



Planning Statement

**DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND CONSTRUCTION OF A
BUILDING TO BE USED AS TWO PERSON HOLIDAY
ACCOMMODATION**

**WHINNEY DENE, WEST FIELD LANE, WOOLDALE, HOLMFIRTH,
HD9 1RD**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling house and the construction of a new building. The proposed building is to be used as a holiday accommodation. The proposed holiday let is to provide luxury one bedroom accommodation for occupation by no more than two people. It will be a quiet countryside retreat.

The proposal comprises the redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt that would not cause substantial harm to openness. As such, the proposal is a type of development that is not inappropriate within the Green Belt and accords with both the NPPF and Local Plan policy.

Furthermore, the new building has been sensitively designed in order to respect and reflect the rural landscape setting of the site.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting plans supplied by Neil Bowen Architecture 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.

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 result in a sustainable form of development, would not harm highway safety or efficiency, would not harm the character of the area and would sufficiently protect neighbouring living conditions. Furthermore, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on ecological assets. Significantly, the proposed development is of a type that is suitable in the Green Belt. Finally, the conclusion is reached that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

2.0 THE SITE

The application site comprises of an existing detached bungalow of brick and render construction under a hipped roof, and its associated external spaces. The existing house is of no historic or architectural merit.

The site lies to the northern side of West Field Lane, a short distance to the east of east of Holmfirth and south of Wooldale.

To the east of the house, there is a paddock containing stables buildings. Planning permission has recently been granted for the redevelopment of that land to provide a dwelling house.

The site lies within the Green Belt.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing house and the construction of a new dwelling house to be used for holiday accommodation. The key elements of the proposal are as follows:

- The scheme comprises the redevelopment of previously developed land that would not cause substantial harm to Green Belt openness.
- The proposed building occupies a similar position within the site to the existing bungalow, but moved slightly to the south west to improve circulation space.
- The size of the footprint of the new building is similar to that of the existing.
- The new building has accommodation over two floors, but this is achieved with rooms within the roof space of a one and a half storey scale building, in order to minimise the height of the new building.
- The new building has a simple but attractive contemporary design that fully reflects the rural landscape setting of the site.
- The new building would provide a very high standard of housing environment for future occupiers, having well-proportioned rooms with excellent levels of outlook and natural light.
- The size and position of the new building would cause no harm to the amenity of occupiers of any existing dwellings.
- Garden and parking spaces would be confined to areas that are already in such use.
- The new building is to be used on a holiday accommodation basis as a very high-quality couples' retreat. The one-bedroom scale of the building will ensure that this is a very quiet and low intensity use.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history for the existing dwelling at Whinney Dene.

Planning permission has recently been granted for the redevelopment of the neighbouring stables site to provide a single dwelling house.

5.0 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

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 identified under the development plan.

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 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural 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 considered of relevance:

LP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

LP9 – Location of new development

LP20 – Sustainable travel

LP21 – Highways and access

LP24 – Design

LP30 – Biodiversity & Geodiversity

LP32 – Landscape

LP59 – Brownfield sites in the Green Belt

Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan

The following policies are considered of relevance:

Policy 1 – Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape Character of Holme

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

Policy 11 – Improving Transport, Accessibility and Local Infrastructure

Policy 12 - Promoting Sustainability

Policy 13 – Protecting Wildlife and Securing Biodiversity Net Gain

6.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development / Green Belt

One of the most significant changes in the revised NPPF in respect of Green Belt policy is the clear and deliberate loosening of restrictions on the redevelopment of previously developed land.

Under the last iteration of the NPPF, the redevelopment of previously developed land was not inappropriate providing that it would not have any greater impact on openness. This like-for-like requirement has now been abolished. Instead, Paragraph 154 part (g) now allows for the redevelopment of previously developed land which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Due to the change in the threshold of appropriateness for redevelopment of previously developed land in the revised NPPF, the requirement set out in local plan policy LP59 for the extent of the existing footprint to not be exceeded is now out of date.

Substantial harm is a deliberately high threshold. There can be no doubt that the change in this respect has been made in order to allow for more housing development on previously developed sites in the Green Belt. There is no longer any policy requirement for arbitrary volumetric calculations between the existing and proposed developments. A new development that is larger than the existing development is policy compliant up until the point where the substantial harm threshold is crossed.

