



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**REDEVELOPMENT
AND CONVERSION OF
AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS
TO FORM 4 DWELLINGS
AT
KNABBE'S HALL FARM
KNABBS ROAD
SILKSTONE COMMON
BARNSELY
S75 4RD**

JUNE 2018

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the redevelopment and conversion of agricultural buildings to form four dwellings at Knabbe's Hall Farm, Knabbs Lane, Silkstone Common, Barnsley.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Impact Statement that has been provided to support this planning application.

Summary

The site is located approximately 6km to the west of Barnsley centre and approximately 1km to the south-west of Silkstone Common. The site is served from Knabbs Lane and the site lies approximately 200m to the west of Knabbs Lane.

The existing site consists of a grade II* listed farmhouse (Knabbe's Hall Farm) with a collection of former agricultural buildings immediately to the west of the farmhouse (two of these buildings are grade II listed). These buildings are now in a general state of disrepair and dilapidation.

The site also contains commercial buildings to the north and east of the farmhouse which are used in connection with a poultry farm but these buildings are outside the application boundary. All the site is in the same ownership and lies within the Green Belt in the development plan.

The proposed scheme primarily consists of the repair, conversion, and re-use of the former agricultural buildings to form three dwellings and the provision of a new build dwelling on the footprint of a building (not listed in its own right) which cannot be converted.

Access to the site will be along the current access road that serves the site from Knabbs Lane.

Pre-application discussions

Whilst no formal pre-application enquiry has been made to the LPA, a site meeting to discuss the overall scheme was held on 15 March 2017 involving Paul Matthews (architect and structural engineer on behalf of the applicant); Tony Wiles (Barnsley Council Conservation Officer); Laura Bennett (Barnsley Council Planning Officer); Elisabeth Lewis (Historic England); Craig McHugh (Historic England); and Nicola Wray (Historic England).

A further site meeting to discuss the condition of buildings and to outline the proposed works was held on 17 May 2017 between Paul Matthews and Paul Evans (Historic England engineer).

The conclusion to these meetings was that the proposed scheme could be considered, without prejudice, to be acceptable in principle and that Council officers and Historic England generally support the content of the overall scheme.

National and local planning policies

National planning policy guidance is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012.

This policy guidance proposes, as one of its core themes, a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraphs 11 and 12 state that –

“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

This National Planning Policy Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. It is highly desirable that local planning authorities should have an up-to-date plan in place.”

Furthermore, paragraph 14 states that –

*“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.....*

*...For **decision-taking** this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

In Section 6 “Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes”, the NPPF states at paragraph 49 that –

“Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites”.

In Section 7 “Requiring good design”, paragraph 56 states that –

“The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”.

In Section 9 “Protecting green belt land”, paragraphs 87 and 88 state that -

“As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Paragraph 90 states -

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:

.....

- *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and*

Section 12 “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” paragraph 128 states that –

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”.

Paragraph 128 goes on to state that –

“As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary”.

Paragraphs 132 and 134 consider any “harm” to the designated heritage asset that may be considered to accrue due to the proposed development –

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting....”

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use”

Local planning policy guidance is provided by the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which remains the development plan for the area until the adoption of the emerging Barnsley Local Plan. In addition, the Barnsley Core Strategy (CS) is also used in the decision-making process.

Relevant local planning policies include (but are not limited to) -

Core Strategy -

CSP29 - Design

CSP30 - The Historic Environment

CSP34 - Protection of Green Belt

CSP37 - Landscape

Unitary Development Plan -

GS8A - Re-use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Green Belt

GS9 - Visual Amenity in the Green Belt

BE2 - Listed Buildings

BE2A - Listed Buildings

BE6 - Design Standards

Principle of development

One of the overarching and central themes to the NPPF is the government's commitment to encouraging and achieving sustainable development and strong economic growth, and the crucial role and expectation that the planning system does everything it can to support this. The government expects that the planning system should operate to encourage, and not act as an impediment, to sustainable growth.

