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Ref; 25/1323/385A – Design & Access, and Planning Statement

Design & Access, and Planning Statement

**Replacement of existing agricultural building at Barrack Fold Farm,
off Knowsley Road, Ainsworth, Bolton.**



- prepared on behalf of -

- Mr C. Dudley -

26th March 2025
Updated 17th June 2025

Section 1- Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been produced to accompany a planning application for the replacement of an existing agricultural building with a new structure.
- 1.2 In addition to this statement the following information is submitted in support of this application:

Drawings

25/1323/170 -	Location plan
25/1323/171 -	Existing site plan
25/1323/281 -	Proposed site plan
23/1283/202 -	Site access overview
25/1323/172 -	Existing floor plans
25/1323/173 -	Existing elevations
25/1323/282A -	Proposed floor plans
25/1323/283 -	Proposed elevations

Reports

25/1323/385 -	Design & Access, and Planning Statement (photos at appendix 1)
14/04/2025 -	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

Section 2- Existing Use

- 2.1 Barrack Fold Farm is located to the north of Ainsworth village centre with access from Knowsley Road. The main farmstead and concentration of buildings is arranged around a central courtyard and existing access as follows;
- Farmhouse – grade II listed (occupied by the applicant since 2011),
 - Grouping of central long barn, attached stables to east (both grade II listed), and attached shippoon to west wrapping around a central courtyard opposite to the farmhouse. In November 2023 planning consent was granted for conversion of the barns into 4 dwellings (69812/FUL and 69803/LBC), and these works are currently being implemented.
 - To the rear (north) of the main barn is an agricultural building (part steel frame, part block, and cladding sheets to the roof). A prior approval determination for change of use of the agricultural building to a dwelling house (unit 5) was approved in May 2023 (69436/PMBPA).
 - Directly to the east of the barns is a garage (stone and slate) that is used for storage and parking by the applicant.
 - To the west of the farmhouse there are further buildings extending along the existing access road comprising;
 - the subject agricultural storage building (timber and steel cladding),
 - a stables (block construction with steel cladding sheets to the roof) that has planning consent for a replacement dwelling (69812/FUL).
 - a detached triple garage that is utilised by the farmhouse.
 - Barrack Fold Farm is registered with the Rural Payments Agency with the last cross compliance check having being undertaken in June 2022 and the RPA confirming that the applicant had met all relevant cross compliance rules (agricultural unit -holding number CBH: 44/690/0547).
- 2.2 The subject agricultural building is of timber frame construction with timber cladding boards to the external walls, and profiled steel cladding sheets to the roof.
- 2.3 The building does not meet the requirements of the applicant due to the restricted height for vehicles and machinery, the limitation on storage height, and the intermediate timber posts that support the roof and restrict access. The existing building is proposed for demolition with a replacement building constructed to a similar footprint.
- 2.4 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, the lowest level of flood risk.
- 2.5 Barrack Fold Farm including the subject agricultural building is located within a Green Belt designation.

Section 3- Proposed Use and Amount of Development

- 3.1 It is proposed demolish the existing agricultural storage building and replace this with a more functional steel frame and clad building.
- 3.2 The existing building to be demolished has an external footprint of 154sqm and the new building will have a slightly larger external footprint of 178sqm (a 14% increase in footprint). The siting of the replacement building will be very similar to the existing.
- 3.3 The replacement building will be slightly higher (3.5metres to eaves, and 5.2metres to ridge), mainly due to the additional height needed to allow access and height clearance for modern farm machinery and more functional storage (2.8metres clearance to vehicle doors).
- 3.4 The new building is a steel portal frame building with outer block walls to a height of 1.8metres, steel plastisol wall cladding to the upper walls (dark green), and low pitch roof (13 degrees) clad with natural grey fibre cement cladding panels.
- 3.5 The design and size of the building is a standard agricultural building proposed to be supplied by Wareing Buildings and is typical of modern agricultural buildings that are found in rural locations.
- 3.6 It is proposed that the building will be arranged with three bays comprising:
 - Left hand bay
 - workshop with tools required for farm maintenance and repairs, and additional storage space for animal feed and fertiliser.
 - Central bay
 - Agricultural machinery utilised for the farming operation and maintenance, including tractor, 2 x loader (stacker), tedder machine, sprayer, mowing machine, and 3 tonne excavator.
 - Right hand bay
 - Storage of hay bales for winter feed (100 bales stored following summer cut).
- 3.7 The access to the existing agricultural building will be utilised comprising access from Knowsley Road and then a single width private access with passing bays up to Barrack Fold Farm. The existing access already serves the residential use of the farmhouse, the approved residential use of the main barn and the agricultural holding. As part of the consent to convert that barns and for a replacement dwelling approval was granted to improve the existing private access leading upto Barrack Fold Farm through the introduction of four additional passing bays.

