

Design and Access Statement

This statement has been prepared in support of a single planning application for development at Low Laithes Village Wombwell.

The proposals include the following works:

- Site A - Erection of residential block containing 6No one bedroom residential living units together with communal and staff facilities and a plant room.
- Site B - Change of Use and extension of Central Kitchens to 2No one bedroom residential living units and associated external works.
- Site C - Erection of 2No detached two bedroom residential units to provide accommodation for visiting families and friends.
- Site D - Erection of 2No detached two bedroom residential units to provide Respite Accommodation.
- Site E - Extension of existing workshop/maintenance building to provide additional storage.
- Site F - Realignment of access road and improvements to existing parking arrangements.

A Key Plan identifying each proposal is included at Appendix A.

1.0 Background Information

1.1 The Applicant - Hesley Group

The Hesley Group are a long established provider of high quality education and care services to children and young adults with complex needs, severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour, arising mainly from Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

The Company began to operate from Hesley Hall Nr Tickhill, Doncaster in 1975 and established a well-reputed service in provision of residential care for children with various behavioural difficulties. During the early 1990s, and in direct response to a significantly increased demand from local authorities for these more specialised services, Hesley Group began to focus increasingly upon developing care services in South Yorkshire for younger people with severe autistic disorders.

Gaining an increasingly acknowledged expertise in this field, Hesley Group embarked on an extensive redevelopment programme to provide residential schools and homes for the more complex cases which saw the opening of further special schools at Wilsic Hall at Wadworth and at Fullerton House, a converted hospital at Dovenby. These schools provided single bedroom accommodation for 36 and 46 children and young people respectively in small living groups together with all associated classrooms, recreational and therapy facilities.

The Hesley Group have prepared a statement which is included as part of this application and provides further background information and details of the services and care that they provide.

1.2 Low Laithes Village

Laithes Village was originally a dairy farm with a farmhouse, a range of stone buildings, and extensive agricultural sheds. The site is accessed via a private road and surrounded by open countryside and agricultural land.



Fig 1 – Low Laithes Village viewed from South West.

It was purchased by the Hesley Group and following an extensive re-development of the site including the restoration of existing buildings, conversions and erection of new buildings, it was registered and began to provide residential care services in 2007.

Today the Village complex includes a mixed range of flats and bungalows with a total registered capacity of 30 residential places. On site facilities include a village hall for general activities and indoor sports; an area providing residents with the opportunity to learn activities for daily living (ADL) including basic laundry, catering and domestic tasks; an activities suite with provision for IT work; a pottery kiln and an arts room; a dedicated area for horticulture including a poly-tunnel, planting beds; an internal potting room/activity area and a workshop used for storage repairs and maintenance.

There is increasing demand for the specialist services that Hesley provides and a need to increase capacity to provide care on a long term and temporary (respite) basis and this is addressed as part of these proposals. Hesley Group have a national catchment and many families have to travel significant distances to visit relatives without any current provision for on-site temporary accommodation which is also to be addressed as part of the application.



Fig 2 – Typical arrangement of original and more recent buildings set within compact courtyards offering living space and communal facilities.

Low Laithes Village is ideally suited to provide the type of care offered by the Hesley Group and required by its residents. It provides an ideal, discrete and characterful setting which will no doubt have contributed to its popularity and success since it was established in 2007.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 Physical Context

Access to Low Laithes Village is via a private road 'Old Farm Lane' which is a single width road with passing places. It is a third of a mile from the junction with Barnsley Road to the south.

The currently developed site has an area of 1.93 Ha and is located within open countryside surrounded by agricultural land. There is a fairly consistent gradient across the site from the high point at the north to the south such that the buildings at the rear of the site (north) are set down into existing ground levels by 2 to 3 metres. A topographical survey has been prepared and a copy is included as part of the application documents.

A photographic survey of each of the areas of the site that will be subject to development proposals and a copy is included as part of the application documents.

