



**PLANNING STATEMENT AND FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT
DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STABLES AND CONSTRUCTION OF
REPLACEMENT STABLES**

LAND OFF SMITHIES LANE, BARNSELY

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1. INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the submission of an application for full permission for the demolition of a range of stables buildings and the construction of a new single replacement stables building.

The site lies to the northern side of Smithies Lane and to the east of a terrace of residential dwellings at numbers 56-62 Smithies Lane. The site is within the Green Belt.

The proposal seeks to replace a range of poor-quality existing stables buildings that are a detracting feature in the landscape with a high quality single new building that would meet the applicant's stabling needs, whilst consolidating the existing arrangement and delivering a positive benefit for the landscape character and visual amenity of the locality.

The proposal represents the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation in the Green Belt, which is supported by local and national planning policy. The proposal results in a sustainable form of development which should be welcomed by the local planning authority (LPA).

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting plans supplied by NYP Architectural Services which demonstrate the credentials of the scheme in more detail. 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 not harm highway safety or efficiency, would make a positive contribution to 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. Importantly, it will also be demonstrated that the proposal would not harm the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. Finally, the conclusion is reached that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

2. THE SITE

The wider application site comprises of a triangular field that has been used for the keeping and grazing of horses for many years. The site lies to the northern side of Smithies Lane and opposite the junction of Smithies Lane and Hartington Drive. The site boundaries are defined by mature trees and hedgerows.

To the north eastern side of the site, there is a range of existing stables buildings. There are seven separate stables buildings in total. These existing buildings are of substantial and permanent construction but are of poor quality in terms of their appearance.

There are four terraced dwellings adjacent to the southern site boundary. These dwellings are all under the ownership of the applicant. Land to the north of the site is predominantly open and undeveloped. The land to the south comprises predominantly of residential properties.

The wider site, including the fields in which the existing and proposed stables are sited, has an area of approximately 1.4 hectares.

The site is not within a Conservation Area. There are no Listed Buildings in close proximity to the site.

3. THE PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for demolition of the existing stables buildings and for construction of one replacement stable building.

Full design details of the replacement dwelling can be found in the supporting plans supplied by NYP Architectural Services. However, at this stage the main details of the proposal are as follows:

- The existing poor-quality stables would all be demolished.
- The proposed replacement stables building would be sited closer to the southern site boundary in order to relate better to the existing built form on Smithies Lane.

- There would be a reduction in the overall footprint and volume of development as a result of the proposed development – the proposed stables are 305 cubic metres whereas the existing stables to be demolished are 313 cubic metres.
- The new stables building would be 12m by 7.9 metres.
- The stables would be constructed with brick walls and a grey concrete tile covered pitched roof.
- The existing gated access point from Smithies Lane would be retained in order to provide vehicular access to the stables.
- 5 new parking spaces would be provided next to the proposed stables.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history for the site.

5. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

Given the simplistic nature of the scheme, the applicant has not requested pre-application advice from the LPA in this instance. The application has however enlisted the services of JR Planning and NYP Architectural Services to advise on the development of the scheme.

6. 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.

Further material considerations exist in the form of national policy and guidance contained within the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published on 24 July 2018 and the suite of documents comprising National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

Allocations

The site lies within the Green Belt under provision of the Local Plan.

National

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

Paragraph 8 states that *“achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

- a) *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) *an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

Paragraph 10 states that *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.”*

Paragraph 11 goes on to set out that *“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:*

approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or...where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date , granting permission unless:

- i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁶ ; or*
- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

Paragraph 38 states that “*Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.*”

Paragraph 109 states “*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.*”

Paragraph 127 states that “*decisions should ensure that developments:*

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

Chapter 13 of the NPPF is particularly relevant to the application as it discussed the protection of Green Belt Land.

Paragraph 134 states that *“Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*

Paragraph 143 states that *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”*

Paragraph 145 established a ‘closed list’ of types of development that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. These include:

“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;”

Paragraph 148 states that *“The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. Paragraph 155 goes on to state Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future).”*

Paragraph 175 states that “...if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.”

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

Local Development Plan

As the site is within the Green Belt, the following local policies are considered of relevance:

CSP34 – Protection of Green Belt

CP29 – Design

CP36 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

7. ASSESSMENT

Principle

As will be discussed in more depth below, both local and national policy makes provision for the construction of new buildings for outdoor recreation in the Green Belt. 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 revised NPPF. Sustainability is multi-faceted and is set out within the Framework taken as a whole. To achieve sustainable development, the Framework sets out 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 deliver an appropriate facility for outdoor recreation that would assist in promoting enjoyment of the countryside location. The proposal would not result in any adverse social impacts.
- **Economic:** Some additional economic activity would be created during the construction phase and during on-going maintenance requirements. The replacement stables would ensure the continued use of local equine services such as vets and feed suppliers.
- **Environmental:** The proposal would have no detrimental impact on the character of the site or the surrounding area. The development would see a number of unsightly existing buildings replaced with a single high-quality building constructed from appropriate materials for the area. There would therefore be a clear betterment in terms of both visual amenity and the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal would have no adverse ecological impacts.

Green Belt

Both national and local policy is permissive of the construction of new buildings to provide appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation in the Green Belt as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. In determining whether the proposal complies with the guidance contained within the NPPF, and policies CSP34 and GS8A, it is considered that there are therefore two key issues which need to be addressed:

1) The impact on openness;

The application involves the demolition of a range of unsightly existing buildings that have a volume of 313 cubic metres and the construction of a single new building with a volume of 305 cubic metres. There is clearly therefore a benefit in terms of the impact on the openness of the Green Belt through the resultant reduction in built form. There would be a further benefit to the openness of the Green Belt by the removal of the range of buildings that span an area of about 70 metres adjacent to the northern site boundary. The replacement building would be only 12 metres wide so, even with the compact new parking area, would deliver a real benefit in terms of consolidating the built form at the site and removing the sprawl caused by the existing buildings.