In order to deliver against these core planning requirements, the NPPF calls for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to draw up Local Plans which set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area and which positively and proactively encourage sustainable growth.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the NPPF confirm that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development, and that sustainable development comprises three specific roles, namely economic, social and environmental. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation because they are mutually dependent, and the NPPF calls for economic, social and environmental gains to be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF confirms that the sustainable development should be seen as a "golden thread" running through both plan making and decision taking. In order to achieve this, the same paragraph requires that LPAs approve proposals that accord with the development plan without delay, and that where the development plan is 'absent, silent, or relevant policies are "out of date" then permission should also be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so "would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits". The NPPF stresses that it is highly desirable that LPAs have an up-to-date Local Plan in place.

One of the "core planning principles" highlighted in paragraph 17 of the NPPF is that every effort should be made to "objectively identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area" in order to respond positively to wider opportunities for growth, and to promote mixed use developments.

The site lies within the green belt in the development plan and so the proposed scheme is subject to stringent national and local planning policies.

The element of the scheme that involves the repair and re-use of the former agricultural buildings is held to comply with para 90 of the NPPF, in that the buildings are of “permanent and substantial construction” (as evidenced by the structural survey report). The very limited domestic curtilage and limitations on the extent of these buildings are held to not adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt in this instance and whilst there is some very limited conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt, the benefits of the overall scheme are considered to outweigh any limited harm to such, particularly in relation to the retention of designated heritage assets (see below).

In relation to UDP policy GS8A, which generally reflects para 90 of the NPPF, the proposed scheme is held to not have a greater *material* impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the present use (part A) - whilst there will be some limited impact on openness by virtue of domestic curtilages, this limited impact is held to be outweighed by the retention of listed buildings. Nor will the scheme affect local residents (the only nearby residential property is Knabbe’s Hall Farm itself) and nor will it have an impact on highway safety - see the Transport Assessment provided to support the application (part B).

The buildings are sound and capable of conversion and there is no longer an agricultural operation on this site (parts C and D). Due to the presence of important listed buildings, the proposed scheme is also held to be architecturally sound (part E) and site curtilages have been drawn as tight as is practicable (part F) in order to have as little impact on the openness of the Green Belt as possible. In terms of a change of use of the buildings to residential, it is contended that the future of the listed and curtilage buildings can only be secured via such a residential scheme as there is very little likelihood that the site will ever be used again for agricultural purposes (part G iii).

Therefore, given the above, it is held that the conversion elements of the scheme meet the requirements of para 90 of the NPPF and UDP policy GS8A. In the context of these national and local policies, the new build element of the scheme is held to represent “very special circumstances” as per para 88 of the NPPF, in that it is the replacement of a dilapidated building and also re-forms the historical context of the courtyard buildings that affect the setting of adjacent listed and curtilage buildings. As such, any limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt or to the purposes of including land within it, are held to be outweighed by the retention of designate heritage assets.

The proposed development is also held to meet the strategic objectives of the CS policies, particularly in relation to CSP30, and the general design policies of UDP policy BE6. Natural materials, a high standard of architectural design, and the sensitive treatment of existing buildings are all held to contribute to a high-quality scheme in this instance.

With regard to designated heritage assets and the impact of the proposed scheme on these assets and other curtilage buildings, it is held that the proposed scheme represents the only viable scheme to secure the life and future of these important assets. Pre-application discussions indicated that all interested parties agreed in principle that such a scheme would be in the best interests of the buildings in question (including the garden II* Knabbe’s Hall Farm) and as such the proposed development is considered to meet the requirements of Section 12 of the NPPF and UDP policies BE2 and BE2A. Full details are provided in the Heritage Impact Statement to support this argument.

Policy BE2 states that “The Council will have special regard to the desirability of securing the retention, repair, maintenance and continued use of buildings of special architectural or historic interest”. Policy BE2A goes on, at parts B, to state that “Although the retention of the original use of a listed building will normally be preferred, the Council will work with the owner to find an acceptable new use which will allow for the building to be retained”. In addition, part C of BE2A states “The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity”.

The information contained in this DAS, and the information contained within the supporting Heritage Impact Statement, confirms that the proposed scheme meets the requirements of policy BE2A as the listed and curtilage buildings will be repaired and retained and pre-application discussions indicated that the principle of an acceptable new use for the buildings. The proposed scheme, including the new build element, has been designed to preserve and enhance the setting of listed buildings, particularly Knabbe's Hall Farm.

In conclusion, and for reasons set out above, the proposed scheme is considered to meet all relevant national and local planning policies.

