

**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF
THE APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION
BY
THE HESLEY GROUP
IN RELATION TO THE 'HOPPER BUILDING' AT LOW LAITHES VILLAGE,
OLD FARM LANE, WOMBWELL, BARNSELY S73 8SU**

**WALKER WOOD LIMITED
70 CLARKEHOUSE ROAD, SHEFFIELD S10 2LJ**



1. CONTEXT

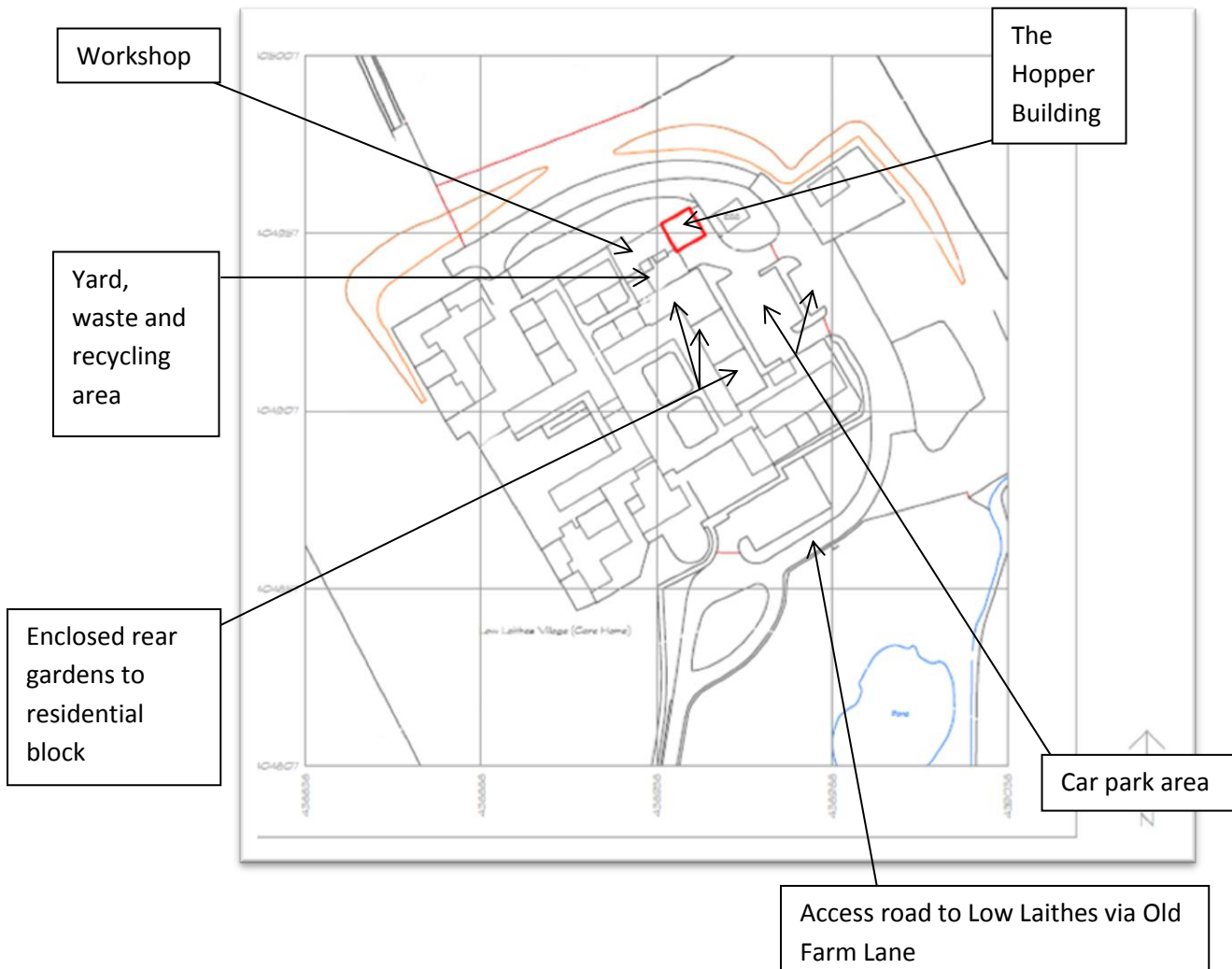
- 1.1 Low Laithes Village is a specialist care facility for adults with autism and other complex needs, located at Old Farm Lane, Wombwell, Barnsley S73 8SU.
- 1.2 The Village is operated by The Hesley Group; established in 1975, the Group provides specialist residential services and schools for young people and adults, often with autism, who have learning disabilities, complex needs and may exhibit challenging behaviour.
- 1.3 The Village operates as a single planning unit and the whole site is designated as C2 use class.
- 1.4 This application relates to an ancillary building known as 'the hopper building' which houses the now decommissioned hopper and bio-fuel boiler. This proposal aims to bring back into use this ancillary building.
- 1.5 The hopper itself consists of an underground funnel, the upper opening of which is located at ground floor level within the hopper building with the remainder below ground. The stem of the funnel then exits into the bio-fuel boiler located in a room beneath the building (below ground). Pellets would be poured into the funnel at surface level, travel through the funnel into the bio-fuel boiler below.
- 1.6 The bio-fuel boiler has not been in use for several years due to regular malfunctioning due to blocking. When blocking occurs the only means of unblocking the system is to physically dig out the large volume of pellets. It is therefore proposed that it would be beneficial for this currently unused building to be brought back into use for storage purposes.
- 1.7 Whilst planning permission is not required for the internal layout of the building it may assist to set out the proposed alterations.

