DESIGN AND ACCESS/SUPPORTING STATEMENT

location	Erection of Agricultural Building on Land off Dunford Road, Harden, Hade Edge, Holmfirth, HD9
application	Erection of an Agricultural Building
client/applicant	Mr J Lees
job number	22/796
date	May 2022

PAUL MATTHEWS ARCHITECTURAL Ltd

ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING | DESIGN

Malkin Farm
Brow Lane
Holmfirth
HD9 2RJ
07946872499
paul@paulmatthewsarchitectural.co.uk
www.paulmatthewsarchitectural.co.uk

Company Registration Number: 09898149 - Company Registered in England and Wales

INTRODUCTION

This design and access/supporting statement has been prepared to support the full planning application for an agricultural building on Land off Dunford Road, Harden, Hade Edge, Holmfirth.

Accompanying the application are plans of the proposed building with elevations, an ordnance survey location plan indicating the surrounding land owned and farmed by Mr Lees (the applicant), along with existing and proposed block plans illustrating the location of the proposed building.

Mr Joseph Lees is a young farmer with an agreement to purchase the subject land from his father Mr Darren Lees (also a local farmer/dry stone waller). Mr Lees Junior, is intent on continuing the Hade Edge family tradition (3 generations) of farming.

Mr Lees has been organically growing his own farming business and now wishes to take the next step with the erection of his own building to provide early year lambing space and provide autumn/winter housing along with storage for his summer crop of hay bales.

Mr Lees junior has built up his stock or 34 lowland sheep (beltex). These are a softer breed than the traditional Texel cross Charollais sheep but fetch a premium at market, therefore Mr Lees is growing slowly, organically and focusing on a quality end product. Early next year, following lambing, it is expected his flock will increase to circa 96 with many lambs sold on, once weaned, with quality stock retained for his breeding programme.

The farm business has a CPH (county parish holding) number of 49/343/1244.

Mr Lees is an up and coming young farmer, having grown up in a farming family and community, he became a regular at the local young farmers club, attending training courses for sheep shearing, handling and treatment he is well placed to take this next significant step to secure the future for his business and continue the natural growth.

He is in a fortunate position that his father and family support his occupation choice with his father willing to support him with the sale of this land to supplement his other locally rented land (7 acres at Cemetery Road Holmfirth). Naturally Mr Lees wishes to control his own destiny hence the application to erect the building on land that will be within his sole ownership as opposed to rented land where he doesn't necessarily have guaranteed long term security of use of the land.

His beltex sheep, as noted above, are a softer breed than that of Texel cross Charollais ewes. Given the exposure of the application site with no shelter or appropriate housing for lambing significant livestock losses are holding him and his rural business back. The investment of the proposed building will enable him to grow and develop his rural agricultural business.

The beltex can withstand a winter frost and to some degree the cold but the driving wind and rain at this exposed application site is simply too much and results in preventable losses.

Outdoor lambing is not ideal, at the best of times, let alone at this application site in February/March when the weather can still be inclement, harsh and severe, the wind, combined with rain, creates an unmerciful setting that impacts on the business financially.

Mr Lees has been operating as a business since a young age, buying and selling hens and eggs, from the local feather and fur market, then working in the feather and fur market, growing and moving onto sheep. He's grown his stock to current levels and now needs to take a significant step and investment to enable further growth. His business ethic is exemplary, making profit and reinvesting to continue growth, started from pocket money yet now an established holding with significant livestock levels producing a profit.

The land forming part of this application amounts to 6 acres. This land is owned outright with other locally rented land being grazed and cropped by Mr Lees.

Very few farmers lamb outside (none by choice) it is far from ideal with resultant losses impacting on financial viability.

Mr Lees now runs a total of 13 acres. 6 owned outright and a further 7 rented locally.

Mr Lees has no access to an appropriate agricultural business and this is the next step required in order to consolidate and then further grow his rural business.

Without an appropriate agricultural building Mr Lees business will be left with an uncertain future. He will most certainly not be able to grow and will be restricted with continued losses of livestock given the harsh exposure. Mr Lees is showing his commitment and intention here to continue to use the application site, and other rented land, for its appropriate and intended use, agriculture.