The relocation of the stables from the northern side of the site to the southern side would also have a positive impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The southern site boundary is much better related to the dense residential development to the south of the site and the proposed building would also sit

comfortably alongside the existing terraced dwellings at 56-62 Smithies Lane. Beyond the site frontage, the land to the north of the site is much more open and the existing buildings are a detracting feature in the open landscape. Removal of the buildings to the northern side of the site and the construction of a single replacement stables building in a more appropriate location to the southern part of the site would be clearly beneficial to the openness of the Green Belt.

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;

As set out above, the proposal would be beneficial in terms of reducing the sprawl of existing built form at the site and would not result in urban sprawl. It 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.

The proposed development would provide an appropriate facility for outdoor recreation within the Green Belt. The development would have no harmful impact on openness and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The proposal would therefore comprise one of the types of development excluded from the definition of “inappropriate development” at paragraph 145 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.

Design and Landscape Impact

Policy CSP29 states that:

“Design Principles:

High quality development will be expected, that respects, takes advantage of and enhances the distinctive features of Barnsley, including: topography, Green Infrastructure assets, important habitats,

woodlands and other natural features views and vistas to key buildings, landmarks, skylines and gateways heritage, townscape and landscape character including the scale, layout, building styles and materials of the built form ..”

As set out above, whilst the existing stables are of permanent construction and have been in situ for many years, it is considered that they are a detracting feature in the open countryside landscape. This is exacerbated by the location of the buildings to the northern boundary of the site, well away from the other existing built form in the locality which is concentrated to the southern side of the site. The isolated position of the existing buildings emphasises their appearance in the otherwise open landscape.

The proposed development would be highly beneficial for the visual amenity and landscape character of the site as it would serve to both replace the existing buildings with one smaller and much more appropriately designed building and also relocate the development to the southern side of the building, where it would have a much reduced impact on the open landscape and a result of being visually well-related to the existing dwellings at 56-62 Smithies Lane and the built up areas to the south of the site. The existing buildings would be removed and the land returned to part of the open field.

The proposed stables building itself is a simple and traditional pitched roof building constructed from brick and tiles in order to be in keeping with the character of existing buildings in the locality. As well as being selected in order to give the best quality visual appearance, these materials have also been chosen in order to provide the highest levels of security for horses and equipment that will be kept within the building.

The development will have a positive impact on visual amenity and landscape character and the proposal clearly accords with policies CSP29 and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

Amenity Impacts

The proposed stables would be sited to the eastern side of the terrace of residential dwellings at 56-62 Smithies Lane. These properties are under the ownership and control of the applicant. The fields in which the proposed stables would be sited are already in use for equestrian purposes so

there would be no harm through the introduction of noise or odour area as result of the relocation of the stables. A parking area is proposed in between the stables building and the adjacent dwellings but this area is served by an existing access point that is used to access the existing stables so there would be no significant intensification in the use of this access point that could be harmful to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

There are further residential dwellings to the southern side of Smithies Lane but the nearest is over 35 metres from the site. The stables would be set behind the existing mature hedge, which is to be retained, as there would be no harmful impact on the amenity of the occupiers of any of these nearby dwellings.

It is clear that the development would result in no adverse impacts on the residential amenity of existing occupiers in the locality. The development is entirely in accordance with local and national policy in this respect.

Drainage/ Flood Risk Assessment

The application site is within flood zone 2 where there is a medium probability of flooding. Stables are not specifically defined in the Planning Practice Guidance in terms of their flood risk vulnerability but agricultural buildings are classed as “Less Vulnerable”. Whilst equestrian use is not agricultural, it is considered appropriate to also regard the stables as less vulnerable, given that, as with an agricultural building, the primary purpose of the building is to keep animals and equipment.

For less vulnerable uses in Flood Zone 2, the national guidance is clear that the Environment Agency’s standing advice should be followed. The floor level of the stables would be no lower than the existing stables that would be removed so there would be no increase in the risk of flooding within the stables. The proposal would result in a reduction in overall built form so there would be a minor benefit in terms of reducing flood risk elsewhere from the return of the footprint of the existing buildings to permeable grassland.

The modest size of the building would not have any noticeable impact on surface water run-off levels.

In terms of the sequential test, the proposal is to replace existing stables that are also within flood zone 2. There is therefore no introduction of new activity over and above that which already exists and the sequential test must therefore be considered to be passed. The exception test is not applicable to less vulnerable development within zone 2.

Transport and Accessibility

Although it is in the Green Belt, the site is situated in a relatively sustainable location, very close to the edge of the established settlement. The proposed replacement stables will make use of the existing vehicular access from Smithies Lane and a new parking area would be created. As the proposal is for a replacement stable building there would be no significant intensification in existing levels of traffic movements.

It is therefore considered that the scheme can clearly be delivered without resulting in harm to highway safety.

Ground Stability

The site is not within a Coal Mining High Risk Area. The scale of the proposed development would not give rise to any issues of ground stability.

Impact on Trees and Ecology

No trees would be affected by the proposed. The existing mature hedgerow to the southern site boundary would be retained and the stables would be set back a sufficient distance to avoid any negative impacts on the hedgerow.

The existing stables buildings are timber buildings with no concealed roof voids or cracks or crevices. The buildings do not appear to have any visible signs of bat occupation on either the inside or the outside and it is considered that the buildings are unlikely to be suitable for roosting bats. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would not be harmful to protected species and will have no detrimental impact on the ecological value of the site.

8. 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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