# ORANGE DESIGN STUDIO.

ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

## PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT.

THE WATER TOWER, GREEN SIDE ROAD, BLAGDENS, THURSTONLAND,
HUDDERSFIELD, HD4 6XA, UNITED KINGDOM.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the conversion of the former water pumping station at Green Side Road, Thurstonland, into high-quality short-stay visitor accommodation. The proposal comprises the change of use and conversion of the existing redundant water pumping station to short-stay visitor accommodation, together with associated internal and external alterations.

The proposal seeks to secure the long-term future of a redundant and distinctive former water pumping station which has remained unused and derelict for a considerable period of time. The building is an established feature within the surrounding countryside and forms part of the historic infrastructure associated with the former Storthes Hall estate.

The proposed development represents the adaptive reuse of an existing building, rather than the introduction of a new building into the countryside. The majority of the existing structure will be retained, with sensitive repairs undertaken to restore elements of the building to their original form. External alterations have been carefully limited, while the internal accommodation has been designed to respond to the building's compact footprint and distinctive vertical form, ensuring that the proposal makes efficient and sympathetic use of the existing structure.

The proposal follows a principle of minimum intervention. The existing masonry structure and its architectural character will remain the dominant feature, whilst contemporary elements are introduced in a restrained manner to allow the building to accommodate a viable modern use.

Importantly, planning permission has recently been granted under application reference 2026/91469 for the replacement of the existing damaged flat roof with a new pitched/hipped roof. This extant planning permission is a material planning consideration in the assessment of the current proposal, as it establishes the Council's acceptance of the principle of altering and extending the existing building in this manner and confirms that the associated increase in height and volume would not result in a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. The Council considered the increase in height and volume to be modest and necessary to secure the long-term preservation of the building, and concluded that the original building would remain the dominant element. The current proposal should therefore be considered in the context of this recently approved scheme and

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the planning judgement already undertaken by the Council in relation to the building's scale, form and impact upon the Green Belt.

The current proposal builds upon that established planning position by incorporating the approved roof form within a wider scheme of adaptive reuse.

The development will provide a distinctive visitor destination which makes use of the building's architectural character, historic association and rural countryside setting. It will also contribute to the local visitor economy whilst securing continued investment, occupation and maintenance of the building.

Overall, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development which combines the beneficial reuse of an existing building with heritage conservation, rural tourism and economic diversification.

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## 2. SITE AND EXISTING BUILDING.

The Water Tower is located approximately 300 metres north of Green Side Road within a predominantly rural landscape surrounded by agricultural land.

The site lies within the Green Belt, as adopted under the Kirklees Local Plan.

The building is a compact and distinctive structure, characterised by its strong vertical form and prominent position within the surrounding landscape. Although no longer in its original operational use and showing signs of age and deterioration, it remains an established and recognisable feature of the countryside.

The building has experienced a degree of deterioration, particularly to the existing flat roof and castellated brick features. A recent assessment identified that the roof was in poor condition, with inadequate drainage contributing to water ingress and associated deterioration to parts of the structure. The replacement roof, which has since been approved by Kirklees Council, was therefore considered necessary to safeguard the building from further deterioration and maintain its long-term condition and structural integrity.

The existing building provides an excellent opportunity for adaptive reuse. Its compact footprint and distinctive character allow a new use to be introduced without requiring significant expansion of the existing built form.

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## 3. SITE HISTORY.

The application site forms part of the wider historic infrastructure associated with the former Storthes Hall Estate and, more specifically, the water supply network that once served Storthes Hall Hospital during the early twentieth century.

Historic mapping indicates that no structure occupied the site during the late nineteenth century. Mapping dating from the 1890s identifies the land as undeveloped agricultural countryside with no evidence of the pumping station structure. Subsequent mapping from the early twentieth century records the discovery of a underground reservoir/body of water and associated water infrastructure, with the footprint of the existing building first appearing between approximately 1900 and 1910. It is therefore considered highly likely that the pumping station was constructed during this period, coinciding with the significant expansion of Storthes Hall Hospital and its supporting infrastructure.

The building was originally designed as a water pumping station responsible for transferring water from the underground body of water to the wider Storthes Hall complex. At the time of its construction, dedicated infrastructure of this nature was essential to the operation of large institutional developments, particularly hospitals, which required reliable and independent water supplies before the widespread availability of modern mains infrastructure.

Although modest in scale, the building represents an important surviving example of early twentieth-century public utility architecture. Unlike purely utilitarian industrial buildings, its carefully detailed brickwork, castellated parapets and strong architectural composition demonstrate that consideration was given not only to function but also to appearance and permanence.

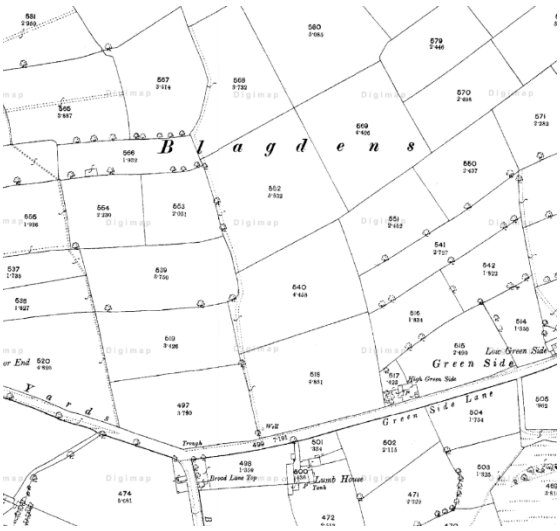
As technology advanced and public utilities became increasingly centralised throughout the twentieth century, the pumping station became obsolete and eventually fell out of operational use, although the year cannot be confirmed. Whilst the wider water infrastructure of Storthes Hall has largely disappeared too, the pumping station remains remarkably intact and continues to occupy its original position within the landscape, serving as a physical reminder of the site's former purpose.

