

Client: Jim Booth

Date: 08/06/2026

Job: Smallshaw Farm Spa

Job No: 1552

Design and Access Statement



Visualisation of the proposed scheme

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the extension of Smallshaw Spa, located at Hollin Lane, Millhouse Green, Barnsley (S36 9NH). The proposal seeks to deliver a modest but essential expansion to the existing spa facilities, allowing the business to continue responding to increasing demand for treatments and wellness services. The revised scheme provides improved changing facilities, expanded treatment provision, and a new swimming pool, along with reconfigured internal accommodation to support the day-to-day operation of the spa.

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. This Design and Access Statement focuses on design rationale, siting, scale, layout and access.

Site Location

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.

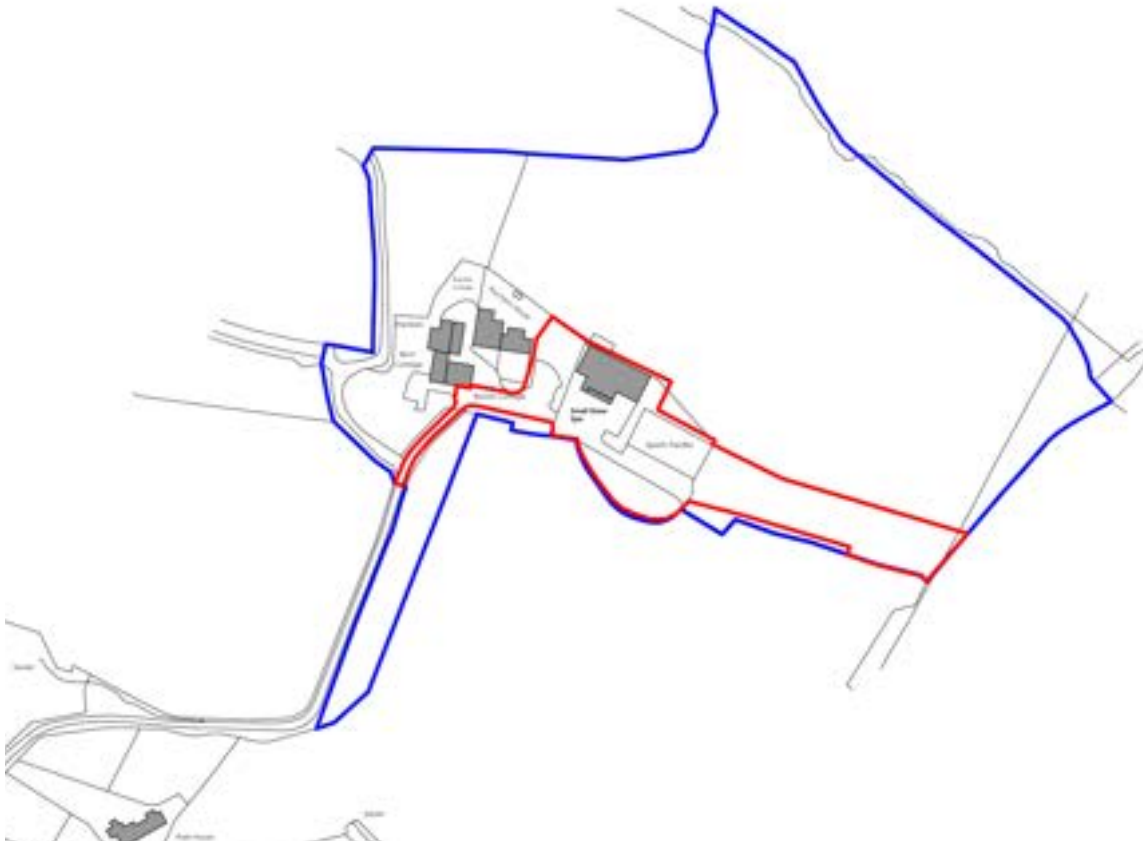
Surrounding Uses

The application site is adjacent to a small number of buildings currently used for temporary overnight accommodation, classified under Class C1: Hotels. These structures form part of the broader hospitality offer in the rural landscape and cater primarily to guests seeking short-term stays and users of the spa Facilities. Flash house farm is a working farm located south of the site.



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Site location plan

Bio-Diversity

The proposed development has been informed by the findings of an Ecological Impact Assessment and accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. The site comprises predominantly modified grassland, vegetated garden, developed land, individual trees and a short section of native hedgerow. The baseline biodiversity value of the site is calculated as 1.14 habitat area units and 0.03 hedgerow units using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

The development proposals have been designed to retain key features where practicable, including existing trees and areas of vegetated garden, whilst delivering targeted habitat enhancements. Post-development, the site will comprise retained habitats alongside the creation of other neutral grassland (g3c) and the planting of native hedgerow to good condition, resulting in a post-development value of 1.52 habitat area units and 0.54 hedgerow units.