Home grown, ethical food should be the future, especially considering the recent and ongoing rise in living costs, Ukraine/Russia conflict causing further issues with food and associated air miles and the transportation of food creating a wider impact.

The world's farming population is growing older. As young people increasingly chose city life, who is going to grow our food? [2] The average British farmer is over 60 [3]. We contend this young man should be supported in his quest to farm and use the land for its intended purpose. Such a use fits in with the National Planning Policy Framework and Barnsley's greenbelt planning policies in keeping land permanently open and protecting the greenbelt.

Naturally the proposed building will have an impact on the openness of the land but it is also a prerequisite for keeping and breeding livestock.

The location of the proposed building has been arrived at considering a number of factors;

- Weather.
- Access (utilising the existing highway access point which has good visibility in both directions).
- Security (not too close to the road but also not too far away that would result in additional engineering operations such as a longer access track to access the building).
- Topography – the application site has few flat areas, a flat-*ish* area has been chosen to reduce the extent of engineering operations and retaining structures.
- Use – the building is sited central to the two fields enabling a thrifty use of the land and ease of segregating stock.

The proposed 30‘ x 45‘ building has been arrived at with the current livestock levels, also factoring in storage of hay and straw. Straw (bedding) will be bought in (its rare straw is cropped locally). Small hay bales can be managed without the need for a tractor which cannot be kept at the application site for security reasons. Both hay and straw will be brought into the building in summer to provide supplement winter feed and bedding with the hay and straw also being used at lambing time when pens will be formed within the building as indicated to help streamline the process and reduce livestock losses associated with outdoor lambing.

As indicated on the well planned out building circa 350 small bales can be stored within and 24 round bales of straw, this should provide adequate feed and bedding for a full calendar year. When hay and straw is at its optimum levels, only 16 pens at 2m x 1m can be erected with a small area of circulation space between to enable swift turnout once checked over, tagged and ringed with other ewes coming in to take over pens, this will require a streamlined approach to ensure productivity.

The building has been kept as low as possible to enable tractor access for bringing large (round) bales in and also mucking out.

A pre-requisite of livestock farming (and legal requirement on animal welfare grounds) is the requirement of an appropriate livestock building.

The proposed building as indicated on the proposed plan will house both hay and straw ($28m^2$ +$19m^2$). This leaves circa $75m^2$ for livestock but naturally the entrance area needs to be kept clear as driving rain will access this gated area and movement/circulation space also need to be allowed for, we contend this brings the functional space down to circa $50m^2$.

Livestock Welfare requirements are a legal responsibility. There are various publications referring to livestock and their requirements. The code of Recommendations for the welfare of livestock (sheep) produced by defra [1] clearly states the various legal requirements, codes, standards and regulations relating to farmed livestock.

The welfare of sheep is considered within a framework, elaborated by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, and known as the ‘Five Freedoms’. These form a logical basis for the assessment of welfare within any system, together with the actions necessary to safeguard welfare within the constraints of an efficient livestock industry. The five freedoms are;

1. freedom from hunger and thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;

2. freedom from discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;

3. freedom from pain, injury or disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;

4. freedom to express normal behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals’ own kind;

5. freedom from fear and distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment to avoid mental suffering.

The same document goes on to provide details specifically with regards to space allowances as follows;

- Animals kept in buildings shall not be kept without an appropriate period of rest from artificial lighting.

114 The law requires that fixed or portable lighting be available so that sheep kept in buildings can be thoroughly inspected at any time.

115 Throughout the hours of daylight, the level of indoor lighting, natural or artificial, should be such that all housed sheep can be seen clearly by the shepherd.

Space allowances

116 The space allowance and group size for housed sheep should be determined according to age, size and class of livestock. Some examples of current good practice, with adequate ventilation and well-bedded on straw indoors, are set out below.

