



PLANNING STATEMENT

CONVERSION OF EXISTING OUTBUILDING TO FORM 1NO. DWELLING

AT

KERESFORTH LODGE, DARK LANE, BARNSELEY, S70 6RE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the submission of a full planning application for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to form 1no. dwelling. The proposal includes some alterations to the external elevations of the building to ensure a high standard of living environment can be created.

The proposal would utilise the existing vehicular access point to the site and existing hard surfacing would be used to provide off-street parking provision. The proposal would result in a net reduction in hardsurfacing/ car parking within the site which should be seen as a net benefit.

The proposal seeks to deliver a modest, sustainable dwelling in a popular residential area. The proposed development would assist in providing an adequate supply of housing in the locality whilst sufficiently respecting the character of the surrounding area.

It will be noted that the general thrust of national planning policy is to encourage the conversion of such buildings to residential use. It will also be noted that the proposed development would have no discernible impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the character of the site. The re-use of existing buildings is inherently sustainable and it is considered that the proposed development would result in a sustainable form of development which complies with all relevant planning policy and guidance.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting plans supplied by White Agus Partnership which demonstrate the credentials of the scheme in more detail.

The submitted documentation demonstrates that the proposal meets with all relevant planning policy and guidance and should limit the need for pre-commencement conditions. It is anticipated that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will adopt a progressive approach to this sustainable scheme.

This statement now proceeds to give details of the site. The details of the proposal are then set out. The planning merits of the scheme are then discussed in relation to relevant planning policies contained in the statutory development plan, together with Government guidance principally set out in the NPPF. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the proposal would result in a sustainable form of development, would make a positive contribution to meeting housing targets, would not harm highways safety or efficiency, would not harm the character of the area and would sufficiently protect neighbouring living conditions. Furthermore the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on ecological assets. Crucially, it will be demonstrated that the proposal does not constitute an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt. Finally, the conclusion is reached that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

2.0 THE SITE

The site comprises a well-sized domestic outbuilding and associated area of hard surfacing. The existing building is single storey but is of a height where this potential to incorporate an upper floor/ mezzanine. The building is constructed using concrete blockwork and is externally clad in stone. The building features a tiled, pitched roof. The building is clearly of permanent and substantial construction.

The hard surfacing is predominately located to the front of the building although there are small areas to the sides and rear.

The outbuilding is within the domestic curtilage of an existing residential property, Keresforth Lodge. Keresforth Lodge is a detached, well-sized dwelling that benefits from a large garden area, predominately located between the main house and the subject outbuilding. The host property benefits from a separate vehicular access point to the south and an adequate area for car parking the same area.

The surrounding area is dominated by residential uses and built form which varies in size and style.

The property is not listed and is not within a conservation area. The site is within an allocated Green Belt.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the existing outbuilding to residential use (1no. dwelling). Full details are set out in the submitted plans. However, at this stage the key elements of the proposal are as follows:

- Existing dwelling (Keresforth Lodge) to be retained in its current format.
- Existing outbuilding to be converted to form a single, 1-bedroomed dwelling suitable for a small household.
- Alterations to the external elevations including the provision of glazing to the front elevation.
- Proposed dwelling to utilise existing access road (Keresforth Mews) off Dark Lane. Parking to be provided to the front of the proposed dwelling, utilising existing hard surfacing. The submitted plans demonstrate that the site is capable of providing ample parking for the proposed dwelling, and that vehicles will be able to enter the site, turn within the site and exit in a forward gear.
- Proposed dwelling to benefit from a dedicated garden area to the front which would measure approximately 135sqm. Whilst the garden area would be to the front of the property it would clearly provide a private area given the location of the site at the end of a private drive and current/ proposed boundary treatments.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:

- 2008/0086 - Erection of a two storey rear extension and new garage block to dwelling (Resubmission) - approved 2008
- 2008/0793 - Erection of two detached dwellings - approved 2008.

5.0 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

It is understood that the scheme architect discussed the proposal with the council's planning officer, Rachael Roddis, who raised some concerns regarding space about dwellings and amenity space. It is considered clear that these matters are fully addressed in the main body of this report.

The applicant has also enlisted the services of JR Planning, the White Agus Partnership and Paragon Highways in the drafting of this scheme.

6.0 ALLOCATION AND POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy and saved Unitary Development Plan policies. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

Further material considerations exist in the form of national policy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the suite of documents comprising National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

National

The NPPF is reflective of the guidance contained within the NPPG. The following sections of the NPPF are considered of direct relevance to the current proposal:

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.”

The NPPF makes it clear that sustainable development comprises three strands; economic, social and environmental. It also states that sustainable developments should be approved without delay.