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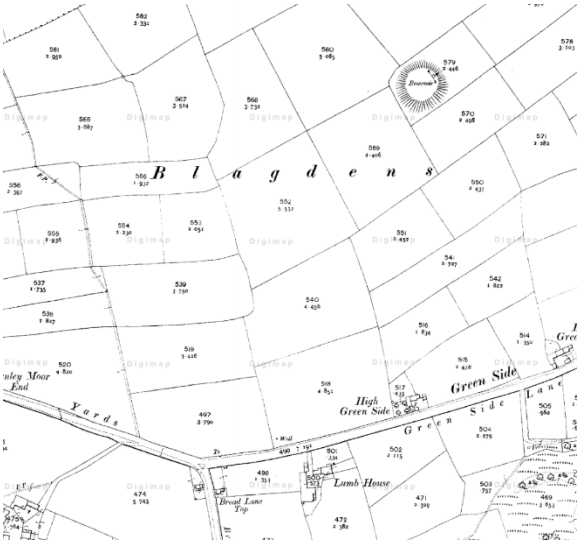
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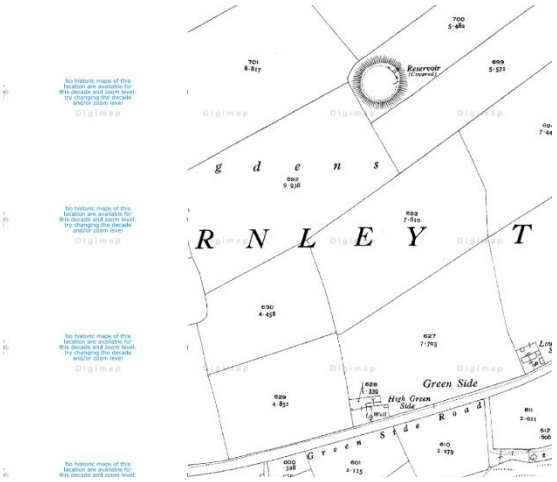
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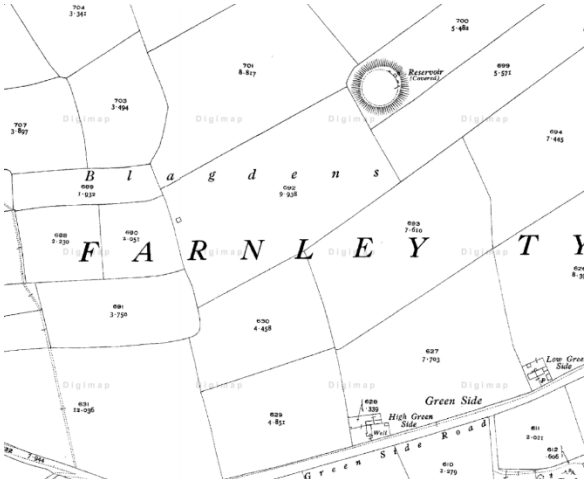

1890.




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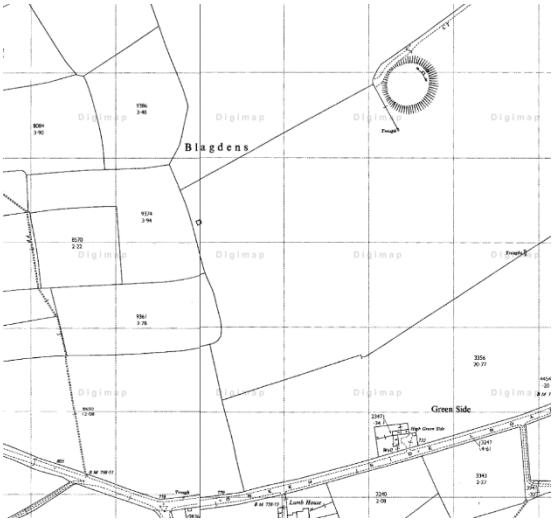

1930.

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1960.



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## 4. PLANNING HISTORY.

Planning permission was granted on 10 August 2026 under application reference 2026/91469 for the replacement of the existing damaged concrete flat roof with a new pitched/hipped roof.

The application was considered acceptable as submitted and no amendments were requested during its determination. No public representations were received.

Of particular relevance to the current application is the Council's assessment of the Green Belt implications of the approved roof.

The delegated report acknowledges that the approved roof increases the height and volume of the building. However, the Council concluded that the works were modest and necessary to secure the long-term preservation of the building. The proposal was considered to fall within the relevant Green Belt exception and to accord with Policy LP57 because the original building remained the dominant element in terms of scale and appearance.

