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Land west of Wellhouse Lane and east of Greenside Road, Mirfield.

Heritage appraisal and heritage impact assessment for proposed residential development.

For the Moravian Union Incorporated

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared to determine the potential for harm to the heritage interest of a grade II listed building by virtue of development within its setting. This report also considers the potential for harm to nearby non-designated heritage assets. Inspections were undertaken in June and September 2024 to gain an understanding of the proposals site, the surrounding area and the likely impacts of the proposals upon them. In accordance with the NPPF this document and the research that informs it is proportionate to the asset's importance.

1.2 To the northeastern corner of the site is a grade II listed building, Wellhouse Farmhouse and a number of historic buildings adjoined to it further west which are likely to be considered non-designated heritage assets (NDHA's).

2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The proposals site comprises two parcels of land, one directly west of the Moravian Church building and the other located to the southeast. The two parcels of land are separated by a burial ground to the south of the church building.

2.2 The Greenside Road site comprises a square field bounded by stone walls and appears to be largely disused. The Wellhouse Lane site is bounded by timber stock fencing and is somewhat elevated at its northern end in relation to the road. This field is used currently for grazing of horses.

2.3 The proposal sites are shown on historic map regression as open fields from as early as the mid C19th with no development having ever been recorded. It is reasonable to assume that prior to the mid 1800's the proposals sites were likely undeveloped.

2.4 Prior to the establishment of the Moravian Church in Mirfield it is likely that the area comprised of scattered and isolated agricultural settlement. Wellhouse Farmhouse is a remnant of this historic development and is dated to 1576 from when an earlier structure was partially rebuilt.

2.5 The farmhouse became part of the Moravian Church settlement established in 1752, along with the nearby settlements of Gomersal, Fulneck and Wyke; the settlement being one of only 30 established worldwide during the C18, based on the community established at Herrnhut in Germany, which emphasised prayer, worship and communal living. And thus, at least this part of Mirfield was built around the Moravian Church community.

2.6 Significant residential development was undertaken to the west of Greenside Road between 1907 and 1922, likely in a piecemeal fashion which established typical residential buildings of stone frontage. To the north of the Greenside Road site and east of the Wellhouse Lane site numerous houses were built in the years preceding 1969 which together with the earlier C20th development, enclosed the parcels of land which form the proposal sites. The church building itself was rebuilt in 1970 in a typical style for the era, the burial ground remained however with numerous extant gravestones dating to at least the late C18th. The historic buildings attached to the farmhouse to the west of the church and are shown on regressive mapping from at least 1855. The terraces immediately opposite the church date to the early C20.



Figure 1: Yorkshire sheet 247. 6/1. OS published 1855.

