

# Design, Access and Heritage Statement

for a

## Replacement Dwelling

at

**1 & 2 Nelson Row  
Middleton-in-Teesdale  
DL12 0SR**

For

Mr. & Mrs. A Carnell

Prepared  
by

Dark Skies Design Ltd.  
North Corn Park, Baldersdale, Barnard Castle,  
County Durham. DL12 9UJ.  
[www.darks skiesdesign.co.uk](http://www.darks skiesdesign.co.uk)

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## Introduction

This statement has been prepared to accompany an application for Planning Consent, seeking permission for the following works:

- Demolition of a pair of Semi-detached cottages and some associated outbuildings within the Middleton-in-Teesdale Conservation Area
- Construction of a replacement single family dwelling on the same site.
- Alterations to site boundary walls in association with the above.

Planning permission has previously been granted for the construction of a new Garage and Workshop as ancillary accommodation to the existing dwelling, associated parking, improved vehicular access and turning space under application DM/21/03831/FPA. It was necessary to split the Planning Applications for works on this site due to the presence of bats in the existing building.

Due to the difficulties imposed by Covid 19 which may make a site visit difficult to arrange, we include the following photographs of the existing building for reference.



*Fig 1: 1 and 2 Nelson Row, Middleton-in-Teesdale. South elevation from lane, showing outbuildings to left of picture.*



*Fig 2: View to the east of no. 1 Nelson Row, showing field access gates and agricultural buildings.*



*Fig 3: View to the north of Nelson Row, showing Public Footpath and field boundary to right of picture*





*Fig 4: View to the north of Nelson Row, showing Public Footpath. Grassed area shown, to north of stone boundary wall is also owned by the applicant.*



*Fig 5: Industrial units to southern boundary of site*





*Fig 6: Industrial units to southern boundary of site*



*Fig 7: Existing stone outbuildings (washhouse) to northwest of site.*





Fig 8: Existing stone outbuildings (stores and outside WC's) to northwest of site.

## Context

Middleton-in-Teesdale is a small market town located on the north bank of the River Tees, with a good mix of local amenities including a Medical Practice, Primary School, Bank, Church, a variety of Cafes and Restaurants and a small Supermarket. It is on a local bus route and is popular with walkers, being adjacent to both the Teesdale & Pennine Way Walks.

