



Appeal Statement

Appellant:
Site Address:

Mr Oliver Howarth

Land between 145 and 115
Holcombe Old Road
Bury
BL8 4NF

Appeal Against:
Planning Ref:
Proposal:

Bury Council

71905

Permission in principle for the
removal of barn/storage shed and
erection of 1no. three bedroom
detached dwelling

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RBA Town Planning has been instructed by the applicant, Mr Oliver Howarth, of planning application 71905, to act on their behalf in the preparation and submission of an appeal against the decision of the local planning authority to refuse planning permission for the proposed development.

1.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible and within statutory timescales, unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

1.3 The application was refused under delegated powers on 23 June 2025, for the reasons set out in the decision notice, which cites policies contained within the council's adopted plan.

1.4 This statement sets out the appellant's case and provides reasoned justification in response to the adopted plan policies cited in the decision notice. It should be read in conjunction with the proposed plans and all other documentation submitted as part of the original planning application and the attached appendices.

1.5 Given the determination date of the refused planning application, it is considered that the appeal has been submitted within the prescribed time limits and is lodged under the written representations procedure.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 The site comprises a barn, henhouse, and storage container of agricultural character, located between 145 and 115 Holcombe Old Road, both of which are existing residential properties. The plot is well-contained by existing built form and mature boundaries, and forms part of the established settlement pattern.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of traditional and modern dwellings, with the Holcombe CA appraisal identifying the village as suitable for “limited infilling... in scale with the village and not adversely affect[ing] its character.”

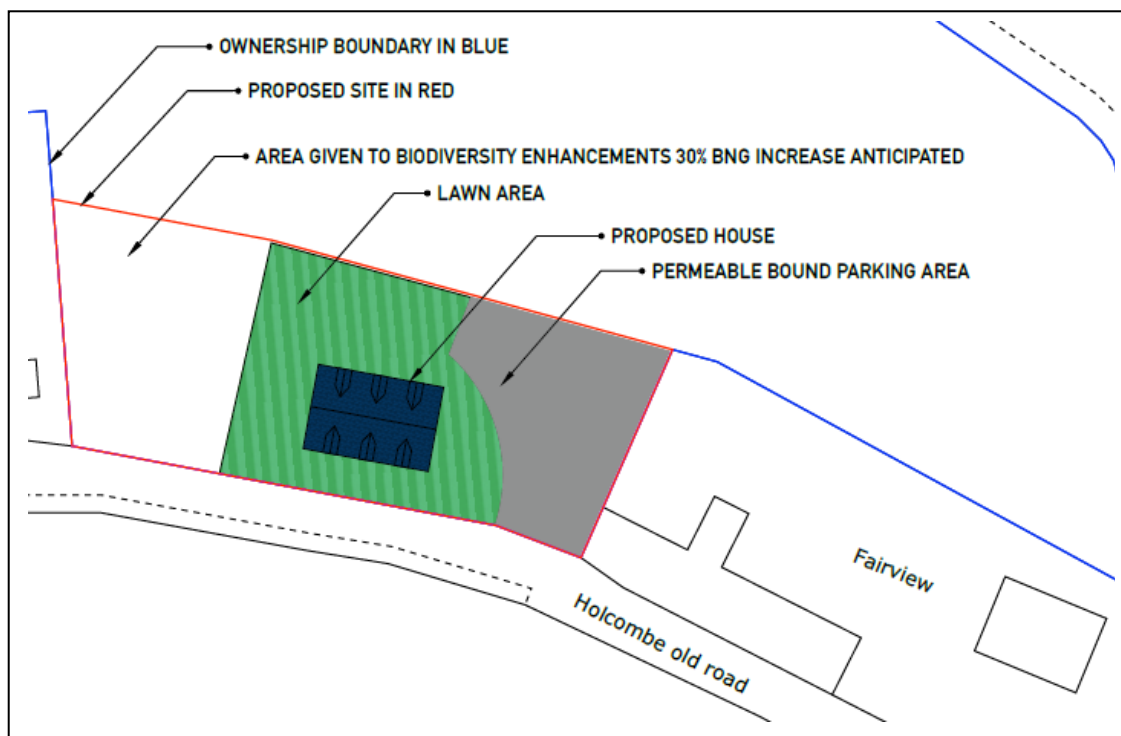
Figure 1. The Appeal Site



3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 The Appellant sought The application sought Permission in Principle for the erection of a single dwelling, with all detailed matters reserved for subsequent approval.