The existing buildings are predominantly constructed of natural stone with slate and concrete tiled roofs. Original buildings which date from the late 19C including the old farmhouse and barns and newer buildings interlink and are arranged in a series of compact courtyards dominated by the buildings which create enclosure. They are consistent with the

local vernacular and their farming origins and provide communal garden spaces within the central courts as well as private rear gardens.



Fig 3 – Typical courtyard setting of single storey living units.

To the north of the site there are a number of steel framed buildings which accommodate workspaces for horticulture, a general storage and maintenance building and a bio-mass village heating system.

2.2 Social Context

The proposals for further development at Low Laithes Village are unlikely to have any significant effect on the wider community in the Wombwell area. The most noticeable change is likely to be a minor increase in traffic movements due to increases in staff numbers.

2.3 Economic Context

The Hesley Group at Low Laithes Village currently employs 150 staff of which 125 are carers with the remainder admin, cleaners, and catering and maintenance staff.

A high ratio of staff to residents is reflective of the complex and demanding nature of this work with the young people / residents. Care staff are on duty 24 hours of every day, 365 days of every year. This involves the operation of several duty teams for each group of residents. The work is often of a highly personal nature requiring a minimum of one staff member (sometimes more) caring for one resident at any given time. The majority of staff are employed to work on a rotating shift system of days and afternoons with some working on a separate night shift pattern.

It is anticipated that the proposals to provide 8No living units and 2No respite care units will generate the need for 50No additional staff made up primarily of carers as well as catering, cleaning and maintenance staff.

The development has the potential to provide opportunities for local people to find employment at Low Laithes Village as well as provide additional opportunities for other specialist suppliers of products and services.

In addition the works will generate jobs for the construction industry which will also help provide funds to the local economy.

2.4 Planning Policy

Low Laithes Village is located within land allocated as Green Belt on the Barnsley MBC Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.

The case for limited infilling development which is appropriate within the Green Belt is addressed in a separate planning statement a copy of which has been provided as part of the application documents.

3.0 Involvement

Informal pre-application discussions have taken place with Joe Jenkinson of Barnsley MBC Development Control. The result of those discussions were outlined in an email received From Mr Jenkinson on 22.04.2014;

‘Afternoon Mark,

Further to our meeting last week I can confirm the following:

As long as the scheme would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it, could be considered limited infilling of a previously developed site. This means it would not be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt and as such, you would not have to demonstrate very special circumstances. Based on the information provided, I’m satisfied that the proposal would not result in encroachment into the countryside and it does not conflict with any of the other purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Given the limited building heights, the new structures would be viewed in the context of the existing development and as such, I don’t consider that they would have a greater impact on openness. On this basis, I’m of the opinion that the scheme would not conflict with Green Belt policy.

The only other potential issue relates to the narrow width of the lane approaching the site. The proposal would generate additional vehicular movements to and from the site and on this basis, highways have suggested you look to incorporate additional passing places. They have suggested locating on the longest stretches between existing passing places. Other than this, they would be unlikely to raise any objections.

Please note that these comments are provided on an informal basis without prejudice to the outcome of any subsequent application.

Regards

Joe Jenkinson

Group Leader (Inner Area)

Development Management

Development Service BMBC’’

The Hesley Group and their agent have designed alterations and new buildings as low rise structures integrated with and alongside existing buildings to limit any adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt as infill development; further details are included in Section 5 – Design.

4.0 Evaluation

Careful consideration has been given to the integration of new development within and around the existing buildings at Low Laithes Village. There are areas of the site which lend themselves to development consistent with the existing arrangement of buildings and where low rise single storey buildings can be integrated within the curtilage of the existing development without extending beyond the previously developed area, and without detrimental effect on the wider Green Belt and/or the amenity of existing residents.

The addition of new living units requires a proportionate increase in communal and staff facilities which are included together with additional storage and parking provision. This is further examined in Section 5 – Design.