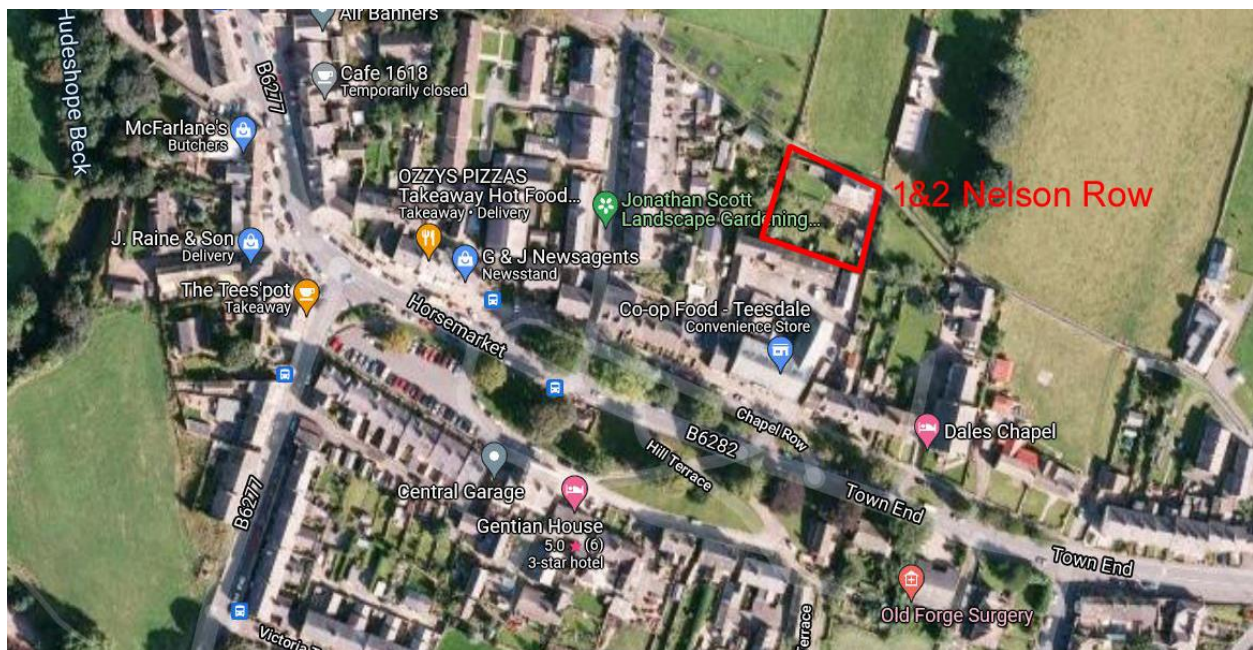


Fig 9: Google maps location plan

Nelson Row is located off Chapel Row, behind the Co-op food store in the centre of the village, accessed via a narrow lane. The properties are not listed, however the site is within the Middleton-in-Teesdale Conservation Area, adjacent to an Area of Higher Landscape Value as defined by the County Durham Local Plan. The boundary of the Conservation area is the public footpath to the north of the properties.

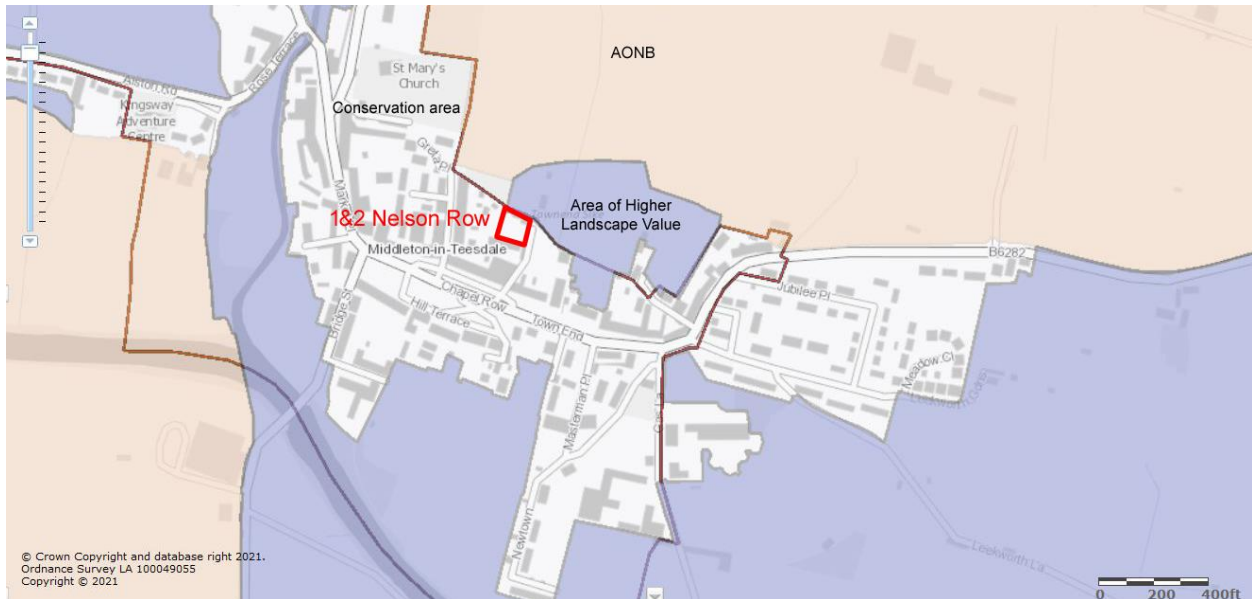


Fig 10: County Durham Local Plan mapping showing the AONB, Area of Higher Landscape Value and the Middleton-in-Teesdale conservation area, relative to the site.

## Pre-Application advice & Planning Policy

The applicant submitted a request for Pre-Application advice last year (PRE21/20/03607) which referred to the following Local Plan Policies:

*Policy 6 – Development on Unallocated sites. Residential development will be considered acceptable where it:*

- c - does not result in the loss of open land that has recreational, ecological or heritage value, or contributes to the character of the locality which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for;*
- d - is appropriate in terms of scale, design, layout and location to the character, function, form and setting of the settlement;*
- e - will not be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity;*

*We also feel policy 6-i is relevant as the proposal makes use of previously developed (brownfield) land.*

We will demonstrate in the following statement that the proposals comply with Policy 6 as they make use of a Brownfield site which does not currently make a positive

contribution to the Middleton-in-Teesdale Conservation Area. The proposal does not result in the loss of any open land. It is appropriate in terms of scale in that the proposals are for a single family home. The design, layout and location are appropriate to the setting. The alterations to the vehicular access will make a positive contribution to the area.