The Council further concluded that the approved works would not result in a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. Despite the modest increase in height, the visual impact was considered limited by the scale of the building, its rural setting and the sympathetic treatment of the roof. The development was therefore not considered visually intrusive or harmful to the surrounding Green Belt.

This approval establishes an important planning baseline for the current proposal. The approved roof form and associated increase in building mass have already been accepted by the Council as appropriate in terms of the building’s scale, form and relationship with the Green Belt. The current proposal should therefore be considered in the context of this established planning position, with the approved roof forming an integral part of the wider scheme to secure the building’s long-term, sustainable reuse.

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## 5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

The application proposes the sensitive conversion of the former Water Pumping Station into high-quality short-stay visitor accommodation, together with a series of proportionate works to improve access and the functionality of the site, together with associated internal and external alterations.

The scheme has been designed specifically around the existing building, rather than seeking to impose a conventional residential layout upon it. The compact footprint and significant internal height of the water pumping station provide an opportunity to introduce a series of mezzanine-style levels, allowing the dramatic vertical volume of the structure to remain an important feature of the accommodation. The proposed internal arrangement has therefore been carefully developed to work within the existing building envelope, with interventions kept to a minimum and the character and legibility of the existing structure retained.

The majority of the existing external structure will be retained. Necessary repair and refurbishment works will be undertaken to ensure the building can be brought back into a viable and sustainable use, with new elements carefully designed to complement the existing masonry structure. A key element of the proposal is the introduction of a new pitched/hipped roof over the existing structure, replacing the existing flat roof. The new roof has been carefully designed to respond to the distinctive character and vertical form of the Water Pumping Station, while providing a clear and considered architectural finish to the building.

The proposed roof will be formed in red zinc, selected to complement the existing red brickwork and reinforce the building's established material palette. At the base of the new roof, a glazed base section will be incorporated to introduce natural light deep into the accommodation and make full use of the building's significant internal height. This glazed element will help to flood the interior with natural light while retaining the visual prominence of the existing masonry structure. At the apex of the hipped roof, polished steel will be used as a contrasting material to provide a refined and contemporary detail to the roof structure. The combination of red zinc, glazing and polished steel has been carefully considered to provide a high-quality finish that complements the existing building without seeking to replicate its historic fabric.

The intention is to preserve the distinctive architectural character of the Water Pumping Station, allowing the historic building to remain the dominant feature of the site, while introducing contemporary interventions that is both functional and visually appropriate to the existing structure.

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In addition to the conversion works, the proposal seeks to improve the existing access arrangement to the site. The access itself will not be relocated; rather, a series of carefully considered improvements are proposed to make the existing route more suitable for the proposed use while retaining its rural and landscaped character.

At the lower part of the site, a dedicated parking space will be provided close to the site entrance. This will be enclosed by a new stone boundary wall, with the stone selected to complement the existing boundary treatments. New vehicular and pedestrian gates will provide a clear and controlled entrance, with associated planting and hedgerow improvements helping to soften the appearance of the entrance and integrate the works with the surrounding landscape. Additional planting is also proposed around the Water Pumping Station to provide a modest sense of curtilage and definition to the accommodation, helping to establish a clear relationship between the building and its immediate surroundings without enclosing or suburbanising the site.

From the site entrance, the existing access route will be improved through the introduction of a grass reinforcement grid system extending towards the old Water Pumping Station. This will provide a robust surface capable of accommodating pedestrian movements and occasional vehicular access while retaining a grassed and rural appearance. The access arrangement has been specifically designed to encourage visitors to leave their vehicles within the dedicated parking area at the lower part of the site, with vehicle movements beyond this point kept to an absolute minimum. Visitors will therefore be encouraged to access the accommodation on foot, with luggage carts available to assist with the transfer of belongings from the parking area to the Water Pumping Station. This approach helps to reduce unnecessary vehicle movements through the site and maintains the tranquil, rural character of the setting. The use of a grass reinforcement grid also avoids the need for extensive areas of conventional hardstanding and ensures that the access remains visually subordinate to the surrounding landscape. Associated turning space and additional hedgerow planting are also proposed, together with the other landscape and access alterations shown on the submitted plans.

The proposed parking arrangement has been designed to support the practical operation of the short-stay accommodation while minimising the movement of vehicles further into the site. Visitors will be able to park at the lower entrance, unload their belongings and make use of the proposed carts to transport luggage along the improved grass-grid access to the accommodation. A dedicated cart storage area and electrical charging station will be provided close to the site entrance, allowing these operational requirements to be accommodated discreetly without the need for additional standalone buildings or visually prominent structures elsewhere within the site.

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A package water treatment system is also proposed towards the northern part of the site, within the application boundary. This provides the necessary infrastructure to support the proposed use while avoiding the need for extensive additional development. Its location and discreet nature ensure that it remains subordinate to the existing Water Pumping Station and wider landscape.

The external works have therefore been carefully considered as part of the overall adaptive reuse of the site. The parking, improved access, turning area, planting, boundary treatments, cart storage, electrical infrastructure and package water treatment system provide the necessary facilities to support the proposed short-stay use, while remaining proportionate to the scale and character of the site.