In accordance with the statutory requirement to achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, the scheme delivers a significant uplift in biodiversity value. The assessment confirms:

- A 33.77% net gain in habitat area units
- A 1699.75% net gain in hedgerow linear units

These gains are achieved entirely on-site through habitat creation, enhancement and appropriate target condition management, in line with the statutory biodiversity gain hierarchy. All statutory biodiversity rules and trading requirements have been met.

The scheme therefore not only safeguards existing ecological features but delivers a substantial measurable improvement in biodiversity value. Detailed management and monitoring measures to

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secure the target habitat conditions will be provided through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and Biodiversity Gain Plan, to be secured by condition in accordance with current legislative requirements. Please refer to the accompanying EclA, BNG metric, and BNG report for further information.

Access and Parking

The site is accessed via Hollin lane, this is an adopted road to within a few meters of the proposed parking. The proposals include provisions for ample parking, ensuring convenient access for all visitors arriving by car. In addition to the 25 existing parking spaces, 16 new parking spaces are proposed, all of which will be situated on existing developed hardstanding areas to minimise impact on the surrounding landscape. The parking is designed to be easily accessible and located within close proximity to the main entrance of the building, ensuring visitors can enter the facility with ease. This approach to parking provision ensures that the development can accommodate the increased demand associated with the expanded spa facilities, without adding unnecessary strain on the surrounding infrastructure.

At present, the spa sees approximately six cars arriving in the morning and departing at lunchtime, with another six cars arriving at lunchtime and leaving in the late afternoon. Under the new proposal, this will increase to around 16 cars arriving in the morning and departing in the late afternoon or evening. The site benefits from its proximity to the adopted highway, which ends just a few meters from the entrance to the spa's parking area, ensuring convenient and direct access for guests without additional strain on the local road network. The new parking provisions on-site are designed to accommodate this increase in vehicle traffic, ensuring the site remains easily accessible while minimising any potential impact on the surrounding area.

Accessibility

The design prioritises accessibility, ensuring that users with disabilities can easily and comfortably access all areas of the building. Two dedicated disabled parking spaces are positioned very close to the front entrance, allowing for direct and convenient access into the facility. The building itself offers level access at the main entrance, ensuring a smooth and unobstructed entry for all visitors.

Inside the spa, a lift is available to provide access to all parts of the building, making it fully inclusive for users with limited mobility. Additionally, the facility features accessible toilets, showers, and changing spaces, ensuring that all guests have access to the necessary amenities.

Design of the Building

The design and layout of the proposed extension meet the functional needs of the spa while remaining sensitive to the site's rural context and heritage setting. The design prioritises the retention of existing site features, utilising existing hardstanding areas to minimise encroachment on undeveloped land.

Key elements, including the pool, changing facilities, and restaurant, have been arranged to ensure efficient internal circulation while maintaining an overall form that respects the site's agricultural aesthetic. The design also responds directly to pre-application feedback, with adjustments made to the building's footprint and massing to reduce its visual impact on the Greenbelt and surrounding listed buildings.



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Internal Layout

The internal layout of the building has been reconfigured to optimise the functionality of the spa and to take full advantage of the site's topography and surrounding views. As part of this revised scheme, the spa facilities are now located entirely to the east side of the building, within the area previously occupied by agricultural edifices and extended to the south.

Relocating the spa to this position allows for an increased separation from the listed farmhouse and barns to the west. This relocation also enables the extension to adopt a southward projection, forming an L-shaped arrangement that sits comfortably within the site.

The proposed basement level accommodates treatment rooms, and associated service spaces. Concentrating treatment rooms at this level ensures that these spaces remain private and tranquil, while also allowing the layout to operate efficiently with controlled circulation routes for staff and guests. Access between all levels is provided by a staircase and lift, ensuring full accessibility throughout.

The ground floor is designed to form the principal arrival and changing level. A central reception space provides a welcoming entrance point, with direct access to both male and female changing facilities. The pool, sauna and associated spa spaces are arranged to the north and east, benefitting from glazing which provides views across the countryside and establishes a calm, open aspect within the main spa environment. This organisation ensures a clear flow through the building, from arrival, to changing, to spa use.

The first floor accommodates the restaurant and associated back-of-house spaces, along with a terrace that overlooks the surrounding landscape. The elevated position of the restaurant provides long-ranging views and allows this part of the building to function as a quiet, reflective space, separate from the activity of the spa below. The terrace is recessed into the mass of the building to ensure it remains discreet in external appearance, while still providing outdoor amenity for guests.