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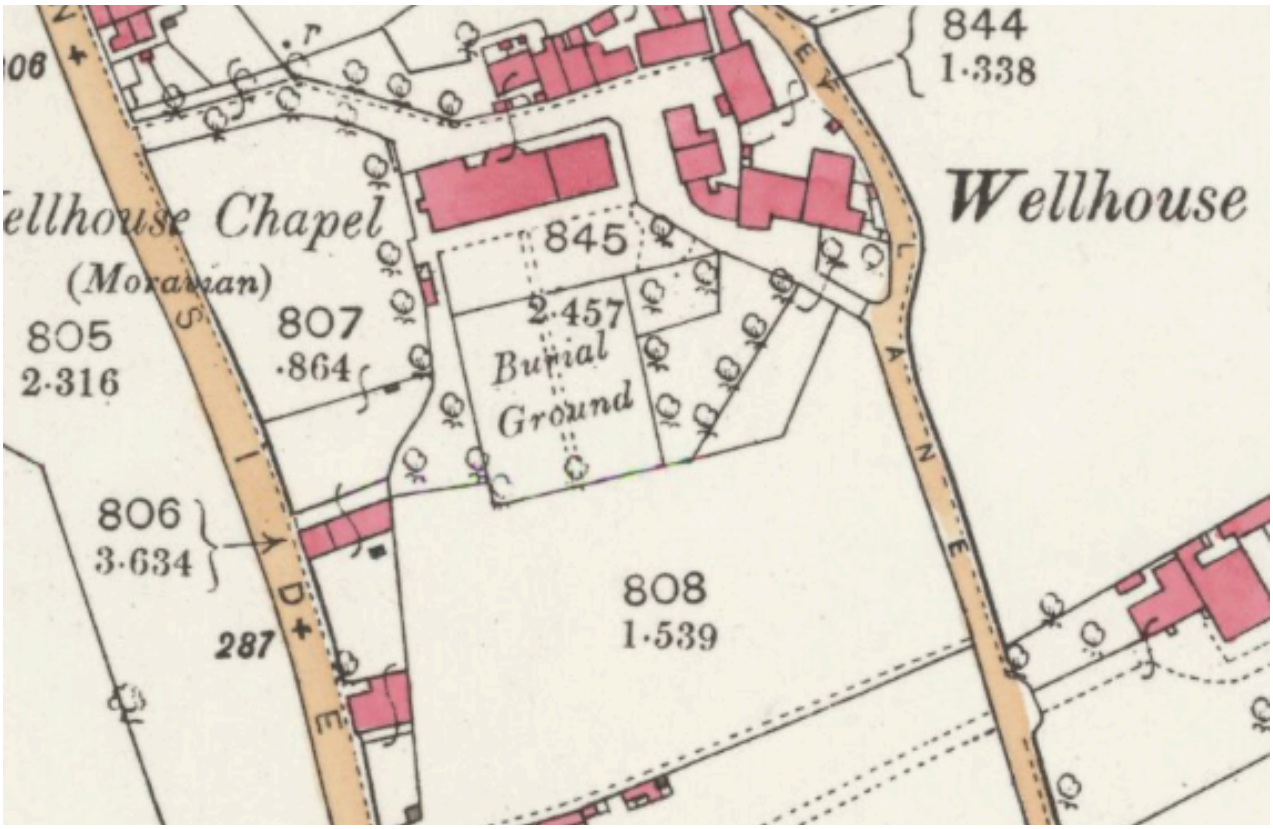


Figure 2: Yorkshire sheet CCXLVII.2. 25/1. OS Published 1893.