4.1 Environmental Assessment

A Phase 2 Site Investigation Report has been prepared by Eastwood and Partners and a copy has been included as part of the application documents. The following is a brief summary of the findings:

- Made ground within some areas up to a maximum of 1.5m deep.
- Unreinforced strip or trench fill foundations should be adequate.
- Buried structures such as old foundations and underground tanks may be present within previously developed parts of the site (car park).
- No Radon or ground gas precautions are required.
- No significant concentrations of contaminants were found in top soils or natural ground.
- A 300mm capping layer is required over made ground in landscaped areas.
- A localised hydrocarbon hotspot was encountered under the proposed car park area and the landscaping in the car park is to have a 300mm capping layer. Further remedial works are considered unnecessary as long as the site remains a car park.
- Based upon chemical test results sulphate precautions will be required in below ground concrete.

4.2 Drainage and Flood Risk

A Drainage and Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared by Stevenson Associates and a copy of the report is enclosed as part of the application documents.

Foul drainage is currently by gravity to a pumping station located adjacent to Old Farm Lane approximately 150m south of Low Laithes Village. It collects at a pumping station and is taken via a rising main to existing public sewers 350m to the south west adjacent to the junction between Old Farm Lane and Barnsley Road.

Surface Water Drainage is currently collected from the site and discharges to a local watercourse via a balancing pond and hydro-brake flow control system. The existing installation has been assessed and is sufficient to accommodate any additional surface water drainage from the proposals.

Flood Risk

The report states that:

'Although the site is not within an area known to flood, water from the site does drain to a susceptible area and it is therefore critical that the flows from this development remains at the current level, as proposed.'

Climate change has been taken into account as part of the drainage design to ensure that no increased rate of surface water discharge will result from the proposals.

4.3 Protected Flora - Trees and Hedges

The development site areas are devoid of mature planting. There is a small amount of peripheral planting and some semi-mature trees planting adjacent to the main entrance which is close to the site for the Respite Care Units. The existing trees and hedges are however unaffected by the works.

There is an immature Sycamore Tree adjacent to Visitor Accommodation B which is referred to and Drawing P1 Site Plan within 4.5m of the proposed building – Tree is the left of those in the image below.



Fig 4 – Sycamore Trees to eastern boundary.

The tree is located at the top of an embankment 2.5m above the floor level of the proposed building and due to the difference in levels should be unaffected by the proposals. There are no proposals to remove the tree although its removal would not be significant and could be mitigated by replacement planting.

4.5 Ecology - Protected Species

The majority of the works involve the erection of new buildings on land within the existing development boundaries which does not provide habitat for protected species.

The only existing buildings to be altered or converted are a small steel framed workshop and a single storey commercial kitchen with a roof space occupied by mechanical extraction and air conditioning. Both buildings were newly constructed around 2006 and have negligible potential for use by bats or owls. Refer to Photographic Survey for details.

There is a wildlife pond to the south east of Low Laithes Village which is used for balancing surface water which will be retained without any alteration.

The proposals include for the installation of cavity bat boxes such as the Schwegler Bat Tube ref 1FR similar to the one shown below, to be located at high level to gable walls to help improve and encourage biodiversity within the site.



Drawing No P1 Site Plan shows the proposed locations of 3No bat boxes located at high level on the gable end walls of Units 6, R2 and Visitor B.

Fig 5.
Schwegler 1FR
Bat Tube

5.0 Design

5.1 Use

The overall use of the existing site which provides residential care and learning will remain unchanged. The application contains a number of proposals for additional accommodation, communal/staff facilities, storage/maintenance space and additional car parking.

Accommodation in the form of a communal kitchen/dining area and a sitting/activities room has been included within a new central living block (Site A) so that young are encouraged towards a more independent and self-sufficient lifestyle within an environment where they can continue to practise and experience positive risk-taking to gain the living skills, allowing them to progress gradually, wherever appropriate, into a less closely supported and more independent setting.

As they progress and develop their skills there is a need for them to move into more "normalised" settings with the ultimate goal of eventually moving towards a life closer to or within the wider community.