Policy 44 – Historic Environment  
Conservation Areas

- f. *the demonstration of understanding of the significance, character, appearance and setting of the conservation area and how this has informed proposals to achieve high quality, sustainable development, which is respectful of historic interest, local distinctiveness and the conservation or enhancement of the asset;*
- g. *the manner in which the proposal responds positively to the findings and recommendations of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals; and*
- h. *respect for, and reinforcement of, the established, positive characteristics of the area in terms of appropriate design (including pattern, layout, density, massing, features, height, form, materials and detailing).*

We believe that the design of the proposals make a positive contribution to the Middleton-in-Teesdale conservation area. Please refer to 'Design Approach and Intentions' below.

Advice has also been sought from Bryan Harris, Senior Conservation Officer, who stated that:

*"The properties are shown on the first edition OS plan of 1860 so are clearly of some age. Interestingly they are shown with a very formal garden where the overgrown garden is now with cross paths and parterre style layout, all lost by 1898. There is also what looks like a series of sheds down the eastern side where the single garage is now. The access road does not belong to us (Durham CC) and is not shown as adopted or maintained, neither is the triangle of land we discussed to the rear. The only formal recognition is a public right of way which follows the footpath between the back of Nelson Row and the agricultural fields beyond.*

*As discussed I feel that given the heavy alterations to the buildings and the wider benefits that can be secured to improve the whole site a conservation argument can be mounted for the redevelopment of the site."*

## **Existing Building and Site**

### **Historical appraisal**

The existing properties appear to have been constructed in 1829 with a date plaque having been uncovered on No. 2 Nelson Row. The original two storey semi-detached houses are of stone construction, which has been subsequently cement rendered with incised coursing lines. The roof is of blue slate with the ridge running east/west and



there are twin chimney stacks, one to the west gable and one to the centre of the plan. Unusually, the frontage of the houses is not mirrored – instead they are a copy of each other, as with terraced properties.



Fig 11: Existing stone door head with inscription to 'John Forster 1829'



Fig 12: South elevation

There are matching modern single storey extensions (bathrooms) to the east and west of the buildings with monopitch roofs. Windows and doors are twentieth century and are generally UPVC, with some timber frames and doors. The two front doors have

stone surrounds as shown in figure 12, although these are damaged and chipped in places.

The buildings are located to the north of the site and are directly adjacent to a footpath which runs around the northern perimeter of the village. The site boundary to the north and west is a high stone wall, with integral outbuildings in the north-west corner - namely a wash house, stores and outside toilets. There is also a triangle of land to the north of this wall which is owned by the applicant. The southern boundary is formed by a range of Industrial units, accessed via a courtyard to the south, with windows facing the site.

The eastern boundary to the lane is a low stone wall, which has been altered and infilled over the years. Historic maps (circa.1895 to 1897) appear to show a range of outbuildings along this lane which may explain the infilled openings. The garden area to Nelson Row at this time appears to have been much larger - prior to the construction of the industrial units which seem to have been built between 1921 and 1977 – and laid out in a formal Parterre style. This seems to have been lost by 1897, presumably when the industrial units were built and in later map editions which show a number of outbuildings on the reduced area of land. There is no sign of any formal gardens at this time and any landscaping uncovered when clearing the site of undergrowth was twentieth century. Refer to figure 13 below.



*Fig 13: Existing site landscaping – modern concrete paving slabs. Industrial units behind.*

### **Structural appraisal**

A structural appraisal and report have been carried out by Carl Swainston Engineering Limited, and the report is submitted in support of this application. The summary of this is



that the existing buildings suffer from a number of structural defects including subsidence and movement leading to out-of-plumb shift. Also, visible separation of external walls from internal flanking walls, with cracked and bulging walls resulting. These defects are classed by the surveyor as severe and it is suggested that the cost of remediation is disproportionate to the significance of the properties. Please refer to the full report for details.

## **Assessment of Existing Buildings and Site**

We assess the contribution that 1 & 2 Nelson Row make to the Conservation Area as neutral. Their style is in the local vernacular, however their alteration, rendering and the inclusion of modern windows and doors reduces their current appeal. The structural issues raised in the engineer's report, and the difficulty of converting the existing small rooms to suit modern family living lead to our suggestion that the buildings are demolished, reclaiming all useable materials for re-use in a replacement dwelling. This would include stone walling, carved stone door lintels and jambs and roof slate

The site boundary walls and outbuildings are classed as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, although their significance is not great. It is proposed that some of these outbuildings are retained and reused. The boundary walls would also be retained with minor alterations to suit the new site layout. The stretch of wall to the north of the site would be repositioned to bring the triangle of land on the adjacent footpath, which is owned by the applicant, within the site boundary. This land is currently subject to nuisance dog fouling which the proposed alterations would alleviate.