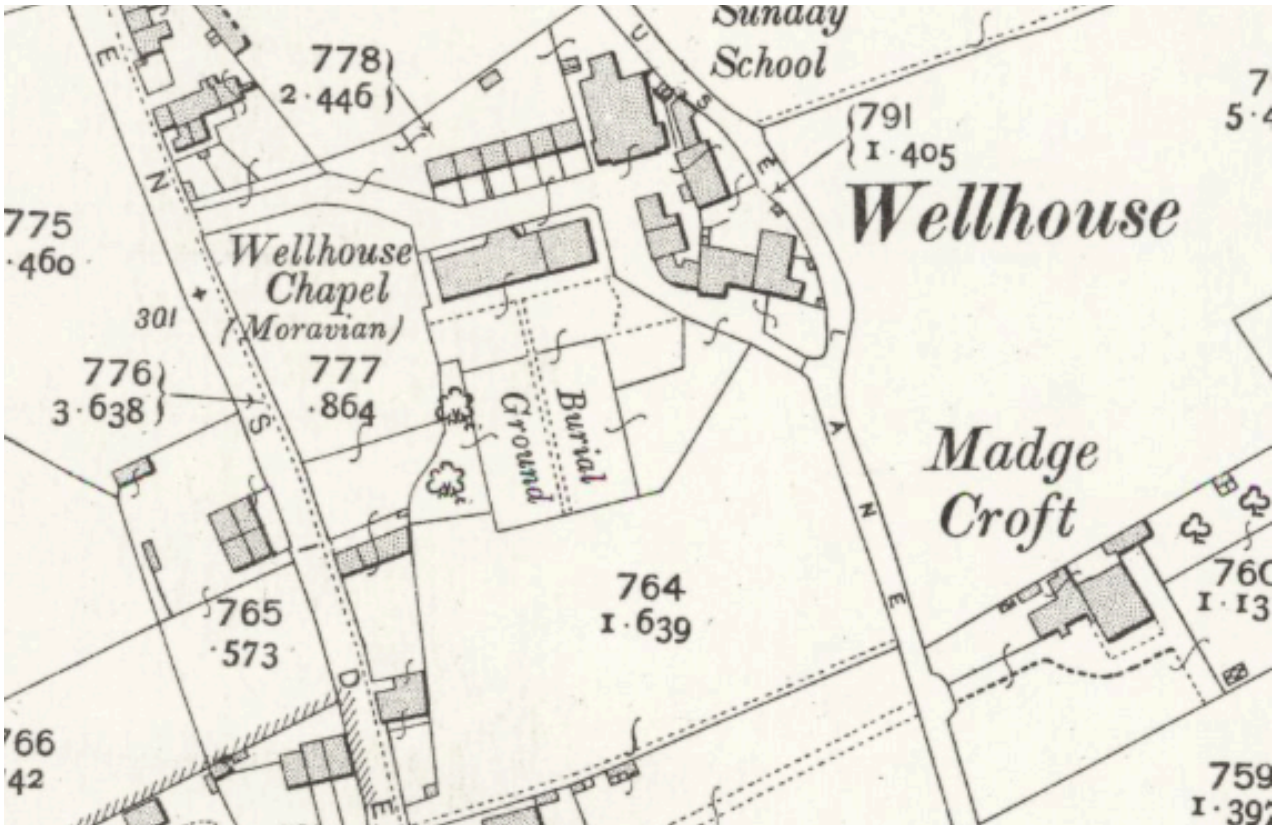


Figure 3: Yorkshire sheet CCXLVII.2. 25/1. OS Published 1907.

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Figure 4: Yorkshire sheet CCXLVII.2. 25/1. OS Published 1922.



Figure 5: Yorkshire sheet CCXLVII.2. 25/1. OS Published 1933.

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Figure 6: National Grid map SE2021SE-B. Published 1969.

3.0 HERITAGE ASSET DESIGNATIONS

3.1 Wellhouse Farmhouse was designated GVII IN 1966. LEN: 1134692. Much has been written about the farmhouse due to prior schemes of development. As follows:

3.2 *Wellhouse Farmhouse is thought to have originated as a late medieval timber-framed house, built on a stone plinth; however, the present stone-built structure predominantly dates from the C16, with subsequent alterations during the C18, C19 and C20. The triangular lintel datestone over the blocked former front door is dated 1576; it probably marks the period when the house was substantially re-built in stone. It has a recessed panel with raised lettering that has been interpreted as abbreviations for 'God be here', 'Gilbert Houldsworth' the owner, and to commemorate the builder, Richard Lee; his status indicated by a depiction of a pick. The position of this blocked door, with a similar opposed doorway in the rear outshut, suggests that a former cross-passage existed between them and that a service wing once lay to the east. The existing front door on the western side of the main house body, does still enter a cross-passage with a surviving wall post and wall plate on the western side of the passage.*

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3.3 Wellhouse Farm is thought to have been employed by the Moravian church as a single brethren's choir house between 1768 and 1824 and also possibly as a bakery and a laundry. The farmhouse was altered during the late C17 and C19; however, map regression shows that the farm's footprint has not altered greatly since the early C19. Map evidence shows the farmhouse was attached to a barn to its east, and a rectangular-plan building and yard to the rear; it is believed that this building was used as a Sunday school during the early C19, before it gained an agricultural use. The late C18 barn that was attached to the farmhouse was believed to have incorporated the service wing of the farmhouse; it was altered during the C18 and C19 to provide additional living accommodation, to function as a barn, and later as a workshop. The attached barn suffered a severe structural failure in the late 1980s that necessitated shoring up; however, the building continued to deteriorate and in the late 1990s, the northern half of the roof collapsed. The barn was demolished in its entirety and rebuilt as new residence between 2017 and 2020, albeit on the same footprint and with a similar external appearance. The farmhouse is the only original structure that remains.

