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2024/0886

**Barnsley MBC**

**Worsbrough Mill, Park Road, Barnsley, S70 5LJ**

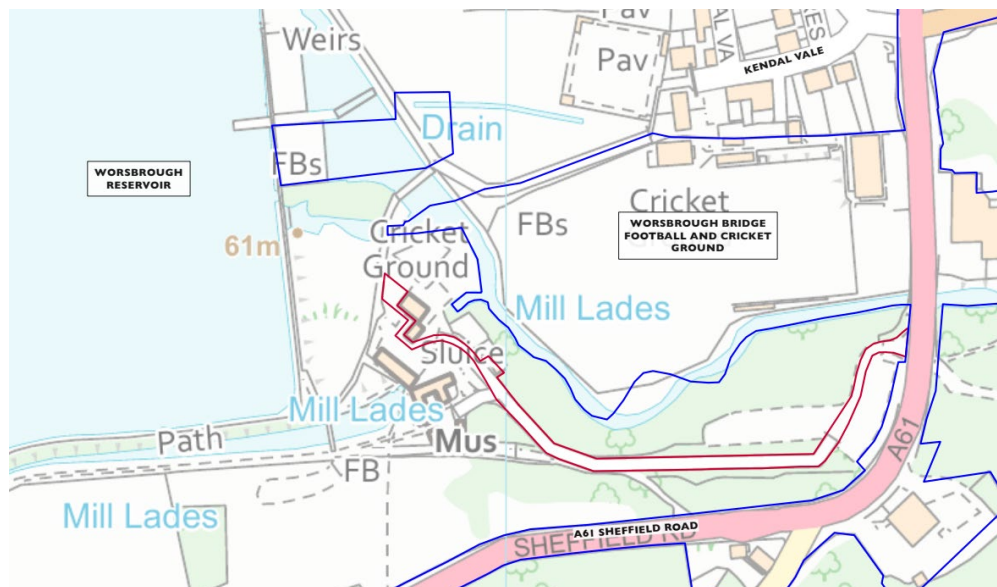
**Siting of wooden container to existing wooden container for storage.**

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This application is being brought before members as it has been made by the Council.

**Site Description**

The application relates to the Worsbrough Mill Museum, which is located within Worsbrough Country Park, off Park Road, approximately 3km to the south of Barnsley Town Centre. The site comprises a water powered corn mill constructed circa 1625 and a later 19th century engine mill, set in over 200 acres of Country Park including a 60-acre reservoir built in 1804. The two main buildings on site are grade II\* and grade II-listed and are constructed from deeply coursed dressed sandstone with stone slate and Welsh Slate roofs. There is an existing timber-clad container located to the northern boundary of the Mill Complex, north of the Mill itself and to the north-west of the existing Field Study Centre, which largely screens the container from view from the south and south-east. A play area is located to the north-east.



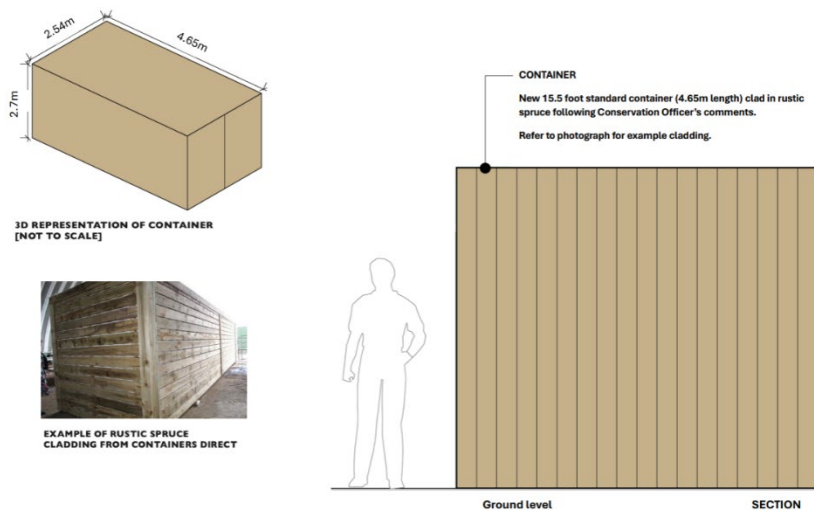
## Planning History

There is an extensive planning history associated with the application site. However, the most recent and relevant application is as follows:

1. 2022/0020 – Removal of existing container and erection of larger replacement container in new location for storage of machinery and tools. – Approved.

## Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking permission for the siting of a new timber-clad container to be used for grain storage. The container exists and is currently located to the south of the existing Field Study Centre. It measures approximately 4.7 metres x 2.5 metres x 2.7 metres and is clad in rustic spruce. It is proposed that the new container would be relocated to the side of an existing container used for tool storage located to the north-west of the Field Study Centre.



## Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the current development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment, and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies which are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at a full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering on its objectives. This means, no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review, which is due to take place in 2027, or earlier, if circumstances require it.

### Local Plan Allocation – Green Belt

The site is located in the Green Belt. Therefore, the following policies are relevant:

- ***Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development.***
- ***Policy GB1: Protection of Green Belt.***
- ***Policy GB2: Replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings in the Green Belt.***
- ***Policy D1: High quality design and place making.***
- ***Policy HE1: The Historic Environment.***
- ***Policy HE3: Developments affecting Historic Buildings.***
- ***Policy GD1: General Development.***
- ***Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection.***
- ***Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.***
- ***Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety.***

### National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. The core of this is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Proposals that align with the Local Plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In respect of this application, relevant sections include:

- ***Section 12: Achieving well designed places.***
- ***Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land.***

*Paragraph 153. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

*Paragraph 154. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:*

- a) *buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*

- c) *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;*
- d) *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) *limited infilling in villages;*
- f) *limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) *limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.*
- h) *Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
  - i. *mineral extraction;*
  - ii. *engineering operations;*
  - iii. *local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
  - iv. *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
  - v. *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
  - vi. *development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.*

– **Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.**

*Paragraph 219. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

*Paragraph 221. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.*

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- **Section 16: Decision on application.**
- **Section 66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions.**

**Consultations**

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Conservation Officer | <i>No objections.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Biodiversity         | <i>It is recommended that an informative is added to the decision notice.</i>                                                                                                                                                        |
| Forestry Officer     | <i>There are trees in close proximity to the proposed new container, yet no tree survey has been provided with this application. It appears as though one tree will overhang the new container slightly and as such it is highly</i> |

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|                             | <p><i>likely that the container will be located in the trees root protection area. It appears as though the incursion is only minor and as such placing the container in the location proposed would not be detrimental to the trees in the long term. Care will need to be taken when creating the base for the container and when positioning the container itself. I am content that the container can be accommodated in this location, but given the lack of arboricultural information and consideration for the constraints that the trees pose we have no option but to condition tree protection details and an arboricultural method statement be provided pre-commencement. I would therefore ask that the following condition be used if permission is granted.</i></p> <p><i>No development or other operations being undertaken on site shall take place until the following documents in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:</i></p> <p><i>Tree protective barrier details<br/>Tree protection plan<br/>Arboricultural method statement</i></p> <p><i>No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the approved methodologies</i></p> <p><i>Reason: To ensure the continued well-being of the trees in the interests of the amenity of the locality.</i></p> |
| Heritage and Museums        | <i>No response.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Parks Supervisor            | <i>No response.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Public Rights of Way (PROW) | <i>It is recommended that an informative is added to the decision notice.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## Representations

A site notice was placed nearby, expiring 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024. A press notice was used, expiring 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024. No representations were received.

## Assessment

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application, the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

### Principle of Development and Green Belt Impact

The application site is located in the Green Belt.

Local Plan Policy GB1 restricts development in the Green Belt that is considered to be inappropriate unless very special circumstances are presented. Exceptions to this are set out in the NPPF.

Local Plan Policy GB2 relates to the replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings in the Green Belt. The extension or alteration of a building where the total size of the proposed and previous extensions does not exceed the size of the original building is acceptable in principle if cumulatively, the development would not amount to more than a doubling of the size of the original building. Outbuildings will not be taken into account when calculating original floorspace but will be taken into account when calculating the cumulative additions to the original dwelling. Original means as existing in 1948 or, in relation to a building constructed later, as it was built.

The application site is unusual in that Local Plan Policy GB2 does not fully fit as the container falls within the wider historic Mill complex with the original building(s) dating back to the early 1600s. The new container would result in a relatively modest amount of additional floorspace of approximately 11.8m<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not conflict with the wider purposes of this Green Belt Policy – which is to prevent urban sprawl and harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Additionally, it could be argued that all the buildings within the Mill complex make up the entire site and the proposed additional floorspace created by the container does not exceed the limits of this policy. Furthermore, paragraph 221 of the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies'. The proposal would address the need for a better grain store facility and would provide a secure rodent proof facility and would be located in an area as to reduce the off-loading time (on delivery) and provide a convenient storage for grain use close to the historic mill. As such, whilst there is undoubtedly some conflict with Green Belt policies, significant weight is afforded to the future conservation of a heritage asset, and the anticipated benefits of enabling development in this instance would outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt, which in this instance is considered to be minor and is therefore afforded limited weight. The proposal is therefore considered to be an appropriate form of development in Green Belt policy terms and is acceptable in principle.

Development will also be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

Development should also conserve and enhance the significance and setting of the borough's heritage assets, paying particular attention to those elements which contribute most to the borough's distinctive character and sense of place.