The arrangement of uses across the three levels serves to ensure that the building operates efficiently while enhancing the guest experience. Each floor serves a clear and distinct function.

Pool and Sauna

The internal layout of the spa has been designed to maximise the views to the east of the site, ensuring that guests can fully enjoy the surrounding landscape. The proposed pool will be an infinity pool, positioned against the glazed east-facing elevation. This allows for an uninterrupted connection between the pool area and the expansive views beyond, enhancing the sense of relaxation and luxury.

Additionally, the sauna takes full advantage of the same views. The seating within the sauna is oriented toward east-facing windows, ensuring that guests can enjoy the scenic landscape while they relax. This thoughtful approach to the layout maximises the utility of the glazing, creating a calming and immersive experience for users, where the connection to nature becomes an integral part of the wellness journey.



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Visualisation from the south-easterly aspect

Agricultural Aesthetic

The building facade combines coursed stone up to a datum level with vertical timber cladding above, selected to reflect the agricultural character of the surrounding area and to blend with the adjacent farm buildings. The use of coursed stone at the lower levels honours the long-standing tradition of stone construction in the region, where sandstone farmhouses and barns dominate the landscape. This material choice ensures the extension integrates well with the existing built environment, preserving the site's rural and historic character. Above the stone, vertical timber cladding is introduced to mimic the appearance of typical agricultural buildings.

This cladding, which reflects the functional simplicity of traditional barns, provides a strong visual link to the site's agricultural heritage while also giving the building a contemporary edge. The combination of materials strikes a balance between modern design and respect for the site's historical context.

The roof design features an asymmetrical arrangement. This architectural feature helps to reduce the overall volume of the building, making it less visually intrusive, while ensuring that the internal space remains as usable as possible. The pitched roof reflects the traditional form of agricultural buildings, maintaining the connection to the site's historical context.

Large areas of glazing are incorporated into the design to create a visual connection between the interior and the surrounding farmland. While these glazing elements are contemporary in nature, they have been thoughtfully integrated to complement the building's agricultural aesthetic without overwhelming the traditional forms and materials.

In summary, the design respects the agricultural aesthetic and vernacular architecture by blending coursed stone with vertical timber cladding, utilising traditional forms with modern elements. These materials and forms ensure that the new extension is both functional and in harmony with the historic and rural character of the area.

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Contextual building with asymmetric roof

Roof

The roof of the Smallshaw Spa extension has been designed to balance sustainability with the agricultural aesthetic of the site. The roof incorporates infinity solar roof, providing a discreet and efficient solution for renewable energy generation. These photovoltaic cells are low profile, ensuring they integrate seamlessly into the roofline without disrupting the visual harmony of the building.

This technology supports the spa's commitment to sustainability, reducing the building's environmental impact while maintaining its rural character.

The rest of the roof features a profiled standing seam finish, which contributes to the agricultural vernacular of the site.

This roofing material is commonly found on agricultural buildings, ensuring the extension remains visually connected to its rural surroundings. The standing seam design is practical, durable, and aesthetically consistent with the building's overall form. Together, these elements balance contemporary sustainable technology with a respect for the site's traditional and agricultural context.

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Specified PV panels on a case study project

Terrace Area

The first-floor design incorporates a recessed terrace area on the south elevation, providing guests with an inviting outdoor space that overlooks the surrounding countryside. The terrace is framed by a timber balustrade, which includes a built-in bar-style table along the leading edge.

Windows & Doors

The proposed windows and doors are designed with a contemporary aesthetic, finished in a refined black RAL colour. This choice of colour complements the overall design approach, creating a striking contrast against the natural tones of the coursed stone facade and vertical timber cladding. The black frames offer a modern, minimalist look, enhancing the clean lines of the building while maintaining a sense of elegance and simplicity.

Stable Relocation and Menage

As part of the proposed development, the existing stables located at the south of the building will be demolished. The stables are proposed to be relocated to the east side of the site, adjacent to the east side of the tennis court. This relocation ensures a more logical separation between the spa facilities and agricultural / equestrian activities, improving the operational flow of the site and minimising potential disruptions to spa guests.

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Visualisation from the easterly aspect

Additionally, a menage is proposed directly off the relocated stables, providing convenient access for equestrian activities. This layout enhances the practicality of the site and supports its diverse range of uses, ensuring that both the spa and agricultural functions can coexist harmoniously.

