

Client: Jim Booth

Date: 08/06/2026

Job: Smallshaw Farm Spa

Job No: 1552

Heritage Statement



Visualisation of the proposed scheme

Introduction

This Heritage Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the extension of Smallshaw Spa, located at Hollin Lane, Millhouse Green, Barnsley (S36 9NH). It should be read alongside the accompanying Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement. The statement considers the heritage context of the proposal, including the setting and significance of the Grade II listed buildings at Smallshaw Farm, and explains how the design responds to pre-application heritage feedback.

The design has been developed in response to the feedback received through the pre-application process, particularly in respect of heritage and landscape considerations. As a result, the extension has been repositioned to the east side of the existing building, projecting south to form an L-shaped arrangement.

This allows the new built form to be located further from the Grade II listed buildings on the wider site, reducing visual competition and improving the overall relationship between the historic farmstead and the spa building.

The scheme continues to work within areas of existing hardstanding, limiting encroachment into open countryside and ensuring that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved. The architectural approach reflects the rural context, employing materials and building forms characteristic of the local agricultural vernacular.

Planning policy matters, including Green Belt assessment, floorspace calculations, Previously Developed Land / Grey Belt considerations and the case for Very Special Circumstances, are addressed in detail within the accompanying Planning Statement. The Design and Access Statement addresses the wider design, layout and access rationale. This Heritage Statement focuses on heritage significance, setting and the conservation response to the revised proposal.



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Site and Proposal Context

Smallshaw Spa is located at Hollin Lane, Millhouse Green, Barnsley (S36 9NH), in a rural setting within the South Yorkshire Green Belt. The site sits on the edge of the Peak District National Park, surrounded by open countryside and agricultural land which contributes to the tranquil character of the spa environment. The spa forms part of the wider Smallshaw Farm complex, which includes a number of converted traditional farm buildings and Grade II listed structures that collectively define the historic farmstead.

The existing spa building is positioned to the east of the historic farmhouse and barns, with views across gently sloping fields to the south and east. The arrangement of buildings on the site provides a clear separation between the spa accommodation and the traditional stone-built elements of the farmstead, while still maintaining a cohesive relationship between the uses.

The wider site includes holiday accommodation, equestrian facilities, and outdoor leisure spaces, with access taken from Hollin Lane. The surrounding land remains in agricultural use, reinforcing the rural context and open landscape character. Although located within the Green Belt, the spa occupies areas that have historically been developed or surfaced, which helps to limit the visual impact of built form when viewed from the surrounding countryside.

In terms of heritage, the site includes several Grade II listed buildings, notably the historic farmhouse and associated barns arranged around the original farmstead enclosure. These buildings are constructed in traditional sandstone with slate roofs and form a prominent part of the architectural character of the site. Any development within this setting must therefore be sensitively designed to ensure that the significance and prominence of the listed buildings are preserved.



Site location plan

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Visualisation from the Westerly approach

Heritage Assets and Significance

The proposed extension to Smallshaw Spa has been formulated with full regard to the site's heritage context, which comprises three Grade II listed buildings: two adjoining farmhouses known collectively as Smallshaw Farm, and two former barns arranged in an 'L'-shaped plan and now converted to holiday accommodation. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to give special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. In parallel, Policy HE1 of the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Local Plan supports development that conserves and, where appropriate, enhances heritage assets and their significance.

A defining aspect of the significance of the listed buildings lies not only in their individual architectural qualities, but in their spatial relationship. The southernmost barn projects forward beyond the principal elevation of the farmhouse, creating a degree of enclosure and forming an intimate space between the buildings. This arrangement is clearly legible as a former farmyard. The loose courtyard configuration, traditional materials and agricultural proportions combine to produce a coherent and readily understood farmstead composition. That spatial enclosure and legibility materially contribute to the significance of the setting, reinforcing the historic functional relationship between farmhouse and barns.

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Historical map showing Small Shaw Farm in 1929

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The existing spa complex lies approximately 20 metres to the east of the listed farmhouses. Although the proposals do not involve direct alteration to the listed buildings, the site falls within their setting and must therefore respond appropriately to their established character and spatial logic. The special interest of the farmhouses and barns derives from their traditional agricultural form, material palette and arrangement around defined external spaces. Coursed stone walls, stone slate roofs and varied, asymmetrical rooflines - particularly evident in the former barns - contribute to a clearly articulated farmstead composition.

