as not to introduce a prominent urban element into countryside location, including the impact of any new or improved access and car parking areas.

- Policy LP57 includes that proposals for replacement of buildings in the Green Belt will normally be acceptable provided that:

b) in the case of replacement buildings, the new building must be in the same use as and not to be materially larger than the building it is replacing;

c) the proposal does not result in a greater impact on openness in terms of the treatment of outdoor areas, including hard standings, curtilages and enclosures and means of access; and

d) the design and materials should have regard to relevant design policies to ensure that the resultant development does not materially detract from its Green Belt setting.

- Policy LP59 relates to brownfield sites. It includes that in the case of partial or complete redevelopment the extent of the existing footprint is not exceeded.

#### 4.7 GREEN BELT – POLICY ASSESSMENT

-Planning permission was granted on 13 May 1999 for the stables and the formation of a caravan space.

-The overall size of the stable block and the number of stalls are such that it is inconceivable that the horses themselves were used for agricultural purposes in connection with the surrounding land.

-They were clearly used for recreational purposes, probably as livery stables.

-As such the site of the stable block is by definition brownfield (previously developed land)

- Accordingly sub-section g) of paragraph 154 of the NPPF is highly relevant in that the redevelopment proposal is of a permanent building on and restricted to the existing slab to which it is permanently fixed.
- Drawing 37/2405/03A shows the proposal layout and design of the dwellings located on the existing slab (to be retained) and, in red, outlines the footprint of the existing stables.
- The sections on Drawing 37/2405/03A show the relative height and profile of what is now proposed compared with the stables as they currently exist.
- It is acknowledged that the volume of the proposed dwellings is greater than that of the existing stable building
- However, taking into account that this application seeks approval for the demolition of the existing derelict store building as well as the stable block, it is considered that the building proposals will have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. As such, in respect of the impact of the new dwellings it is considered that the proposals represent an exception as set out in paragraph 154 sub-section g) of the NPF.
- Paragraph 19.8 of the KLP sets out that, where very special circumstances exist, for development in the Green Belt, the proposals should not be harmful to the visual amenity of the Green Belt.
- As shown on the photograph of the existing stables and the photomontage of what is now proposed the visual impact from a distance is virtually indistinguishable.
- The new entrance/exit and parking area will be defined with natural stone walling (details to be agreed) with a grid of recycled plastic grass reinforcement system providing the surface treatment.
- Taking levels from Plains Lane, the adjacent highway, the access and parking will be set down and sheltered/screened by existing and proposed planting with details to be agreed as a reserved matter application following the grant of this outline application.
- As such it is considered that the proposal will not be harmful to the visual amenity of the Green Belt.
- Paragraph 19.8 also includes that proposals should include the use of high-quality materials – this will certainly be the case given the Passivhaus design principles to be adopted.
- Regarding the need for a design that is sensitive to its Green Belt setting, the photomontage well illustrates how the new building, essentially a replica stable block will be virtually indistinguishable from the approved, existing stable building.
- There will be minimal impact on the amenity of neighbours given the distance involved from the dwellings to the north.
- Finally, so far as paragraph 19.8 of the KLP is concerned, the additional impact of the proposals by virtue of the new access and parking area is kept to a minimum necessary to meet the parking and servicing requirements of the new dwellings and the community growing areas.
- So far as KLP Policy LP56 is concerned the provision of access and parking in connection with the community growing areas is the minimum considered necessary

to meet everyday needs in a well screened setting in appropriate local and recycled materials. (It should be noted that on Drawing 37/2405/13 a building to be used in connection with the community growing project is shown to the immediate north of the parking area but this does not form part of the current application. Proposals will be submitted once siting and design have been finalized)

- So far as Policy LP57 and 59 are concerned the issues raised are the same as those addressed above in respect of relevant policies set out in the NPPF

4.8 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposals are entirely consistent with national and local Green Belt policy such that very special circumstances are not required to be shown to justify development in the Green Belt

4.9 However, should that not be the view taken then it is considered that very special circumstances exist, as set out below, to justify the grant of planning permission.

