



ROMAN **SUMMER**



PLANNING STATEMENT

DRUMMERSDALE MISSION, 61 MERSCAR LANE, SCARISBRICK

SEPTEMBER 2023

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 We are instructed by APR Projects Ltd to prepare this Planning Statement in support of a proposal to reuse, remodel and refurbish the former 'Drummersdale Mission', 61 Merscar Lane, Scarisbrick to create a single dwelling house, with associated garden curtilage and parking provision.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement is proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. It considers relevant policies set out at both national and local levels, and assesses the proposal against those.
- 1.3 This Statement calls to be considered alongside the submitted drawings and Heritage, Design and Access Statement.



2.0 The Site

- 2.1 The site is located on the southern side of Merscar Lane, Scarisbrick.
- 2.2 It comprises the former Drummersdale Mission, which was built in 1832 as one of many Mission Halls in the area. The building appears on the Council's List of locally important buildings and falls to be assessed as a Non Designated Heritage Asset.
- 2.3 The main aspect of the building presents a charming / characterful feature to the streetscape, albeit somewhat spoilt by its clumsy front porch extension which is obviously a later unsympathetic addition.
- 2.4 The site frontage comprises unsightly hardstanding previously used as a car parking area.
- 2.5 The building has been extended very unsympathetically / crudely at the rear (as below).



3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 We understand that the Mission Hall ceased operating in January 2022 and has since sat vacant.
- 3.2 This application seeks its reuse, repair, adaptation / modification to form a single dwelling, comprising snug, office, WC, kitchen and dining/ living room (with gallery above) and four bedrooms, all with *en suite* bathrooms.
- 3.3 The design approach has been to show utmost respect to the heritage value of the building, retain its best external features, remove unsympathetic features, and introduce contemporary detailing (principally at the rear) to create a comfortable, fit for purpose home, whilst preserving and enhancing the authenticity of the non designated heritage asset.
- 3.4 The details of the proposed works are shown on the submitted drawings and explained in the submitted Design and Access Statement, but briefly include:
- Remove the unsympathetic front porch and restore the original front door and pediment above.
 - Remove paint from the stone mullioned windows and make good with new aluminium slimline glazing elements.
 - Internally insulate the external envelope plaster render solution (nb this does not require planning permission but is referred to in order to demonstrate the comprehensive works proposed).
 - Replace the existing slate roof and rainwater goods and reinstate together with installation of insulation to current standards.
 - Remove the existing boiler room on the west gable and the associated fuel tank enclosure, and locate the fuel tank elsewhere within a fence and landscape planting screened area.
 - Overclad the unsympathetic rear extension with contemporary sinusoidal metal panels with anthracite grey finish.

- Replace the existing flat roof with a pitched roof, with its ridge perpendicular to the main building roof.
- A lower section of flat roof is proposed to create a contemporary link section, so that the two pitched roof elements will read as separate elements.

4.0 Assessment against Policy

4.1 NPPF §149 confirms that LPAs should regard the construction of most new buildings as *'inappropriate'* in the Green Belt. However, it identifies limited exceptions, one of which is:

'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'

4.2 §150 confirms that certain other forms of development are not inappropriate provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These include:

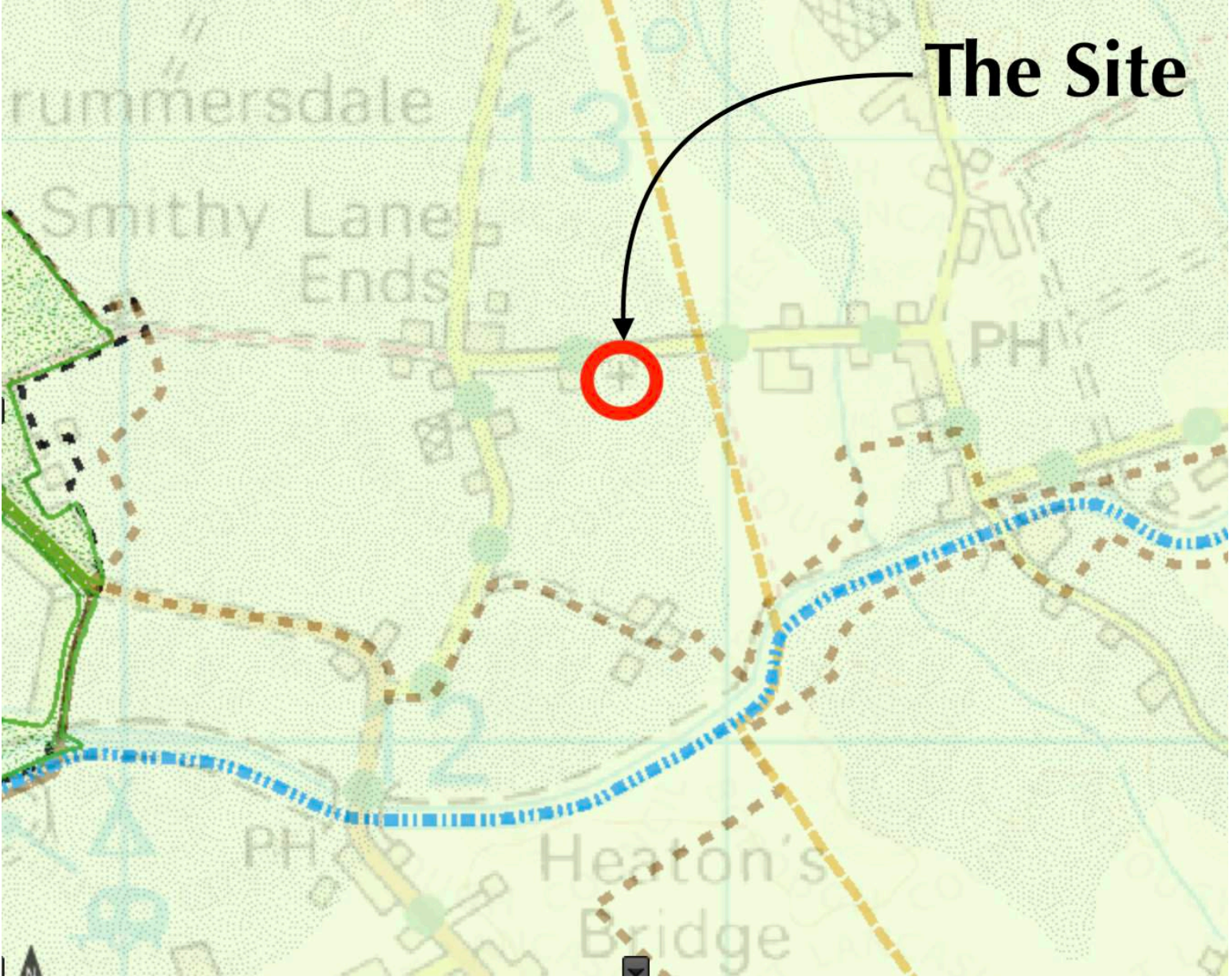
'the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction'