5.2 Amount

Low Laithes Village currently occupies a site area of 1.93 Hectares.

The proposals are as follows:

- Site A – 1364m²
Erection of residential block containing 6No one bedroom residential living units together with communal and staff facilities and a plant room.
 - Within the block there are 4No 1 Bed living units, 2 3 5 and 6 at 45.8m²; Unit 1 is designed to offer accommodation for the physically disabled and has a floor area of 58.1m²; and Unit 4 has a floor area of 52.3m².
 - There is a staff area with an office which has a floor area of 7.7m² and a staff rest room 13.2m².
 - There is a communal kitchen/dining room 16.8m², and a sitting/activities room 19.2m². Adjacent to this there are disabled toilet and assisted bathroom facilities.
 - There is a detached Plant Room, 19m², which will control heating and hot water which is currently provided via a district heating system powered by a bio-mass boiler located within ancillary buildings at the rear of the site with oil fired boiler back-up.
- Site B – 344m²
Change of Use and extension of central Kitchens to form 2No one bedroom residential living units and associated external works.
 - The existing building is single storey and has a floor area of 79.5m². The proposal involves the construction of an extension to increase the floor area by 28.3m² which represents 36% of the floor area of the existing building. The existing eaves height and roof line have been maintained.
- Site C - 318m²
Erection of 2No detached two bedroom residential units to provide accommodation for visiting families and friends.
 - The proposed buildings are single storey and have a floor area of 65.7m².
- Site D – 500m²
Erection of 2No detached two bedroom residential units to provide Respite Accommodation.
 - Based upon a similar design to the accommodation for visiting families the Respite Care buildings are single storey and have a floor area of 65.7m².
- Site E - Extension of existing workshop/maintenance building to provide additional storage.
 - The existing maintenance workshop is an oversized single storey building with a floor area of 67m².
 - The proposal involves the construction of an extension to increase the floor area by 42m² which represents 63% of the floor area of the existing building. The existing eaves height and roof line have been maintained.
- Site F -2438m²
- Realignment of access road and improvements to existing parking arrangements.

5.3 Layout

The integration of infill development is illustrated on the proposed plans. Drawing No P7 Block Plan, shows the existing buildings which are arranged in a series of traditional courtyards consistent with the original farming use and the stone barns which were retained and converted as part of the original proposals undertaken in 2007. They are interlinked and visually attached into a number of compact courtyards that provides attractive sheltered communal spaces and private gardens.

The proposals respect and enhance this arrangement by introducing a new residential block which creates its own individual courtyard setting. The existing access road has moved to the east and an area currently used as informal parking has been improved and redesigned to accommodate additional car parking and landscaping.

Access for visitors to a small car park at the front of the site adjacent to the main entrance and offices has been retained and access and manoeuvring for commercial and service vehicles is maintained to the rear service yard.

5.4 Scale

The existing buildings are a mix of single and two storeys with steeply pitched roofs (30-35 degrees) of domestic proportion comprising an original farmhouse, now converted to offices, converted agricultural stone barns and new build from the original development.

The proposals are all single storey of similar mass and scale to the existing buildings. The extensions take a simple linear form which matching eaves heights and roof lines to the host buildings. All proposals will comfortably integrate into the site and will neither dominate, nor be dominated by, the existing buildings.

Given the Green Belt allocation of the site the use of single storey buildings as infill development it considered important to reduce any impact on openness or the visual amenity of the site in terms of longer distance views.

Development at the rear, north, of the site in particular Sites A C E and F benefit from their floor levels being lower than the surrounding ground levels to the north and west which provides natural enclosure enhanced with landscape planting and screening from long distance views.

Site D to the south west is located adjacent to an existing two storey residential building 'Heathcotes' as shown on drawing P7 Block Plan. The proposed single storey Respite Units have been set into existing ground levels and screened by new landscape planting at the approach from Old Farm Lane.

