



Planning Statement

REDEVELOPMENT OF BUILDER'S YARD TO PROVIDE TWO DWELLINGS

**BIRKLAND FARM, FULLSHAW LANE/GILBERT HILL, LANGSETT,
S36 9FD**

**PREPARED FOR: WHITSHAW BUILDERS LTD
PREPARED BY: TOM SHIELS
CHECKED BY: JAMES ROBERTS MRTPI**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the redevelopment of a site comprising a builder's yard and associated buildings and external spaces to provide two houses.

The site formally comprised a working farm, commercial operation and dwelling house. Following a downturn in the agricultural and commercial activities, the site was repurposed as a builder's yard following the grant of planning permission. The site is to continue to operate as a builder's yard for the foreseeable short-term future, but the operator anticipates potential for a change in the business model in the medium-term, and this application seeks to secure a long-term beneficial use for the site by providing two much-needed family homes.

The site comprises previously developed land. The provision of the two dwellings to replace the existing builder's yard use, buildings and hard surfaced areas comprises the redevelopment of previously developed land that would not cause substantial harm to openness. As such, the proposal is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, as defined by paragraph 154 g) of the NPPF and local plan policy.

Furthermore, the LPA cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land, and the proposal comprises the development of 'grey belt' land. The proposal is, therefore, also not inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting plans and technical reports which demonstrate the credentials of the scheme in more detail. It is anticipated that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will adopt a progressive approach to this sustainable scheme.

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. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the proposal would result in a sustainable form of development, would not harm highway safety or efficiency, would not harm the character of the area and would sufficiently protect neighbouring living conditions. Furthermore, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on ecological assets. Significantly, the proposed development is of a type that is suitable in the Green Belt. Finally, the conclusion is reached that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

2.0 THE SITE

The application site is Birkland Farm, which lies to the western side of Gilbert Hill and Fullshaw Lane in Langsett:



The site contains a series of substantial buildings and external areas that have established lawful use as a builder's yard. The builder's yard use was approved in March 2025 and was implemented very soon after.

The site lies within the Green Belt.

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

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

The site is within a Coal Authority Development High Risk Area.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of the site to provide two dwelling houses. The key elements of the proposal are as follows:

- The proposed houses have been carefully designed in order to ensure there would be no substantial harm to Green Belt openness.
- As such, the proposal comprises the redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt that is supported by paragraph 154 g) of the NPPF.
- The site also comprises 'grey belt' land and the development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt as defined by paragraph 155 of the NPPF.
- The proposed houses have been carefully designed in order to respect and reflect the rural landscape setting of the site. The development would result in visual betterment in comparison to the existing builder's yard site.
- The replacement of the builder's yard with two dwellings would see the commercial use of the site cease, which would lead to a reduction in noise generation and activity.
- The replacement of the builder's yard with two houses would not result in any material increase in traffic generation from the site.
- The proposed houses would provide a high standard of housing amenity for future occupiers, with no adverse impacts on any neighbouring residents.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

Recent planning history for the site comprises of:

- 2025/0013 Change of use from agricultural, commercial and dwelling to builder's yard (Sui Generis) – Application approved 21 March 2025.
- 2024/0252 Outline application for the removal of buildings (agricultural, commercial and dwelling) and erection of 1no. detached dwelling (access and layout only considered at this stage) – Application approved 19 September 2024.
- 2023/0888 - Lawful development certificate for existing use of agricultural building as a residential dwelling – LDC issued 21 December 2023

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).

Allocations

The site lies within the Green Belt as identified within 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 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural 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
- BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- GB1 Protection of Green Belt
- GB2 Replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings 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 / Green Belt

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.

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

Two of the most significant changes in the revised NPPF in respect of Green Belt policy are the clear and deliberate loosening of restrictions on the redevelopment of previously developed land, and the introduction of 'grey belt' land.