Kitchen Extraction

The proposed kitchen extraction system is positioned at the rear of the building, pointing away from the nearby listed cottages to minimise any potential visual or acoustic impact. This placement ensures that the extraction system is located on the least impactful part of the elevation, where it is visually unobtrusive. Additionally, the location of the extraction system ensures that any noise generated will not affect guests or neighbouring properties, maintaining the peaceful environment of the site. It is anticipated that the noise generated by Royd Moor Wind Farm, which is adjacent to the site, will exceed any noise from kitchen extraction.

Scale and Massing

The scale and massing of the proposed extension ensure that the building remains both functional and visually appropriate within its rural context. The roof has been designed with a specific pitch to minimise the overall volume of the building. This approach ensures that the building blends more harmoniously with the surrounding landscape and nearby structures, particularly the listed buildings on site.

The internal layout has been planned to optimise the use of space, with every area designed to serve a specific function. There is no excess or wasted space within the building, as the design prioritises efficiency and practicality.

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The extension provides only the minimum amount of space required to meet the operational needs of the spa, ensuring that the development remains modest in scale while still enhancing the functionality of the facility.



Visualisation from the south-west aspect

Greenbelt

The proposed development has minimal visual impact on the Greenbelt, adhering to both national and local planning policies that seek to preserve the openness of these areas. The extension has been strategically positioned on areas of existing hardstanding, ensuring that there is no unnecessary encroachment into previously undeveloped land. By utilising existing developed portions of the site, the proposal limits its footprint and preserves the surrounding countryside.

The design of the building, including the pitched roof and optimised layout, further reduces its visual impact on the Greenbelt. The scale of the extension, combined with its confined volume, helps to maintain the sense of openness that is characteristic of the Greenbelt.

Additionally, the relocation of the stables to the east side of the site, against the agricultural shed, ensures that any new development remains clustered with existing structures, further reducing its visual impact and encroachment on open land. This sensitive approach balances the need for enhanced spa facilities with the responsibility of protecting the surrounding environment.

A basic visual impact assessment has been completed. This study is shown on the submitted plans 01_02 Proposed Site Sections. It shows a loss of openness of just 3%.

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Visualisation from the Westerly approach

Heritage

Detailed heritage matters are addressed separately in the accompanying Heritage Statement. The proposal has been developed with regard to the setting of the Grade II listed buildings at Smallshaw Farm, including their relationship with the existing spa building and the wider rural landscape.

Pre App Response

Green Belt and NPPF Concerns

The original proposal raised concerns regarding the impact of the spa extension on the Green Belt, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Barnsley Local Plan policies GB1 and GB2. The feedback highlighted that the proposed extension, with an additional 625sqm of spa space and a significant first-floor extension, was disproportionate in size relative to the original 139.5sqm spa and would negatively impact the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal also included a replacement stable block and a new menage, which, while acceptable in principle, did not mitigate the overall scale of the development.

The use of agricultural land for parking and other facilities was also identified as problematic, as it would further harm the rural character and openness of the Green Belt. As a result, the proposal was considered to conflict with the allowed uses under paragraph 149 of the NPPF, and the Conservation Officer raised additional concerns regarding the design's impact on the adjacent listed buildings.

In response to these concerns, the design of the Smallshaw Spa extension has been revised to better align with Greenbelt policies. These revisions are explained in the accompanying planning statement.

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Contextual visualisation showing greenbelt setting

Conclusion

The proposed extension of Smallshaw Spa has been thoughtfully designed to meet the growing demand for enhanced spa facilities while ensuring that the development remains in harmony with its rural and historic setting. Through a sensitive approach to scale, massing, and materials, the extension respects the character of the Green Belt and the adjacent Grade II listed buildings, preserving the site's historical integrity and rural aesthetic.

The design incorporates traditional agricultural elements, such as coursed stone and vertical timber cladding, while introducing contemporary features that enhance both functionality and visual appeal. The use of a profiled standing seam roof and renewable energy solutions, such as photovoltaic panels, demonstrates the project's commitment to sustainability. Careful attention has been given to minimising the impact on undeveloped land, with the extension largely occupying areas of existing hardstanding and decking, ensuring the openness of the Greenbelt is maintained.

In terms of accessibility, the project prioritises inclusive design, with level access, a lift, and fully accessible facilities to ensure that all visitors, including those with disabilities, can comfortably enjoy the spa. Ample parking has also been provided, with 16 new spaces added to the existing provision, along with dedicated disabled parking close to the entrance.

Overall, the extension results in a balance between the operational needs of the spa, the preservation of the site's heritage, and the protection of the Greenbelt. This development will provide significant benefits to the local community, offering enhanced wellness facilities while respecting the surrounding environment and maintaining the character of the area.

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