

Proposed Housing Development
Pear Tree Farm, Church Street,
Brierley, Barnsley, S72 9JR.

BUILDING FOR HEALTHY LIFE ASSESSMENT.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide an assessment against the criteria set out in the Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) Design Guide 2020 for Residential development at Church Street Brierley, Barnsley, S72 9JR. This BHL has been undertaken by Building Link Design accompanies a Full Planning Application for the Erection of 10 No. new dwellings following demolition of existing bungalow, Farmhouse and Outbuilding accessed via church street a 0.495Ha.



Site Location

Planning Background

The development site is located within the defined development limits of Brierley, situated in a Residential Policy Area as per the Barnsley Local Plan. The site comprises Pear Tree Farmhouse, a bungalow, and a series of outbuildings. These structures are to be demolished to facilitate the proposed development.

A previous planning application (Ref: 2016/1451) proposed 16 dwellings, which was refused due to insufficient documentation and concerns over site impact. The current application responds to these issues by reducing the scale to 10 dwellings, improving layout and design integration, and incorporating a detailed Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement.

The site is within the Brierley Conservation Area, and while there are no listed buildings on the site, two Grade II listed buildings lie nearby. The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposal will not adversely affect these heritage assets.

Structure of the Document

This assessment is structured according to the Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) 2020 framework, a government-endorsed design tool that supports healthier, better-connected, and more attractive places to live. It is built around 12 assessment criteria, which are grouped under three core themes:

1. **Integrated Neighbourhoods** – Focused on connectivity, access to services, and housing inclusivity.
2. **Distinctive Places** – Emphasises contextual design, place identity, and spatial definition.
3. **Streets for All** – Promotes well-designed, healthy, and inclusive public realm.

Each criterion is assessed using a traffic-light system:

- **Green** – Meets or exceeds expectations for design quality.
- **Amber** – Acceptable but with room for improvement.
- **Red** – Falls below expected standards.

The assessment also draws on relevant policies from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023), the National Design Guide (NDG), and the Barnsley Local Plan (2019). Where applicable, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and site-specific material from the applicant's Design and Access and Heritage Statements are also referenced.

INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. Natural Connections

Assessment: Green

The proposed development utilises an existing access point from Church Street and integrates with the established street pattern of Brierley. The layout supports permeability within the village by reinforcing the linear development pattern and providing ease of vehicular and pedestrian movement. This aligns with NPPF (para 105 & 112) which encourages connectivity and active travel options, and Local Plan Policy T3 (New Development and Sustainable Travel) which supports integrated transport networks. The BHL 2020 principle promotes connected places that offer multiple route choices, contributing to a legible, integrated layout.

2. Walking, Cycling and Public Transport

Assessment: Green

The site is within 60m of bus stops and close to key local amenities including schools, shops, and medical services. Footpaths are included, and cycle storage is to be provided via garages or sheds, supporting sustainable travel. Policy T3 and NDG (paragraph 97) both emphasise sustainable movement. BHL 2020 encourages new developments to promote walking and cycling to reduce car dependence.

3. Facilities and Services

Assessment: Green

The development benefits from excellent proximity to essential facilities: primary schools (360m), post office, GP surgery, and local shops all within walking distance. This supports sustainable neighbourhood development in line with NPPF Chapter 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities) and aligns with Barnsley Local Plan Policy H1 (Housing Growth). The availability of services also supports principles from the NDG (paragraph 131) and BHL 2020, which advocate for walkable neighbourhoods with everyday services close by.

4. Homes for Everyone

Assessment: Green

The development includes two and three storey dwellings aimed at families, with 5 of the 10 homes designed for accessibility in compliance with Approved Document M Volume 1, M(2) standards. While a broader tenure mix is not specified, this provision addresses the needs of households requiring adaptable living spaces. NPPF (para 62) and Local Plan Policy H6 (Housing Mix) require developments to meet diverse needs. The NDG (C1-C3) encourages varied, adaptable homes. BHL 2020 promotes inclusive communities with housing suitable for a mix of ages and abilities.

DISTINCTIVE PLACES

5. Character

Assessment: Green

The proposed materials (red brick, stone, slate) and architectural language reference surrounding vernacular, particularly other buildings on Church Street. The design also incorporates elements such as vertical window emphasis and low boundary walls that reflect local identity. NPPF (para 130) and Local Plan Policy D1 (High Quality Design and Place Making) support developments that are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. NDG (I1-I2) and BHL 2020 advocate designs that enhance the identity and sense of place.

6. Working with the Site and its Context

Assessment: Green

The development respects conservation area constraints and proximity to listed buildings, with heritage considerations addressed in the accompanying Heritage Statement. Archaeological sensitivity has been noted, with mitigation measures proposed. This aligns with NPPF Chapter 16 and Local Plan Policies HE1 (Historic Environment) and HE6 (Archaeology). BHL 2020 recommends responding positively to site features, including heritage and topography.

7. Creating Well-defined Streets and Spaces

Assessment: Green

Plot boundaries and building orientation clearly define public and private realms. Features such as low walls and planting enhance definition and support legibility. The inclusion of private gardens and on-plot parking reduces visual clutter. This meets BHL 2020 objectives and reflects NDG principles (B2-B3) on enclosure and coherent layouts.

8. Easy to Find Your Way Around

Assessment: Green

The small-scale nature of the site, variation in dwelling types, and simple street layout enhance legibility and wayfinding. The access route and coherent design language contribute to a strong sense of place. NDG (I2) supports visual cues for wayfinding. BHL 2020 highlights the importance of creating distinctive, memorable places.

STREETS FOR ALL

9. Healthy Streets

Assessment: Green

The layout includes wide footpaths and a 7.3m carriageway, with trees and green verges added to the road boundaries and sides. These elements enhance visual quality and promote walkability. The BHL 2020 framework encourages healthy streets that are safe, green, and sociable. NPPF (para 92) and NDG (B3) call for designs that promote health and wellbeing.

10. Cycle and Car Parking

Assessment: Green

On-plot car parking complies with Barnsley SPD (Parking, Nov 2019) and garages meet required dimensions. EV charging provision is included, aligning with Local Plan Policy RE1 (Low Carbon and Renewable Energy) and NPPF (para 112). Cycle storage will be provided through garages or sheds, which supports sustainable transport goals in line with Policy T3 and NDG guidance.

11. Green and Blue Infrastructure

Assessment: Green

The scheme includes soft landscaping, private gardens, trees and green verges, and hedging to soften boundaries. Local Plan Policies BIO1 and CC3, as well as NDG (N1), encourage developments that respond to natural features and promote environmental resilience. BHL 2020 recommends integrated green infrastructure.

12. Back of Pavement, Front of Home

Assessment: Green

Well-defined frontages with low walls, planting, and clear entrances ensure strong visual and physical definition between public and private spaces. This enhances security and street presence, supporting NDG (B1) and BHL 2020 aims of designing attractive, safe environments.