

**Proposed Alterations to Redundant Agricultural Buildings &
Farmhouse To Form 7 Dwellings & Garage Buildings,
At Blacker Grange Farm, Barnsley Road, Blacker Hill.**

This report has been prepared by Simon M Elliott (Dip URP) of S.E.A. Planning Limited. The purpose of this report is to support the proposed development, as described above, at Blacker Granger Farm, off Barnsley Road, Blacker Hill.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the relevant considerations and benefits of the proposed development, in planning terms. This report is to support the application for Planning Permission that is submitted by Garry Greetham Associates for the above-mentioned development and is to be considered along with that planning application.
- 1.2 This report takes account of the current status of Blacker Granger Farm, its outbuildings and its surroundings. Account has also been taken of the current Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, where they relate to the allocation of the site and surrounding area within the Green Belt and to the conversion of buildings in such areas into residential units.
- 1.3 This report also takes account of other material planning considerations that are believed to be relevant to the proposed development or may have some influence on the Council's decisions on this planning application. These include the architectural and historical merits of the buildings in question and the Government's current advice, as contained in PPG2, where it relates to the conversion of buildings in the Green Belt to dwelling units.

2. Site & Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site of the proposed development is at Blacker Grange Farm, which is located off Barnsley Road, along a private access road to the southern side of Blacker Hill. The buildings are set well back from Barnsley Road and are barely visible from that road. The site is comprised of the redundant farmhouse itself, together with a number of associated buildings, including a number of single-storey and two-storey barns. There is also a large detached modern agricultural building adjacent to the farmyard, which is to be removed as an integral part of the overall redevelopment of this site.
- 2.2 The buildings on this site have a variety of external facing materials, but the predominant material is natural stone, with some areas of brickwork as well. There is also a variety of roofing materials, with the predominant material being corrugated sheeting, with slates on some roof slopes as well. The majority of the buildings on the farm are faced with natural stone and this external finish is to be retained as part of the proposed works. Any alterations and improvements to the existing buildings will also be carried out using natural stone to match the existing. It is also proposed to replace all of the corrugated roofing sheets with slates, which will clearly improve the character and appearance of the buildings on this site. Full details of the external materials will be agreed with the Council before any works are commenced.
- 2.3 There is a long established access road, which serves the site and adjacent land. The access that serves the site is already predominantly hard surfaced but can, if necessary, be upgraded as part of the proposed development. This can be made a condition of a planning permission if deemed to be necessary by the Council, however, it is not thought that this will be necessary as part of this particular proposal.
- 2.4 The application site is surrounded by open countryside, with a number of individual dwellings close by. There are also a number of mature and semi-mature trees and hedgerows in close proximity to the site.

3. Outline of Proposals

- 3.1 The development, as proposed, involves the removal of a number of unsightly buildings and structures from the scenic Green Belt location. These include a large double spanned agricultural building to the rear of the site, a large hard surfaced open yard and the steel posts and timber sleepers that enclose that yard. A large steel silo and circular corrugated storage structure will also be permanently removed.
- 3.2 The proposed works also include the conversion of the remaining buildings on the site into a total of 7 dwelling units with a number of garages as well. The majority of the existing barns are in good structural condition and the proposed alterations to the barns will include a number of different elements. However, the main buildings will remain largely unaltered, and the existing openings will, in the main, be retained in situ.
- 3.3 The external appearance of the barns to be converted will retain their original character and only a limited number of additional openings are proposed to be inserted into the walls of the existing buildings. The roofing materials will be agreed with the Council before any works are commenced and all external walling will be constructed from natural stone to match the existing in type, colour and coursing.
- 3.4 The proposed development represents the renovation of a number of traditional stone buildings that have been disused for a number of years now and should be renovated before they fall into a state of disrepair. Some areas of the site do need some rebuilding works to be carried out but it is not considered that these works would represent a significant percentage of the overall development. The principle of the proposed development is, therefore, considered to be acceptable.
- 3.5 This proposal also includes the construction of three garages on the site of an existing building, together with the formation of garage spaces within the confines of the existing buildings to serve the adjacent dwellings.

4. Planning Policy & Other Material Considerations

- 4.1 It is considered that the following UDP Policies are, in some way, relevant to the proposed development:

Policy GS7, which relates to development in the green belt.

Policy GS8, which relates to the construction of new buildings within the green belt.

Policy GS8A, which relates specifically to the re-use and adaptation of buildings in the green belt.

Policy GS9, which refers to the protection of the visual amenity of the green belt.

Policy BE6, which refers to standards of design to be incorporated into new developments.