Taken together, the proposal represents a genuine adaptive reuse of an existing and distinctive building rather than a redevelopment of the site. It provides a viable long-term use for the former Water Pumping Station, makes efficient use of the existing building and minimises the need for new built development within the countryside. The retention of the existing structure, combined with the carefully controlled access and landscape improvements, ensures that the proposal preserves the character of the site while allowing the Water Pumping Station to be brought back into beneficial and sustainable use.

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## 6. HERITAGE AND DESIGN.

Although the former Water Pumping Station is not a listed building and is not located within a Conservation Area, its historic association with the former Storthes Hall estate, distinctive architectural form and prominent visibility within the surrounding landscape means that it could reasonably be considered to possess sufficient historic and architectural interest to constitute a non-designated heritage asset. As a surviving component of the historic water infrastructure that supported the operation of the former estate, the building contributes to an understanding of the historical development and functioning of the wider area.

The building also possesses a distinctive architectural character, expressed through its form, proportions and detailing. Its prominent and recognisable appearance contributes to its local identity and gives the building a degree of landmark quality within the surrounding rural landscape. These characteristics are considered to form an important part of its local significance.

The proposal has been developed with these values in mind and seeks to retain and enhance the significance of the existing building through its sensitive adaptive reuse, rather than replacing or substantially altering and extending it. The principal structure and distinctive external form will be retained, with interventions carefully considered to minimise harm to the building's historic and architectural character. The internal accommodation has been designed to work within the existing envelope and respond positively to the building's established form.

The proposed reuse would also provide a practical means of securing the building's long-term conservation and maintenance. Continued vacancy and limited use present an ongoing risk of deterioration, particularly where a building requires regular maintenance and repair. Bringing the water pumping station back into a viable and sustainable use would provide a clear mechanism for its continued upkeep and investment, helping to ensure that its heritage significance is retained for the future.

The recently approved replacement roof forms an important part of this conservation approach. Under application 2026/91469, the Council accepted the principle of replacing the existing damaged flat roof with a new pitched/hipped roof and concluded that the modest increase in height and volume was necessary to secure the long-term preservation of the building. The Council also concluded that the original building would remain the dominant element and that the approved works would not result in a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

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The current proposal should therefore be understood as a sensitive adaptive reuse scheme, building upon the Council's recent acceptance of works necessary to safeguard the building. Rather than eroding the building's historic and architectural interest, the proposal provides the Water Pumping Station with a viable long-term use while retaining the existing structure and the elements that contribute most strongly to its character, appearance and significance within the surrounding landscape.

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## 7. GREEN BELT.

The application site is located within the designated Green Belt, as adopted under the Kirklees Local Plan.

The Council's recent planning decision provides particularly important context for the consideration of the current application. In determining the roof application, the Council confirmed that Green Belt policy applies to the site and considered the proposal against the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Council accepted that the increase in height and volume associated with the new roof was modest and necessary to secure the long-term preservation of the building. It concluded that the original building would remain the dominant element in terms of scale and appearance and that there would be no greater impact upon Green Belt openness.

The current proposal retains the established building footprint and does not introduce a separate new building or substantial additional built form into the countryside.

The proposed change of use will therefore take place within an existing structure whose overall mass, including the approved roof, has already been considered acceptable in Green Belt terms.

The physical works associated with the conversion are limited and are principally concerned with the adaptation, repair and improvement of the existing building. The proposal does not require substantial extensions, additional outbuildings or an expansion of the built footprint.

The existing relationship between the building and the surrounding agricultural landscape will therefore be maintained.

The proposal also represents a beneficial reuse of an existing building, securing its continued occupation and maintenance rather than allowing it to remain vacant and deteriorate.

Taken together, the retention of the existing building, the limited nature of the external works, the recently approved planning application and the absence of substantial additional built development demonstrate that the proposal can be accommodated without materially undermining the openness or character of the Green Belt.

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# 8. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT.

## Policy LP1 – Achieving Sustainable Development.

Policy LP1 promotes development which delivers economic, social and environmental benefits and supports the achievement of sustainable development.

The proposal accords with these objectives through the sustainable reuse of an existing and currently redundant building. The scheme avoids the unnecessary demolition of the Water Pumping Station and the construction of a new tourism building elsewhere, instead making productive use of the existing structure, footprint and embodied resources.

The proposal also provides a viable long-term use for the building which will facilitate investment, repair and ongoing maintenance, helping to secure its continued contribution to the character of the area. The introduction of a high-quality short-stay accommodation unit will additionally support the rural visitor economy by attracting visitors to the area and encouraging expenditure within local businesses, attractions and services.

The proposal therefore delivers a complementary combination of environmental, economic and social benefits and represents a sustainable form of development consistent with Policy LP1.

## Policy LP2 – Place Shaping.

Policy LP2 seeks development which responds positively to local character and contributes to the creation of attractive, distinctive and sustainable places.

The proposal responds directly to the distinctive character and architectural qualities of the existing Water Pumping Station. The scheme has been designed around the existing building rather than seeking to impose a conventional residential or suburban form upon it.

The existing structure will remain the dominant architectural element, with the proposed interventions carefully controlled in scale, form and materiality to complement the original building and reinforce, rather than detract from, its established architectural character. Internally, the proposed accommodation has been arranged to respond to the building's unusual proportions and significant internal volume, allowing these distinctive spatial qualities to be retained and experienced as an integral part of the proposed use.