Section 4- Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.1 The NPPF is an important material consideration in determining planning applications emphasising a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and requiring that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay (paragraph 11).
- 4.2 Chapter 12 of the NPPF focusses on 'Achieving Well Designed Places'.
- 4.3 Paragraph 125 (d) states that planning decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.
- 4.4 Paragraph 135 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- 4.5 Chapter 13 sets out policies for 'Protecting Green Belt land' (Paragraphs 142– 160).
- 4.6 Paragraph 153 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 4.7 Paragraph 154 states that a Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, exceptions to this include;
 - a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
 - d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- 4.8 Paragraph 187 requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, and d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.
- 4.9 Part 16 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment.
- 4.10 Paragraph 207 directs that "in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting."

4.11 Paragraph 210 states that in determining applications, LPA's should take account of:

- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability; and
- c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.12 Paragraph 212 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Local Planning Policy

Bury MBC Unitary Development Plan (1997)

4.13 The Development Plan for Bury comprises the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1997 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchases Act (2004) identifies that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.14 The cluster of buildings forming the main hub of Barrack Fold Farm is a previously developed site within a wider Green Belt designation in the Bury UDP (1997) and is also located within the West Pennine Moors and in a Special Landscape Area.

4.15 UDP Policy OL1 (Green Belt) seeks to maintain the Green Belt, ensuring that it fulfils the following strategic purposes;

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

4.16 Saved policy OL1/2 states that *"The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate development unless it is for one or more of a number of stated purposes, including:*

- a) agriculture and forestry.*

4.17 *Policy OL1/2 does not include for redevelopment of previously developed land and is not consistent with paragraph 154 of the NPPF* where the exceptions include;

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land; whether redundant or in continuing use, and which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

4.18 Policy OL4/5 – ‘Agricultural Development’ states that:

Agricultural development, buildings or structures which require planning permission will be permitted providing they are sited and designed in such a manner as to:

- minimise their visual impact on the landscape having regard to height, material, landform and landscaping;
- relate well to existing farm buildings;
- not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of any neighbouring dwellings.

4.19 Policy OL7/2 West Pennine Moors states that throughout the area of the West Pennine Moors the Council will control development so as to reduce any possible detrimental effects on the important character of the area.

4.20 UDP policy EN1/1 states that the Council will seek to protect, preserve and enhance the character, appearance and amenity of the Borough's built environment. Policy EN1/1 states that development will not be permitted where proposals would have a detrimental effect on visual amenity both within, or viewed from, areas of environmental interest such as the Green Belt, Special Landscape Areas.

4.21 UDP policy EN2/3 – Listed buildings. This policy states that:

In considering applications for Listed Building Consent, the Council will have regard to the following criteria:

- a) the impact of the proposal on the historic fabric of the building;
- the relationship of any extension to the Listed Building in terms of its height, size, design, and roofscape;
 - the need to protect the setting of the Listed Building;
 - the impact of associated ancillary facilities and infrastructure works.

4.22 UDP policy EN8 Woodland and Trees states that the Council will support the retention of trees, woods, copses and hedgerows and encourage natural regeneration and new and replacement tree planting throughout the Borough.

- 4.23 Policy EN9 Landscape states that the Council will seek to protect, conserve and improve the landscape quality of the Borough, and will encourage the enhancement of landscapes, where appropriate.
- 4.24 UDP policy EN9/1 – Special Landscape Areas states that any development will be strictly controlled and required to be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of visual impact. High standards of design, siting and landscaping will be expected. Unduly obtrusive development will not be permitted in such areas.

Development Control Policy Guidance Note 8 ‘ New Buildings and Associated Development in the Green Belt’

- 4.25 Whilst this policy guidance note does not have development plan status it is a material consideration. SPD 8 provides guidance for the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt, and in respect of agricultural buildings advises that new buildings should normally form part of a group rather than stand in isolation, and relate to existing in size and colour.

