

# Planning Statement

**CONVERSION OF TWO AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS TO CREATE  
THREE RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS**

**BARNS AT THURLSTON ROAD, THURLSTONE, S36 9QQ**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the submission of an application for full planning permission for the conversion of two existing farm buildings to create three residential dwellings. The existing buildings comprise of an attractive stone built roadside barn, and a modern building of no architectural and historic interest set further back into the site. The development scheme has been carefully designed in order to preserve and enhance the character of the roadside barn, and to improve the appearance of the more modern building.

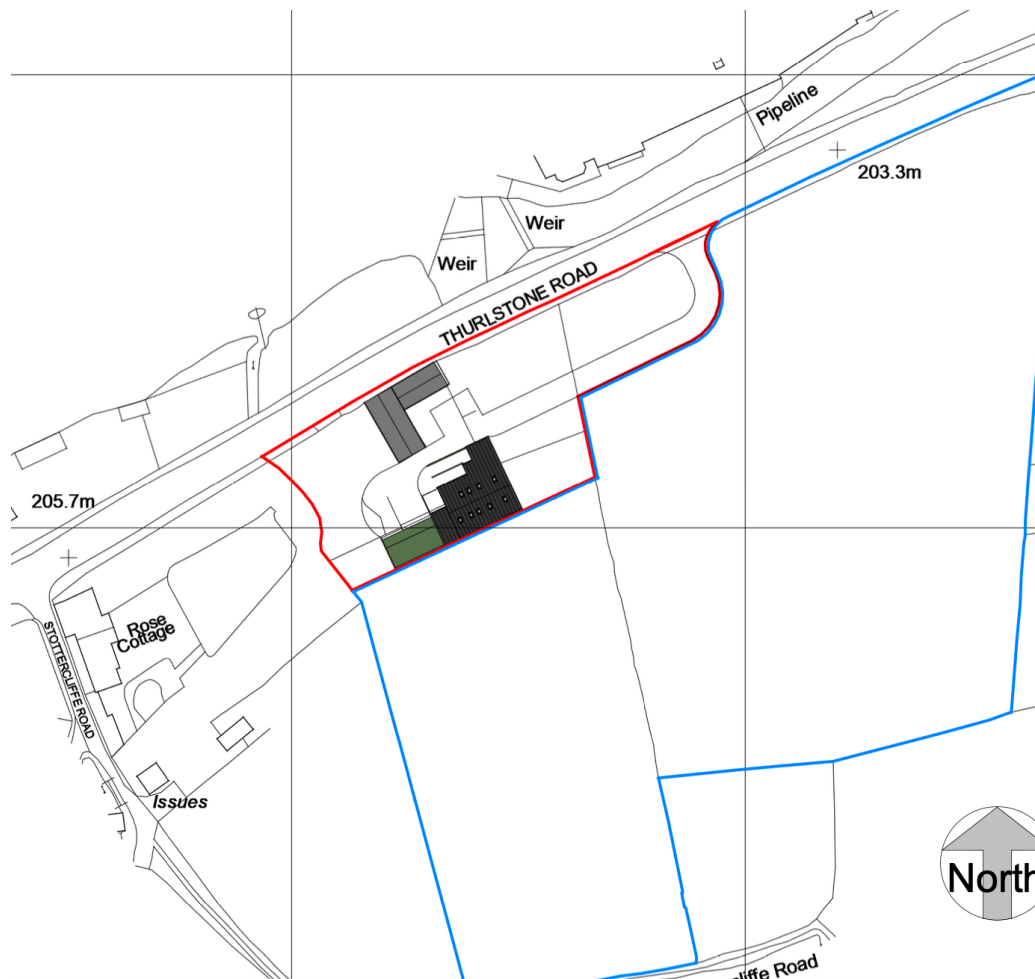
Together, the proposed conversions will deliver much needed new housing in a manner that does not harm Green Belt openness, preserves the historic character of the site where it exists and will enhance the appearance of the site, and the contribution it makes to the rural landscape, overall.

Whilst the site is in the Green Belt, it is located immediately next to the built edge of Thurlstone, and only a stone's throw from Penistone. As such, the site benefits from excellent levels of accessibility to local services and facilities, and it is an entirely sustainable location for three additional homes.