Pre-application Heritage Feedback

Pre-application advice identified concerns regarding the relationship between the existing spa, barn and stable buildings and the listed farmstead. In particular, the varied materials and irregular configuration of these structures were considered to create a fragmented and visually discordant grouping. The projecting stable element interrupts the frontage of the spa building, and the use of corrugated metal roofing to the spa and barn contrasts with the coursed stonework and stone slate roofing that characterise the listed buildings. Although physically attached, the eastern buildings do not express any clear functional hierarchy or coherent agricultural logic, and consequently do not read as a unified outbuilding group. In contrast to the strong legibility of the historic courtyard to the west, this eastern range appears visually and conceptually disconnected from the farmstead.

The Conservation Officer raised concerns regarding the original design of the proposed extension to Smallshaw Spa, noting that the significant increase in scale and massing, particularly when viewed from the west and southwest, would negatively impact the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed buildings. The officer highlighted the substantial roof span, footprint, and height, all of which were seen as intrusive in comparison to the existing, low-profile building. The use of materials, such as the green roof, was also criticised as potentially drawing excessive attention from various viewpoints. The officer felt that the visual prominence of the extension would detract from the historic context of the site, particularly in relation to the listed structures, and as such, they did not support the proposal in its original form.

In response to the feedback provided by the Conservation Officer, significant revisions have been made to the design of the Smallshaw Spa extension, as outlined above, to address concerns related to scale, massing, and materiality.



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Contextual visualisation showing listed building in the background

Design Response and Impact on Setting

The proposed extension responds directly to these issues by rationalising the built form and reintroducing a coherent spatial structure. The removal of the projecting stable eliminates the most visually disruptive element of the current arrangement. The new extension, positioned on the opposite side of the building and further from the listed structures, establishes a more ordered and unified composition.

Importantly, the extension incorporates a projecting element that creates an 'L'-shaped plan form, introducing a sense of enclosure and defining a courtyard space to the front of the spa building. This approach draws upon the established spatial logic of the historic farmyard to the west, where enclosure and projection create a clearly legible yard. While expressed in a contemporary manner, the proposed configuration echoes this arrangement and allows the spa building to be read as part of a coherent farmstead grouping, rather than as an isolated or arbitrarily attached structure. In this way, the development reinforces, rather than undermines, the historic courtyard character that underpins the setting's significance.

In material terms, the extension adopts a palette informed by the agricultural vernacular of the site. Coursed stone is proposed to a defined datum level, with vertical timber cladding above, reflecting the hierarchy and textural qualities typical of traditional barn structures. This enables the building to sit comfortably alongside the historic fabric without resorting to direct imitation. The asymmetrical pitched roof form references the varied roofscapes of the former barns, while remaining lower in height than the farmhouse to preserve its primacy.

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To improve legibility, the design introduces a more unified front elevation with a clearly defined entrance. Larger glazed elements are incorporated around the principal access and along the east-facing elevation. Such glazing is characteristic of high-quality barn conversions and is employed here to articulate a contemporary interpretation of a traditional barn opening. When viewed frontally, the alignment of ground and first-floor glazing creates the impression of a single generous opening, reinforcing the agricultural narrative in a modern yet contextually grounded manner.



Historical map showing Small Shaw Farm in 1948

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The extension has been designed to remain subservient within the overall composition. Its reduced ridge height and physical separation ensure that it reads as a secondary element in key views, including along the access track where the farmhouse and former barns remain the dominant and foreground features. From within the yard to the west, the new built form would be perceived as a complementary outbuilding that strengthens the sense of a farmstead arranged around defined external spaces.



Visualisation from the westerly aspect

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed development enhances the setting of the listed buildings by replacing a fragmented and visually discordant arrangement with one that reflects the spatial logic, material character and courtyard form of the historic farmstead. By reinforcing enclosure, legibility and cohesion, the extension preserves and enhances the significance of the heritage assets, in accordance with the statutory duty under Section 66(1) and the objectives of local and national heritage policy.

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