Design Justification Statement for Variation of the Approved Dwelling at The Quarry, The Old Brickworks, Thurstonland



Figure 1 Existing site within the excavated hollow

1 Purpose and scope of the application

This statement supports an application under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary condition 2 of planning permission 2026/62/91076/E, granted on 25th September 2026 for demolition of the existing building and erection of a detached dwelling with ancillary works at Builders Yard, The Old Brickworks, Top O' Th' Bank, Thurstonland, Huddersfield, HD4 6UY. The application seeks approval for a revised design for the same single dwelling and its ancillary accommodation, together with a revised internal driveway and a detached domestic garage.

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The revised design responds to the site's topography and further development of the household brief. It reorganises the accommodation, separates the garage from the principal dwelling and turns the leisure wing on plan. The design retains the combination of natural stone, pitched roofs, timber and restrained contemporary glazing that informed the Council's acceptance of the original proposal.

The application does not seek an additional dwelling or a change to the description of development. It seeks substitution of the relevant architectural drawings in the condition 2 schedule.

2 The permission and its design rationale

The approved architectural baseline is L'Arche's drawing 124/2.002 revision K, identified in the decision notice. It comprises an arrangement of connected volumes, four bedrooms, a pool and gym wing and two integrated garage bays. Its site layout shows a curved driveway, garden and paddock areas, a wildlife pond, bin storage and a bin collection point. The variation changes the relationship between these elements while retaining a single dwelling with ancillary leisure accommodation.

The delegated report accepted the site as previously developed land and assessed redevelopment against the national policy exception for proposals that would not cause substantial harm to Green Belt openness. The officer concluded that very special circumstances were not required. The assessment vehicle was therefore the previously developed land route, rather than a finding that the applicant's very special circumstances arguments justified inappropriate development.

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The officer acknowledged an increase in bulk and massing relative to the existing building, but gave weight to the site's position away from the public realm, its limited prominence and the containment provided by existing landscape features. In design terms, the report accepted the materials and architectural approach as a contemporary interpretation of local vernacular. These findings establish the relevant context for the variation, while requiring the effects of the revised siting and external works to be assessed in their own right.

The Council also accepted the relationship with neighbouring occupiers and the principle of access, subject to safeguards. Conditions reserve external materials, residential curtilage and boundary treatments, drainage, ecological protection and other matters.

3 Site character and policy context

The site occupies the former builders' yard and equestrian setting within an excavated hollow. The surrounding land rises around parts of the plot, while established vegetation and nearby converted buildings contribute to its enclosed rural character. Access is through the existing Old Brickworks route from Top O' Th' Bank. The site photograph illustrates both the containment of the existing building within the hollow and the wider landscape visible beyond it.

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The design response is informed by this landform. A large level building platform and a short direct driveway would place greater demands on excavation and retaining structures where levels change rapidly. The revised layout instead uses a longer approach and an articulated building footprint to address those changes. Some regrading and retaining walls remain necessary and form part of the development's landscape effects.

The statutory development plan comprises the Kirklees Local Plan and the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan. The principal policies for the revised design are LP24 on design and amenity; LP57 and LP59 on development within the Green Belt; LP21 and LP22 on access and parking; LP28 on drainage; LP30 on biodiversity; and LP52 and LP53 on environmental quality and contaminated or unstable land. LP1, LP2 and LP7 provide the wider context for sustainable development, place shaping and effective use of land.

The neighbourhood plan is particularly relevant through Policies 1 and 2 on landscape and built character, Policy 11 on transport and accessibility, Policy 12 on sustainability and Policy 13 on wildlife and biodiversity net gain. The officer's assessment of Policies 1 and 2 emphasised locally influenced form and materials, the grain of development, landscape setting and protection of amenity. These considerations are addressed through the revised composition and the detailed treatment of external areas.

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The Housebuilders Design Guide SPD supports a response to local character, suitable materials, a roofline related to topography and views, and protection of residential amenity. The current National Planning Policy Framework remains a material consideration, including policy GB7(1)(e), which addresses redevelopment of previously developed land that would not cause substantial harm to Green Belt openness.

4 The revised layout and accommodation

The four-bedroom dwelling retains family living accommodation and ancillary pool, gym and service spaces. The ground floor organises the kitchen, dining and family areas around the main entrance and circulation space, while the formal lounge and study provide separate rooms. The first floor groups the bedrooms around the principal circulation space and retains a gym associated with the leisure accommodation. The changes improve the functional relationship between the principal rooms without creating a separate residential unit.

The leisure wing is turned approximately 45 degrees relative to the main composition. This gives the garden elevation a change in direction and reduces the effect of a single continuous frontage. The pool accommodation is expressed as a lower element, while the gym occupies the upper part of the wing nearer the house. It is therefore the hierarchy of the individual volumes, rather than a description of the whole leisure wing as single storey, that explains its visual relationship with the principal dwelling.

