Conversion of Barn and Outbuilding to 2 Dwellings
Rowling House Farm
North Lane
Cawthorne
Barnsley
S75 4AF

Date: June 2015
Ref: 12.15-02

## DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

This statement has been prepared in support of an application for Full Planning Permission made to Barnsley MBC for the conversion of a stone barn and outbuilding into 2 dwellings and garages.



Fig 1. View of existing two storey barn from South West.

### 1.0 Background

The applicant owns Rowling House Farm which comprises the Farmhouse with outbuildings including a two storey stone barn with a single storey wing. The surrounding farm and land extends to approximately 5.2 acres of agricultural grazing land which sustains a small herd of beef cattle. Over the last few years agricultural buildings have been erected in the paddock to the south east of the main farm which is much more suitable for the rearing of stock allowing ad-hoc sheds and outbuildings to be removed. As a result the principal stone barn and outbuilding which was unsuitable for cattle is no longer used and is redundant.

The applicant wishes to obtain planning permission to enable the buildings to be converted primarily for his own use and that of his family although he cannot rule out the possibility of

sale in the future. The proposal is to convert the buildings into two dwellings one of which is a small 2 bed retirement cottage which will have full disabled access facilities including a lift.

## 2.0 Assessment

### 2.1 Physical Context

Rowling House Farmhouse is attached to Rowling House Cottage the latter is not within the applicant's ownership and both have independent access from North Lane.

There is an additional access to the west which serves the barns and adjacent agricultural land. Until recently this also provided access for parking to Rowling House Cottage which now has its own independent access and parking on the frontage to North Lane. Improvements to the west access were granted planning permission ref: 20011/0656 in July 2011 and the works have been implemented.

The site is located approximately 1.5 miles west of Cawthorne Village with open countryside to the north west and south. The eastern boundary abuts the Naylor Pipeworks Industrial site.

The buildings are of local stone in a rural vernacular typical of the area. The outbuildings themselves are a mix of stone and brick. The principal stone barn retains its original walls and roof structure as well as a stone slate roof. The single storey buildings have been adapted over the years and a replacement low pitched roof with steel trusses has been added at some point in the past.

The site has a gently slope towards the south east. There are no significant trees within the site and none that will be affected by the proposed development.
Boundaries are a mix of post and rail fences, traditional dry stone walls and native thorn hedges.

#### 2.1.1 Planning History

2011/0656 – July 2011
Permission for improvements to existing access (West); Rowling House Farm.

2013/1175 – Erection of detached double garage/workshop following demolition of existing garage.

#### 2.1.2 Environmental Assessment

Other than its use as a farm the site has had no previous use. Ground levels appear to be natural and the potential for significant contamination is considered to be minimal.

There are no watercourses or culverts within the area of the site.

#### 2.1.3 Drainage

Foul
The site is not connected to mains drainage. Foul drainage from Rowling House Farmhouse and Cottage jointly connects to a septic tank and the treated effluent discharges to a soakaway. The position of existing drains is shown on drawing ref: P1 Site Plan. This drainage will not be affected.

Foul drainage from the converted barns will be taken to a Klargester Bio-Disc BB sewage treatment plan and discharged into the ground via a sub irrigation system of herringbone pipework. The extent of drainage pipework required will be subject to a percolation test and detailed design prior to commencement of works.

Surface Water
The existing barns have limited surface water drainage. New surface water drainage will be disposed of by local soakaways on site in accordance with the principals of Sustainable Urban Drainage solutions (SUDs). Wherever possible permeable, free draining paths driveways and paving has been specified (refer to drawing ref P1 Site Plan). Roof water will be taken to soakaways which will need to be designed following the completion of percolation tests.

**2.1.4 Flood Risk**
The site is not located within an area that is shown to be at risk of flooding on the Environment Agency Flood Maps. The works will not affect any watercourses or culverts and will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

**2.1.5 Ecology**
The site has some potential for use by protected species. A Bat Survey has been prepared and a copy of the report is available as part of the application documents. Extensive surveys concluded that 'a single Whiskered bat was roosting somewhere in the barn'. Mitigation for this will be proposed as part of a Method Statement which will be prepared when applying for a Licence to undertake works.