Paragraph 14 also states that in cases where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date planning permission for sustainable development should normally be granted.

Paragraph 19 states that planning “...should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.”

Paragraph 34 states that plans and decisions should ensure developments which generate significant movements are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.

Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 56 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

Paragraph 60 states that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or style. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Paragraph 64 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Chapter 9 is concerned with the protection of the Green Belt and places importance on the need to restrict urban sprawl and openness. At paragraph 80 it sets out the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The NPPF sets out a general presumption against “inappropriate development” in the Green Belt, and states that “very special circumstances” will need to be demonstrated to justify such development.

Paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF provide a “closed list” of development types that are excluded from the definition of inappropriate development in the Green Belt, provided that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved and that there is no conflict with the purpose of including the land in the Green Belt.

Paragraph 90 states that one of the types of development excluded from the definition of inappropriate development is "...the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction".

Paragraph 100 states that inappropriate development in areas of high risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Sequential and Exception Tests should be carried out to justify development, reduce the risk from flooding and steer development to those areas at lowest risk.

Paragraph 118 states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by refusing planning permission if significant harm cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

The overarching message of the NPPF is that LPA's should adopt a positive and pro-active approach to planning proposals, particularly those that result in sustainable development. LPA's should not place unnecessary burdens on developers and should look to support appropriate schemes such as this.

Local

The application site is within an allocated Green Belt under the provisions of the UDP.

The following development plan policies are therefore considered of relevance to the scheme:

CSP34 - Protection of Green Belt

CSP29 - Design

GS8A - The reuse of buildings in the Green Belt

CSP36 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to the proposal:-

‘Designing New Residential Development’ sets out the standards that will apply to the consideration of planning applications for new housing development.

‘Parking’ states that the parking standards for new housing development shall be 1 space for dwellings under 3 bedrooms in size and 2 spaces for 3 bed dwellings and above.

The South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide has been adopted as a best practice guide by the Council and covers issues relating to sustainability, local distinctiveness and quality in design and is underpinned by the principles in the CABI ‘Building for Life’ scheme.

7.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle

As will be discussed in more depth below, both local and national policy makes provision for the conversion of existing buildings in the Green Belt to residential use. It will be demonstrated that the proposal fully complies with all relevant policies in this regard.

Notwithstanding the need to comply with Green Belt policy, the main emphasis of current national planning policy is to ensure proposals are compliant with the definition of sustainable development set out within the NPPF. Sustainability is multi-faceted. The Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice is to be found in paragraphs 18 to 219 of the Framework, taken as a whole. To achieve sustainable development, the Framework states that economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

The proposal would be wholly sustainable using the definition set out in the NPPF for the following reasons:

- **Social:** The proposed development would result in the re-use of an existing building to provide a new dwelling in a popular residential area. The application site is located in close proximity to local services and community facilities. The proposed use of the building for residential purposes would provide further support for such services and facilities. The proposal would not result in any adverse social impacts.
- **Economic:** The proposal would allow for the efficient use of the existing site and would provide growth and investment in the locality. Additional economic activity would be created during the conversion phase and future residents would provide additional custom at existing local services.
- **Environmental:** The proposal would have no detrimental impact on the character of the site or surrounding area. The proposal represents a high quality development which would enhance the housing stock in the locality. The site is located in a sustainable location and future residents would have access to excellent public transport links. It will be demonstrated that the proposal will have no adverse ecological impacts.

The proposal would not result in any material harm and the presumption in favour of sustainable development must be applied. The principle of development must therefore be considered acceptable.

Green Belt

Both national and local policy is permissive of conversions of existing buildings to residential use in the Green Belt subject to set criteria. In determining whether the proposal complies with the guidance contained within the NPPF, and policies CSP34 and GS8A, it is considered that there are five key issues which need to be addressed:

1) The impact on openness;

The proposal would utilise an existing building and would not result in any increase in footprint, floorspace or volume at the site. The proposed parking arrangements would not be significantly different from the existing and the site is well screened by existing boundary treatments. The proposal would result in a net reduction in hardsurfacing/ storage capacity within the site which would result in net benefits to openness.

The proposal would therefore have no detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

2) Whether the proposal would be in conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt;

The proposal would utilise an existing building and would therefore have no impact on urban sprawl, would not result in towns merging, would not result in countryside encroachment, would not have any heritage impact and would not harm urban regeneration objectives.