Places for Everyone (Pfe) Joint Development Plan, 2024

- 4.26 The Pfe was adopted on the 21st March 2024 and forms part of the Development Plan for Bury.
- 4.27 Policy JP-S1 Sustainable Development states that to help tackle climate change, development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives. In preparing plans, authorities should make as much use as possible of suitable previously developed (brownfield) land and vacant buildings to meet development needs.
- 4.28 Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy states that the aim of delivering a carbon neutral Greater Manchester no later than 2038, with a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.29 Policy JP-S4: Flood Risk and the Water Environment aims to manage flood risk by locating and designing development to minimise the impacts of current and future flood risk.
- 4.30 Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity states that through local planning and associated activities a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought.
- 4.31 Policy JP-G9: The Green Belt, confirms that the Green Belt serves the five purposes set out in national policy.

- 4.32 Policy JP-P2 Heritage states that development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy.

Section 5 - Planning Assessment

- 5.1 In this section the development proposals are assessed against the relevant policies of local and national planning policy.

Principle of development

- 5.2 The application site is used for agricultural purposes and is occupied by an agricultural building. The existing land and agricultural building are part of the agricultural holding and are lawful.
- 5.3 The land and building are located within a Green Belt location but local and national planning policies allow for the development of agricultural buildings, and for the redevelopment of previously developed land.
- 5.4 The existing agricultural building has a concrete slab foundation, and a timber frame with wall and roof cladding and is a robust structure. The building is in a sound and serviceable condition but the existing height and configuration is ill-suited to modern day machinery. The new purpose built building would facilitate access for loading and storage of farm machinery and provide the storage capacity that would meet the needs for the maintenance and upkeep of this farm holding.
- 5.5 Paragraph 154 (a) allows for the development of agricultural buildings in the Green Belt. The replacement building is to be built where there is already an existing building. The replacement building is higher but is a standard height for an agricultural building (2.8metre high vehicle access doors), and of a scale necessary to accommodate loading by modern farm machinery. The building is typical in appearance of a modern day agricultural building and would not appear out of place, or incongruous in a rural setting.
- 5.6 The replacement agricultural building would be sited in the same position as the existing, adjacent to the existing access, and between existing/proposed buildings rather than in an isolated location. Over longer ranging views the replacement agricultural building would be viewed as a cluster of development alongside the adjacent buildings, and the wider Barrack Fold development.
- 5.7 The existing building is viewed in the context of the buildings that are located to either side (stables building and detached triple garage). The replacement building would be viewed in this context also and demonstrably there would be no substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.8 There is planning consent to build a replacement dwelling to the stables, with an increase in height over the existing stables of 1.8 metres. The overall ridge level to the replacement agricultural building will be at a similar level to that of the replacement dwelling.

- 5.9 The application site is an existing agricultural use with an existing building that is to be replaced. There is planning policy to support these proposals and the circumstances of the existing land and buildings are such that it can be demonstrated that development in the manner proposed is appropriate in the Green Belt.

Green Belt (OL1)

- 5.10 The proposed development would not result in harm to any of these purposes, and there is no conflict with Policy OL1. **Clearly no unrestricted sprawl would occur and the proposal is within the defined boundaries of the existing agricultural use.** This development would not result in the merging of towns, or have any impact of the setting and special character of historic towns. The development assists in the recycling of a building that is ill suited to meet the functional need of this agricultural holding.
- 5.11 For the above reasons it is demonstrated that the proposal is justified in terms of Green Belt policy.

Principle of agricultural development

- 5.12 In respect of UDP Policy OL4/5 and the provisions of this:

- The agricultural building replaces an existing building and whilst a limited increase in height is proposed, this is only what is necessary to provide a functional agricultural building with sufficient height to allow access for vehicles and machinery that are necessary for the farm operation.
- The agricultural building is a direct replacement of the existing building and so relates well to the existing farm buildings.
- The stables building located directly to the west of the existing agricultural building has planning consent for replacement with a dwelling that the applicant intends to implement. There will be little difference in terms of impact on the potential future dwelling between the existing agricultural building and the replacement that is proposed. The applicant is simply seeking a more functional building that is suited to the needs of the agricultural holding for machinery access and storage, and they do not intend to house livestock within the replacement building. It is considered therefore that there will be no unacceptable impact on the proposed dwelling, and no greater impact than that which would be present as a result of the existing building.

Ecology

- 5.13 A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report is submitted with this application. It is assessed that there is no evidence of bats roosting within the existing agricultural building. No bats were recorded and the building is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats. To provide Biodiversity Net Gain the installation of a Greenwoods Ecohabitats Two Chamber Bat Box or Kent Bat Box is proposed within the application site that would provide roosting potential for the local bat population. An improvement in ecological value will be delivered and so meeting the objectives of the NPPF (para. 174).