5.5 Landscaping

Access throughout Low Laithes Village for residents, staff and servicing requires predominantly hard surfaces for pedestrian and vehicle movements. Existing surfaces comprise tarmac finishes to roads and a mix of tarmac and artificial stone flag paths and terraces. These areas are softened by areas of lawn and landscape planting.

The proposals provides an opportunity to improve the level of soft landscaping to enhance the proposed development with areas of significant tree planting to the eastern boundary and landscaping to the car parking.

The car parking in particular will feature tarmac access roads but parking spaces will be finished in free draining gravel. This helps reduce the positively drained areas and, used in conjunction with beech hedging provides attractive parking areas similar to the treatment used by the applicant at its head offices at Hesley Village Nr Tickhill – see below.



Fig 6 – Typical design of tarmac access roads and gravel parking with beech hedging surround.

Indicative proposals for landscape and tree planting are shown on drawing P7 Block Plan and will be subject to the submission of detailed landscaping proposals to be submitted for Local Authority approval prior to development commencing.

5.6 Appearance

The proposals have been carefully designed to fit in with the existing development in terms of layout, mass and scale of buildings.

5.6.1 Extensions

Buildings where extensions are proposed are relatively modern and there is no need to design them in such a way that they clearly show the original building as a dominant element by making the extensions subservient.

They have therefore been designed so that they can be constructed using matching materials with equal ridge heights and roof lines to those of the existing buildings so that the extensions provide seamless expansion of the existing buildings.

5.6.2 New Buildings

The principal development of living accommodation and communal facilities at Site A, is a single storey building of domestic proportions positioned to complement the existing arrangement of buildings in a courtyard setting.

Existing roofing materials feature a mix of artificial stone slates and artificial blue slate.

Materials proposed include dark brown Hardrow 'Old Stone' concrete roof tiles with matching ridges to give the general appearance of natural stone, with natural coursed stone external walling flush pointed to match the existing buildings.



Fig 7 – Typical view of existing living units showing stone walling.

New living accommodation has been designed with doors and window frames in off white finish to match existing and with window and door proportions including stone lintels, cills and mullions to match existing as shown above.

Gutters and rainwater pipes are to be in aluminium with black powder coat finish. Gutters to be half round or ogee profile and fixed to the stonework on brackets without fascias and rainwater pipes to be circular.

In slight contrast to the majority of the existing and proposed buildings at Low Laithes Village, proposals for Site C, Visitor Accommodation and Site D, Respite Care have been designed as Lodges with external timber cladding material. All four detached buildings have a similar internal arrangement and window and door proportions are of similar size and design.

These buildings which are intended to provide essential accommodation to service a growing demand for Respite Care and provide temporary accommodation for visiting relatives are located at a discrete distance from the remaining living accommodation. As such the variation in external appearance by cladding in timber, reducing the roof pitch and adding overhanging eaves to create Lodges will allow the buildings to complement the existing development and integrate within the surrounding landscape.

5.6.3 Sustainability

The development

The Council will require that new development within the district shall be energy and water efficient and incorporate built-in conservation measures. Opportunities to conserve energy and water resources through the layout and design of the development shall be maximised.

The development will incorporate measures in the design to ensure the building is highly sustainable. Features include:

- Landscape planting to help offset CO2 emissions.
- Providing energy efficient buildings with high standards of insulation to external walls and roofs which meet/exceed building regulations requirements.
- Providing windows with low emissivity glass to reduce heat loss.
- Extend/adapt existing district heating system utilizing Bio-mass boiler providing heating and hot water. Detailed proposals for energy generation to be provided as part of detailed design.
- Energy efficient timers and thermostats to be used.
- Install energy efficient appliances such as low volume flush wc's to reduce water consumption.
- Specify energy efficient lighting
- Locally source construction materials as far as possible.
- Specify timber from sustainable sources.
- Design drainage to SUDs by utilizing existing natural pond as storage for surface water.

6.0 Access

6.1 Old Farm Lane

Old Farm Lane is a private access road with public footpath which connects Low Laithes Village to Barnsley Road. The footpath does not extend the entire length of the road as shown on drawing OS10. There is no through access although Old Farm Lane is also used for occasional agricultural access to adjoining farm land.