### Design, Heritage and Visual Amenity

Sections 16 (2), 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building and conservation area or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The applicant engaged in discussions with the Council's Conservation Officer prior to the submission of the application where a number of options and locations were considered for the new container. The proposed location of the container is considered the least intrusive, and although the container would be visible when standing in the environs of the cobbled yard to the north of the mill near to the existing Field Study Centre and tool storage facility, the development would be screened from view by existing buildings in the yard when approaching the oldest part of the historic mill from the lane to the south-east. As most visitors are likely to approach the mill either by the top yard or by travelling and looking west in the lower yard, it is considered that this part of the setting contributes less than other areas due to the relative lower degree of visibility. Additionally, whilst the proposal is a modern intervention following similar precedents in the vicinity, such as the existing tool storage container, which is of a similar scale and appearance as proposed, it is considered that the sensitivity to change in this area would be relatively less than elsewhere and the harm would be low. The treatment and cladding of the container in rustic spruce would also mitigate visual impact to a degree. The proposal would also be 100% reversible. As such, the Conservation Officer raised no objections. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

*The proposal is therefore considered to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of nearby grade II\* and grade II-listed buildings in accordance with Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and is considered to comply with Local Plan Policy HE1: The Historic Environment, Local Plan Policy HE3: Developments affecting Historic Buildings, and Local Plan Policy D1: High Quality Design and Placemaking and would be acceptable regarding visual amenity.*

### Residential Amenity

The Council's mapping system indicates that there is a flat above Miller's Tea Room which is located approximately 45-metres to the south-east of the Mill complex. The new container would not be in direct view of the flat and would likely have very little impact on its occupant(s). More widely, the site is relatively remote with no other immediate residential properties nearby which would otherwise be impacted by the proposed development. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

*The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and Local Plan Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection and would be acceptable regarding residential amenity.*

### Highway Safety

The proposed development would not be prejudicial to highway safety, and as such, this weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

*The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety and would be acceptable regarding highway safety.*

### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Worsbrough Country Park is recognised as having biodiversity and geological value. The application site is located within the Country Park and is characterised as a grassed area to the north-west of the existing Field Study Centre. The applicant has indicated that the proposal meets the threshold for the de minimis exemption in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Biodiversity was consulted on the application and the Council's Planning Ecologist raised no objections due to the small size of

the site and the low value of the habitat to be affected. It was also confirmed that the proposal would meet the threshold for the de minimis exemption. It was recommended that an informative be added to the decision notice setting out that any required vegetation clearance shall be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March – August inclusive) or following a check where nesting birds are confirmed to be absent by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

*The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.*

### Trees

The proposed location of the new container would be in proximity of an established tree line along the northern border of the complex. The Council's Forestry Officer was consulted on the proposal, and it was noted that a tree survey had not been provided, although it appears that at least one tree would overhang the container slightly. It is therefore highly likely that the container would be located within the root protection area of the trees. It appears that any potential incursion would be minor and as such placing the container in the location proposed would not be detrimental to the trees in the long term. Nevertheless, care will need to be taken when creating the base for the container and when positioning the container itself, and whilst the Forestry Officer is content that the container can be accommodated in this location, there is a lack of arboricultural information and consideration for the constraints that the trees pose. As such, it is recommended that a condition be attached to any forthcoming decision to require the submission of additional arboricultural details.

### Planning Balance and Conclusion

Whilst there is undoubtedly some conflict with Green Belt policies, significant weight is attributed to the future conservation of a heritage asset, and the anticipated benefits of enabling development on this occasion would outweigh any potential harm to the character and openness of the Green Belt, which is likely to be minor and is therefore attributed limited weight on this occasion. The proposal would address a need for a better grain store facility and would provide a secure rodent proof facility that would be positioned in an area that would reduce the off-loading time (on delivery) and would provide a convenient storage for grain close to the historic mill. In this instance, the slight departure from Green Belt policies is therefore considered acceptable and in accordance with paragraph 221 of the NPPF.

Modest weight has been attributed to the appearance of the new container which would be sited and has been clad in rustic spruce as to mitigate the impact of any intrusion on the historic environment and visual amenity of the area. The proposed location is considered to be the least intrusive and the harm to the historic environment would be low.

The Council's mapping system indicates that there is a flat above Miller's Tea Room which is located approximately 45-metres to the south-east of the Mill complex. The new container would not be in direct view of the flat and would likely have very little impact on its occupant(s).

The proposed development would not be prejudicial to highway safety.

The proposed development would affect a small site with a low value of habitat and would meet the threshold for the de minimis exemption in relation to BNG.

A condition will be attached to any forthcoming decision that requires the submission of additional arboricultural details in line with the comments of the Forestry Officer.

Considering the above, the proposal would comply with Local Plan Policies HE1, HE3, D1, GD1, T4 and BIO1, and the planning balance is tilted in favour of the proposed development. As such, this application is recommended for approval.



**Recommendation -  
Approve with Conditions**