This statement now proceeds to give details of the site. The details of the proposal are then set out. The planning merits of the scheme are then discussed in relation to relevant planning policies contained in the statutory development plan, together with Government guidance principally set out in the NPPF. It will be demonstrated that the proposal would have no adverse impacts and accords with all relevant policy and guidance.

## 2.0 THE SITE

The application site lies to the south of Thurlstone Road, and just to the east of the settlement of Thurlstone itself. The site is part of a parcel of agricultural land and contains two existing farm buildings.



The site lies within the Green Belt.

The site is not within the Thurlstone Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings in close proximity.

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The site is within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding) according to the Environment Agency's flood risk maps.

### 3.0 THE PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the two existing buildings to provide three residential dwellings. Full proposals can be seen in the accompanying plans and technical reports. The key details are as follows:

- The roadside barn is to be converted to a single detached dwelling.
- The barn is to be converted within its existing shell, with no extensions or rebuilding required.
- The barn has been assessed by a structural engineer, and it has been concluded that only 'general maintenance repairs and minor enhancements' are required to facilitate the conversion.
- As such, the barn can be converted in a manner that preserves its historic fabric.
- The conversion scheme is also sensitive to the historic character of the barn. Existing openings are re-used throughout. Where new openings are required, they are of appropriate size, type and pattern and respective of the agricultural character of the building.
- The modern farm building is to be converted into two dwellings.
- The modern building is also to be converted within its existing shell, but with the addition of small extensions to the front and side elevation.
- An existing single storey element of the building (which is of no merit and actively detracts from the appearance of the site) is to be removed.
- The proposed extensions are smaller than the existing building that is to be removed, so there is a reduction in built form overall.
- The exterior of the building is to be re-clad, with small areas of natural stone walling also used on the new extensions. This will greatly enhance the appearance of the building compared to the current situation, but in a manner that is fully appropriate for the agricultural landscape that the site is part of.
- A new access point is proposed to the eastern side of the buildings in order to provide better visibility than the existing access point. The existing access point is to be closed.

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- The new access point would be linked to the proposed dwellings by a track that would a grass grid system in order to have virtually no visual impact.
  - Parking areas for the proposed houses are discretely sited in areas that are already developed. The parking for the roadside barn would be within the existing yard area behind the building, and the parking or the plots 2 and 3 would be on the footprint of the existing single storey building that is to be removed.
  - Overall, the scheme would deliver three family homes in a sustainable location and in a manner that would have no adverse impact on the Green Belt.

#### 4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history for the site that is directly relevant to the current proposals.

## 5.0 ALLOCATION AND POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the Development Plan consists of the Barnsley Local Plan which was adopted in January 2019 and the Joint Waste Plan.

Material considerations exist in the form of national policy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and the suite of documents comprising National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

The Council's SPDs are also considered of relevance.

The site is within the Green Belt as identified under the local plan.

### National

The NPPF is reflective of the guidance contained within the NPPG. The following sections of the revised NPPF are considered of direct relevance to the current proposal:

- Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 - Decision-making
- Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The overarching message of the NPPF is that LPAs should adopt a positive and pro-active approach to planning proposals, particularly those that result in sustainable development. LPAs should not place unnecessary burdens on developers and should look to support appropriate schemes such as this.

### Barnsley Local Plan

- SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- GD1 General Development
- LG2 The Location of Growth
- H2 The Distribution of New Homes
- H4 Residential Development on Small Non-allocated Sites
- H6 Housing Mix and Efficient Use of Land
- T3 New Development and Sustainable Travel
- T4 New development and Transport Safety
- D1 High Quality Design and Place Making
- LC1 Landscape Character
- HE1 The Historic Environment
- BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- GB1 Protection of Green Belt
- GB2 Replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings in the Green Belt
- GB3 Changes of use in the Green Belt

#### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Regard has been had to the LPA's Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPD.

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

#### *Housing delivery*

The revised NPPF is a crucial part of the Government's overarching agenda of delivering 1.5m new homes during this parliament. This is a central pillar of the 2024 election pledge and is a response to the well-publicised UK housing crisis. The NPPF places great importance on housing delivery across the UK and is accompanied by recent press releases ("back the builder's, not the blocker's") and written ministerial statements. All of these place heavy emphasis on the need to reform the planning system so that developments, most notably housing developments, can be delivered as quickly as possible.