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The conversion will therefore secure the continued presence of an unusual and recognisable building within the local landscape and will contribute positively to the identity and character of the area.

The proposal is consequently considered to accord with Policy LP2.

### Policy LP7 – Efficient and Effective Use of Land and Buildings.

Policy LP7 supports the efficient and effective use of land and buildings.

The proposal provides a particularly strong response to this objective by bringing a vacant and deteriorating building back into beneficial use without requiring a new building to be constructed elsewhere.

The existing building provides the principal accommodation envelope and the proposal makes efficient use of its existing footprint and internal volume. The introduction of mezzanine-style levels allows the substantial vertical space within the Water Pumping Station to be utilised without requiring significant outward expansion of the building.

The proposal therefore represents an efficient form of development which makes productive use of an existing building and provides a clear planning benefit when compared with continued vacancy and deterioration.

The proposal accords with Policy LP7.

### Policy LP20 – Sustainable Travel.

Policy LP20 seeks to promote sustainable travel and reduce reliance on the private car.

The proposal comprises a single, low-intensity short-stay accommodation unit and would consequently generate a limited level of movement. It would not result in the level of traffic associated with larger-scale tourism, residential or commercial development.

The site is served by an existing agricultural vehicular access from Green Side Road, which is already used in connection with the surrounding agricultural land, including by tractors and other agricultural vehicles. The proposal seeks to improve and formalise this existing access to provide an appropriate and safe means of access for the proposed use, rather than creating a wholly new access onto the public highway.

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The rural location means that some visitors will reasonably rely upon private transport. Nevertheless, the site is not wholly dependent upon private car travel. Bus stops are located along Green Side Road to the south of the site, while Stocksmoor railway station is approximately 1 kilometre from the site and provides rail connections towards Huddersfield and surrounding towns.

The scale and nature of the proposal, together with the availability of existing public transport connections and the retention and improvement of an established access, mean that the development represents a proportionate use of the site and existing infrastructure.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the objectives of Policy LP20.

### Policies LP21 and LP22 – Highway Safety and Parking.

Policies LP21 and LP22 seek to ensure that development is served by safe and appropriate access arrangements and provides suitable parking provision.

The proposal comprises a single unit of short-stay accommodation and is inherently low intensity in terms of vehicle movements and parking demand.

The existing agricultural access from Green Side Road will be retained and improved to provide an appropriate access to the proposed accommodation. This represents a logical and proportionate approach which makes use of an established access rather than introducing a new access onto the public highway.

Appropriate on-site parking will be provided within the site in a discreet manner which reflects the scale and rural character of the development. The parking arrangement will be sufficient for the proposed use without introducing an excessive area of hardstanding or creating an urbanised appearance.

The proposal would therefore make effective use of the existing infrastructure while limiting the extent of physical alteration required.

Subject to the detailed access and parking arrangements shown on the submitted drawings, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies LP21 and LP22.

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## Policy LP24 – Design.

Policy LP24 requires development to achieve a high standard of design and respond appropriately to its context.

The proposal has been designed specifically around the existing Water Pumping Station and seeks to preserve, rather than diminish, its distinctive architectural qualities. The existing building will remain the defining element of the scheme, with new interventions deliberately limited and designed to complement the established architectural character.

The approved replacement roof is an important part of this approach. The Council has already considered the principle, scale and visual effect of the new roof and accepted that the modest increase in height and volume would not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the building, the surrounding landscape or Green Belt openness.

Internally, the proposed mezzanine arrangement makes efficient use of the existing volume while retaining the building's distinctive spatial qualities. The accommodation is therefore designed as an adaptive reuse of the Water Pumping Station rather than as a conventional residential layout inserted into the building.

The proposal consequently represents a high-quality and contextually responsive approach to the conservation and reuse of the existing structure and accords with Policy LP24.

## Policy LP33 – Trees.

Policy LP33 seeks to protect trees and woodland of significant amenity, landscape and ecological value.

The proposal does not require a substantial new building or extensive development within the surrounding landscape. The existing vegetation and established landscape will be retained wherever practicable, with external works limited to those necessary to facilitate the proposed use.

The access and parking arrangements have also been considered in the context of the surrounding vegetation, with the intention of minimising unnecessary disturbance.

Any additional planting associated with the entrance and external areas will be appropriate to the rural setting and will assist in integrating the development into its surroundings.

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The proposal is therefore capable of being accommodated without unacceptable harm to important trees or woodland and accords with Policy LP33.

### Policy LP35 – Historic Environment.

Policy LP35 seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment and ensure that development affecting heritage assets responds appropriately to their significance.

The proposal recognises the architectural and historic interest of the former Water Pumping Station and seeks to secure its long-term future through continued beneficial use.

The majority of the existing structure will be retained, with repair and adaptation undertaken in a manner which respects its existing architectural character. Importantly, the proposal does not seek to conceal or substantially remodel the building; instead, its distinctive form and character are central to the design approach.

The building's prolonged vacancy and deteriorating condition demonstrate the importance of establishing a viable use capable of generating the investment required for its repair and continued maintenance. The proposed short-stay accommodation therefore provides a realistic mechanism for securing the building's continued occupation and preventing further deterioration.

The proposal consequently supports the conservation of the building through sustainable and sympathetic reuse and is considered to accord with Policy LP35.