Design and layout and Impact upon listed building

- 5.14 The replacement agricultural building is located 27metres west of the listed barns (at the closest points), and 31 metres west of the listed farmhouse (at the closest points). The proposed replacement agricultural building is separated from the listed buildings by the site access and two sets of detached garages that are of recent construction.
- 5.15 There is separation of the replacement agricultural building and the listed buildings due to the distance between them, and the physical separation due to the site access and the garages that are built between.
- 5.16 Views of the listed buildings are interrupted, and existing views include the existing agricultural building that is proposed to be replaced.
- 5.17 It is considered that there will be little if any discernible impact upon the listed buildings as a result of the replacement agricultural building in the same location.
- 5.18 The proposed building is a functional agricultural building that is typically found in a rural location and would preserve the character of the listed buildings.
- 5.19 In terms of setting it is considered that the proposal for a replacement agricultural building would not necessarily change the inherent character of the sites settings. The replacement building will be sited in the same position as the existing and the extent of the agricultural use is well defined by the existing fences. The agricultural use and building is screened and contained by the site access and the adjacent buildings. It is considered that the proposals would not give rise to any undue harm or impact on the setting of the heritage asset.

Transport and highways impacts of the development

- 5.20 Paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF require that safe and suitable access to a site can be achieved for all users and that 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 of the road network would be severe.

- 5.21 There is a private access that extends from the end of Knowsley Road up to the subject site that has a tarmac surface that is well maintained and with good visibility along the entire length of the road. This means of access is well established and has been utilised by farm and commercial vehicles for many decades.
- 5.22 The access is of sufficient width for farm machinery and commercial vehicles. Following the granting of consent for further residential use to this site additional passing bays have been incorporated in to the private access and it is possible for two vehicles to pass.
- 5.23 There will be no increase in traffic movements from the replacement of the existing agricultural building. Traffic generation is expected to remain as existing, and it is assessed that there would be no detrimental impact on highway capacity or road safety.

Impact upon the surrounding area

- 5.24 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments promote a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Additionally, the NPPG states that local planning authorities when Plan-making and decision making, need to take account of the acoustic environment and in doing so consider:
- whether or not a significant adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur;
 - whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; and
 - whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved.
- 5.25 There is already an existing agricultural building and use to this site. The applicant does not propose to change the agricultural activities that they undertake, or change the function of the building. No livestock are proposed to be housed within the replacement building. It is reasonable to conclude that no greater adverse effects are likely to occur, or that the standard of amenity to neighbouring dwellings should be impacted to any greater extent than the current operation.

Contamination risks on the site

- 5.26 The proposed use will not change and the replacement agricultural building is not a use that would be sensitive to potential contamination. Bearing in mind the existing agricultural use and building it is not considered necessary to undertake any further assessment of contamination for the replacement building.

Flooding risks on the site

- 5.27 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not located within a Critical Drainage Area.
- 5.28 Surface water drainage from the existing building is to ground. There will be no significant increase in roof area and surface water will be drained to a soakaway.

Section 6 – Conclusion

- 6.1 The applicant proposes replacement of the existing agricultural building in order to provide a more functional building that will be accessible for farm vehicles and machinery, and be better suited to the needs of this agricultural holding.
- 6.2 The proposed building is sited in the same position as the existing agricultural building, and the extent of the agricultural use will be contained to the same areas as the existing.
- 6.3 The existing access is to be utilised and no further infrastructure or enabling works will be necessary.
- 6.4 A functional agricultural building is proposed that is typical in design and materials of buildings that are common and would be expected in a rural setting.
- 6.5 The building is sited in the most appropriate location for this farm holding, being a direct replacement of the existing building, and located directly adjacent to the existing access and amongst the existing cluster of buildings.
- 6.6 The existing building is viewed in the context of the buildings that are located to either side and there would be no substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.7 It is considered that there will be little if any discernible impact upon the listed buildings or their setting as a result of the replacement of the existing agricultural building in the same location.
- 6.8 The design of the new building is appropriate for this rural location and the replacement agricultural building will not result in any adverse impacts.

Issued 26th March 2025

Updated 17th June 2025

APPENDIX 1 - PHOTOGRAPHS



Image 1 – Existing agricultural building and stables to west



Image 2 – View of agricultural building and residential use to east



Image 3 – Existing agricultural building



Image 4 – Existing access to east of agricultural building



Image 5– North elevation to existing agricultural building



Image 6 – West elevation to existing agricultural building and stables