The site previously housed a modern garage, was overgrown, with modern landscaping all of which had a negative impact on the conservation area. The garage has been removed under the previous planning application as it was unsafe, and the overgrown site has been cleared by the applicant. These efforts show the intention of the applicant to improve the site to the benefit of the Conservation Area.

## **Proposals**

The applicant proposes to construct a new Eco-house at Nelson Row, as a single family dwelling. This new dwelling would allow for open plan living, with rooms enjoying a southerly aspect and views of the garden. The structure would be super-insulated - well above the requirements of the Building Regulations - to allow the property to be heated with minimal energy use. The construction is intended to use either a sustainable timber frame, filled with organic insulation or an Insulated Concrete Formwork (ICF) structure. This structure would be clad reusing vernacular materials

salvaged from the demolitions, to both blend with the surrounding area and to reduce the carbon footprint

The applicant wishes to bring a high standard of design to the area and intends to document the build as an educational tool to assist others.

Sustainable technologies such as fly-ash concrete, super insulation and earth tubes to pre warm / cool air, will keep the use of fossil fuels to a minimum.

## **Design Approach and Intentions**

### **Layout**

The north wall of the existing building is set directly on a busy footpath which has in the past lead to anti-social behaviour towards the occupants. The proposals move the new house southwards and create a new boundary wall to the footpath to give some privacy and division to the property and its occupants.

The new dwelling is located in largely the same position on site as the existing cottages, with two public rooms at ground floor level facing to the south, with views of the garden. Ancillary spaces such as Storage, a WC and Pantry are located to the north as a buffer to the footpath and with smaller windows to reduce heat loss. The new house links to the retained outbuildings in the north west corner, incorporating these into the layout as a utility and hobby room.

At first floor there are three bedrooms for the applicant and their family.

The proposed garage (approved under application DM/21/03831/FPA) is set back from the lane to improve vehicular access (see below) and is located in the south west corner of the site. This has an 'L' shape plan, with space for two cars to the east side, with a workshop area at the rear. The garage would have a room in the roof arrangement with the loft accessed via an external stone staircase. The gables of the garage and dwelling face each other, subdividing the garden space and creating a more private area to the west of the site. The roof of the garage is pitched to slope away from the adjacent workshop windows to avoid overshadowing.

### **Sustainable design and Materials**

The design of the dwelling focusses on capturing the sun's energy in high thermal mass materials (fly-ash concrete floor slabs) which absorb heat and emit it slowly. The building will retain this heat through the use of a super insulated envelope. This has driven the design of the building in that there are large glazed apertures to the south of the dwelling, with small windows to the north. Walls are wide, particularly where overclad in stone, which also follows the local vernacular. Materials proposed include



locally sourced and sawn timber, re-used and salvaged local stone and roof slates to both reduce carbon footprint and to be in keeping with the area.

### **Access and vehicular movement**

(Approved under application DM/21/03831/FPA) The applicant wishes to improve vehicular access and circulation on the lane as this is currently extremely difficult, particularly for vehicle turning.

A blocked up opening in the low boundary wall to the south east of the site will be reopened, creating a new vehicular access, driveway and turning head

In conjunction with these alterations, the existing garage has been demolished as the structure is unsafe, and a new garage is being constructed to the west of the site, creating parking space and a turning head to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site safely.

### **Scale & Massing**

The height of the building has been kept to a minimum, combining a generous floor to ceiling height to the public rooms at ground floor, with a lower structural height at first floor, where ceilings are vaulted into the roof space to avoid any loss of volume. The Pre-Application advice received stated "*subject to final design details the site is adequately large enough to accommodate a large new building.*"

### **Landscaping**

While there is historic map evidence of formal garden layouts on the site, these have been lost over time and no physical evidence of these now exists. The site is also smaller now, than when these gardens existed, as this was prior to the construction of the workshops to the south. It would seem inappropriate to recreate these gardens now as their previous layout would not suit the site as it currently exists, nor the proposed development.

The existing site suffers from a lack of privacy being fully visible from the lane. The positioning of the garage and house aims to create some enclosure to the western area of the garden providing the applicants with some privacy. The eastern side of the site in contrast, with the driveway and garden will be visible from the lane and give back to the Conservation Area.

### **Summary**

We believe that the applicant's proposals to remove a structurally unsound, and thermally inefficient building, replacing it with a state-of-the-art Eco-house should be

supported and encouraged. In particular the intention to use the build to inform and educate others in how environmentally friendly and Eco-conscious construction can be accommodated in a historic environment without loss of character.

The proposed dwelling will enhance the site and provide improved facilities for the applicants and their family. We believe that the proposals comply with all relevant policy and should be granted Planning approval accordingly.

We hope the proposals will be supported in their current form, however would welcome any comments from the Planning Department.