### Policy LP43 – Waste Management Hierarchy.

Policy LP43 promotes the minimisation, appropriate management and recovery of waste.

The proposed use is small in scale and would generate only limited quantities of domestic-type waste associated with short-stay occupation. Suitable waste storage can be accommodated discreetly within the site and managed through the established arrangements serving the property.

No significant waste-handling infrastructure is required and the proposal would not give rise to a material waste management issue.

The proposal is therefore consistent with Policy LP43.

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## Policies LP51 and LP52 – Environmental Quality and Pollution.

Policies LP51 and LP52 seek to protect environmental quality and ensure that development does not result in unacceptable pollution, nuisance or adverse effects upon neighbouring amenity.

The proposed use is inherently low intensity and is not expected to generate significant noise, odour, dust, emissions or other forms of pollution. Occupation will be limited to a single short-stay accommodation unit, substantially limiting the potential for disturbance.

The Water Pumping Station is also separated from neighbouring residential properties, reducing the potential for direct impacts upon residential amenity.

The proposal is therefore considered capable of operating without unacceptable effects upon neighbouring properties or the wider environment and accords with Policies LP51 and LP52.

## Policy LP57 – Green Belt.

The site is located within the Green Belt and Policy LP57 is therefore a key consideration.

The Council's recent approval for the replacement of the damaged flat roof with a new hipped/pyramid roof is an important material consideration. That decision established the acceptability of the proposed external building form and concluded that the resulting increase in height and volume would be modest, that the original building would remain the dominant element and that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact upon Green Belt openness.

The current proposal does not seek to increase the approved external building envelope. Instead, it seeks to secure the beneficial reuse of the existing building through its conversion to short-stay accommodation.

The proposal therefore represents the reuse of an existing building with limited external alteration and no requirement for substantial additional built form. The established character, scale and openness of the surrounding Green Belt will consequently be maintained.

The proposal is considered to accord with Policy LP57.

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## Policy LP60 – Green Belt.

Policy LP60 is particularly relevant as it supports the conversion and reuse of buildings within the Green Belt where the building is of permanent and substantial construction and the resultant development does not introduce incongruous domestic or urban characteristics into the landscape.

The Water Pumping Station is a permanent and substantial masonry structure which has existed on the site for a considerable period. The proposal retains the principal structure and architectural character of the building and does not require its replacement or substantial enlargement.

The proposed use will also remain visually subordinate to the established agricultural and rural character of the site. The external works are limited, with the existing building remaining the principal visual feature. The proposed access, parking, landscaping and other external elements will be contained within the existing site and designed to avoid the introduction of an urban or suburban character.

The proposal also represents a genuine beneficial reuse of an existing building rather than development seeking to establish a new built form within the Green Belt. This is particularly important given the current condition and vacancy of the Water Pumping Station and the need to establish a viable use capable of funding its repair and continued maintenance.

The proposal therefore satisfies the underlying objectives of Policy LP60 and provides an appropriate form of Green Belt development through the sensitive reuse of an existing permanent and substantial building.

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## 9. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2026.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in August 2026, is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and replaces the previous Framework published in December 2024. The Framework confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, with the national decision-making policies read alongside adopted local policies.

The August 2026 NPPF provides a particularly supportive policy context for the proposed development. Its overarching approach to sustainable development recognises the need to support rural economies and communities while safeguarding the character and beauty of the countryside. The Framework identifies economic, social and environmental objectives which should be pursued in a mutually supportive manner, including supporting economic growth, protecting the built and historic environment, making effective use of land, improving biodiversity and minimising waste and pollution.

### Sustainable Development and Rural Tourism.

Policy S5 of the NPPF specifically addresses development outside settlements. It identifies development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary, as a form of development which can be supported. It also expressly identifies the reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building as an appropriate form of development outside settlements where the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms and the resulting development does not represent a disproportionate increase in size.

The proposal falls squarely within these principles. The application concerns the reuse of an existing, permanent and substantial building for a small-scale tourism use. The Water Pumping Station is already present within the landscape and the proposal does not seek to establish a new tourism building on undeveloped land.

This approach is further supported by Chapter 7 of the NPPF, which identifies leisure and tourism, agriculture and other rural and land-based businesses as important components of economic growth and resilience, particularly within rural areas.

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The proposal will therefore provide a modest but tangible contribution to the rural visitor economy while securing a viable use for an existing building.

## Effective Use of Land and Buildings.

The NPPF places significant emphasis upon making effective use of land and buildings. Policy L2 states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of proposals which make better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings.

This is directly applicable to the Water Pumping Station. The proposal brings an existing vacant and deteriorating building back into active use, makes use of its existing footprint and volume, and avoids the need for a new tourism building elsewhere.

The proposal therefore represents precisely the type of efficient reuse encouraged by the Framework and provides a clear sustainability benefit through the retention and adaptation of an existing built resource.

## Green Belt.

The August 2026 NPPF provides particularly clear support for the principle of this proposal within the Green Belt.

Policy GB6 confirms that development within the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories identified by Policy GB7. However, Policy GB7 expressly identifies the reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building as development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms and any extension or alteration does not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared with the original building.

The current proposal is for the reuse of an existing permanent and substantial building. Importantly, the application does not propose a substantive enlargement of the building. The approved roof form is retained and the current application principally concerns the internal conversion and associated access, parking and landscape works.

