DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Relating to the Proposed Conversion of Agricultural Buildings into 7 Dwelling Units, with Ancillary Garages, At Blacker Grange Farm, off Barnsley Road, Blacker Hill.

Applicants: Thawley Trustees.

1. Introduction.

1.1 This is a detailed Design and Access Statement to support the submission of a formal planning application for the above-mentioned development, which has been prepared by Simon M Elliott - Dip URP. The application in question is submitted for full planning permission for the conversion of a group of agricultural buildings into seven dwelling units at Blacker Grange Farm, off Barnsley Road, Blacker Hill in Barnsley.

1.2 The purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to highlight the relevant and material considerations that need to be taken into account by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) relating to the design and accessibility of the proposed development and its relationship with the surrounding land and buildings.

1.3 In this particular case the design of the proposed development has been dictated by the extent of the existing buildings and their external facing materials. In terms of the details of the proposed development it involves the conversion of the existing barns and other farm buildings into a total of seven dwelling units. The development also involves alterations and some re-building works to form both the dwellings and garaging and it is also proposed to erect new garage blocks within the confines of the group of buildings, the access to which is gained via the existing access that serves the existing farmyard.

1.4 The proposed development also involves the removal of a number of unsightly buildings, structures and silos on this site that will represent a benefit to the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt. The buildings that are to be removed from this site include a double Atcost barn to the rear of the site (to the south west of the site) and the adjacent tarmac and concrete hardstanding and the surrounding enclosures. There are also a number of animal feed silos on this site that will be removed as an integral part of the proposed development.

1.5 In terms of the principle of the proposed development and its design the details have been considered very carefully. Discussions have also taken place between the agent and the Council's planning officers dealing with this geographical area in development control matters. This proposal involves the creation of **seven** dwellinghouses by altering and using the existing agricultural buildings that are no longer used and are not, in any event practical to be efficient for modern agricultural practices.

2. Design of the Proposed Development Relative to its Surroundings.

2.1 The site of the proposed development is located off Barnsley Road, to the southern side of Blacker Hill and will utilise the existing predominantly stone-built agricultural buildings. The proposed development also involves significant improvements to the appearance of this group of buildings through the replacement of roofing sheets with artificial stone roof slates or other materials that will be agreed before any work is commenced.

2.2 This development also proposes the rebuilding of the small sections of the buildings that are weathered, visually unsightly or structurally unsound. None of the buildings on this site are thought to be Listed, but the group as a whole has considerable interest and will benefit from being renovated and put back to a viable use. The proposed development is remote from the closest dwellings and it is considered that there should be no detriment to residential amenity as a result of this proposal being implemented.

2.3 The design of this development proposes to retain all of the important elements of the existing buildings and replace all of the unattractive or more modern alien features with a sympathetic form of development. The development includes the preservation and exposure of the existing natural stone walls, except where they need to be re-built for structural reasons, as referred to above.

2.4 The existing roof trusses within the buildings will also be retained, unless they are found to be structurally unsound and will be exposed within the dwellings whenever possible. External features, such as natural stone heads and sills will also be retained in situ, unless they have failed or are in a poor state of repair, when they will be replaced with new ones to match the existing in size and colour. It is considered that the details of the proposed conversion works will result in a significant improvement in the character and visual amenity of this group of buildings.

2.5 The size, form and mass of the existing buildings will be retained in full, together with the height and form of all of the roofs, unless any changes are required by the LPA. The external facing materials for the proposed development can be agreed in full with the LPA's planning officers before any work is commenced on site, but at this stage it is proposed to use natural stone for the walls, to match the existing walls in all respects and an appropriate artificial stone slate for the roofs, such as Farmer Brown tiles.

2.6 In terms of pre-application discussions and community involvement brief discussions have taken place with the LPA's planning officers. The current proposals have been arrived at as a result of the discussions and to ensure that the development accords with the LPA's Policies and guidelines for a development of the type proposed. It is not, therefore, considered that the development would be particularly sensitive or contentious in design and access terms.

3. Access Considerations.

3.1 In terms of the accessibility of the application site and for the movement of people and vehicles within the site the location and width of the access drive are long standing and are currently used to serve the farmhouse and farm buildings on the application site. The existing access is considered to be suitable to serve the proposed development as the amount of vehicular traffic using it will not materially increase as a result of this proposal. The access drive is likely to need re-surfacing once works on the development have been completed but in all other respects it is considered to be acceptable.

3.2 The main access into the farmyard could be moved from its current position but it is not considered to be necessary as the access is safe and there will be no adverse impact on the interests of highway safety if this application were to be granted.

3.3 Account has also been taken of the fact that the application site has been occupied for decades by a commercial farm enterprise, where farm vehicles and private cars have entered and left the farmyard on a regular basis throughout the year. The agricultural activities will obviously not continue and the vehicular activity associated with the proposed development would not represent a significant increase in the level of traffic using the site and would not, therefore, have an adverse effect on the interests of highway safety on Barnsley Road.

3.4 The dwellings will each be provided with a minimum of two off-street car parking spaces, including garaging and there is also sufficient space for vehicles to turn around within the site to ensure that they can enter and leave the site is a forward gear. There is also sufficient space to accommodate other forms of transport, such as motor bikes or bicycles, giving ample flexibility for residents to use alternative modes of transport.