3.4 *The main body of the house is built of coursed rubble with quoins and a plinth; the end walls of the west wing are of dressed stone. Windows are either timber sashes with lead glazing or casements; they either have ashlar surrounds with a central mullion and sill or ashlar lintels and sills. The roofs are clad in stone slates, with timber gutters. The two-storey main elevation faces roughly to the south and has a projecting hipped west wing with quoined corners, paired sash windows to both floors, a small casement window in the right return, and a closely set corbel table beneath the eaves of the hipped roof. The remainder of the main elevation is asymmetrical, the ground floor has a door to the left and a blocked doorway to the right, with a pair of four-light sashes set between them. The blocked doorway has an ashlar moulded surround and a four-centred arch triangular lintel that forms a datestone with raised letters in recessed panels, that reads: Gbh 1576 GH / RH and a pick. The first floor has a casement window towards each end, each with an ashlar surround and a central mullion*[1].

4.0 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

4.1 Much like the listing description reproduced above there is much written regarding the farmhouse building, however no further information beyond that already provided in the listing description is apparent[2]. There is no further information available on the Heritage Gateway website (West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Services WYAAS), or the Archeological Data Service archives regarding the proposals sites.

[1] Historic England listing description, see here: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1134692?section=official-list-entry

[2] Heritage Gateway, see here: https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MWY8073&resourceID=105

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5.0 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

5.1 This section of the report responds to the requirements as set out in paragraph HE5(1) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Under the heading "Assessing effects on heritage assets" is stated the following:

5.2 *Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.*

5.3 Annexe 2: Glossary of the NPPF, defines significance as follows; *The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*

5.4 Annexe 2: Glossary of the NPPF defines setting as follows; *The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

FARMHOUSE

5.5 Wellhouse Farmhouse faces south, towards the Wellhouse Lane proposals site. This elevation provides physical, illustrative evidence of a C16 farmhouse building, however its late C16 southern elevation has been much altered over the centuries. Attached to the farmhouse is a barn which has been entirely rebuilt in recent years, as such this does not possess evidential interest to any degree.

5.6 The Heritage Gateway contains a record that references a visit to the farmhouse in 1979 by Colum Giles, a prominent architectural historian who describes the farmhouse building as the oldest dated in the area and so is of particular historic interest[3].

5.7 In addition, the listing description states the reasons for designation: *the farmhouse became part of a Moravian Church settlement established in 1752, one of only 30 established worldwide during the C18, based on the community established at Herrnhut in Germany, which emphasised prayer, worship and communal*

[3] Heritage Gateway, see here: https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MWY8073&resourceID=105

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living[4]*.* The connection the farmhouse has with the Moravian Church is therefore of particular heritage interest. However, it is understood that the farmhouse is no longer owned by the Union.

5.8 The listing description also describes architectural interest as a reason for designation, as follows: *the core of the structure dates to the late-medieval period and it falls within the period where there is a presumption in favour of listing; * the retention of substantial late-medieval timber-framing within a reconstructed stone-built house of 1576, together with evidence of later alteration, permits a good understanding of the phased development of the building; * the survival of much of the original plan form, including a cross-passage and evidence of a second, is a rare survival and provides evidence of the use of the house and the status of its residents; * there is good survival of fittings and fixtures dating from a range of periods; * it contributes to the regional diversity and character of the West Yorkshire Pennine.*[5] Wellhouse Farmhouse is therefore of great interest from an architectural standpoint given the way it reflects historic vernacular architecture. However, the newly built adjoining barn and the converted barn to the north detract from heritage interest somewhat.

5.9 The setting of WellHouse Farmhouse is defined as the surroundings in which the building is appreciated, which in the context of these proposals is from the private access road directly to the south and to a far lesser extent from Wellhouse Lane looking northwest.

5.10 The house is not visible from Greenside Road or further west along Wellhouse (beyond no10). Further south on Wellhouse Lane towards the southernmost extent of the proposals site and from the south/southeast of the proposals site itself, the southern elevation of the farmhouse is not particularly visible aside from the roof and the gable of the modern adjoined barn due to the incline of the land. Heritage significance derived from wider views is therefore limited from where the building can be seen which is the eastern end of Wellhouse, the junction of Wellhouse with Wellhouse Lane and the northern tip of the proposals site.