Category of sheep	Space
Lowland ewes (60-90 kg live weight)	1.2-1.4 m² floor space per ewe during pregnancy
Lowland ewes after lambing with lambs at foot up to six weeks of age	2.0-2.2 m² floor space per ewe and lambs
Hill ewes (45-65 kg live weight)	1.0-1.2 m² floor space per ewe during pregnancy
Hill ewes after lambing, with lambs at foot up to six weeks of age	1.8–2.0 m² floor space per ewe and lambs
Lambs up to 12 weeks old	0.5–0.6 m² floor space per lamb
Lambs and sheep 12 weeks to 12 months old	0.75–0.9 m² floor space per lamb/sheep
Rams	1.5–2.0 m²

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69365/pb5162-sheep-041028.pdf (pg 21).

As noted earlier in this statement the current flock size of 34 ewes (lowland sheep) requires 1.2 – 1.4m^2 per ewe during pregnancy (the ewes will be pregnant over autumn/winter when housed to prevent loss of condition/exposure to the harsh weather) NB sheep have a gestation period of circa 144 – 152 days. This equates to 47.6m^2 floor space being required for overwintering 34 ewes (34 x 1.4m^2).

The realistic useable internal floor space factoring in keeping the entrance/gateway clear (for access and expected slight weather ingress) is 50m^2. This space will increase slightly as hay and straw is used creating more internal floor space but as the plans indicate only 16 lambing pens are possible based upon a full stocking density of hay and straw (in an ideal world 34 lambing pens would be created but this would require a significantly larger building).

Indoor lambing will be carried out around late February/early March and dependent upon strength and weather conditions ewes and lambs will be turned out.

Some weaker lambs and cade lambs will need to be kept inside and hand reared before being turned out.

We contend that the proposed building is modest in relation to the land holding and livestock levels at the application site, not to mention the other rented land (that has no buildings).

Mr Lees farm business and application site has no other buildings or appropriate facilities. To enable the business to consolidate then grow again naturally, this building is a genuine requirement to prevent unnecessary/preventable losses of livestock.

The building, in agricultural terms, is not large. Its design is consistent with modern day agricultural buildings, a portal frame structure with low level blockwork or concrete panels with profiled sheeting above, with a profiled sheeted roof. Adequate ventilation will be provided via the stock gate, with gale breaker screen over and roof apex vents to enable and promote cross flow ventilation.

Whilst a lot of thought and consideration has gone into the genuine requirements and space planning of the proposed agricultural building it does create a flexible layout to suit all farming seasons. The location of the hay and straw enables easy access for stacking within the building and also access as and when required for ad-lib feeding and bedding/topping up bedding.

The entrance will enable agricultural machinery to easily manoeuvre directly into the building, when unloading hay or straw and for mucking out at turning out time following the completion of lambing.

The building will simplify general farming practices such as shearing, foot treatments , other veterinary treatments, lambing, tagging, pens, segregation, etc, etc.

The large gale-breaker screen above the gated opening will allow sufficient ventilation to the building.

The materials and location, in particular has been considered at an early stage to try and ensure minimal impact to the greenbelt setting and to ensure the open outlook and visual amenity is retained.

The existing dry stone wall to the rear is to be retained, providing some element of weather protection but also assisting in partly masking the building from the rear.

The topography has been utilised to also reduce the impact and massing of the proposed building from Dunford Road. The proposed building and simple roof design/slope ensure the building follows the land levels therefore assisting in reducing the massing and impact. When viewed from a distance the building will not be prominent with the backdrop of rough moorland beyond.

The green profiled sheeting is common on other local agricultural buildings and will help the building blend in with the landscape.

We contend the proposed location is the most suitable, being alongside the dry stone wall, partly recessed into the hillside, away from the public highway and away from the overhead power lines (which are due to be removed).

The building is located a significant distance from Winscar reservoir which will assist in preventing pollution and contamination issues.

The agricultural building will be accessed via the existing roadside gated access and track, therefore preventing the requirement for additional extensive cut and fill engineering works to access the building.

This application is not a prior notification given it will be used for livestock and is located within 400m of protected buildings.

The building has been designed to ensure the size is kept to a minimum.

POLLUTION AND NOISE CONTROL

Whilst the proposed agricultural building is within 400m of other protected buildings it is a good distance away, considering the exposure and continued use of the land for livestock purposes and space separation, this should ensure no noise or smell pollution is caused.

The use of the land is not subject to change as a result of this application. Livestock have grazed this land for a number of years.

