



# PLANNING STATEMENT

**Location:** Dunsty Hill Farm, Calvert, Buckinghamshire

**Client:** Highbarrow Holdings

**Date:** October 2021



**PLANNING  
INSIGHT**

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

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# INTRODUCTION

PLANNING STATEMENT

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This *Planning Statement* has been prepared by Planning Insight on behalf of Highbarrow Holdings (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') to accompany a full planning application to Buckinghamshire Council in respect of the proposed development at Dunsty Hill Farm, Calvert, Buckinghamshire (the 'Application Site'). The applicant is seeking full planning permission for the following development:

*“Demolition of existing Farmhouse and outbuilding (Barn 1) and construction of replacement Farmhouse and carport, including access and landscaping”*

- 1.1.2 Dunsty Hill Farm is located to the south of the small village Calvert Green in the Aylesbury Vale District of Buckinghamshire.
- 1.1.3 The farm is operational, but the farmstead and all the associated buildings are vacant and falling into a state of disrepair.
- 1.1.4 The applicant is seeking to replace the existing vacant farmhouse which is beyond economic repair. The replacement farmhouse is proposed within the curtilage of the existing farmhouse.
- 1.1.5 A replacement dwelling will facilitate wider improvements to the farmstead and enable it to be brought back into active use. This will act as a catalyst to improve the site and the character of the surroundings.
- 1.1.6 The proposed dwelling is a traditional yet contemporary design, in keeping with the rural aesthetic. The building will exceed policy standards in terms of high-quality design and sustainability. The replacement dwelling will improve the quality of the housing stock in the district.
- 1.1.7 The site is not within the Green Belt or any protected landscape, as such, the principle of replacement is supported by planning policy. The replacement dwelling has a much lower profile than the existing, this suitably mitigates a modest increase in internal area. The redevelopment presents opportunities to improve the site and the wider setting; these will be explained in this *Statement*

### 1.2 Application Submission

1.2.1 This *Statement* describes the application proposal in more detail and in the context of the relevant policies. It should be read in conjunction with the plans and the following specialist reports which have been prepared in support of the application:



- *Design and Access Statement (TPD)*
- *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Chase Ecology)*
- *Protected Species Surveys (Chase Ecology)*

# DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

## 2.0 Site and Surroundings

### 2.1 Site

- 2.1.1 The site subject of this application is the Farmhouse at Dunsty Hill Farm. The farmhouse is in a prominent and elevated location approximately 250m from Perry Hill via an existing access road.
- 2.1.2 As can be seen from the photographs, the existing farmhouse is in a considerable state of disrepair, both cosmetically and structurally.



Figure 1 and 2 – Front elevation and aerial photograph looking north across farmstead

- 2.1.3 The farmhouse was constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, consequently it does not conform with modern standards in terms of layout and function (see enclosed Existing Plans).
- 2.1.4 The existing 4-bedroom dwelling has a footprint of 143m<sup>2</sup> and GIA of 266m<sup>2</sup> across two floors and a small cellar. It is constructed of stock brick, likely to be from the nearby Calvert Brickworks. The roof is slate tile. The house has a double-storey gable to the front and a smaller single-storey gable extension to the rear. The side elevation is rendered and painted white.

### 2.2 Surroundings

- 2.2.1 The site is not located within a conservation area, nor are there any statutory or locally listed buildings in the area.
- 2.2.2 The site is not within the Green Belt nor is it located within a special landscape area for example an Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL), a Local Landscape Area (LLA) or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.2.3 In addition to the vacant farmhouse, the farmstead comprises a number of redundant agricultural barns. One large steel barn of circa. 325m<sup>2</sup>, two smaller steel barns both circa.150m<sup>2</sup> and a smaller brick barn of circa 50m<sup>2</sup>, in addition to a small brick outbuilding. It is intended to bring the barns back into active use in the near future.





Figure 3 – Additional Barns on Farmstead

- 2.2.4 Dunsty Hill Farm is to the immediate south of Calvert Green village. Calvert Green is a new village which was constructed on the disused Calvert Brickworks site from 2002 through to 2011. The original hamlet of Calvert still exists at the northernmost point of Calvert Green. Calvert is a much smaller hamlet of around 20 dwellings built to serve the Calvert Brickworks; the houses were constructed after the Brickworks opened in 1900.
- 2.2.5 Calvert Green has around 400 homes. Other facilities include a local shop and a village hall. The village has particularly good levels of open space and is arranged around a large village green.
- 2.2.6 The nearest large settlements are Buckingham, approximately 11 miles to the north, and Bicester approximately 11 miles to the west. The small market town of Winslow is located approximately 9 miles to the east.
- 2.2.7 The site is not a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or a Site Local Importance for Nature Conservation. The site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no Listed Buildings near the site. The site is within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding).

# RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

## 3.0 Relevant planning history

### 3.1 Application Site

- 3.1.1 Householder planning permission was granted for *“Demolition of existing rear extension. Replacement with part single storey with lantern rooflights and part two storey rear extension; raised platform with balustrade to front entrance to Dunsty Hill Farmhouse and detached double garage”* (reference 15/02082/APP) in December 2015. This application approved extensions to the existing farmhouse and a new garage, the approved scheme was not implemented. It does however acknowledge that the principle of additional built volume was acceptable.

### 3.2 Pre-application Advice

- 3.2.1 The applicant submitted a request for pre-application advice on a replacement farmhouse in December 2020. As of October 2021, the local planning authority have failed to provide a written response.

### 3.3 Dunsty Hill Farm

- 3.3.1 There are currently small-scale applications for development at Dunsty Hill Farm. These include an application for external alteration to the large cattle barn (reference 21/02233/APP) following the approval of a Prior Notification for change of use to a hotel (reference 20/04431/COUAF). An application for minor external works (reference 20/04204/APP) to rebuild one of the smaller barns following the grant of a Lawful Development for its use as light-industrial (reference 20/01594/ACL). Finally, an application for the conversion of the brick barn to a dwelling (reference 21/01743/APP).

# PLANNING POLICY

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## 4.0 Planning Policy

### 4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 This section of the *Statement* provides an analysis of the planning policy context in which the proposed development should be considered, in accordance with the relevant planning legislation and national policy guidance.
- 4.1.2 Planning decisions in England and Wales should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This statutory requirement is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 4.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear at Paragraph 11 that development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved without delay.
- 4.1.4 The statutory development plan for the Aylesbury Vale District of Buckinghamshire Council consists of:
- The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) adopted September 2021
- 4.1.5 While not forming part of the statutory development plan, the following documents remain important material considerations for the determination of planning applications in Buckinghamshire Council area:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
  - National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (2014, as amended)

### 4.2 Statutory Development Plan

- 4.2.1 The VALP was recently adopted in September 2021, this replacement the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan 2004. The most relevant extracts of these documents are analysed in more detail below.
- 4.2.2 The principal policy in the VALP which provides guidance for this proposal is H4 – Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside. It states, *“The replacement of dwellings within the countryside on a one-for-one basis will normally be supported provided that the replacement dwelling is not significantly greater in size than the one it replaces, does not cause significant harm to the site or its surroundings and accords with the design principles set out in policy BE2”*.
- 4.2.3 Policy BE2 states *“All new development proposals shall respect and complement the following criteria:*



- a) *The physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings including the scale and context of the site and its setting*
- b) *The local distinctiveness and vernacular character of the locality, in terms of ordering, form, proportions, architectural detailing and materials*
- c) *The natural qualities and features of the area, and*
- d) *The effect on important public views and skylines.*

*More guidance on the detail for the application and implementation of this policy will be provided in the Aylesbury Vale Design SPD”.*

- 4.2.4 Policy BE3 – Protection of the amenity of residents – states *“Planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would unreasonably harm any aspect of the amenity of existing residents and would not achieve a satisfactory level of amenity for future residents. Where planning permission is granted, the council will use conditions or planning obligations to ensure that any potential adverse impacts on neighbours are eliminated or appropriately controlled”.*
- 4.2.5 Policy T6 - Vehicle Parking – states *“All development must provide an appropriate level of car parking, in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix B”.* Appendix B states that for 5-bed plus dwellings the optimum standard is 3.5 spaces. Policy T8 – Electric Vehicle Parking – states that one charging point per dwelling is required.
- 4.2.6 Policy NE1 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity – states a net gain in biodiversity will be sought in all developments and that development proposals will expect ecological surveys where appropriate.

### 4.3 National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3.1 On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021, the Government adopted the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The document provides a consolidated framework of planning policy which replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework originally published in March 2012.

#### **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

- 4.3.2 The NPPF outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: an economic objective, a social objective and environmental objective.
- 4.3.3 The framework is clear at Paragraph 11 that development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit.



