

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Dwelling

Land Adjacent Berry Lane Cottage

Berry Lane

Howbrook

Barnsley

Prepared on behalf of the Scott Ward

1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the construction of a single detached dwelling on land adjacent to Berry Lane Cottage, Berry Lane, Howbrook.

The application site benefits from an extant planning permission for the erection of a detached dwelling under application reference **2024/0460**, establishing the principle of residential development on the site.

The purpose of this submission is therefore not to revisit the principle of development, but to present an evolved architectural response which builds upon the previously approved scheme whilst responding more positively to the site's topography, landscape setting and the aspirations of the applicant.

The revised proposal retains the established residential use, access arrangements and overall scale of development, whilst introducing a carefully considered contemporary interpretation of the traditional Yorkshire dwelling. The design seeks to achieve a high quality family home that sits comfortably within its rural surroundings and complements the existing character of Berry Lane.

The proposal has been informed by:

- the existing site constraints and opportunities;
- the extant planning consent;
- local architectural character;
- Barnsley Local Plan design policies;
- the approved arboricultural and ecological assessments; and
- the natural topography of the site.

The resulting dwelling is intended to be both timeless and contextual, creating architecture that is contemporary in its detailing whilst firmly rooted in the local vernacular.

The Six Design Principles

1. Respond to Topography

The dwelling steps naturally with the land.

2. Respect Rural Character

A contemporary interpretation of traditional Yorkshire architecture.

3. Natural Materials

Stone, slate and robust detailing.

4. Landscape First

Existing trees and drystone walls retained.

5. Sustainable Living

Fabric-first design with renewable energy generation.

6. Timeless Architecture

Simple forms, honest materials and long-term adaptability.

2.0 Site Context

The application site comprises a vacant parcel of land immediately adjacent to Berry Lane Cottage within the small settlement of Howbrook.

The site occupies an attractive elevated position with views across the surrounding valley and agricultural landscape. Existing residential properties along Berry Lane are generally detached dwellings of varying ages, unified by a consistent palette of natural stone, slate roofs, drystone boundary walls and mature vegetation.

The character of the area is informal rather than suburban, with buildings responding individually to the landscape rather than following rigid building lines. Changes in ground level are a defining characteristic of the locality and many neighbouring properties step naturally with the topography.

The application site itself is constrained by:

- existing changes in level;
- established trees surrounding the site;
- existing drystone boundary walls;
- the rural setting;
- existing access from Berry Lane.

Conversely, the site also presents a number of opportunities.

These include:

- creating a dwelling that responds positively to the changing levels rather than imposing extensive engineering works;
- reinforcing the traditional materials found throughout the locality;
- preserving existing trees and landscape features;
- improving biodiversity through sensitive landscaping; and
- delivering a high quality bespoke home that enhances the character of the area.

The approved planning permission has already demonstrated that the site is capable of accommodating a detached dwelling without causing unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenity, highway safety or landscape character.

The current proposal seeks to refine this established principle through improved architecture and a more considered response to the site's natural landform.

3.0 Planning Background

Planning permission has previously been granted for the erection of a detached dwelling on the site under planning reference **2024/0460**.

That permission establishes that:

- the principle of residential development is acceptable;
- the proposed access arrangements are suitable;
- residential use represents an appropriate form of development in this location;
and
- environmental impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated.

The approved permission is accompanied by detailed conditions requiring, amongst other matters:

- natural coursed sandstone;
- natural slate roofing;
- recessed window detailing;
- black rainwater goods;
- drystone wall construction;
- landscape planting;
- tree protection during construction.

The current proposal embraces these principles and continues the use of high quality natural materials appropriate to the locality.

Rather than fundamentally altering the approved development, the application represents an architectural evolution. The revised dwelling provides a more coherent composition, a stronger response to the site's levels and a contemporary interpretation of local rural architecture whilst remaining entirely respectful of the established character of Berry Lane.

4.0 Design Evolution

The design has evolved from a detailed appraisal of the site, the surrounding built form and the opportunities presented by the existing planning permission.

Rather than replicating the previously approved dwelling, the proposal seeks to refine the architectural response through a building that sits more naturally within the landscape whilst maintaining the scale and domestic character already accepted by the Local Planning Authority.

The fundamental design principles have remained consistent throughout the evolution of the scheme:

- respect the established settlement pattern;
- minimise visual impact;
- respond positively to the site's changing topography;
- utilise high quality natural materials;
- preserve the mature landscape setting; and
- create a dwelling with a strong sense of permanence and longevity.

The resulting architecture deliberately avoids unnecessary ornamentation or fashionable detailing. Instead, the design draws upon the proportions and simplicity of traditional Yorkshire farm buildings and cottages, interpreted in a contemporary manner through clean detailing, generous glazing and carefully composed elevations.

The dwelling has been designed to appear settled within its landscape, allowing the building to complement rather than compete with its surroundings.

5.0 Layout

The approved planning permission established the principle of a detached dwelling occupying the site and the revised proposal follows the same broad arrangement.