In this instance, the proposed building is marginally larger than the existing bungalow. However, it is contained within the existing well-defined residential curtilage and occupies a comparable sized footprint. The additional size is mainly derived from the provision of first floor accommodation (whereas the existing bungalow is single storey). However, this additional space is achieved within the roof space with the scale being limited to one and a half storeys.

There would be a marginal impact on openness through the new building being larger, but the impact of this would be moderate rather than substantial.

The new building would continue to be seen in conjunction with the recently approved and larger dwelling on the neighbouring land parcel, and would be set against the rising topography of the site and the land to the north and west. The site already has the appearance of an enclosed and developed area, distinct from the surrounding open fields. The proposed dwelling would be largely visually contained and would not unacceptably impact the function and purpose of the Green Belt.

Because of this, although the new building is slightly larger than the existing bungalow, the visual impact of it will not be significantly different.

As such, whilst there would also be some additional impact on visual openness, this would also be moderate, and not substantial.

Overall, taking into account both spatial and visual considerations, the impact of the development on Green Belt openness would be moderate. This is, therefore, an acceptable form of redevelopment as it would not cause substantial harm to openness.

A number of recent and relevant appeal decisions confirms that the assessment of the impact on openness as set out above is sound.

Appeal reference APP/J1535/W/24/3345568 considered the issue of whether substantial harm to Green Belt openness would be caused by the introduction of a dwelling house on a site that does not contain any existing buildings. The Inspector noted:

“The site is largely devoid of any buildings or structures, but includes an area of hardstanding comprising the foundations of the former building and is enclosed by timber fences. Consequently, any new buildings would have a significantly greater impact on the spatial openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. Nevertheless, the single-storey dwelling would have a modest footprint and would have a low ridge height. Whilst the

dwelling be more visible than the existing development at the site, the presence of the neighbouring properties and the established hedgerow to the rear of the site would limit the visual effect on the openness of the Green Belt.

The dwelling would be located within the context of the surrounding development, which is enclosed from the surrounding open fields by a hedgerow and mature trees. While the development would be visible from outside the site, the proposal would be largely visually contained and would not unacceptably impact the function and purpose of the Green Belt. Accordingly, although the proposal would harm the openness of the Green Belt, the adverse effects would be moderate. The proposal would therefore accord with Paragraph 154 g) of the Framework.”

Bearing in mind that this was for a site that did not contain any existing buildings, there is clearly scope for replacing the existing buildings at the current application site without resulting in substantial harm to openness.

On a larger scale, appeal reference APP/N0410/W/24/3348677 considered whether 95 assisted living units and a 75-bed care home on a sports pitches site would result in substantial harm to openness. The Inspector acknowledged that there was no doubt that the proposed development would have a greater impact on openness than the existing situation, but stressed that, following the December 2024 changes to the NPPF, the new criterion is that it should not cause substantial harm to openness, rather than having no greater impact on Green Belt openness. In considering whether the substantial harm threshold would be breached, the Inspector noted that:

“The scheme would appear well-contained within the wider Wilton Park site. The A355 with its roundabouts and adjacent bund provides a very clear dividing line between the appeal site and the countryside. The appeal scheme’s perceived effect on openness would therefore not be that of a new development encroaching into open countryside.

The layout of the scheme, consisting of five residential blocks enclosing a landscaped courtyard, residents’ lounge and access, would be compact rather than sprawling. The traditionally designed buildings of two, three and four storeys, though taller and more

extensive than the terraced houses, would still be of relatively modest height. Their varied architectural form and concealed flat roofs would help to limit their visual bulk and hence their impact on openness.

Views of the scheme would be most evident from the A355, from north and south of the site. However, the impact on openness would be contained; blocks of woodland limit longer views of the site. The effect of the scheme on openness from these positions would be moderate.

The scheme would have some effect on openness when seen from within Wilton Park to the east, but this would be limited by planting within the proposed parkland. In any case, the site would clearly be perceived as connected with the overall development of Wilton Park. Again, the impact here would only be moderate.”

These decisions clearly reflect the significance of the changes to the NPPF in respect of proposals that are appropriate in the Green Belt provided they do not result in substantial harm to openness, and the high threshold that substantial harm entails.

The proposal is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt as defined by paragraph 154 (g) of the NPPF, and fully complies with local plan policy LP59 in so far as that policy remains up to date. The principle of development is wholly acceptable and policy compliant.

Holiday Accommodation Use

As noted above, it intended that the new house will be used as a high-quality holiday accommodation. The holiday accommodation concept is routed in taking advantage of the tranquil landscape. It is intended to be a peaceful countryside retreat. The one-bedroom design of the house will be entirely self-limiting in this respect. The holiday accommodation will never be occupied by more than two people, ensuring a very low intensity use with few trips generated and no more (indeed, likely far less) noise and disturbance than any dwelling house of this size would generate. The quiet, countryside retreat for two-person occupancy is a stark contrast to the ‘party house’ type of accommodation that could be more problematic in terms of noise and disturbance. The holiday accommodation would be a quiet

and low intensity use that would coexist comfortably in this rural landscape and alongside the existing dwellings in the locality, including the recently approved dwelling to the north east.

Design and Landscape

The existing bungalow is of no historic or architectural merit. Its hipped roof form and red brick and render exterior are more akin to a suburban setting that being reflective of this rural landscape setting. As such, the demolition of the existing bungalow will be of no detriment to the natural and built environments.

The proposed building has been carefully designed to reflect and respect the rural landscape setting of the site. The one and a half storey height, pitched roof form and materials all reference the rural / agricultural outbuilding that would typically be found in this landscape setting. The external materials are highly recessive and would integrate into the surrounding landscape. The scale and form of the proposed building will also sit comfortably alongside the recently approved neighbouring dwelling.

The application site is within Landscape Character Area 8 - Settled Slopes of the Holme Valley. Key landscape characteristics of the area are:

- Strong rural and agricultural character with pastoral farmland on the rising valley slopes.
- There is a strong connection to the surrounding rural landscape from long distance and panoramic views over the wooded valley floor to the opposing valley sides as well as glimpsed views of the rural backdrop through gaps between the built form, especially within Totties and Scholes.
- Stone walls and hedgerows form field boundaries and line single lane roads.
- Short sections of the Kirklees Way, the Barnsley Boundary Walk and the Holme Valley Circular Walk cross the area. A short section of National Cycle Route no. 627 also crosses the north-east of the area.

The identified key built characteristic of the area includes farmsteads on the valley slopes.

The development would retain and respect the appearance of the identified characteristics as a farmstead set on the valley slopes. The open land that already warps around the built areas of the site would be entirely retained, and the agricultural character would be unchanged. The proposal works with and preserves the identified key characteristics of the landscape area.

The proposed building would form an appropriate piece of rural architecture that would relate well to its surroundings and would not appear in any way discordant. The proposal would respect and preserve the landscape character of the surrounding area, and is fully compliant with policies LP24 and LP32 of the Local Plan, Policies 1 and 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan, and section 12 of the NPPF.

Transport and Accessibility

The proposed dwelling would utilise the existing access point to the south western side of the existing/proposed dwelling. Parking for the new dwelling is to be provided within an attached garage and on a driveway. The access arrangement will allow the existing access arrangement to the north eastern side of the building to be used solely for the recently approved new dwelling.

The existing bungalow has three bedrooms, so could potentially be occupied by up to six people, generating several traffic movements per day. Given the one bedroom and two-person maximum occupancy of the holiday accommodation, this use would not generate any more vehicular movements to and from the site than could be reasonably expected from the existing bungalow. As such, there would be no material highways impacts.

Residential Amenity

The scale and the position of the proposed dwelling would ensure no overbearing impacts to or overshadowing of the recently approved neighbouring dwelling. The window arrangement would ensure the outlook from the new house is onto its garden space, and there would be no overlooking between the two properties.

The separation distance to the other existing dwellings in the locality is about 100m, and would ensure no adverse amenity impacts.

As noted above, the nature of the holiday accommodation use would be quiet and low intensity. There would be no harm to amenity by way of noise or other disturbance. The proposal is fully policy compliant in this regard.

Ecology

A PEA has been undertaken and is submitted separately. This demonstrates that there would be no adverse impact on protected species or ecological interests.

A BNG metric has also been provided in order to demonstrate statutory 10% net gain.

The proposal is fully policy compliant in this respect.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed scheme represents a sustainable form of development that would not have any unacceptable impact for the reasons set out above.

The proposal would deliver a quiet rural retreat within an exceptionally good quality new building, in a manner that is fully compliant with Green Belt policy. The proposal would have no adverse impact in respect of visual, amenity, highways and environmental considerations.

The proposal is fully policy compliant.

The Applicant is willing to discuss any issues that may arise during the consideration of the proposal with the LPA.