The proposal therefore falls within the category of development identified by Policy GB7 as not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As a result, the proposal does not require reliance

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upon very special circumstances solely by reason of the change of use, subject to the detailed assessment of any other potential harm.

This is reinforced by the Framework's wider approach to Green Belt land, which recognises the importance of previously developed and underutilised land and buildings and seeks to prevent unnecessary development of new Green Belt land where existing buildings can instead be effectively reused.

## Design and Architectural Quality.

The NPPF's design policies provide further support for the proposal.

Policy DP3 requires development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting, including through the use of appropriate materials and architectural features and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. It also promotes development which is visually attractive, distinctive and characterful and which establishes or maintains a strong sense of place. The proposed conversion follows these principles closely. The scheme has been developed around the existing Water Pumping Station and seeks to retain its distinctive architectural character rather than replacing it with a conventional tourism or residential form.

The approved roof is retained as an important part of the building's established architectural composition. The proposed red zinc finish has been carefully selected to complement the existing red brickwork, while providing a subtle contemporary intervention that distinguishes the new roof from the original structure without appearing incongruous. Similarly, the proposed white render to replace the existing brown concrete elements will introduce a clean and visually contrasting finish, helping to brighten the building and provide a clear distinction between the original masonry and the contemporary interventions. Together, the red zinc roof, existing red brickwork and white rendered elements create a considered material palette which is both visually appealing and complementary to the building's distinctive architectural character. Internally, the proposed arrangement makes efficient use of the building's significant internal volume without undermining its distinctive spatial qualities. The proposal therefore represents an adaptive and context-led approach to design consistent with Policy DP3.

## Sustainable Transport, Access and Parking.

The NPPF recognises that transport considerations should reflect the scale and nature of development and that significant movement-generating development should be directed towards

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sustainable locations. Policy TR3 also recognises that in rural areas opportunities to improve walking, cycling and public transport connectivity should be taken where they exist and can be supported by development.

The proposed development is a single, low-intensity short-stay accommodation unit and would not generate a significant amount of movement. It will utilise and improve an established site access rather than introducing a new access, while appropriate on-site parking will be provided.

The proposal is therefore proportionate to its location and scale, and there is no evidence that it would result in a severe adverse impact upon the transport network or an unacceptable impact upon highway safety. Policy TR6 confirms that refusal on transport grounds is directed towards proposals resulting in severe adverse network impacts or unacceptable highway safety impacts.

## Historic Environment.

The NPPF also places strong emphasis upon securing the conservation and continued use of historic buildings.

Policy HE4 states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and that development affecting heritage assets should, where possible, maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation. The policy specifically recognises the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, local economies, character and distinctiveness.
This principle is directly relevant to the Water Pumping Station. The proposed conversion establishes a viable use capable of funding repair, maintenance and continued occupation of the building. Rather than allowing the building to remain vacant and deteriorate, the proposal provides a mechanism through which its architectural and historic qualities can be retained as part of an active and sustainable use.

The NPPF therefore supports the principle of securing the building's future through sensitive adaptation and reuse.

## Overall Compliance with the NPPF.

Taken as a whole, the proposal is strongly aligned with the objectives and decision-making policies of the August 2026 NPPF.

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It:

- reuses an existing permanent and substantial building rather than introducing new built form into the countryside;
- supports a rural tourism use and contributes to the local visitor economy;
- makes effective use of a vacant and underutilised building;
- retains the existing building and its principal architectural character;
- does not result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the building;
- falls within the NPPF category of development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt;
- provides a viable long-term use capable of supporting the repair and maintenance of the building;
- adopts a context-responsive approach to design;
- makes use of existing access and infrastructure; and
- provides a low-intensity use which is unlikely to result in unacceptable highway, environmental or residential amenity impacts.

The proposal therefore represents a sustainable and proportionate form of development which makes productive use of an existing building while supporting the rural economy and securing the building's long-term future. When the development plan policies and the August 2026 NPPF are considered as a whole, the proposal is considered to represent an appropriate and sustainable form of adaptive reuse.

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## 8. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

The proposed use is considered particularly appropriate to the character, qualities and circumstances of the existing building. The water pumping station is an unusual and distinctive structure, with a strong architectural identity and significant internal volume that lends itself naturally to a form of short-stay visitor accommodation. The proposal has been developed specifically around these existing characteristics, allowing the building itself to form an integral part of the visitor experience rather than requiring a conventional residential layout or substantial new development.

The water pumping station offers an inherently distinctive visitor experience, drawing upon its unusual architecture, former function, historic association and countryside setting. Its conversion to high-quality short-stay accommodation would provide a characterful and differentiated tourism offer, making beneficial use of an existing and underutilised building while retaining its prominence and identity within the surrounding landscape.

The proposal would also support the wider rural tourism function of the area by providing a base from which visitors can experience the surrounding countryside, walking routes, attractions and nearby settlements. Guests staying at the accommodation would be encouraged to explore the local area, supporting the continued use of nearby cafés, public houses, shops, attractions and other visitor facilities. The proposal therefore has the potential to contribute positively to the wider rural visitor economy without introducing a high-intensity or urbanising form of development.