The proposal would not therefore conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

3) Whether the host building is of “permanent and substantial construction”;

The building is constructed using concrete blockwork and is externally clad in stone. The building features a tiled, pitched roof. The building is clearly of permanent and substantial construction. No major structural alterations are required and the submitted plans clearly demonstrate that the proposal would not constitute a re-build of the existing. Given the lack of ambiguity in this instance it is considered that any request for the submission of a structural survey would be unjustified.

4) Whether the proposal would be sufficiently in keeping with the character of the existing building and locality;

The character of the existing building would be largely retained. The proposed physical works to the outbuilding would be very limited (please see submitted plans) and the proposal would have no significant impact on the character of the wider area.

5) Whether the proposal would result in any other harm including impacts on neighbouring amenity, highways safety and the functionality of any agricultural use.

There is no other harm resulting from the proposed development. There is no agricultural use at the site and the site is not suitable for any other use except for residential. Issues relating to highways safety and residential amenity are discussed in more depth elsewhere in this document.

The proposed development would result in the re-use of an existing building within the Green Belt. This re-use would have no harmful impact on openness and would therefore comprise one of the types of development excluded from the definition of “inappropriate development” at paragraph 90 of the NPPF. Furthermore, the proposed development would meet all the tests of such developments set out in the relevant development plan policies. The proposal fully accords with relevant Green Belt policy and guidance and should be considered acceptable in this regard.

Housing Mix

The proposed development would result in desirable house type in this area which would provide much needed accommodation for a small household. The proposal would make a positive contribution to the housing mix in the locality in accordance with the social objectives of the NPPF.

Drainage/ Flood Risk

The application site does not fall within flood zones 2 or 3 as identified by the Environment Agency. The existing building is already connected to the mains drainage system in the area and it is considered that the re-use of the building would not place excessive pressure on local infrastructure in this regard. Furthermore, the re-use of the existing building would have no impact on surface water run-off levels.

Transport and Accessibility

As previously discussed, the location of the site is considered to be sustainable. In particular the site has good access to public transport links and some local services are within reasonable walking distance. The location of the site therefore complies with national and local objectives of creating sustainable patterns of development.

The proposal will make use of an existing vehicular access point and there will be ample space within the site for vehicular parking and turning. Whilst the change of use would result in a new dwelling at the site, the overall level of residential space within the site would not alter. It is therefore considered that the scheme would be unlikely to result in an unacceptable intensification in vehicular movements at the site.

A separate Highways Statement has been submitted with the application which provides further information on this matter.

It is therefore considered that the scheme can be delivered without resulting in unacceptable harm to vehicular or pedestrian safety.

Design and Visual Impact

The application site comprises a detached outbuilding situated in a complex of residential dwellings. The host building is not prominent from the public realm and is not considered architecturally sensitive. The proposed physical works are largely limited to the addition of new openings to the front elevation and it is considered that these would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the site or surrounding area.

Some small scale works are proposed to the existing boundary treatments and these would be wholly in keeping with the existing character of the site.

It is therefore considered clear that the scheme would not have an unacceptable visual interest and would indeed breathe new life into the building which would result in visual betterment.

Residential Amenity

The proposal would result in the re-use of an existing building and would not result in any increase in footprint, volume or height of built form. The proposal would not therefore have any impact on light levels at any neighbouring property.

Primary openings for the dwelling would be located to the front of the host property and these would be located in excess of 21m from the windows at the facing dwelling, Keresforth Lodge. In any case the proposed boundary treatments would screen the property from the neighbouring occupier. There would be no increase in overlooking at any other neighbouring dwelling.

The proposal would benefit from a substantial garden area which would be sufficiently private and would help to provide a high standard of living environment for future occupiers.

It is considered clear that the development would not have any adverse impact on residential amenity and is entirely in accordance with local and national policy in this respect.

Ground Stability

The proposal would result in the re-use of an existing building and would not require any significant ground works. As such it is considered that the proposal is acceptable with regard to ground stability in accordance with paragraphs 109 and 121 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ecology

The application site is not located in a rural area and the building in question is of modern construction. The building does not appear to have any visible signs of bat occupation on either the inside or outside. There are no suitable features with potential to accommodate bats. Consequently it is considered that the buildings have negligible roost potential.

Only small scale physical works are proposed and it is therefore considered that the proposed conversion of the existing buildings will have no detrimental impact on the ecological value of the site.

8.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposed development represents a sustainable form of development that would not have any unacceptable impact for the reasons set out above. The proposal does not constitute an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt and the need to demonstrate “very special circumstances” does not therefore apply. The proposal would sufficiently accord with adopted planning policy and guidance and the LPA are respectfully urged to grant permission for the scheme.

The Applicant is willing to discuss any issues that may arise during the consideration of the proposal with the LPA.

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