**2.2 Social Context**
The proposed building will have no detrimental effect upon local businesses or residents.

**2.3 Economic Context**
The existing small scale farming activities at Rowling House Farm will continue in more suitable buildings recently constructed adjacent to the farm. The works will have no negative effect upon the economy of the local area. They have the potential to provide short term employment for local builders and trades involved in the construction works.

**2.4 Planning Policy**
The site is located within an area identified on the Barnsley MBC Unitary Development Plan as Green Belt. New Development and the erection of new buildings in the Green Belt is considered to be inappropriate development without exceptional circumstances, however there is provision for the conversion/change of use of existing buildings.

The application is considered against national and local planning policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Barnsley MBC Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

The NPPF under its Core Planning Principals and considerations promote Sustainability, Design, maintaining and promoting the vitality and viability of urban areas, supporting the transition to a low carbon future, taking account of Flood Risk, re-using existing land and buildings, and encouraging the use of renewable energies.

The NPPF policy with regard to development within the Green Belt is addressed in Section 9 paras 79 to 92. The most relevant is para 80 which outline the reasons for including land as Green Belt and para 90 which describe uses that are not inappropriate within the Green Belt:

*80. Green Belt serves five purposes:*
- *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;*
- *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict*

*And other urban land.*

*90. Certain other form of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. This includes:*

- *The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.*

Barnsley Councils LDF Core Strategy Policy, CSP34 Protection of the Green Belt is more general and less explicit than the guidance it replaced in the UDP and therefore the policies outlined in the NPPF are considered to be the most relevant.

**2.4.1 Compliance with Planning Policy**
**Design**
The proposals feature a modest sympathetic design which maintains and enhances the external appearance of the existing building and uses good quality natural materials in-keeping with the local vernacular.

Existing buildings will be retained and converted and new build is limited to the erection of a double garage for Unit 2. This is located within the curtilage of the existing yards and ad-hoc outbuildings with a much larger footprint are being removed.

The two storey barn is in good condition and will convert without the need for significant alterations or structural repair. The single storey outbuilding has been adapthed over the years and at some point the original roof structure has been replaced with a low pitch roof of fibre cement sheets supported by light-weight steel trusses. The works include the reconstruction of the west elevation which is in poor structural condition and the replacement of the roof with a more appropriate steeply pitched roof covered with blue slates. This is much more in keeping with the original roof configuration, more appropriate to the location and improves the external appearance.

Access to Unit 2 is being created through land to the south of the existing buildings. This land has previously been used for miscellaneous storage and farm machinery (see below) and the route of the proposed access drive falls within this land. A native thorn hedge provides a development boundary enclosing rear gardens and providing sufficient private amenity space whilst reducing the extent of encroachment into the green belt.



Fig 2. Aerial view of farm with principal barn to south.

**Sustainability**
Although located in a rural location, the proposals will have sustainable credentials by:

- re-using an existing building that is no longer required for its original purpose;
- adopting air source to provide heating and hot water to minimise co2 emissions;
- incorporating insulation to provide a highly efficient dwelling with minimal heat loss;
- incorporate low energy lighting;
- disposing of foul and surface water on site without connection to sewers;
- utilising locally sourced materials and work force as part of the works where possible.

**Green Belt Policy**
The proposal for change of use of the existing building which is no longer required for its original use and is '*of permanent and substantial construction'* is consistent with National Planning Policy Section 9 para 90 and the works will have no detrimental effect upon the openness of the Green Belt nor does it conflict with the purposes for which land is included within the Green Belt outlined in NPPF Section 9 para 80.

## 3.0 Involvement

The works are of a relatively minor nature and the applicants have had no formal involvement with neighbours. The applicant's agent has had informal discussion with Laura Bibby of the Planning Department prior to submission when the principals of conversion were discussed and agreed as an alternative to the erection of a replacement dwelling on the site.

## 4.0 Evaluation

There are no detrimental Social or Economic issues that would be caused by the proposed development. The change of use of the existing redundant building is consistent with Planning Policy and the design is capable of making a positive contribution to the local setting and maintaining an attractive and substantial stone building for the future. It will also provide two additional good quality homes to assist with the current shortfall in housing stock.

## 5.0 Design

### 5.1 Use
The buildings have previously been used for storage and winter shelter for cattle. New agricultural buildings in the paddock immediately to the south west of farm mean that the barns are no longer required for this purpose and are redundant.
The proposed use is residential.

### 5.2 Amount
The site area including the access is 1506sqm.

The buildings have a gross floor area of:

| **Unit 1 – 4 Beds** | | **Unit 2 – 2 Beds** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ground Floor | 130sqm | Ground Floor | 49sqm |
| First Floor | 63 sqm | First Floor | 49sqm |
| Garage | 34.5sqm | Garage | 31.4sqm |
| **Total** | **253.4sqm** | **Total** | **129.4sqm** |

The total area of new build is limited to the erection of a new build garage to Unit 2, i.e. 31.4sqm. Outbuildings including the lean-to on the north side of the principal barn and ad-hoc buildings to the east (excluding those shown removed as part of application ref 2013/1175) with a floor area of 213.4sqm are to be removed as part of the works which will result in an overall reduction of 182sqm.

**5.3 Layout**
The layout is determined to a great extent by the existing buildings and the access. New build garages to Unit 2 have been located within the built curtilage to minimise any impact upon the wider Green Belt.

**5.4 Scale**
There is minimal variation in terms of scale. The height to eaves and ridge of the principal barn remain unaltered. The height of the single storey outbuilding has been increased but only as necessary to allow the relatively modern, unattractive, low pithed, fibre-cement roof to be replaced with something more appropriate and in keeping with the scale of adjoining buildings.

**5.5 Landscaping**
Hard landscaping includes the provision of a driveway surfaced in free draining gravel; car parking spaces with artificial stone setts and paving with artificial stone flags.
Soft landscaping includes a new boundary hedge which forms the development curtilage to the south and internal dry stone walls to match existing.

Occasional tree planting has been proposed as part of the south and west boundary and further structural planting is considered to be un-necessary.

**5.6 Appearance**
The change of use of the buildings has been carefully designed to help maintain the overall appearance of the buildings.

Areas of stonework requiring repair and areas of new build such as the garages to Unit 2 will be carried out using local stone to match and flush pointed in grit sand mortar.

The principal barn will be roofed in a good quality artificial stone slate. The plans ref P2, indicate the use of Bradstone Old Quarried artificial stone, colour ref green/grey. Roofing to the single storey outbuilding will be in blue slates.

Existing openings have been retained and, where necessary, new openings have been carefully introduced to maintain a semi-random external appearance typical of the vernacular. Windows are set into deep reveals and will be in timber with a dark stain or off white painted finish. Larger openings and doors with timber frames will have dark oak stain finish.

Unit 1 makes use of the roof space at first floor level and the addition of new windows has been kept to a minimum by using conservation style rooflights which would be almost flush to the slope of the roof.

Further details of materials and finishes are referred to on the proposed plans ref P1 Site Plan; and P2 Plans and Elevations.

## 6.0 Access

The site is level and capable of providing 'level approach' in accordance with the requirements of the Building Regulations and includes toilet facilities at the entrance level to both dwellings. Unit 1 however will necessitate internal steps at ground floor level to suit existing site conditions. Unit 2 has been designed to facilitate full wheelchair access with the inclusion of a lift from ground to first floor level.

Both units have double garages with adequate turning and parking areas. Additional overspill/visitor parking is provided to the north of the garage to Unit 1.

The buildings although set back from North Lane are within accessible limits for a fire appliance. The access to North Lane is wide enough for a Fire Appliance to reverse up to 20m from the road at which point the buildings are within the standard 40m hose length.

There is adequate space available for the provision of waste and recycling bins adjacent to the visitor parking provision of bin storage is shown adjacent to the visitor car parking area and waste and recycling bins would be taken to the road for collection avoiding any need for refuse vehicles to access the site.

## 7.0 Summary

The proposals are to make use of attractive, substantial and permanent stone buildings which have become redundant to their original use and provide living accommodation in the form of 2No dwellings. The buildings are to be converted in a sympathetic manner using good quality materials. They have no detrimental effect upon the amenity of neighbours or local residents and preserve the openness of the green belt.

The proposals are in line with national and local planning policy and we look forward to the support of the local planning authority in determining this application.

MBooth Design