Design

Amount

It is proposed that the development provides for four residential units. Three of these units (Plots 1-3) will be provided in existing buildings on the site -

Plot 1 -

The supporting floor plans indicate that a shower room, a utility room, a kitchen, a dining room, and a snug will be formed at ground floor level in the small barn and linked to the farm building by a single storey glazed access (to replace the dilapidated current link) to provide a living room. At first floor level, two bedrooms and a bathroom are to be provided in the small barn with two further en-suite bedrooms provided in the farm building.

Plots 2 and 3 -

This long building will form two residential units (Plots 2 and 3). Both dwellings will have a WC, a utility room, a kitchen, a dining room, and a living room at ground floor level. At first floor level, Plot 2 will have three bedrooms (two ensuite), a bathroom, and a study room whilst Plot 3 will have four bedrooms (two ensuite) and a bathroom.

Plot 4 -

The new build unit will have an entrance hall, a dining room, a kitchen, a living room, and a snug at ground floor level. At first floor level, there will be four bedrooms (two en suite) and a family bathroom.

Layout

The layout of the residential units is arranged around the existing courtyard. This courtyard will remain open, with car parking and domestic curtilages being provided on the outside of the complex.

Scale

The scale of development is determined by the existing buildings. The new build (Plot 4) is of a similar scale to that of the existing buildings and is designed to be read as an “extension” to the building to which it is attached.

Appearance

Plot 1 -

Elevational plans indicate that there will be no new openings for windows or doors in the elevations of these buildings but a number of currently blocked doors and window openings will be reinstated. However, in order to obtain some natural light, conservation rooflights are proposed to the roof planes of the building that face out from the courtyard and a number of existing larger openings (former barn doors etc) will be fully glazed.

The proposed fully glazed single storey link is of a contemporary design that adds variety to the built form and represents a practical link solution rather than a pastiche (as would be the case if the link was built in natural materials to replicate the dilapidated existing link).

Plots 2 and 3 -

As in the case of the buildings described above, a number of former openings will be restored and natural light will be obtained by the use of glazing in door openings at ground floor level. Only two small window openings will be formed and much of the natural light to the first floor will again be obtained by the judicious use of conservation rooflights. The current dilapidated corrugated steel roof will be replaced by natural Yorkshire stone slates.

Whilst the appearance of the building when viewed from the courtyard will be altered by the use of rooflights, the overall appearance of the building at ground and first floor levels will remain largely unaltered. Similarly, the west elevation will remain largely unchanged, save for the con-

servation rooflights. It is considered that these changes lead to less than substantial harm being caused to the significance of the building.

Plot 4 -

On the footprint of the building attached to the southern end of the un-listed barn described above, it is intended to provide an “extension” to this building that will function as a separate dwelling unit. This building will therefore form the third wing of the courtyard, effectively enclosing the space on three sides and providing an appropriate setting for all the buildings in this complex.

Accommodation will be laid out over two storeys, with a single storey lean-to “extension” being provided on the eastern gable.

Natural materials will be used and the building has been designed in a traditional manner to complement existing buildings.

Landscaping

The materials to be used in the courtyard are still to be determined in discussions with the LPA and Historic England. To date, this area has not been excavated and so it is unknown as to what materials may lie underneath the current unmade ground. However, considering the unmade conditions of the access road leading to this area, it is considered unlikely that any hard materials will be present. The applicant would therefore be looking to introduce hard landscaping, such as natural stone slabs and/or stone setts. It is also intended that this area remain open and be a shared communal area, with no car parking and no domestic paraphernalia etc, so as to retain the visual integrity of the courtyard.

Domestic curtilages allocated to each unit will be as small as practicable and all gardens and parking areas will be on the outside of the building complex, again to ensure as far as practicable the integrity of the buildings when viewed from beyond the site.

Access

Access issues have been covered within a supporting Transport Statement that accompanies this application.

Other material planning considerations

Flood risk - there is no risk of flooding on this site.

Ecology - preliminary investigations reveal no evidence of bats or bat roosts within the buildings.

Trees - no trees are affected by the proposed scheme.

Contaminated land - there is no evidence of land being contaminated.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the proposed development satisfies all relevant national and local planning policies in both principle and detail and is therefore capable of being approved subject to any necessary planning conditions.