Figure 2. Proposed Block Plan



3.2 The proposed development would consolidate built form within the appeal site. The existing barn and storage structures on the appeal site are currently more dispersed within the plot. Their removal and replacement with a single, well-sited dwelling would reduce the visual and spatial spread of development.

4.0 REFUSAL

4.1 The Application was refused under delegated powers on 23 June 2025 for the following reasons;

1. The proposed development for 1 No dwelling on a 0.09ha site would not make optimal use of the potential of the site. Therefore, the proposed development would conflict with Policy JP-H4 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and Chapter 11, particularly paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development would not be located in a sustainable location and would fail the tests set out in Paragraph 155 (c) in relation to Grey Belt Land. Therefore, the proposed development would conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.0 POLICY

5.1 Places for Everyone

Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing

New housing development should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design.

Regard should be had to the minimum densities set out below.

Location (use highest density that applies when a site falls within more than one location)	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare): Within the location	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare): Within 400 metres	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare): Within 800 metres
Designated centres:			
City Centre	200	120	70
Designated town centres	120	70	50
Other designated centres	70	50	35
Public transport stops:			
Main rail stations and Metrolink stops in the City Centre	N/A	200	120
Other rail stations and Metrolink stops	N/A	120	70

Location (use highest density that applies when a site falls within more than one location)	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare): Within the location	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare): Within 400 metres	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare): Within 800 metres
in large, designated centres			
Other rail stations with a frequent service and all other Metrolink stops	N/A	70	50
Leigh Guided Busway stops	N/A	50	35
Areas within GMAL 6 and above or its equivalent	50	35	35
All other locations: minimum net residential density of 35 dwellings per hectare			

Lower densities may be acceptable where they can be clearly justified by:

1. Local housing market issues, such as a demonstrable need for a particular type of housing that cannot be delivered at a higher density; or
2. Site-specific issues, such as the design context and any potential impact on the wider landscape or townscape including heritage assets and green infrastructure

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In order to achieve an appropriate mix of housing across the plan area, developments should include the provision of houses and/or apartments having regard to the following and the need to achieve high quality design:

- A. 35-70 dwellings per hectare: primarily houses
- B. 70-120 dwellings per hectare: mix of houses and apartments
- C. 120+ dwellings per hectare: primarily apartments, incorporating houses and/or ground-floor duplexes where practicable

6.0 ASSESSMENT

6.1 The main issues of the appeal are whether the proposed development would represent an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt and the Council's concerns regarding density and efficient use of land.

6.2 The Council argues that providing a single dwelling on a 0.09ha site fails to make "optimal use of the potential of the site," contrary to Policy JP-H4 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and paragraph 130 of the NPPF. Policy JP-H4 does not impose a blanket requirement for higher densities. Its wording is qualified: "New housing development should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design."

The policy therefore requires a balanced judgment: density must be "appropriate to the location," not simply "maximised.". The appeal site lies within the Green Belt and the Holcombe Conservation Area, where policy and statutory duties require sensitivity to character, scale, and heritage significance.

In this context, a single dwelling can properly be considered the appropriate density.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF makes a similar point: developments should "optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development." The key word again is appropriate, not "maximum."

6.3 The overarching policy lens here is the Green Belt. Paragraph 154(e) of the NPPF expressly allows "limited infilling in villages" as an exception to inappropriate development and, as such, this fundamentally shapes what can reasonably be regarded as "appropriate" in terms of housing density within this location. The NPPF does not suggest that "limited"

should be equated with maximising yield or meeting generic density thresholds; rather, it sets a clear expectation that in Green Belt villages, development must remain small in scale, sensitive to context, and subordinate to the established pattern of the settlement. In this setting, “optimal use” therefore means delivering a form of development that respects both the openness of the Green Belt and the character of the Conservation Area, rather than seeking to force additional dwellings onto a constrained site.

To require a higher density here would contradict the concept of “limited” infilling and undermine the balance struck in national policy between efficient land use and the protection of sensitive, designated environments.

6.4 The Holcombe Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) specifically recognises scope for “limited infilling in scale with the village and not adversely affect[ing] its character and surroundings.”. It confirms that infill development of the right scale is not only acceptable in principle, but part of the character management of the CA. Attempting to fit multiple dwellings onto the site to satisfy JP-H4 density would directly conflict with the CA appraisal’s guidance, resulting in harm to heritage significance.

6.5 Delivering one dwelling on this site is the optimal solution when Green Belt, Conservation Area, and local character constraints are taken into account. Attempting to achieve more units would move the scheme outside the definition of “limited” infilling and risk refusal on Green Belt and Conservation Area harm grounds. It is considered that the Council’s interpretation of JP-H4 is therefore overly rigid given the location of the site and the surrounding area.

6.6 The Council’s second reason for refusal states that the proposed development would not be located in a sustainable location and would fail the tests set out in paragraph 155(c)

of the NPPF in relation to “Grey Belt land.” However, it is argued that the proposal benefits from exception 154(e) in that the development constitutes limited infill in villages.

- The appeal site lies between existing built form within the village of Holcombe and is physically and visually contained.
- Development of a single dwelling on this small gap site clearly constitutes “limited” infill.
- Where paragraph 154(e) applies, the development is not inappropriate, and the broader safeguards in paragraph 155 are not engaged.

6.7 The Council’s own Conservation Area Appraisal makes the position even clearer. Section 2 (“The Planning Policy Context”) states:

“Holcombe is a settlement within the Green Belt, where development is restricted to that connected to agriculture and forestry; essential facilities for outdoor recreation; limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings; and limited infilling within existing villages which is required to be in scale with the village and not adversely affect its character and surroundings.”

- Holcombe is recognised by the LPA as a settlement within the Green Belt.
- Limited infilling in the village is accepted as a permissible form of development.
- The only caveats are that infill should be in scale and not harm character — both of which can be secured at the Technical Details stage.

6.8 Set out above is the Appellant’s case is that the proposal constitutes limited infilling in a village under paragraph 154(e) of the NPPF and is therefore not inappropriate development. However, should the Inspector not accept that position, the proposal can still be supported when assessed against paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

6.9 In this respect, the LPA's concern was that proposed development would not be located in a sustainable location and would fail the tests set out in Paragraph 155 (c). However, the following assessment is provided to demonstrate that the appeal site is in a sustainable location.

Location and Accessibility

The site lies within Holcombe and benefits from its close functional relationship with Ramsbottom. This proximity ensures access to a full range of shops, schools, and public transport links, including rail and bus services. The short travel distance reduces reliance on the private car and aligns with the sustainable transport objectives of the NPPF. Within Holcombe itself, the development will connect to established pedestrian routes and transport corridors, with opportunities to enhance walking and cycling connections toward Holcombe Moor and Ramsbottom.

Efficient Use of Land and Community Benefits

The appeal site is a modest but valuable infill plot, making efficient use of underused land without extending development into open countryside. As such, it reinforces the existing settlement pattern and avoids harm to the openness of the wider Green Belt. The introduction of a single dwelling brings with it both investment and ongoing household expenditure, supporting local shops, services, and facilities in Holcombe and Ramsbottom. Socially, new residents would help sustain amenities while contributing to the vitality of the wider community. Importantly, the scheme adds to the borough's housing supply at a time when delivery is demonstrably below target, a factor that carries significant weight under national policy. While the scale is necessarily modest, it represents a meaningful and proportionate contribution to the economic and social objectives of sustainable development.

Community Character and Design

In design terms, the site offers the opportunity for a high-quality and sensitively conceived dwelling that respects Holcombe's distinctive rural character. Materials and detailing can be selected to complement the surrounding area, while scale and massing can be controlled to ensure the new building integrates with surrounding development. The scheme therefore delivers not only a functional home but one that enhances local distinctiveness, meets identified housing needs, including the potential for smaller or accessible accommodation, and reinforces the cohesion and identity of Holcombe's community.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in paragraph 10 to ensure that “sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The proposal comprises sustainable development when considered against guidance in the NPPF. The framework advises that developments should respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, whilst not discouraging appropriate innovations.

7.2 It has been evidenced in the assessment above that the proposed development would not result in the harm considered by the Local Authority and that it does conform in all regards to the Councils Development Plan and guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.3 It is respectfully requested that the appeal is upheld and permission granted for the proposed development subject to appropriate conditions.