Importantly, the proposal represents a genuine form of rural diversification through the reuse of an existing building, rather than the creation of a new tourism facility within the countryside. The accommodation would be limited to a single unit and the associated access, parking and infrastructure have been carefully designed to remain proportionate to the scale and character of the site. The scheme therefore provides an appropriate and sustainable means of bringing the former Water Pumping Station back into beneficial use, while making efficient use of the existing building and minimising the need for further built development within the countryside.

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## 9. FARM DIVERSIFICATION PLAN.

The proposed conversion of the former Water Pumping Station to short-stay visitor accommodation forms part of a wider diversification of the existing agricultural landholding. The site is owned and managed by an established farming family, with agriculture remaining the principal use and ongoing function of the wider holding. The proposal represents a modest complementary use which will support the long-term resilience and sustainability of the established farming enterprise.

The diversification is considered particularly appropriate given the nature of the existing site and building. The former Water Pumping Station is a substantial, permanent structure which is no longer required for its original purpose and is currently underutilised. Rather than allowing the building to remain vacant and deteriorate, the proposal provides an opportunity to bring it back into beneficial use through a carefully managed short-stay tourism use.

Importantly, the proposal does not involve the loss of productive agricultural land or the construction of a new standalone tourism facility within the countryside. The proposed accommodation is contained within the existing building, with the approved external form retained and only limited associated works required to facilitate its use. The proposal therefore makes productive use of an existing rural asset while allowing the wider agricultural holding to continue operating in its established manner.

The scale of the diversification is deliberately modest, comprising a single short-stay accommodation unit. This ensures that the visitor use remains proportionate to the wider agricultural operation and does not introduce a significant commercial tourism use into the countryside. The limited scale will also ensure that associated traffic, parking, servicing, waste generation and general activity remain proportionate to the rural location.

The proposal has been designed to respond sensitively to the character of the existing building and its agricultural surroundings. The Water Pumping Station will remain the principal built feature, with its distinctive architectural character retained and enhanced through its sensitive adaptation. The proposed red zinc roof and white rendered elements provide carefully considered contemporary additions which complement the existing red brickwork, while maintaining an appropriate relationship with the surrounding rural landscape.

The proposed diversification will operate alongside, rather than in place of, the established agricultural use of the holding. The wider landholding will continue to be managed for agricultural

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purposes, with the visitor accommodation representing a complementary secondary use of an existing redundant building. There is therefore no intention for the proposed use to displace or undermine the principal agricultural function of the holding.

The proposal also has the potential to support the wider rural economy by encouraging visitors to explore the surrounding area and make use of nearby shops, pubs, restaurants, attractions, leisure facilities and other local services. In this respect, the diversification provides benefits which extend beyond the immediate site while remaining appropriately limited in scale.

The proposal is consequently considered to represent a proportionate and sustainable form of farm diversification. It provides an appropriate new use for an existing redundant building, avoids the loss of productive agricultural land, supports the continued resilience of the established farming enterprise and contributes to the wider rural visitor economy. At the same time, the agricultural use of the wider holding will remain the principal function of the site.

The proposal should therefore be viewed not as a standalone tourism development in the countryside, but as a modest diversification of an established farming enterprise through the productive reuse of an existing redundant rural building. This represents an appropriate and sustainable form of diversification which maintains the agricultural character and function of the wider holding while securing a viable and complementary future use for an otherwise underutilised building.

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## 10. PLANNING BALANCE.

The proposal provides a clear opportunity to secure the long-term future of an existing and distinctive building through sensitive adaptive reuse.

The principal benefits are:

- the conservation and continued use of a redundant former water pumping station;
- the retention of the majority of the existing building and its architectural character;
- the provision of a viable long-term use capable of supporting continued repair and maintenance;
- the beneficial reuse of existing built resources rather than the construction of a new tourism building;
- the contribution to the rural visitor economy;
- the creation of a distinctive visitor destination that sensitively combines the building's historic architectural character with carefully considered contemporary elements, drawing upon and celebrating its existing historic and architectural qualities;
- the continuation of the building's established relationship with the surrounding Green Belt.

The recent approval of the replacement roof is particularly material. The Council has already considered the increased height and volume associated with the approved roof and concluded that the works were modest, necessary for the building's preservation, proportionate to the original structure and would not result in a greater impact upon Green Belt openness.

The proposal therefore represents a balanced approach which allows the existing building to evolve and remain relevant whilst protecting the character and openness of its rural setting.

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## 11. CONCLUSION.

The proposed conversion of the former Water Pumping Station into a high-quality short-stay visitor accommodation represents a sensitive and sustainable form of adaptive reuse.

The proposal retains the existing building, preserves its distinctive character and provides a viable long-term use capable of supporting its continued maintenance and conservation.

The recently approved hipped roof is an important part of the building's future and establishes an accepted position in relation to the building's overall mass, appearance and Green Belt impact. The Council has confirmed that the approved increase in height and volume is modest, that the original building remains dominant and that the works do not result in a greater impact upon Green Belt openness.

The current application builds upon that established position without introducing a separate new building or substantial additional built form.

The proposal also provides wider environmental, economic and social benefits through the reuse of an existing building, conservation of local character and contribution towards the rural visitor economy.

For these reasons, the development represents an appropriate and sustainable use of the Water Tower and is considered to accord with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Kirklees Local Plan.

Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought.