Consultation Response from KC, Conservation & Design
2025/93355 Land off, Woodward Court, Mirfield, WF14 0PY
Erection of 75 residential dwellings with associated landscaping, open space, highways and drainage infrastructure
Date Responded:25/3/26 Responding Officer:SC Responding Ref:

The site comprises a rectangular piece of pasture land located to the east of existing residential properties which lie off Wellhouse Lane and Hepworth Close on a lower level. There are further residential properties to the south. Crossley Fields Junior and Infant School lies to the north. Land to the northeast comprises Green Belt land which forms part of a larger expanse of Green Belt providing a significant buffer between the edge of Mirfield and the urban edge of Dewsbury. Within 40m of the site boundary to the southeast lies Balderstone Hall and a collection of outbuildings and structures which are Grade II listed.

Balderstone Hall, Mirfield - 1313670 | Historic England

The application site slopes generally northwest to southeast with a level change of *circa* 14m across the site. A substantial hedgerow is the most notable vegetation feature within the site running east to west within the northern portion of the site. The boundaries of the site are relatively open comprising a mix of lo dry stone walling, timber fencing and vegetation. The western boundary is contained by rear gardens and fencing associated with existing dwellings.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings. Chapter 16, paragraph 212 the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated herita asset, *'great weight'* should be given to the asset's conservation. Local Plan Policy LP35 reflects the NPP in respect of heritage assets.

There are no known above ground heritage assets/buildings/structures within the site boundary, but archaeological records indicate various below ground findings. It is expected that West Yorkshire Archaeolog Advisory Service would be consulted. Various findings were summarised in an email dated 24/10/2018 on a previou application 2017/93935. Archaeological reports, geo-physical reports and trenching reports need to be shared and examined and it would be expected that WYAAS would make appropriate recommendations regarding archaeology

Situated to the east within approximately 40m is Balderstone Hall which is Grade II listed (dated early to m 18th Century, although there is some evidence to suggest it was built before this time). The hall includes a associated building group, each individually Grade II listed, which comprise a barn range to the rear of the hall 18th-19th Century, a barn to the south west 17th Century and a garden wall, gate and gate piers. The Conservation/ Heritage Statement sets out the other heritage assets in the wider area.

It is considered that an impact in this case would arise as a result of the urbanising element of the propose housing which would affect the setting of the building and associated listings, especially given that the site agricultural and is a component part of the setting of Balderstone Hall which indicates more extensive agricultural use.

Considering the historical context and the details of the listing of Balderstone Hall and associated buildings the principal elements of significance in terms of architectural and historic interest are considered to lie within their retained fabric, with the surrounding agricultural setting also making a contribution to the settin of the assets. The historical agricultural context surrounding the listed building would not be wholly remove and would remain to the northeast and the east. It is therefore considered that the impact on the significance of the heritage asset could be less than substantial but only provided there would be an adequate buffer zone to the listed structures and provided that materials, design and landscaping would b appropriate to the setting. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a proposal will lead to *less than substantial harm* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including its optimum viable use. Public benefits could include exceedi

minimum levels of affordable housing, while also respecting local distinctiveness in design, materials and appropriate landscape treatment at the setting of the listed buildings.

The 'less than substantial harm' to the heritage assets should be given weight which accords with its relati importance as a heritage asset. Consequently, there is a requirement for public benefits to be demonstrate in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

Careful consideration should be given to the design quality of this proposed development in accordance with Local Plan policy LP24 (Design), LP35 and the design principles set out in the council's Housebuilder Design Guide SPD and other national design guides. This includes sensitively respecting and enhancing local character and local distinctiveness.

If permissions are forthcoming, the scale, form and materials of the local area should be respected which appears to be generally natural stone (and some but less brick) with slate roofs of 2 storey dwellings with front gardens with hedges and drystone walls. Stone is the predominant material providing local distinctiveness (occasionally brick or render have been used on less prominent elevations in the area nearby). A limited palette of materials of high quality and appropriate to the local distinctiveness of the area would be expected. A buffer zone of larger native trees and hedges should be proposed between any new housing (of appropriate scale) and the listed structures to reduce the amount of harm to the setting.

A neighbourhood plan has been proposed for Mirfield, however to date no such plan has been adopted. The link to check for progress is at: https://www.mirfieldtowncouncil.com/neighbourhood-plan.html

The submitted **Design & Access Statement** sets out the historic context at P. 22 Section 2 including; "Mirfield is a historic town... The town occupies gently undulating ground with views across the River Calder and wooded hillsides, giving it a distinct semi-rural character while maintaining strong connections to nearby urban centres.

Rows of stone-built workers' cottages and terraces formed around mills along the River Calder and canal, creating a cohesive vernacular of sandstone buildings with slate or stone roofs that continues to define the historic core… Traditional field patterns, farmsteads, and stone boundaries remain visible in the surrounding landscape, reflecting Mirfield's rural origins."

Architectural character assessment is provided at P. 32 including;
"Mirfield's character is defined by traditional vernacular buildings, local stone and slate, and its agricultural and industrial roots. Its charm lies in its modest scale and close connection to the surrounding landscape.
Terraced and semi-detached properties coexist with detached dwellings, all contributing to a balanced density that is neither too tight nor too dispersed. Newer development has generally respected this pattern, extending naturally from the existing town fabric."

The submitted statement focuses on brick and red clay tiles, but Conservation Team consider that these materials do not contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area and if proposed at this site would cause harm to the setting of the listed buildings at Balderstone Hall.

The Materials Strategy at Section 4, P.66 indicates proposals for 2 types of red brick and grey concrete roof tiles. These materials are not appropriate in the setting of the listed buildings. Natural stone and slate should be used for dwellings within the setting of Balderstone Hall, and consideration could be

given to other buff coloured alternative types of masonry, and grey slate on the rest of the site.

Section 4 P.68 refers to the following;
“APPROACH TO CHARACTER Creating character in a new development requires a sensitive response to the site and its surroundings. High-quality character will be embedded throughout the development, with a particular focus on primary frontage areas.” So this needs to be reflected in the proposed materials. A more substantial green buffer zone would be expected close to the listed buildings to mitigate the loss of agricultural fields and soften the boundary. Appropriate boundary treatment could include native trees, hedges and some drystone walls particularly in the area near the listed structures.

In conclusion, Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a proposal will lead to *less than substantial harm* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including its optimum viable use. Public benefits could include achieving or exceeding minimum levels of affordable housing. The development would need to respect local distinctiveness in design, materials and appropriate landscape treatment at the setting of the listed buildings. Amendments should be sought and conditions applied regarding the materials for the proposed development.