Planning Statement
Proposed Part Conversion of Fletcher House Farm, Lumb Lane, Huddersfield
Listed Building Consent
March 2025

Executive Summary

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a planning and listed building consent application for converting a part derelict of Fletcher House Farm, a Grade II listed farmhouse located at Lumb Lane, Huddersfield, into a two-bedroom, two-storey residential dwelling. The proposal seeks to restore the building to sustainable use while safeguarding and enhancing its historic character.

The proposed development complies with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024), the Kirklees Local Plan (2019), the House Extensions & Alterations SPD, and the Housebuilders Design Guide SPD (2021). It offers substantial public benefit through heritage conservation, climate-conscious design, and sustainable rural development.

Site and Context

The application site consists of a stone-built, detached farmhouse with associated outbuildings. The main farmhouse dates from the late 18th century and is situated within the Green Belt on the southern outskirts of Huddersfield, surrounded by open pasture and dry-stone walls.

Fletcher House Farm, a unique and historic farmhouse, is a 17th-century-built, Grade II listed, partly timber-framed, part stone-built dwelling. It features four bedrooms and living accommodation over two storeys and has the potential to be renovated into an enviable family home. The site also contains numerous agricultural outbuildings and structures with varying degrees of condition. The property and site have most recently been used as an operational, working farm and are now sold with vacant possession.

<u>Heritage Designation:</u> Grade II listed (Listing Number: 1134946)

<u>Condition:</u> Part derelict, with roof and floor degradation, damaged joinery, and evidence of water ingress and timber decay.

<u>Context:</u> Though not in a conservation area, the site contributes significantly to local landscape character. Historic farm buildings and enclosures are visible from surrounding public rights of way, contributing to the rural and historic setting.

Description of Proposed Development

The proposal includes a conversion to a two-bedroom, two-storey private dwelling with a new internal staircase. External windows and front door are replaced with timber-framed, 12mm thin double-glazed heritage units. The installation of breathable insulation consisting of wood fibre and limecrete will complement the existing fabric of the listed building. The proposed works involve repairs to stone masonry and roof using traditional techniques and materials and internal reconfiguration to provide appropriate domestic accommodation. In addition, the internal alteration process includes salvaging historic elements and incorporating sympathetic architectural detailing throughout.

Planning Policy Framework

<u>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)</u>

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development (para. 8)
Section 12: Achieving Well-designed Places (para. 135)
Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land (para. 147)
Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paras. 203-208)

The proposed development aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) in preserving and enhancing the historic asset, ensuring optimum viable use, and enhancing the Green Belt setting.

<u>Kirklees Local Plan (2019)</u>

LP24: Design
LP30: Biodiversity & geodiversity
LP31: Strategic green infrastructure
LP32: Landscape
LP35: Historic Environment

<u>Supplementary Planning Documents</u>

- House Extensions and Alterations SPD (2021): Emphasises subservience, historic materiality, and sustainability
- Housebuilders Design Guide SPD (2021): Promotes energy efficiency, heritage retention, and local character integration

Assessment of Heritage Significance

Description of Heritage Asset

Fletcher House Farm is a Grade II listed building constructed of coursed gritstone with ashlar dressings, a stone slate roof, and a layout typical of late Georgian rural farmhouses. Features of interest include:

- Mullioned windows with stone surrounds
- Chimney stacks with dressed coping
- Internal lime plaster
- Georgian/Victorian joinery (4-panel doors, architraves, skirting)
- Timber joists and trusses

Contribution to Setting

The building holds high aesthetic and evidential value within a rural setting. It forms part of the historical narrative of Pennine agriculture and is prominently visible within the open landscape, maintaining an organic relationship with the surrounding field systems and traditional farmsteads.

Significance of Affected Areas

The interior is primarily stripped or damaged but retains floor joists, layout, and joinery elements. Windows and doors are largely non-original or missing and are proposed to be replaced with historically accurate units. There is no staircase, but having a reinstatement in a traditional style will enhance legibility. The structural envelope is solid and largely intact, requiring traditional repair to stone, mortar, and roof.

Heritage Impact Assessment

Type of Works Proposed

The works include:

1. Replacement windows and doors in timber with slim-profile heritage glazing
2. Insulation upgrades (wood fibre and limecrete)
3. New timber staircase and internal partitions
4. Replastering with lime products
5. Salvage and reuse of joinery where possible

Level of Impact

- Low to neutral impact: New insulation, floor systems, and plaster are breathable and reversible
- Positive impact: Reinstatement of traditional features, removal of inappropriate modern materials
- No harm to a historic setting or surviving original fabric

Summary

The proposals will preserve and enhance the asset's historic significance. The works are conservation-led and reflect best practices for heritage buildings.

Justification

Optimum Viable Use (OVU)

The building is at risk due to disuse and degradation. Returning to residential use offers the most practical, sustainable, and least harmful intervention, consistent with its original purpose.

Public Benefit

- Secures future conservation of a listed building
- Supports local employment in skilled heritage trades
- Enhances the setting of the Green Belt and rural landscape
- Contributes to housing supply and sustainable reuse

Alternatives Considered

- Do nothing: Risk of loss due to neglect
- Commercial use: Unsuitable due to access and infrastructure
- Modern design intervention: Disregards historic character

The proposed scheme represents the least harmful and most sensitive approach, incorporating traditional materials and respecting the building's form and character.

Conclusion

This proposal constitutes a sensitive, policy-compliant, and conservation-led scheme that will secure the long-term future of Fletcher House Farm. The proposal aligns with the NPPF (2024) in promoting sustainable development and preserving heritage assets. The proposal complies with the Kirklees Local Plan (Policies LP24, LP35). In addition, the proposals meet the design guidance in the Housebuilders Design Guide SPD and House Extensions and Alterations SPD. The works involve minimal intervention, maximum reversibility, and faithful reinstatement. The proposed development is, therefore, fully justified, policy compliant, and deserving of planning and listed building consent.