PROPOSAL SITES

5.11 Further afield, bordering both proposals site is residential development of varying periods within the C20th. To the west of the Greenside Road site is early C20th development comprising of stone-built semis. To the north and south off Greenside Road (The Orchards eg) and east of the Wellhouse Lane site are numerous late C20th houses. The church building dates to the late C20th also. To the north of the Moravian Church on Wellhouse is a row of stone-built terraces (1-6 Wellhouse) that date to the early C20 as well as the Mirfield Evangelical Church and another row of terraces directly south which lead to Wellhouse Farmhouse adjoined to the east which date to the late C19. The staggered development apparent around the proposals site is

[4] Historic England listing description, see here: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1134692?section=official-list-entry

[5] Historic England listing description, see here: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1134692?section=official-list-entry

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evidentiary and typical of historic piecemeal development, however overall heritage interest is limited to the listed farmhouse building and to a much lesser degree 7-10 Wellhouse and Mirfield Evangelical Church.

5.12 There is no evidence either in historic mapping or the various archives consulted that the proposal sites contain buried remains of built structures. They have been part of the historic landscape as open fields in close proximity to historic settlement for many centuries so therefore may contain isolated, unknown remains. The heritage significance of the proposals sites in relation to the potential archaeological interest is therefore limited.

5.13 Directly between the two sites is the Wellhouse Moravian Church burial ground. Within are a large number of grave markers/ headstones, some of which date to the late C18 (from what was visible). These do therefore possess archeological and evidential interest relating to the past lives of the parishioners and Wellhouse Moravian Church.

5.14 From an illustrative or associative standpoint the proposals sites do not possess heritage interest as they are simply open parcels of land. Regarding the C19 buildings on Wellhouse, these do possess minor illustrative heritage interest. The properties on Greenside Road, The Orchards, Wellhouse Lane and numbers 1-6 Wellhouse do not possess illustrative or associative historic interest.

5.15 The proposal sites do not possess architectural or aesthetic interest, however the roadside wall on the Greenside Road site is likely of early C20th origin and reflects the prevailing stone-built character of the buildings in this location and is therefore a positive contributor to the street scene aesthetic. Similarly the wall to the southern boundary of the Wellhouse Lane site is likely of a similar age.

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6.0 SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE DERIVED FROM PROPOSALS SITE

6.1 The proposals site off Greenside Road whilst a relatively pleasant open green space within a semi-urban environment does not possess any inherent significant heritage interest. Neither does the field form part of the setting of any designated or non-designated heritage assets.

6.2 The proposals site off Wellhouse Lane, whilst a relatively pleasant open green space does not possess any inherent significant heritage interest. However, the northern tip of the field forms part of the setting of the grade II listed Wellhouse Farmhouse building, which allows heritage significance to be appreciated from beyond the narrow access road of Wellhouse at the junction of Wellhouse with Wellhouse Lane.

6.3 Wellhouse Farmhouse is of much heritage interest given its late C16 origin, and likely much older in parts which is reflected in its detailed listing description, Heritage Gateway record and the numerous instances of prior research that are apparent. The building is illustrative of regional vernacular design, historic building methods and practices and is indicative of the history of Mirfield as an area of scattered agricultural development prior to C20th development.

7.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The local planning authority is required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings when considering proposals that may harm heritage significance. The LPA must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the significance of the listed buildings, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm their heritage significance.

7.2 For the purposes of this assessment, preservation equates to an absence of harm[6]. Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England's Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset[7].

7.3 In addition, aside from the NPPF definition of setting ie; "*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral*. Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance further define

[6] South Lakeland v SEE [1992] 2 AC 141.

[7] Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance. English Heritage 2008. Para 84.

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setting as: *"Definition of the setting of a significant place will normally be guided by the extent to which material change within it could affect (enhance or diminish) the place's significance*[8]".

7.3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA 3), published by Historic England advises a staged approach to assessment in which Step 1 involves the identification of the relevant heritage assets (section 3), Step 2 establishes their significance (section 5&6), and Step 3 describes how the change within the setting of the assets might affect their significance (section 7). In cases where there is potential for a loss of significance, amounting to harm, Step 4 is engaged, requiring the discussion of mitigation, which this section of the report aims to address.