The proposed level of housing that is expected to be delivered is extremely ambitious. To put it into context, the UK has not got close to delivering the amount of housing now proposed for over 45 years. Using the revised standard methodology set out within the NPPF, annual housing need in Barnsley is set to increase from 638 dwellings to 944 dwellings (a 48% increase).

Applications for housing developments need to be viewed in this context and supported wherever possible.

#### *Green Belt*

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out a 'closed list' of development types that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. This includes:

- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building

and:

- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and provided it would preserve Green Belt openness and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

This is reflected in policies GB1, GB2 and GB3 of the Barnsley Local Plan. GB3 also sets the following criteria for conversion schemes in the Green Belt:

- *The existing building is of a form, scale and design that is in keeping with its surroundings;*
- *The existing building is of a permanent and substantial construction and a structural survey demonstrates that the building does not need major or complete reconstruction for the proposed new use;*
- *The proposed new use is in keeping with the local character and the appearance of the building; and*
- *The loss of any building from agricultural use will not give rise to the need for a replacement agricultural building, except in cases where the existing building is no longer capable of agricultural use.*

The buildings are of clear agricultural character. They are fairly typical examples of a 19<sup>th</sup> century field barn and a modern 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural building. They are clearly in keeping with the agricultural landscape surroundings of the site. Both of the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction. They have stood for many years and a structural assessment has confirmed that the buildings are capable of conversion without needing any major reconstruction.

The roadside building is to be converted without any extension and the external alterations would be limited to the additional of a small number of new openings and minor repair works. The works would add no additional size to the original building, and would clearly not be disproportionate.

The modern building conversion includes small extensions to the front and side elevations. However, an existing single storey part of the building is also to be removed. As such, there is no increase in the size of the existing building overall, and the proposed extensions are not disproportionate to the original building.

The residential use of the site is entirely compatible with both the character of the existing buildings and the local character.

The buildings are no longer in regular agricultural use. The surrounding farm land is used for the production of silage, and this does not necessitate the building space. As such, there would be no pressure for replacement agricultural buildings as a result of the proposed conversion.

The proposal is an appropriate form of Green Belt development as defined by paragraph 154 of the NPPF, and also fully compliant with local plan policies GB1, GB2 and GB3.

#### *Sustainability*

Although the site is within the Green Belt, it nevertheless benefits from very high levels of sustainability and accessibility. The site is on the edge of Thurlstone village, and a footway provides quick, safe and easy access to the village amenities (including public houses, food outlets, local shops, schools and sport and recreation) on foot. Cycling into the village is also an easy option. The site is a short distance from the wider range of amenities, employment opportunities and more extensive public transport links in Penistone town centre.

The site is a wholly suitable and sustainable location for three family dwellings of the type and scale proposed.

The proposed development will make a small but valuable contribution to meeting the borough's housing needs, and is fully compliant with policies GD1, LG2, H2 and H4.

The principle of the proposed development is, therefore, clearly acceptable and fully policy compliant.

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### **Housing Mix and Efficient Use of Land**

Policy H6 sets out an expectation for developments to include a broad mix of house sizes. The proposal allows for as broad a mix of house types as is possible within the constraints of the existing buildings. Overall, the scheme will deliver one detached and two semi-detached houses that will be suitable for a wide range of household types and needs.

Policy H6 also seeks a development density of 30 dwellings per hectare, although does go on to acknowledge that lower densities will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they are necessary for character and appearance, need, viability or sustainable design reasons. The scheme would deliver a housing density of 10 dwellings per hectare. However, as the scheme is in the Green Belt and involves the reuse of the existing buildings, and a more intensive conversion scheme would be likely to conflict with design and amenity policies, the proposed density is wholly appropriate in this instance.

The development would make efficient use of the land resource in a manner that is appropriate for the nature and location of the site. The proposal complies with policy H6.

### **Design, Heritage, and Landscape**

The roadside barn appears on 19<sup>th</sup> century edition os maps, and its form and materials are typical of a field barn of this period. The building is not listed. Furthermore, it does not appear on the South Yorkshire Local Heritage List. A conservative approach has nevertheless been taken, and it is anticipated that the LPA may consider the roadside barn to be a non-designated heritage asset.