#### 4.4 National Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.4.1 The Government launched the Planning Practice Guidance web-based resource in March 2014. The resource is continually updated, with the most recent update reflecting the revised National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.4.2 Paragraph 001 of Design states that as a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design.
- 4.4.3 Paragraph 007 of Design states that development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- 4.4.4 Paragraph 040 of Design states that well-designed housing should be functional, attractive and sustainable. It should also be adaptive to the changing needs of its occupants.

# PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

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## 5.0 Proposed Development

### 5.1 Proposed Development

5.1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for:

*“Demolition of existing Farmhouse and outbuilding (Barn 1) and construction of replacement Farmhouse and carport, including access and landscaping”*

5.1.2 The 5-bedroom replacement farmhouse will have a footprint of 235m<sup>2</sup> and a GIA of 398m<sup>2</sup>. The footprint is larger than the existing (which is 163m<sup>2</sup>). The building will be relocated to the south by approximately 20m within the existing curtilage.

5.1.3 The small outbuilding will be demolished. Moving the dwelling will ensure that trees are not affected by the proposal. It will also enable the creation of a small courtyard within the existing farmhouse curtilage.

5.1.4 A car port will enclose the courtyard from the south. The arrangement of the buildings will be typical of a farmstead layout.

5.1.5 The house will be constructed of stock-redbrick and will have clay or slate roof-tiles (materials will be salvaged from the existing house wherever possible). The windows and doors will be wooden framed.

5.1.6 The barn-style farmhouse has a rural aesthetic, in keeping with the character of the location. The barn will be one and a half storeys with second floor accommodation in the roof-space.

5.1.7 The ridgeline of the proposed house will be 6.35m (3m lower than the existing). As can be seen in the extract below:

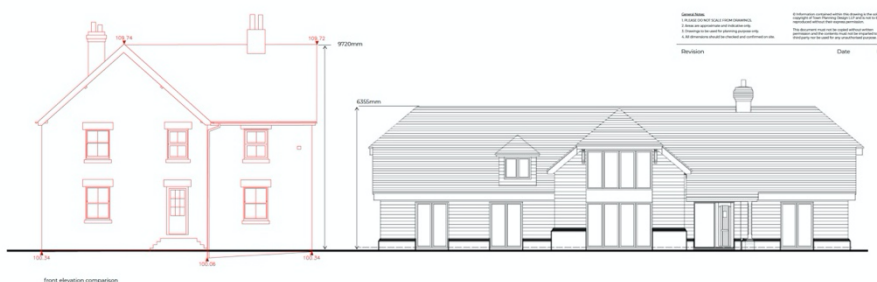


Figure 4 – Existing and Proposed Front Elevation

5.1.8 The lower profile and relative position of the replacement dwelling is illustrated in the drawing extract above. Further details of the proposed development are set out in full in the *Design and Access Statement*.

# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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## 6.0 Planning Considerations

### 6.1 Overview

6.1.1 This section describes the main issues relevant to the proposal in accordance with the identified policies.

### 6.2 Principle of Development

6.2.1 The one-to-one replacement of dwellings is an established principle in planning terms and is confirmed by VALP. Policy H4 confirms that the replacement dwellings in the countryside will normally be supported on the proviso that the replacement dwelling is not *"significantly greater in size than the one it replaces"* and *"does not cause significant harm to the site or its surroundings and accords with the design principles set out in policy BE2"*.

6.2.2 In relation to the first point, the replacement dwelling is not significantly greater in size than the existing. It is larger, by approximately 25% in GIA terms and 20% in footprint terms, these are acceptable increases for replacement dwellings. It is generally accepted that replacement dwelling will be larger than those they replace, otherwise it is often not economically viable to rebuild.

6.2.3 The increases in footprint and GIA, the replacement dwelling is significantly smaller in height than the existing, by over 2 metres, this will reduce the profile of the Farmhouse in the landscape.

6.2.4 Notwithstanding the above spatial considerations, given the surrounding context, the increase in footprint and internal area is not considered to be significant. The site is an isolated farmstead, therefore the scale of the proposed dwelling relative to the surroundings is minor.

6.2.5 Farmhouses are generally large and the relative scale of existing barns on the site, located close to the existing farmhouse, ensure that any dwelling will appear proportionate in scale. The proposal will clearly not result in any harm to the site or surroundings.

### 6.3 Design

6.3.1 The second criteria of Policy H4 states that the replacement dwelling will be support if it does not cause harm to the site and accords with the design principles in Policy BE2.