7.4 As discussed in sections 5 & 6, the proposals sites themselves do not possess inherent heritage significance but harm may still arise to the setting of the listed building given the proximity of the proposals sites. The potential for harm can therefore be considered two fold.

1. The immediate setting of the listed building; considering encroachment and outlook from the farmhouse curtilage and access road, and;
2. Intrusion to the views of the building from further afield.

7.5 In response to point 1 above, development directly on the northern (Wellhouse) boundary of the Wellhouse Lane site would undoubtedly alter setting to a degree that would harm the heritage significance of the listed farmhouse. In this regard, and in response to GPA step 4 it is proposed to leave this space open field (as per the design plans) to retain a degree of separation between the proposals site and retain a spatial relationship with the open field.

7.6 In response to point 2 above, leaving the northern tip of the Wellhouse Lane site as open field would also serve to retain views from the south of the Wellhouse and Wellhouse Lane junction, looking north. Given that views of the listed building from further afield are limited, harm by virtue of the proposed buildings featuring in the views of the farmhouse will be negligible.

7.7 Given the limited heritage interests of the proposals site and the mitigation measures outlined above, harm to the heritage significance of Wellhouse Farmhouse will not occur in relation to the proposals.

[8] Ibid. Para 76.

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8.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

8.1 The national planning policies regarding heritage assets are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework [2026] specifically section 20 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. Paragraph HE5(2) states:

8.2 *Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to: a. Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or b. Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or c. Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or d. Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset.*

8.3 As discussed in the heritage impact assessment section of this report, the significance of Wellhouse Farmhouse is embodied within the building itself and will remain intact. Given that limited heritage significance is derived from setting and considering the mitigation measures that are proposed, harm to heritage interest will not occur.

8.4 And in relation to non-designated heritage assets, paragraph HE7(2) states**:**

8.5 *Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal and a balanced judgement made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.*

8.6 I do not foresee that development to the northwest corner of the Greenside Road site will harm heritage interest, particularly so given that according to regressive mapping these houses date to the early C20. However in terms of undertaking a balanced judgement, again, the proposals for new housing, including affordable housing are of great public benefit which should be considered during determination.

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Plate 01: Looking north along Wellhouse Lane, towards Wellhouse Farmhouse. The eastern elevation of the barn is visible.



Plate 02: Looking northwest from Wellhouse Lane, The upper portion of Wellhouse Farmhouse is visible but not particularly prominent from this location.

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Plate 03: Looking northwest towards the farmhouse from the fence line., again only the upper portions visible.



Plate 04: Looking northwest towards the farmhouse from the junction, again only the upper portions visible.

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Plate 05: Wellhouse Farmhouse, southern elevation.



Plate 06: Wellhouse Farmhouse, southern elevation.

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Plate 07: Looking south towards the Wellhouse Lane proposals site.



Plate 08: Looking west towards the Wellhouse junction and proposals site.

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Plate 09: Looking west towards the Wellhouse junction from 10 Wellhouse.



Plate 10: Number 8 & 9 Wellhouse.

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Plate 11: Mirfield Evangelical Church.



Plate 12: Looking west towards the Greenside Road site with no 7 Wellhouse to the left and the Moravian Church beyond.

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Plate 13: Looking west towards the Greenside Road site from Wellhouse.



Plate 14: Looking northeast along Wellhouse. Early C20th buildings pictured with the early 19th Evangelical church in the background.

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Plate 15: Looking along Wellhouse.



Plate 16: The Greenside Road site looking south west from its northeastern corner.

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Plate 17: Greenside Road, looking south towards the proposals site.



Plate 18: Greenside Road, looking north.

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Plate 19: Typical example of early C20th residential buildings on Greenside Road.



Plate 20: Greenside Road looking north from the southern corner of the proposals site.

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Plate 21: Looking northeast across the Wellhouse Lane proposals site. The apex of the converted barn is visible.



Plate 22: Looking north across the Wellhouse Lane proposals site, the gable of the barn and the upper portion of the southern aspect of Wellhouse Farmhouse is visible.

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Figure 6: Annotated viewpoint plan.

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