At the junction with Barnsley Road it is 5.6m wide with a footpath but reduces to a single width road where passing under the old railway bridge which now carries the Trans Pennine Trail. At this point the road is a shared surface for use by vehicles and pedestrians.



Fig 8. View of bridge from west

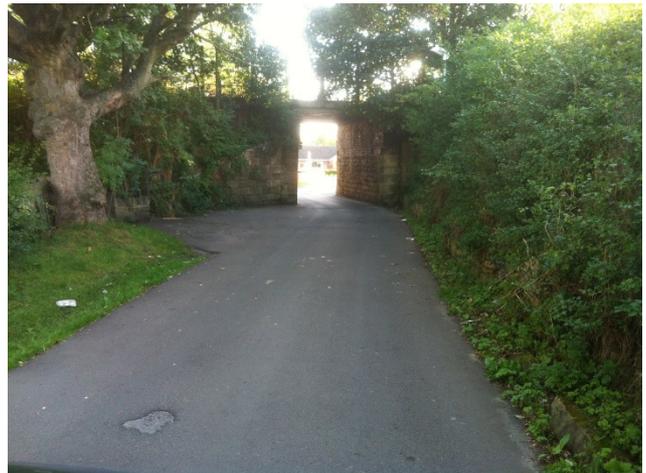


Fig 9. View of bridge from east



Fig 10. View towards bridge from Passing Place No 1.

Old Farm Lane has 3 No Passing Places as shown on drawing OS10 between the bridge and Low Laithes Village. It has signage to warn motorists that the road is shared with pedestrians, there is a 10mph speed limit and there is traffic calming with a number of speed humps along the length of the road.



Fig 11. View from Passing Place No 1 to Passing Place No 2.

Inter-visibility between the bridge and Passing Places 1 and 2 is good. There is no direct view between Passing Place 2 and 3 due to a bend just to the south of Passing Place 3 but

there is an informal passing area within the access of an overflow car park to the south side of the road as shown on drawing OS10.

Overall it is considered that the existing road is adequate and no improvement is required to Old Farm Lane.

Cyclists are encouraged by the provision of a cycle shelter.

6.2 Disabled Access

Low Laithes Village is located on land with a natural gradient of approximately 1 in 16 and falls from the high point at the north towards the south. The vast majority of the buildings on the site are accessible without the need for steps. Where steps are needed to overcome changes in levels these were originally designed for ambulant disabled access.

The applicant is committed to providing suitable accommodation and facilities for the physically disabled and to address this, Unit 1 of Site A has been designed to accommodate wheelchair users. In addition the communal areas include a disabled toilet and an assisted bathroom. Access between all areas within Site A can be achieved with level approach and all new buildings will have low rise thresholds and all internal layouts will provide circulation for wheelchair users.

Within the existing visitor car park there is provision for disabled parking. Disabled parking spaces could be included within the staff parking areas if necessary.

6.3 Service Road

The existing road layout has been amended. Access to the rear of the site and manoeuvring for service vehicles has been maintained. An existing service road extends to the rear, north west corner of the site and provides access for emergency vehicles.

Waste and recycling bins are located with a service yard to the south of the Bio-Mass Boiler housing. Access and turning is available for refuse vehicles.

7.0 Summary

Low Laithes Village is a residential campus run by the Hesley Group providing high quality education and care services to children and young adults with complex needs, severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour, arising mainly from Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

They have established a need to provide additional services and these proposals which are in line with Local and National Planning policy for infill development of a previously developed site within the Green Belt which will allow them to provide much needed additional accommodation in a sustainable way providing social and economic benefits without detrimental effect on the local amenity and retaining the openness and special character of the surrounding countryside which provides Low Laithes Village with a unique and ideal setting.

We look forward to the support of Planning Officers and Council Members with regard to these proposals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M Booth', followed by a horizontal line and a period.

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MBooth Design