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The detached garage is positioned across the entrance court from the house. Its simpler pitched roof and lower scale distinguish it as an ancillary building. Separation removes garage doors from the main dwelling and allows the entrance court to organise arrival, parking and access. The intervening gap also enables the garage to be read as a separate volume.

The consented scheme provides 368 m² GIA at ground floor and 282 m² at first floor, giving a total of 650 m² including the integrated garaging. The revised dwelling provides 360 m² GIA at ground floor and 236 m² at first floor, giving 566 m², with a further 60 m² for the detached garage. The revised combined GIA is therefore 626 m²: a reduction of circa 25 m², or approximately 4%, compared with the consented scheme. The maximum ridge height remains unchanged.

Comparison with the consented scheme:

Metric	**Consented revision K**	**Revised scheme**
Ground floor GIA	368 m² including integrated garaging	360 m² dwelling; 60 m² detached garage
First floor GIA	282 m²	236 m²
Combined GIA including garaging	650 m²	626 m²
Measured building footprint	346 m²	363 m²
Maximum ridge height	Consented baseline	Unchanged

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The measured building footprint is 346 m² for the consented scheme and 363 m² for the revised scheme. This represents an increase of 17 m², or approximately 4.9%. The comparison therefore shows a reduction in combined GIA alongside a small increase in footprint, with no change to the maximum ridge height.

5 Appearance and relationship with local character

The revised elevations retain an architectural language of pitched slate roofs and coursed natural stone, with dark timber cladding, smooth ashlar surrounds, and slim black aluminium window frames. Stone establishes the relationship with the nearby buildings and the wider Pennine setting. Timber cladding distinguishes the contemporary parts of the composition and provides a reference to the site's former working character.

Compared with approved revision K, the revised design turns the previously straight leisure wing, replaces the integrated garage bays with a detached garage and reorganises the principal entrance and garden-facing openings. The approved palette already included slate, natural stone, dark timber, zinc and black-framed glazing. The continuity of those materials makes the proposal an evolution of the consented architectural approach. The revised roof glazing also uses openings within the principal pitched roof plane, in place of the projecting dormer treatment shown on parts of the approved scheme.

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The principal roofs remain legible as individual pitched forms. Glazed links separate the larger volumes, while lower roofed elements mediate between the two-storey accommodation and the garden. This articulation provides changes in height, direction and material that can be understood from the garden and approach. It offers a coherent response to the officer's acceptance of a contemporary interpretation of local vernacular.

Glazing is used to connect living and leisure accommodation with the garden and to identify the entrance and links. More enclosed stone elevations provide a different character to the outward-facing parts of the house. The architectural justification rests on the proportion and placement of openings in each volume, rather than on an assumption that all glazing is concealed from wider views. The extent of glazing also makes control of internal light spill and external lighting relevant to landscape character and ecology.

The material palette and the relationship between principal and ancillary volumes respond to LP24 and the neighbourhood plan's objectives for local distinctiveness. Condition 15 provides the mechanism for agreeing the precise walling and roofing materials.

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6 Green Belt openness and external works

The planning case follows the previously developed land basis accepted in the delegated report. National policy GB7(1)(e) permits redevelopment within this category where substantial harm to openness would not result. The relevant assessment includes the spatial effects of building footprint, height, volume and distribution, together with the visual effects of the whole development in its landscape setting. The original permission is a material comparison, but the effects of the revised scheme also need to be understood in the context of the existing site.

The delegated report considered LP57 and LP59 alongside national policy and applied the national substantial-harm threshold to redevelopment of previously developed land. The variation follows that same assessment approach. The local policies remain relevant to the design, treatment of outdoor areas and environmental effects, and the current national policy threshold is a material consideration when assessing the revised development as a whole.

The principal design measures supporting this application are the continued provision of one dwelling, the articulation of its built form, the lower scale of the garage and parts of the leisure accommodation, and the use of the existing hollow as the setting for development. These measures retain the underlying relationship between the site and the development that informed the officer's conclusion. The scheme is intended to accommodate the same residential use without introducing additional dwelling units or independent occupation of the leisure accommodation or garage.

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The detached garage and rotated leisure wing alter where built development is located. The comparison in section 4 shows a reduction in combined GIA of approximately 4%, while the measured building footprint increases from 346 m² to 363 m², an increase of 17 m² or approximately 4.9%. The maximum ridge height remains unchanged. The footprint increase forms part of the assessment of spatial openness; the floorspace reduction and unchanged ridge height do not remove its effects. The planning justification therefore rests on the articulation and distribution of the buildings, their relationship with the existing hollow and the treatment of external works. A gap between buildings improves visual legibility but does not remove their spatial effect, and illustrative planting is not relied upon as established screening.

The revised access is accompanied by removal and regrading of the existing track as indicated on the site plan. Restoring redundant track areas offers an opportunity to reduce the visual presence of the former circulation pattern and return land to a softer landscape treatment. This benefit must be considered alongside the new drive, parking court, garden and retaining walls.