- 4.2 The following Central Government Guidance Notes or Statements are also considered to be relevant to the proposed development:

PPS1 relating to Delivering Sustainable Development;

PPG2 relating to development within Green Belt areas;

PPS7 relating to Sustainable Development in Rural Areas;

- 4.3 As an introduction to this statement in support of the proposed development it is considered that this proposal will have a beneficial, rather than a detrimental impact on the openness and the visual amenity of the Green Belt. For the sake of clarification it is understood that the buildings on this site are not Listed Buildings and they are not located within a Conservation Area. No trees will be lost or need to be lopped or topped as a result of the proposed development and the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of any local residents. It is also considered that this proposal will not have an adverse impact on the interests of highway safety. The existing access drive is considered to be of sufficient width but if any passing places need to be provided they can be accommodated with the agreement of the applicants.

- 4.4 In terms of the Policy considerations of this proposal it is considered that the development is consistent with the Council's Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, as referred to above. The buildings are considered to be structurally sound and are generally capable of being converted without the need for substantial alterations. The development will not adversely affect the character or the visual amenity of the Green Belt but will be viewed as an enhancement of the area. The proposed alterations are architecturally consistent with the existing buildings in all respects and the curtilage of the development is limited to the boundaries of the original farm.

- 4.5 It is also considered that the proposed alterations to the buildings to form residential units on the site are the best way of retaining and enhancing the character and appearance of these buildings. The Council's own policies, as referred to above, together with the advice contained in PPG2 and PPS7 allow for the conversion of existing buildings to form dwellings within the Green Belt. PPG2 makes it clear that converting existing buildings, where no material alterations or extensions to the building are needed to make it habitable, does not represent an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt. The buildings are all large enough to form individual dwellings without having to be extended or materially altered. The roof pitches do not need to be changed on the buildings and the roof coverings will be replaced with new roof coverings to improve the appearance of the buildings. It is also considered that the insertion of the windows and doors in the buildings, as proposed, will clearly not be detrimental to the area.
- 4.6 The proposed development is for the creation of a number of additional dwellings on a long established farmstead, which are within the confines of an existing group of buildings. This proposal will not be detrimental to the openness, visual amenity or character of the Green Belt or the countryside. The windows and doors and rainwater goods will be consistent with this rural area, with details being agreed with the LPA before works are commenced. The main consideration for the Council regarding this proposal is whether the development will accord with the provisions of the UDP. It is clear from a perusal of the relevant UDP Policies, together with the advice contained in PPG2 that this development will not be contrary to any of the 5 purposes of including land in green belts.
- 4.7 It is also argued that the proposed development will comply fully with the requirements of Paragraphs 3.7 to 3.9 of PPG2. These paragraphs advise that: "With suitable safeguards, the re-use of buildings should not prejudice the openness of Green Belts, since the buildings are already there. It can help to secure the continuing stewardship of land, especially by assisting farmers in diversifying their enterprises, and may contribute to the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts. The alternative to re-use may be a building that is left vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction."
- 4.8 Paragraph 3.8 advises that the re-use of buildings inside a Green Belt is not inappropriate development subject to a number of provisos. There are 4 provisos, which require that a proposal does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the green belt and the purposes of including land in it. Also that strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building, such as extensive external storage, hardstanding or car parking, walls or fences, none of which are applicable in this case. The buildings are also required to be of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and the form, bulk and design of the building(s) are in keeping with its surroundings, which these buildings clearly are.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 In conclusion it is my opinion that the proposed conversion of the barns in question to form a number of dwelling units, together with the renovation of the existing dwelling represents as acceptable form of development in the Green Belt. The buildings are substantial buildings with a number of attractive features. It is considered that the changes to the appearance of these buildings, including the removal of a large building and a number of other structures from the site, will not have a material impact on the openness or the visual amenity of the Green Belt. Quite the opposite, it is felt that this development will represent an attractive addition to this part of the Green Belt. It is also considered that this proposal will not be contrary to any of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
- 5.2 It is clear that this proposal will not be materially detrimental to the character or the openness of the Green Belt. The access to the site already exists and the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the interests of highway safety. As viewed from outside the site the appearance of the buildings will remain generally as they are at present, except for the removal of the large structures from the site and the re-roofing of the buildings to give a more traditional appearance.
- 5.3 The construction of an additional small building for garaging purposes is not considered to represent an unacceptable form of development in this location. The overall effect of the new development will represent a reduction in the impact on the openness on the Green Belt and an improvement to the visual amenity of the locality.
- 5.4 The Council is respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development in the interests of the preservation of the original buildings on this site and the character and openness of the Green Belt.