When the stock is turned out in spring the building will be mucked out with the resultant muck spread on the land the following winter. This acts as a natural fertiliser for the land assisting with hay making the following summer.

Defra standards require field heaps must not be;

- within 10m of surface water (including ditches) or of a land drain,
- within 50m of a spring, well or borehole,
- on land likely to become waterlogged, or
- on land likely to flood.

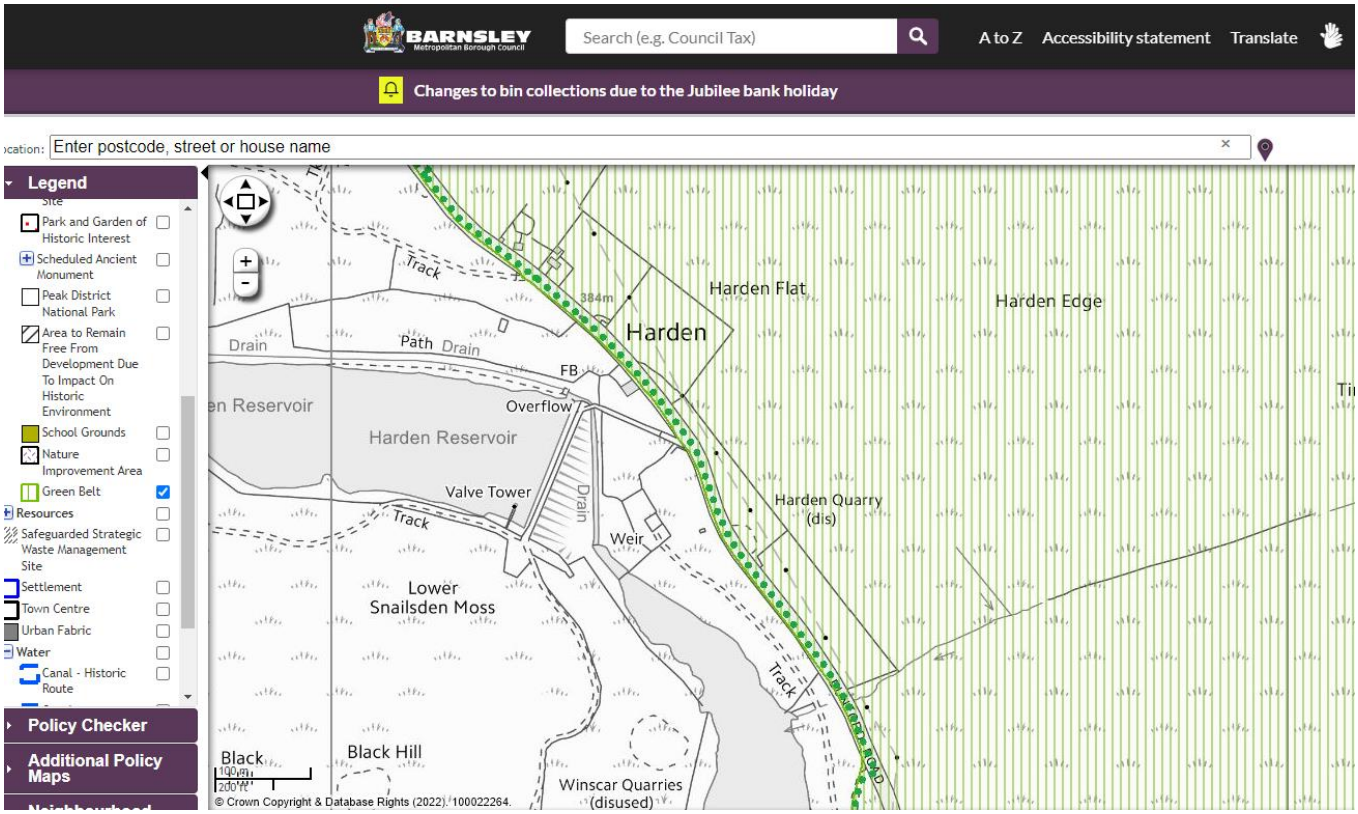
Piles must also;

- move any field heap at least every twelve months,
- leave a 2 year gap before returning to the same site, and
- keep a record of the sites used for field heaps, and the dates of use.