Condition 9 reserves the domestic curtilage and boundary details, and condition 10 restricts specified permitted development rights. The residential garden will be identified separately from other land, with boundary details addressed under condition 9 using treatments appropriate to the rural setting and wildlife permeability where required. Detailed landscaping is not submitted as part of this application to vary condition 2. Planting shown in the visualisations is illustrative and does not constitute a detailed landscape proposal.

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7 Levels access and drainage

The site plan places the arrival court between the house and detached garage, with access around the dwelling and a private garden beyond. This arrangement gives a defined destination to the approach and separates the principal garden space from the arrival court.

The design objective is an access gradient no steeper than 1 in 12.5, equivalent to 8%. The wider levels strategy aims to limit excavation while providing usable access around the dwelling. Retaining walls and local regrading remain part of that strategy and will be coordinated with finished floor levels and proposed contours. Their exposed heights and materials affect the appearance of the scheme, particularly where new level surfaces meet the existing slopes. The justification is therefore a more considered relationship between access, building and landform, rather than an absence of engineering works.

The established connection to the wider highway network is retained. Revision K identifies bin storage and a collection point, and the revised access arrangement preserves a suitable refuse storage and collection strategy. The revised forecourt and garage arrangement continues to provide sufficient parking, turning and safe pedestrian movement. Surfacing and drainage will need to satisfy conditions 11 and 16.

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8 Amenity ecology and sustainability

The revised dwelling provides generous internal accommodation, a range of living spaces and direct access to a private garden. The reorganisation allows household circulation and service functions to be resolved within a single home. These are relevant benefits for future occupiers under LP24.

The revised landscape and access works will remain consistent with the ecological safeguards secured through the permission. Conditions 3 to 8 address lighting, construction management, biodiversity enhancement, invasive species, badgers and bat licensing, while condition 14 secures bat and bird features. A revised ecological assessment accounts for the driveway, removed track, garage, and retaining walls.

The permission identifies a requirement for a biodiversity gain plan, and the officer's report envisages a combination of on-site and off-site measures. The revised development must retain an appropriate mechanism for securing the required gain. The landscaping should integrate habitat provision with the restoration of redundant track areas, subject to ecological advice and the agreed management arrangements.

The design also provides an opportunity to retain the energy and resource objectives of the original climate change statement. The detailed specification will coordinate building fabric, glazing, ventilation and shading with heating and energy systems, including the demands of the pool accommodation. Noise, lighting and land contamination safeguards remain relevant under LP52 and LP53.

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Figure 2 Illustrative garden view of the revised scheme

This rear garden aspect image illustrates the intended relationship between stone volumes, dark timber, glazed links and lower ancillary accommodation. The changes in roof form, direction and material help explain the articulation of the revised design. Planting is illustrative; the design justification rests on the arrangement and appearance of the buildings within the existing landform, without assuming that the vegetation shown provides established screening. The submitted architectural drawings define the proposed building design.

9 Planning conclusion

The revised scheme retains the single dwelling and the architectural approach accepted by the Council, while reorganising the accommodation and access around the particular constraints of the site. Its combined GIA is reduced by approximately 4% and its maximum ridge height remains unchanged. Its design merits lie in the clearer relationship between principal and ancillary volumes, and the functional arrangement of the home.

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The application should be assessed against the previously 'developed land' Green Belt route accepted in the permission, together with the design, landscape, access, amenity and ecological policies relevant to the changed layout. The measured increase in building footprint, together with the effects of the external works, must be considered expressly within that assessment. The intended outcome remains a development that avoids substantial harm to openness and maintains the quality of its rural setting. The building arrangement, relationship with the existing landform and retained safeguards provide the basis for assessing that outcome; the illustrative planting does not form a submitted landscape scheme.

References

- Kirklees Council, decision notice for application 2026/62/91076/E, dated 25th September 2026, including condition 2 and the plans and specifications schedule.
- Approved scheme drawing 124/2.002 revision K, L'Arche Developments, April 2026, as listed in the decision notice and supplied for this comparison.
- Kirklees Council, delegated report for application 2026/62/91076/E, particularly the Green Belt, visual amenity, residential amenity, highways and ecology assessments on pages 6 to 14.
- Kirklees Local Plan, adopted 27th February 2019, and Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan, made December 2021. Adopted documents: https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-policy/local-plan.aspx

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- Kirklees Housebuilders Design Guide SPD, June 2021, particularly Principles 6, 13 and 15. https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-policy/pdf/housebuilders-design-guide-spd.pdf
- National Planning Policy Framework, current online Chapter 13, particularly GB7(1)(e). https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework-chapter-13-protecting-green-belt-land-gb1-8
- Planning Practice Guidance, Flexible options for planning permissions, section 73 guidance. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flexible-options-for-planning-permissions

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