In respect of the redevelopment of previously developed land, under the last iteration of the NPPF, the redevelopment of previously developed land was not inappropriate providing that it would not have any greater impact on openness. This like-for-like requirement has now been abolished. Instead, Paragraph 154 part (g) now allows for the redevelopment of previously developed land which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Substantial harm is a deliberately high threshold. There can be no doubt that the change in this respect has been made in order to allow for more housing development on previously

developed sites in the Green Belt. There is no longer any policy requirement for arbitrary volumetric calculations between the existing and proposed developments. A new development that is larger than the existing development is policy compliant up until the point where the substantial harm threshold is crossed.

A legal opinion on the implications for decision making due to the change of threshold in paragraph 154 (g) has been obtained and is submitted separately.

The site is previously developed land, and this is confirmed by the lawful use of the site as a builder's yard in accordance with the planning permission.

The site comprises of various buildings that sprawl accords much of the land parcel. The LPA noted in the assessment of the 2024 application that *"the existing site has a cluttered appearance due to the combination of the large footprint of the existing buildings, large curtilage and the associated paraphernalia contained within the site."* The proposal will see the built form consolidated into the two dwellings and a detached garage block. This will rationalise the spread of buildings within the land parcel. Furthermore, the proposed development remains in the region of the site that already contains existing buildings, and there is no encroachment into the undeveloped land to the south. The site benefits from a good sense of containment, with the dense tree cover to the west and further tree cover to the north providing a clear distinction between the developed site and the surrounding open land. This further restricts the impact of the proposed development on openness.

The scale of the proposed buildings has also been restricted to ensure no significant increase beyond the size of the existing buildings. Whilst a direct volume comparison is not a decisive factor following the 2024 NPPF amendment to introduce the substantial harm threshold, it is noteworthy that the proposed development would only increase the total built form within the site by 23%. Taking into account the consolidation of built form within the site, it is debatable whether the additional volume causes any additional harm to openness compared with the existing development. However, it certainly does not result in substantial harm to openness.

The LPA also previously acknowledged that *“Even when the domestic paraphernalia and activity associated with residential use is taken into consideration, the site would not be more cluttered or contain more paraphernalia as a result of the proposal.”* This remains entirely the case now.

The LPA previously concluded that the one house scheme would result in betterment to openness and, as such, met the previous policy requirement for “no harm” to openness. It follows that the two house scheme as now proposed would not breach the very high bar of the “no substantial harm” threshold as is now applicable. The proposal is, therefore, an acceptable form of development within the Green Belt as defined by paragraph 154 g).

Furthermore, the development is also appropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 155 sets out that the development of homes should not be regarded as inappropriate where all of the following apply:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework.
- d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements.

The NPPF defines ‘grey belt’ land as:

“land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. ‘Grey belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.”

Barnsley cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing supply. As such, there is currently an unmet need for new housing development and criterion a) is currently engaged.

As such, consideration should be given to whether the site strongly contributes to Green Belt purposes a), b) or d) as set out in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

Green Belt purposes a), b) and d) are as follows:

a) – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

The site does not provide a role in checking the sprawl of large built-up areas and makes no strong contribution to purpose a).

b) - to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. The site does not lie between any neighbouring towns and is already developed. For this reason, the site does not strongly contribute to purpose b).

d)– to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. The site does not form the setting of a historic town, and does not strongly contribute to purpose d).

As such, it is clear that the site comprises ‘grey belt’ land as defined by the NPPF.

As the proposed development is all contained within the previously developed area, the redevelopment of the site would not fundamentally undermine the purpose of the remaining Green Belt taken across the plan area.

In terms of the sustainability of the location for development, it needs to be kept in mind that the site is already in everyday use for a commercial operation. Whilst outside of a settlement, the site still benefits from good levels of accessibility with excellent connectivity to Sheffield, Barnsley and the surrounding settlements. It is this level of accessibility that makes the site suitable for its current builder’s yard use, and this will also translate to the proposed residential use. It’s also noteworthy that the site has always contained a residential dwelling. The site also already benefits from planning consent for a replacement dwelling. As

such, only a net increase of 1 additional application would result from the current application. The site is in a sufficiently sustainable location for a net increase of one dwelling.