This site is more than large enough to easily and practically comply with the above and ensure no pollution or insect nuisance is caused to the nearest dwellings.

PLANNING POLICY

The site is allocated as greenbelt on the adopted local plan, the site is also allocated as a site of Biodiversity or Geological interest (omitted for clarity).



The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) states, at paragraph 89, that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are: Buildings for agriculture and forestry

The local plan states "*All such buildings still have to be considered in terms of their impact on the openness of the Green Belt and whether they cause other harm.*" We contend this application has considered the landscape and impact on the openness of the greenbelt with an appropriate location, short/squat building and use of appropriate materials.

Local Plan Policy BI01 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity states

"*Development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough by:*

Protecting and improving habitats, species, sites of ecological value and sites of geological value with particular regard to designated wildlife and geological sites of international, national and local significance, ancient woodland and species and habitats of principal importance identified via Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (for list of the species and habitats of principal importance) and in the Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan.

Maximising biodiversity and geodiversity opportunities in and around new developments.

Conserving and enhancing the form, local character and distinctiveness of the boroughs natural assets such as the river corridors of the Don, the Dearne and Dove as natural floodplains and important strategic wildlife corridors.

Proposals will be expected to have followed the national mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate) which is used to evaluate the impacts of a development on biodiversity interest.

Protecting ancient and veteran trees where identified.

Encouraging provision of biodiversity enhancements.

Development which may harm a biodiversity or geological feature or habitat, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, will not be permitted unless effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures can be ensured.

Development which adversely effects a European Site will not be permitted unless there is no alternative option and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI)."

With regards to the biodiversity and ecological interest allocation of the site we contend the proposals have minimal impact. There are no trees on site – partly owing to the actual exposure very few trees would survive or thrive the harsh elements this application site endures.

Naturally some ground works form part of the proposals (foundations and floor slab) but these have been proposed to a virgin flat part of the site away from previously quarried areas and also away form the piles of quarry waste that provides a habitat for many species. Whilst the grassland offers a habitat for species it is already grazed so no impact is expected as a result of the proposed continued agricultural use. Taking these factors into account we don't consider any ecological mitigation necessary, normally bird nesting boxes would be proposed but we consider these inappropriate for the location and exposure. Naturally we are happy to discuss further if deemed necessary.

Section 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) of the NPPF (national planning policy framework) states "*Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.*"

Section 6 goes on to state (under heading “supporting a prosperous rural economy”)

“*84. Planning policies and decisions should enable: a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;……*”

We contend that this well thought out application indicates that the proposed building is a genuine requirement for the purposes of agriculture and a rural business.

Whilst one may consider the proposed building is isolated, the demonstrated reasons for such are provided. This land simply cannot be farmed appropriately and economically without an appropriate agricultural building. Furthermore, agricultural buildings, specifically livestock buildings, ideally should be located away from nearby residential properties, this in itself can lead to isolated buildings.

Taking into account the semi-rural/isolated location, steps have been taken within the design, location and materials to reduce the impact. The applicant is willing to consider alternative materials if deemed necessary.

There will be no detriment to the amenity of any nearby residents by reason of noise or odour or any other reason; and the resultant development is of a standard of design and materials appropriate to its green belt setting as reflected with other nearby agricultural buildings.

Permitting this building will ensure the long term security of Mr Lees agricultural business for the long term future.

Pollution (noise and odour) has been considered as part of this proposal. We contend given the exposure, space separation and difference in levels that no pollution or noise control issues will be caused as a result of this proposal.

The design is based upon the requirement of the business, land holding and livestock levels. To ensure safe and ease of use in providing a building that is fit for purpose but as small as practically possible.

We consider the proposed materials and colours are suited to the setting, common on similar rural agricultural buildings and go a long way to ensure minimal impact on the setting. We are, however, willing to discuss materials and colours further with Local Authority planning officers if required.

CONCLUSION

In further support of this application we add: -

- The subject of this full planning application is for the construction of an agricultural building, principally for livestock, lambing and overwinter shelter along with the storage of round straw bales (bedding) and small hay bales (feed). Both these straw and hay bales will be unwrapped bales and as such cannot be stored externally.