- 1.8 The hopper opening, at surface level, is currently covered by a grate surrounded by railings. Suitable structural reports and designs have been obtained from Eastwood and Partners Consulting Engineers. The proposal includes the removal of the existing grate and railings, making good of the existing floor slab using steelwork and pre-cast concrete planks to the structural engineer's details, in order to create a floor where the entrance to the hopper and grate is currently located. Within this newly created floor area an aluminium access cover will be fitted, beneath which a galvanised access ladder and cage will continue to provide access to the funnel boiler for maintenance purposes (see drawing 003).
- 1.9 The building will then be suitable internally for use as storage of items and as a covered and secure unit where general repairs can be undertaken by staff.
- 1.10 In addition to these internal changes, external physical alterations are required to the building in order to make it suitable for its new ancillary purpose, which relate specifically to the enclosure of the currently open front elevation of the building, in order to create a secure and weather proof building with adequate access for the placement or removal of larger items, as well as access by individuals.
- 1.11 This application is therefore made in respect of the external alterations for which planning permission is required, in order to facilitate the change of this building from use as an ancillary hopper to ancillary storage within the C2 use class.

2. THE SITE

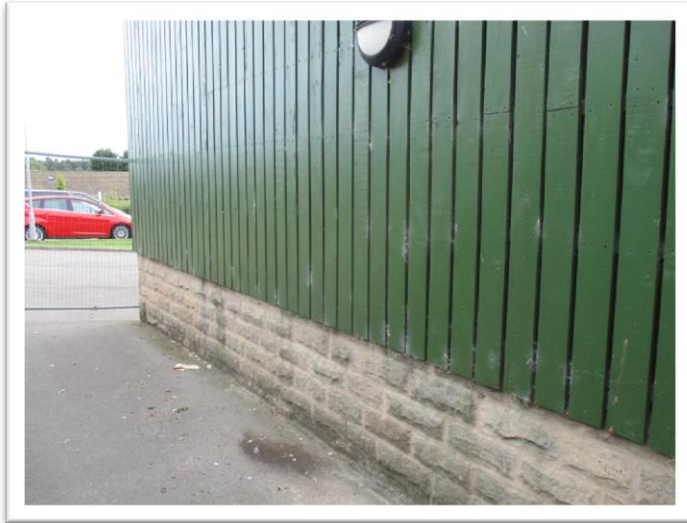
- 2.1 Low Laithes Village is located within the Green Belt and is a purpose-built residential service for 35 adults with complex needs, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

- 2.2 The Village was originally Low Laithes Farm, a dairy farm which was subsequently purchased by The Hesley Group and in respect of which planning permission was granted in 2006 (under reference 2006/0205) for the partial demolition and redevelopment of the farm to form the residential care home.
- 2.3 Further planning applications have been made in respect of the site, with the most recent and ongoing application under ref: 2014/0986 being subsequently varied under ref: 2014/1577 and 2016/0443, with a further grant of planning permission in respect of application 2014/0986 occurring on 31st January 2017. This proposal in respect of the hopper building is independent to the alterations proposed to the site within 2014/0986.
- 2.4 Low Laithes Village is accessed via Old Farm Lane, which is a private road leading from the A633 at Wombwell. It is located within an area designated as Green Belt within the UDP Map.
- 2.5 The hopper building is located at the far corner to the rear of the site as one enters the site from Old Farm Lane. The building is located at the periphery of the Village to the north. Its front elevation is visible to some degree from the surrounding green belt land, although this visibility is limited due to its location and the positioning of surrounding buildings and any changes to the external aspect of the building would only be visible from the green belt land to the east and south east.



3.0 EXISTING EXTERNAL DESIGN

- 3.1 The hopper building is constructed from a dwarf wall of internal leaf concrete block with stone external leaf. The upper area of the walls is made up of concrete block with external timber cladding (stained green). The roof is green palisade sheeting with two roof lights to the rear of the roof. The external design and colour of the materials enables the building to blend with its green belt surroundings and with its neighbouring stone built buildings.