The dwelling is positioned to make efficient use of the available plot whilst maintaining generous separation distances from neighbouring properties and preserving the spacious rural character of Berry Lane.

Vehicle access continues to be taken directly from Berry Lane using the previously accepted access arrangements, thereby avoiding any additional impact upon the local highway network.

Externally, the layout has been carefully considered to minimise hardstanding whilst providing practical parking and turning space appropriate for a modern family dwelling.

Private amenity space is located to the rear of the property where it benefits from privacy, excellent levels of sunlight and uninterrupted views across the surrounding countryside.

The organisation of the accommodation has been heavily influenced by the site's natural levels.

Rather than creating excessive retaining structures or artificially levelling the site, the building has been designed to step naturally with the topography. This approach significantly reduces the amount of excavation required whilst ensuring that the dwelling sits comfortably within the landscape.

The split-level arrangement also allows the principal living accommodation to maximise views over the valley, whilst creating a strong relationship between the internal spaces and the garden.

Overall, the proposal represents an efficient and landscape-led response to the site that minimises intervention whilst maximising residential quality.

6.0 Scale and Massing

The scale of the proposed dwelling has been carefully considered in the context of both the approved planning permission and the surrounding built environment.

Although contemporary in architectural expression, the building adopts proportions familiar to the locality, comprising a simple pitched roof form with domestic scale and carefully balanced elevations.

The massing has intentionally been broken down into a series of clearly legible elements rather than a single bulky volume.

This creates a dwelling that reads as a traditional rural building whilst allowing the accommodation to respond effectively to the changing site levels.

Importantly, the natural topography significantly reduces the perceived scale of the building when viewed from the surrounding landscape.

From Berry Lane, the dwelling presents itself as a modest two-storey family home with a restrained and welcoming frontage.

To the rear, the building steps with the site, allowing the lower ground floor accommodation to open directly onto the garden without increasing the apparent height of the building.

This approach enables additional accommodation to be incorporated without creating an overly dominant or intrusive form.

The simple roof profile further reduces visual complexity and reflects the established roofscape found throughout Howbrook.

Overall, the proposal achieves an appropriate balance between providing a generous modern family home and respecting the scale and character of neighbouring development.

7.0 Appearance

The appearance of the dwelling has been guided by a desire to create architecture that is both contemporary and enduring.

Rather than replicating historic buildings through pastiche, the proposal adopts the simple forms, robust materials and restrained detailing that characterise traditional Yorkshire rural architecture.

The building is deliberately uncomplicated in its composition.

A single pitched roof, carefully proportioned openings and a restrained palette of natural materials create a calm architectural expression which is intended to age gracefully over time.

The principal elevation presents an understated and welcoming appearance to Berry Lane.

Natural stone walls, recessed openings and a modest entrance create a domestic scale that complements neighbouring properties without appearing overly formal.

To the rear, larger areas of glazing have been introduced to take advantage of the site's exceptional outlook and to maximise natural daylight within the principal living spaces.

These larger openings are orientated away from the public realm and therefore have limited visual impact upon the wider landscape whilst significantly enhancing the quality of the internal accommodation.

The overall architectural language reflects a belief that good rural architecture should derive its character from proportion, materiality and craftsmanship rather than decorative features.

The proposal therefore seeks to create a dwelling that will remain visually attractive and appropriate for many decades to come.

8.0 Materials

The proposed dwelling adopts a restrained and robust palette of natural materials that reflects the established character of Berry Lane and the wider rural landscape.

The external walls will be constructed using natural stone, providing permanence, durability and a strong visual relationship with the traditional buildings that define the local area. The use of natural stone also satisfies the requirements of the previous planning permission, ensuring continuity with the established design principles for the site.

The roof will be finished in natural slate, reflecting the predominant roofing material found throughout the surrounding settlement and reinforcing the simple agricultural character of the building.

Window openings are recessed within the stonework to provide depth and shadow, creating robust elevations that respond positively to traditional construction methods while accommodating modern levels of insulation and thermal performance.

Rainwater goods, fascias and external metalwork will be finished in a simple black finish, ensuring that secondary architectural elements remain visually recessive.

The material palette has intentionally been limited to a small number of high-quality, honest materials which will weather naturally and require minimal long-term maintenance.

The resulting architecture is intended to possess a timeless quality, avoiding short-lived architectural fashions in favour of durable construction and carefully considered detailing.

9.0 Landscape and Trees

The landscape setting forms one of the site's greatest assets and has therefore been a primary consideration throughout the design process.

The proposal seeks to retain and reinforce the existing landscape character through the preservation of mature trees, existing drystone boundary walls and the informal rural appearance of the site.

An Arboricultural Survey and Arboricultural Method Statement accompany this application and demonstrate that the proposal can be constructed whilst protecting the retained trees in accordance with BS5837:2012.