The size of the site is below the threshold at which the 'Golden Rules' apply.

For the reasons set out above, the proposal comprises the acceptable use of 'grey belt' land and is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

Grey belt development is not subject to a test of the impact on Green Belt openness. As such, in the unlikely event that the LPA was to reach a different conclusion to the one set out above regarding the proposal being acceptable development as defined by paragraph 154 g), then it remains acceptable development under paragraph 155 in any case.

Following the significant changes to Green Belt policy as a result of the December 2024 revisions to the NPPF, the development is clearly acceptable in principle in the Green Belt.

The principle of development is acceptable, and the proposal accords with policies SD1, GD1, LG2, GB1, GB2, H2, H4, H6 and sections 2, 5 and 12 of the NPPF.

Design and Landscape Considerations

The replacement of the existing buildings and use provides a clear opportunity for betterment in terms of visual amenity and landscape character. In considering the 2024 application to replace the existing buildings with a dwelling, the LPA noted the significant improvement in this regard.

The proposed dwellings have been carefully designed to respect and reflect the rural landscape setting of the site. This has been the key element of the design strategy. As set out in more detail in the accompanying Design Statement by Brightman Clarke Architects, the proposal seeks to reflect the local vernacular by replicating the forms and materials of stone barn buildings. The staggered and separated forms are to reflect the layout of traditional farms where buildings have been added over time. Natural coursed stone is the dominant material, with the subtle use of vertical timber to reference the agricultural history

for the site and its surroundings. The new buildings would not project any further to the south than the existing development, ensuring no impact in terms of encroachment into the open land that surrounds the existing developed area.

The development resulted in the replacement of the existing detracting buildings of no merit with two exemplary new dwellings of high-quality rural architecture. The design quality, coupled with the steps that have been taken to ensure a sensitive visual impact, would ensure that the development enhances the visual appearance of the site whilst having no adverse impact on landscape character. The development fully accords with policies D1 and LC1 in this regard.



Amenity

The proposed new homes would provide a very high quality of residential amenity for future occupiers. The position and scale of the development would have no adverse impact on any existing neighbouring uses. The replacement of the established builder's yard use with residential use is likely to result in betterment to the general amenity of the locality in respect of noise and associated activity.

The proposal is fully compliant with policy D1 and section 12 of the NPPF.

Transport and Accessibility

The proposed houses would utilise the existing access arrangement to the site. The site is in daily use for the established builder's yard operation, and two dwellings are unlikely to result in any material increase in traffic movements generated by the site. There is also likely to be a marked reduction in traffic compared to the historic use of the site as a mix of residential, commercial and agricultural activities.

The proposed dwellings would have appropriate off street parking and maneuvering space.

There are no highway safety or efficiency reasons why planning consent for the proposed development should not be granted. The proposal is fully policy compliant in this regard.

Ecology and Trees

An Ecological Impact Assessment (PEA) has been undertaken to demonstrate that the development would not result in any harm to protected species or ecological interests. The report concludes that, subject to the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures, the development would have no adverse impacts.

A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has also been undertaken. The statutory BNG uplift will be delivered through either enhancements on land in the applicant's ownership or through the purchase of off-site credits. This can be secured through the BNG condition.

An Arboriculture Report has also been undertaken and is submitted separately. This confirms that all existing trees can be retained, and the development also presents an opportunity for enhancement through additional tree planting. A tree protection plan for the development period is also proposed.

The proposal is fully policy compliant in these respects.

Land Contamination and Stability

A Phase 1 ground conditions report and a Coal Mining Risk Assessment have been undertaken and are submitted separately. These reports set out an appraisal of the potential risk factors, along with the appropriate further investigation measures to inform any necessary remediation. The application provides sufficient information to be fully policy compliant in this regard.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed scheme represents a sustainable form of development that would not have any unacceptable impact for the reasons set out above.

The proposal would deliver two much needed and good quality new homes, in a manner that is fully compliant with Green Belt policy. The proposal would have no adverse impact in respect of landscape, visual, amenity, highways and environmental considerations.

The proposal is fully policy compliant.

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