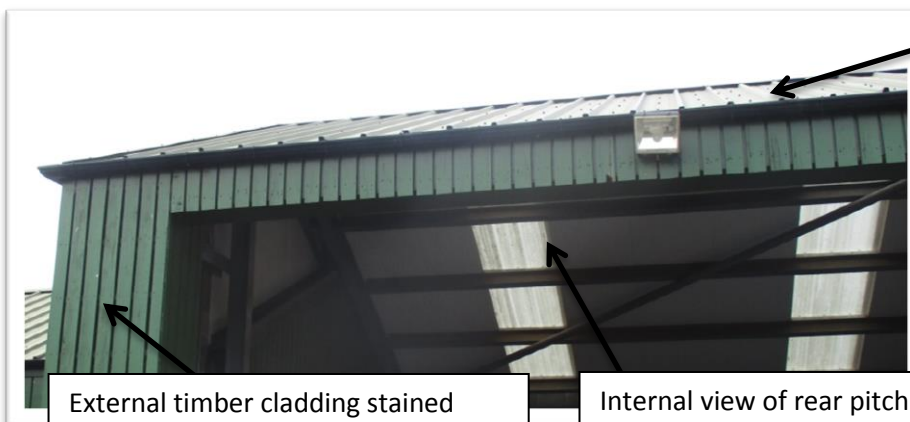


Side elevation – external stone overleaf with external wooden cladding.



Rear elevation

Rear of neighbouring workshop



External green palisade sheeting roof

External timber cladding stained green to match the green palisade sheeting roof.

Internal view of rear pitch of roof, including the roof lights visible through the entrance within the front elevation.

- 3.2 The internal area of the building is currently highly visible to the Low Laithes buildings within the immediate vicinity, and also from the car park area and is also visible from the green belt land to the east and south east of the building. The large entrance seen within the existing front elevation drawing (002) results in the internal grey concrete brickwork, the white underside of the profile sheet roofing and the roof lights, the green steel rafters and frame all being visible externally.



Internal of the hopper building

- 3.3 The entrance is currently cordoned off using Heras Fencing in order to prevent residents from entering the building when they are out walking around Low Laithes Farm.

4.3 PROPOSED EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS

- 4.2 As can be seen from the drawings 002 and 003, no alterations will be made to the existing left, rear or right elevations or to the roof of the hopper building.
- 4.3 The proposal is to enclose the front elevation by way of a solid steel roller shutter door with in-built wicket door. The door will consist of a powder-coated finish: RAL colour 6002 'Leaf Green'. By use of the door rather than in-filling, the cost of the project will be reduced; in-filling will require steel supports, the cost of which may prevent the Village from proceeding with the project. In addition the roller

shutter door enables access for larger items whilst incorporating the wicket door for easy access for individuals.

- 4.4 Once enclosed the hopper building will not only be brought back into use but will no longer require Heras fencing along its entrance to prevent residents from entering the building, thus making the area more secure.
- 4.5 The green colour of the newly formed doors and walls will match the existing colour of external areas of the building, enabling it to blend into its surroundings to a greater extent than at present.

5.0 GREEN BELT

- 5.1 The outside of the hopper building currently sits well within the green belt and the Low Laithes Village site from both the rear and side aspects. The front elevation and the interior, visible to some extent from the green belt to the east and south east of the site, will be significantly improved by the proposed alterations, as the internal grey concrete blocks and the internal roof pitch will no longer be visible, but will be enclosed by the proposed door, the colour and design of which will reflect much of the remainder of the building and neighbouring buildings through the choice of colour.
- 5.2 The proposal will have no negative impact physically or visually upon the green belt land within which it is located, having no adverse effect on the amenity of local residents or the appearance of the locality. The proposal will enable enclosure of this currently unused building with minimal external alteration in a way that respects the use of the building and the design of the other outbuildings within the Village and the design of the Village in its entirety. The hopper building will visually integrate into the green belt land to an even greater extent than at present.

6.0 ACCESS

- 6.1 Pedestrian access will be via the existing routes within the Village and no changes are made within the proposal.
- 6.2 A yard area is located directly outside the hopper building and adjacent to this is the area for bin and recycling storage and collection, access for both is via the car park area which also acts as a turning 'circle'. No alterations are proposed to the vehicular access. As the current access operates successfully including allowing for larger vehicles towards the refuse storage area, should a vehicle require access to the location of the hopper building it is not anticipated that any difficulties will be expected, indeed deliveries of pellets for the boiler would arrive previously straight into the storage area within the hopper building.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed external alterations to the hopper building will enable this currently unused building to be brought back into use. By incorporating an entrance door to the building, the area will become secure and protected from the elements, and with the addition of the internal alterations, these changes will enable this building to provide additional usable space for storage and to carry out general maintenance works at the Low Laithes Village.
- 7.2 No change of use will occur as the use continues to be ancillary to class C2.
- 7.3 The design of the proposed external alterations has considered the position of the building within an area of green belt. These changes enhance the vista from surrounding green belt land and enhance the integration of the building with its neighbouring buildings and within the green belt.
- 7.4 In light of the above we would respectfully request that this application be granted.