The accompanying survey identifies that the majority of existing trees are of lower Category C quality, with only limited tree removal required to facilitate the development. Overall, the impact upon existing tree cover is considered negligible.

Appropriate tree protection fencing and construction methodologies will be implemented throughout the construction period in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement.

The existing drystone walls make an important contribution to the rural character of Berry Lane and will be retained and repaired where necessary using traditional construction techniques.

Soft landscaping will comprise native planting and informal garden areas that complement the surrounding countryside. The intention is for the landscape to mature over time, further integrating the dwelling within its setting and enhancing local biodiversity.

Overall, the landscape strategy seeks to preserve the site's established rural qualities whilst creating an attractive setting for the proposed dwelling.

10.0 Sustainability

Sustainability has been embedded within the design of the dwelling from the earliest stages of the project.

Rather than relying solely upon technological solutions, the proposal adopts a fabric-first approach that prioritises high levels of insulation, air tightness and efficient building construction.

The orientation of the dwelling has been carefully considered to maximise natural daylight to the principal living spaces, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and improving internal environmental quality.

Generous glazing has been concentrated on the south and west facing elevations where long-distance views can be enjoyed, whilst more modest openings to the street elevation provide privacy and minimise unnecessary heat loss.

The simple building form further contributes to thermal efficiency by reducing unnecessary external envelope complexity.

Renewable energy generation will be provided through roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, reducing operational carbon emissions and supporting the transition towards low-carbon living.

Modern construction techniques and energy-efficient building services will enable the dwelling to comfortably exceed historic building performance standards whilst creating a healthy and comfortable living environment.

The proposal therefore contributes positively towards both local and national objectives for sustainable development by reducing energy consumption, improving building efficiency and delivering a high-quality home capable of adapting to future environmental challenges.

11.0 Access

The application site benefits from an established and previously approved vehicular access directly from Berry Lane, and no alterations to these arrangements are proposed.

The existing access has already been assessed through the previous planning application and found to provide an acceptable level of highway safety.

The proposed driveway provides sufficient space for vehicle parking and manoeuvring within the site, enabling vehicles to enter and leave in a safe manner.

Pedestrian access is clear, direct and legible, with the principal entrance located adjacent to the parking area and easily identifiable from Berry Lane.

Internally, the dwelling has been designed to provide flexible accommodation capable of adapting to the changing needs of its occupants over time.

The split-level arrangement responds directly to the site's natural topography and allows convenient access between internal and external spaces without excessive engineering works or extensive retaining structures.

The proposal therefore provides a safe, practical and accessible environment appropriate for a modern family dwelling whilst respecting the site's physical characteristics.

12.0 Planning Policy Assessment

The proposal has been developed having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Barnsley Local Plan and the previously approved planning permission for the site.

The principle of a single detached dwelling has already been established through the extant planning permission, with the Local Planning Authority concluding that residential development on the site represents an acceptable form of development.

The current application does not seek to alter that established principle but instead presents an evolved architectural response which better reflects the site's topography and landscape setting.

The proposal has been carefully designed to satisfy the key objectives of Barnsley Local Plan Policy D1 by:

- responding positively to the site's physical characteristics;
- respecting the scale and character of surrounding development;
- creating high quality architecture that complements the local vernacular;
- incorporating durable and locally appropriate materials;
- protecting existing landscape features and mature trees;
- providing a safe and practical means of access;
- delivering a sustainable, energy-efficient dwelling; and
- creating a high quality living environment for future occupants.

The proposal also reflects the core design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework by promoting well-designed places that are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and responsive to their context.

Rather than competing with the surrounding landscape, the building has been designed to reinforce the existing qualities of Berry Lane through its simple form, restrained detailing and sensitive use of natural materials.

The proposal therefore represents sustainable development in accordance with both national and local planning policy.

13.0 Conclusion

This application presents a carefully considered architectural response to an established residential site.

The principle of development has already been accepted through the previous planning permission, and the current proposal seeks to build upon that approval by delivering a more refined, contextual and landscape-led design.

The dwelling has been informed by a detailed understanding of the site's physical characteristics, neighbouring development and rural setting.

Its simple form, natural stone construction and restrained architectural language draw inspiration from the traditional buildings that define the character of Howbrook whilst providing a contemporary home capable of meeting modern standards of sustainability, comfort and energy efficiency.

The design has intentionally worked with the site's natural topography, reducing the need for extensive engineering works and allowing the building to sit comfortably within the landscape.

Existing trees, boundary walls and established landscape features are retained wherever possible, ensuring that the rural character of Berry Lane is preserved and enhanced.

The proposal demonstrates that high quality contemporary architecture can successfully coexist with traditional rural character when informed by an understanding of place, proportion and materiality.

Taken as a whole, the development represents an appropriate evolution of the previously approved scheme. It delivers a bespoke family home of lasting architectural quality whilst respecting the character of the surrounding area and satisfying the objectives of national and local planning policy.

For these reasons, it is respectfully concluded that the proposal represents sustainable development and that planning permission should be granted.