6.3.2 Policy BE2 states that all new development proposals shall respect and complement certain design criteria.

- 6.3.3 Firstly, the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings including the scale and context of the site and its setting. The proposed development is on a farmstead which is isolated in the countryside. There are several larger scale barns on the site. The proposed scale of the farmhouse is harmonious with the site and its setting.
- 6.3.4 Secondly, the proposed replacement dwelling respects the character and vernacular features found in the locality. Indeed, the replacement house has taken several cues from the existing house. In terms of appearance, the replacement house will have a barn-style external appearance. It has gable protrusions, in a similar fashion to the exiting dwelling. The materials will also match those found on the existing dwelling and materials will be re-purposed wherever possible.
- 6.3.5 The proportions differ in that the existing building is relatively and prominent on the hill, whereas the proposed dwelling has a lower profile which will enable it to correspond with the topography.
- 6.3.6 Thirdly, the proposed development works with the natural features and qualities of the site. The proposed dwelling is positioned within the existing residential curtilage of the farmhouse. It effectively falls within the part of the site which is previously developed land – it does not comprise development on ‘greenfield’ parts of the site. Whilst it stays within the recognised curtilage, it is moved to the south by approximately 20m. The replacement dwelling will be moved away from existing trees, resulting in benefit to those trees and also ensuring better outlook for the replacement dwelling.
- 6.3.7 Fourthly, policy requires development to respect any important public views or skyline. As previously stated, the farmstead is an isolated cluster of farm buildings. From public vantage points, i.e. from Perry Hill or public bridleways across the site, the farmhouse will be seen in conjunction with the other farm buildings. The proposed changes are fully in keeping with the rural character and will have no unacceptable impact.
- 6.3.8 As per the reasons set out above, the proposed scheme is fully compliant with Policy BE2 of the VALP.

## 6.4 Ecology

- 6.4.1 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) prepared by chase ecology. Bat, amphibian, reptile, badger, and invertebrate surveys have been carried out. The final survey reports will be sent to the County Ecologist on competition along with biodiversity net gain calculations.
- 6.4.2 The application is already engaged with the County Ecologist on other matters. Appropriate licences will be obtained for the works, subject to the grant of planning permission.

## 6.5 Highways and Parking

6.5.1 The site includes a carport for 3 cars. The car parking standards in the VALP suggest that 5-bedroom plus dwellings should have an optimum of 3.5 spaces. The site will have additional forecourt parking spaces to the front.

## 6.6 Other Material Considerations

6.6.1 The current farmhouse is in a state of disrepair and has been vacant for a number of years. The replacement dwelling will increase the supply of (fit-for-purpose) housing in the district and thus contribute to the supply of housing in the district.

6.6.2 Given the extent of repairs needed to the existing farmhouse, it is only viable to demolish this property and replace it with a new building. The new dwelling will meet with current requirements in terms of layout and function. The replacement of the dwelling will also ensure that any new building embodies high quality sustainable design, exceeding current standards. The proposal will therefore improve the quality of the housing stock in the district and constitute sustainable development.

# CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

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## 7.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 7.1.1 This *Statement* has been prepared in support of a full application for the replacement of the existing farmhouse at Dunsty Hill Farm, Edgcott Road, Calvert Green, Buckinghamshire.
- 7.1.2 The principle of replacing the dwelling is acceptable, subject to it not being significantly larger than the existing and not having a harmful impact on the site or surrounds.
- 7.1.3 The proposed dwelling is not significantly larger than the existing building. Whilst it has a moderately larger GIA and footprint, the proposed dwelling has a significantly lower profile than the existing, with the proposed ridgeline being 3m lower than the existing.
- 7.1.4 The scale of the proposed replacement building is compatible with the farmstead which includes several much larger barns. The isolated nature of the site ensures that the replacement farmhouse does not impact on the character or amenity of the surrounds.
- 7.1.5 The contemporary yet traditional style of the dwelling perfectly assimilates with the rural surrounds. The replacement dwelling will constitute a significant improvement in terms of standard of accommodation and sustainability.
- 7.1.6 The existing building is in a state of disrepair and has been vacant for several years; the building is beyond economical repair. Permission for the proposed dwelling will ensure that that replacing the farmhouse is financially viable. This will bring the farmstead into active use, to the benefit of the site and surrounds.
- 7.1.7 For the reasons set out in this *Statement*, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted without delay.