The significance of the roadside barn lies in its historic interest as a 19<sup>th</sup> century field barn and the story it tells in the context of the agricultural landscape in which the site lies. The settlement of Thurlstone developed from a small farming community next to the larger settlement of Penistone. The barn possesses some architectural interest, but is fairly typical in this regard so such interest if limited to local significance only. The plain roadside

elevation, along with arched cart opening and standard agricultural building plan form are the most notable architectural aspects of the building.

The retention of the roadside barn is beneficial to the surrounding historic agricultural landscape. The conversion scheme allows for the retention of all the remaining historic fabric as no major rebuilding is necessary. Minor general repairs and structural enhancements (as set out in the accompanying structural reports) will safeguard the future of the building without harming its interest and significance. The conversion scheme has also been sensitively designed to preserve the character of the barn. The roadside elevation is to remain blank, and this strong facet of its character is, therefore, preserved. The existing openings, including the arched cart opening, are to be retained and reused. Some additional openings are necessary to facilitate the residential use, but these are positioned to less-sensitive parts of the building and are of a size and pattern that would fully respect the agricultural character of the building.

If the LPA does consider the roadside barn to be a non-designated heritage asset, then the proposal fully accords with policy HE1 and paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

The modern building lacks any historic or architectural merit, but does reflect the agricultural landscape character of its surroundings. The single storey element of the building is of particularly poor appearance, and the proposed replacement of this as part of the conversion scheme presents an enhancement opportunity. The replacement of this element of the existing building with two small extensions, along with the external upgrading of the building would create a more attractive building than exists now, but one that still retains a very strong agricultural character through its form and materials. The resultant building would, therefore, continue to be entirely appropriate for, and reflective of the agricultural landscape.

There would be little discernible visual or landscape character impact as a result of the change in use of the site from agricultural to residential. As noted further above, the parking areas for the proposed dwellings would be confined to existing yard/built areas and positioned close to the host buildings. The garden areas are already confined by existing boundary walls that provide clear distinction between the developed area and the

surrounding open land. The new access would have very little visual impact due to the use of a grass grid system.

Overall, the proposal is a sensitive conversion scheme that would preserve the character of the existing building that is of historic and architectural merit, and would enhance the appearance of the modern building that lacks any merit. Furthermore, the scheme would continue to preserve and respect the agricultural landscape in which the site lies. The proposal is fully compliant with policies D1, LC1, HE1 and the NPPF in this regard.

### **Amenity**

The position of the site would ensure that the development does not have any adverse impact on the amenity of residents of nearby existing properties. Furthermore, the conversion scheme would provide three new family homes with very good levels of housing amenity. The houses would all provide very well proportioned rooms with good levels of natural light and outlook. Each house would also have an appropriately sized garden that would provide good levels of private outdoor amenity space.

The proposal would provide a good level of amenity for future occupiers, without causing harm to the amenity of any existing users or residents. The proposal fully accords with policy D1 in this regard.

### **Highways**

The proposal includes the closure of the existing access point to the western side of the buildings, and the creation of a new access point to the eastern side. This will allow for 70 metre visibility splays in both directions, and this represents a significant betterment compared to the existing situation.

The new access point will provide safe and suitable access for the proposed dwellings. Furthermore, each of the three houses will have appropriate parking and manoeuvring space within the site.

The proposed development is in full alignment with both local and national policies concerning the impact of highways.

### **Ecology**

An Ecological Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted separately. This confirms that, subject to the recommended mitigation measures, there would be no adverse impact on protected species.

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric has also been prepared. The development is projected to result in a 27.19% habitat units net gain, so is fully policy and legislation compliant in this regard.

The development proposal fully accords with local and national policy in this respect.

### **Flood Risk**

The application site is within flood zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency so is not at undue risk of flooding.

### **Land Stability**

The site not within a Coal Authority Development High Risk Area.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposal represents the suitable and sustainable reuse of buildings and is an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt. The new uses would give rise to no adverse impacts and the scheme is fully policy compliant.

The proposal would deliver much needed new housing and the LPA should welcome the proposal and look to support the scheme. Failure to do so would be inconsistent with national objectives to significantly boost housing supply.

The Applicant is willing to discuss any issues that may arise during the consideration of the proposal with the LPA.