#### 4.10 PASSIVHAUS STANDARD

- Reference has already been made to Chris pioneering work on Passivhaus constructions. This work will be followed through to the 3 No. dwellings now proposed. They will be built to exemplary standards of low environmental impact including construction to certified Passivhaus standard, net zero emissions and detailed attention to reducing the impact of all materials used.

- Chris and Bill were business partners at Green Building store for 25 years.

- As set out in the Background Statement, Chris and Jan, the applicants, will live in House 1 with Bill and Joan in House 3.

- With Chris and Bill's practical and theoretical background they are ideally placed to project manage the development as a self-build scheme, an exemplary project in the Colne Valley by two of the U.K.'s leading exponents.

- The project is entirely consistent with Policy LP 26 of the Kirklees Local Plan which supports low carbon energy proposals.

4.11 The applicants are perfectly willing to sign an obligation under Section 106 of the 1990 Planning Act that the dwellings will be built to a certified Passivhaus standard.

4.12 They are also willing to sign an obligation regarding the community food growing project on land owned by themselves outside the application site boundary (blue land). This would be secured by an agreed tenancy of the land at a peppercorn rent with key community stakeholders in Marsden.

- The provision of this community facility will fully accord with Policy LP47 of the Local Plan which seeks to promote healthy, active and safe lifestyles, by 'd) supporting initiatives which enable or improve access to healthy food. For example, land for local food growing or allotments.'

4.13 It is envisaged that the laying out of the areas used for community growing will incorporate significant new tree and shrub planting the details of which will be

submitted for formal approval under the landscaping reserved matter following the grant of outline planning permission.

-it is envisaged that such new planting will immediately enhance the biodiversity of the overall site, for exceeding any minimum net gain requirements, as required under Local Plan Policy LP30 and under Policy LP31 regarding enhancement of the strategic Green Infrastructure Network.

## 5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 It is considered that the proposals represent an innovative and exciting development of the redundant buildings and largely unused land.

5.2 The application proposes self-build housing to a Passivhaus standard which will in a small way help to meet the serious shortfall in housing delivery in Kirklees.

5.3 The proposals will also provide a significant food growing resource for the benefit of people in Marsden.

5.4 It is hoped that the Council will take the view that the proposals are worthy of support as a sensitive re-use of this redundant overall site, which will provide an extremely useful resource for the local community as well as an exemplar self-build project meeting Passivhaus standards. It will be a noteworthy feather in Kirklees' cap.

Malcolm Sizer

Malcolm Sizer Planning Ltd.

October 2024

APPENDIX A  
SCHEDULE OF SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS  
re  
OUTLINE APPLICATION  
for  
Demolition of existing stable block and store  
and  
Erection of 3 No. Dwellings including  
Means of Access, Appearance, Layout and Scale  
at  
Mount Pleasant, Plains Lane,  
Marsden, Huddersfield HD7 6AN

- Application Form
- Planning Statement
- Background Information Prepared by the applicants
- Design Statement prepared by Hawdon Russell Architects
- Drawings (37/2405) prepared by Hawdon Russell Architects
- 01 – Location Plan (attached to email 11.6 from M.M)
- 02A – Existing Site Plan (-attached to email 12.6 from M.M)
- 03A – Proposed Layout and Elevations – (attached to email 22.5 from M.M)
- 04 – Proposed Floor Plans (attached to email 22.5 from M.M)
- 05 – Proposed Sections (attached to email 22.5 from M.M)
- 12 - Coloured Existing Site Layout – (attached to email 1.6 from M.M)
- 13 - Coloured Proposed Site Layout – (attached to email 12.6 from M.M)

- 2 No. Photographs as existing (attached to email 6.3 from M.M)
- 2 No. Photomontages as proposed (attached to email 6.3 from M.M)
- Climate Change Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment – (JCA received via CH 13.9)

Malcolm Sizer

Malcolm Sizer Planning Ltd,

October 2024