- The total area of the proposed agricultural building is 140 square metres.

- The application site is sited on land that has been used for livestock/farming purposes and is owned by the applicant's family.

- This land forms part of an agricultural business with a registered Farm Holding (CPH No 49/343/1244). The Registered Holding is 2.4 hectares. The overall holding totals 13 acres/5.2 hectares (6 acres owned outright and 7 acres rented).

- The subject site, and associated rented land, is used all year round for grazing (sheep) along with hay making, as the livestock levels increase it is likely hay making of the land will cease with the land simply grazed and bales will be bought in at harvest time direct from the field of other local farms.

- This location is considered the most appropriate location away from natural watercourses, nearby reservoirs and steeply sloping land. This location serves well to reduce the impact and overall massing of the building from all viewpoints. This proposed location is circa 220meters from the nearest residential property with a significant difference in levels.

- The site features, specifically access and topography, have also been considered when determining the most appropriate location. This proposal does not constitute harsh skyline development.

- The location of the proposed building is significant in relation to security, vandalism and arson. Many other local Holme Valley farms have very recently suffered a spate of theft/vandalism. This location, we feel, provides a relatively secure location whilst being fit for purpose and ensuring minimal impact on the location.

- The parcel of land which the application relates to far exceeds 1 hectare (2.4 hectares).

- There are <u>no other</u> agricultural buildings on this (owned) land or the overall holding (other rented land). In any case erecting an agricultural building on the other rented land is not an option.

- The proposed agricultural building, sited on land within the applicants family ownership, is essential to safeguard the future of this agricultural business. To lamb externally results in more losses causing an unnecessary negative financial burden to the business. The beltex sheep cannot be overwintered externally due to the harsh exposure without condition and sometimes stock losses. Naturally this reduces the functional economic enterprise of the farm business. Furthermore an appropriate building is required to enable the safe handling of livestock to segregate and create pens internally for lambing sheep. It is wholly reasonable to require the construction of a suitable farm building to facilitate the functioning of the farm business.

- It will be noted that a key characteristic of this location is the predominance of agricultural buildings throughout the landscape. The sporadic development of older and more modern farm buildings and farmsteads can also be seen in the very immediate locality, therefore, we contend, this proposal will not be out of character or keeping with the surrounding area and the character and appearance of the countryside.

- The appearance of the proposed building has been designed to be in keeping with other nearby modern agricultural buildings with a form and scale appropriate for the use, livestock levels and land holding of the business. The building has also been located adjacent to a dry stone retaining wall, this provides shelter to the building but also ensures the building is not prominent or overbearing from any viewpoints.

- The location has been arrived at to ensure no pollution and noise control issues are unduly caused to the nearby residential buildings.

- The proposed location is a good distance between the nearest residential property. The buildings location/position, slightly recessed into the existing landform, with the backdrop of the moorland to the North East also ensures the building will not appear out of place nor out of keeping with the character of the countryside in this area.

The openness of the greenbelt and visual amenity has been heavily considered in determining what we consider to be the most appropriate location for the building, we are however open to discussions with Local Authority Planning Officers.

Barnsley's Local plan states "*Most of Barnsley's countryside is Green Belt. With the changes proposed in this Local Plan to take land out of the Green Belt, primarily for development needs, the Green Belt will still account for almost 75% of the borough (The Green Belt in the last development plan proposals map, the UDP, amounted to 77% of the Borough). Further details can be found about proposed Green Belt release in the introduction section under 'our approach'. The Green Belt will continue to fulfill it's longstanding role in the Borough of helping to conserve the natural environment by restraining development and assisting in the process of urban renaissance. National guidance in the NPPF sets out some uses which are generally acceptable in the Green Belt.*"

We contend this supporting statement indicates compliance with the above paragraph/extract from the local plan providing clear clarification to enable this application to be supported.

Naturally should the Local Authority Planning Department require any further information please contact Paul Matthews Architectural. We respectfully ask for contact from the case officer prior to the formal determination of this application.

APPENDIX A

SITE PHOTOS





