4.3 The building is inarguably of permanent and substantial construction, and its reuse as a house is therefore *'appropriate'*.

4.4 It is also the Applicant's case that none of the proposed alterations or the very small extent of *'extension'* (ie the placing of a pitched roof over an existing flat roof) will result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, and those are in turn *'appropriate'*.

4.5 The principal part of the adopted development plan for the purposes of this application is the West Lancashire Local Plan (2013). Its Policies Map (extract on the following page) confirms that the site falls within the Green Belt and also an area of *'Landscape Character'*.

Extract from West Lancashire Local Plan Policies Map:



	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Green Belt		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EN2.6(i) Landscape Character
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4.6 Policy GN1 'Settlement Boundaries' confirms that development within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy and any relevant Local Plan policies. For reasons set out above (and considered in more detail later by use of volumetric figures), we contend that the proposal is consistent with both national and local policies, including those below.

- 4.7 Local Plan Policy GN3 'Criteria for Sustainable Development' states that the design of new development should:
- i. *Be of high quality design and have regard to the West Lancashire Design Guide SPD* – the proposal adopts a 'light touch' approach to design, respecting and preserving the integrity of the heritage asset, whilst removing or adapting the unsympathetic features – such as the clumsy front porch and improving the crude flat roofed rear extension. Contemporary, robust and contextual / sympathetic materials will be utilised (predominantly at the rear where most of the 'change' will occur), delivering visual improvement.
 - ii. *Have regard to the historic character of the local landscape and / or townscape* - again, utmost sensitivity has been paid to the heritage asset, stripping away or adapting unsympathetic features. The expanse of stark hardstanding (car park) along the frontage will be grubbed up and a far more pleasant 'green' landscaped area created, with obvious enhancements to not only the asset itself, but also to the street scene.
 - iii. *Retain or create reasonable levels of privacy, amenity and sufficient garden / outdoor space for occupiers of the proposed and neighbouring properties* – the proposal raises no privacy or amenity concerns, and ample private garden space will be provided at both the front and rear.
 - iv. *Have regard to visual amenity and complement or enhance any attractive attributes and / or local distinctiveness within its surroundings through sensitive design, including appropriate siting, orientation, scale, materials, landscaping, boundary treatment, detailing and use of art features where appropriate* – for reasons set out above, the scheme has been sensitively formulated, and has full regard to the integrity of the heritage asset and landscape / townscape matters.
 - v. *Adhere to low carbon sustainable building principles in accordance with Policy EN1* – the proposal will deliver sustainable construction benefits through internal

insulation, better quality windows and use of high quality, sustainable materials as part of adaptation works.

- vi. *In the case of extensions, conversions or alterations to existing buildings, the proposal should relate to the existing building, in terms of design and materials – again, we contend that the proposed works are highly sympathetic, respectful and will deliver both heritage and visual enhancement.*

4.8 We therefore suggest that the proposal is consistent with Policy GN3.

4.9 Policy RS1 ‘Residential Development’ states that, within Small Rural Villages, the appropriate re-use of an existing building will be permitted for market housing. We suggest that the site can be considered as forming part of a small rural village, but even if that is not the case, it is clearly important to make good and sustainable use of this vacant heritage asset, and that its reuse as an attractive new home (as deemed appropriate in Green Belt policy terms) ought to be welcomed. We understand that the project has been discussed at pre-application stage and that the LPA has expressed no concerns about the principle of its use as a home.

4.10 Policy EN4 ‘Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Cultural and Heritage Assets’ notes that the historic environment has an aesthetic value and promotes local distinctiveness and helps define sense of place. It states that there will be a presumption in favour of the protection and enhancement of existing non-designated heritage assets which have a particular local importance or character which it is desirable to keep.

4.11 The above echoes NPPF policy, which – at §203 – states:

‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

- 4.12 It is also important to highlight NPPF §190, which states that Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, taking into account:

*‘the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and **putting them to viable uses** consistent with their conservation’*

- 4.13 §197 states that, in determining applications, local planning authorities 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 vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 4.14 §199 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).’

- 4.15 There is no conflict with the above suite of policies (at either local or national level). The heritage status of the building is fully recognised by the Applicant and is being treated with utmost respect. Unsympathetic features will be removed and replaced with far more sensitive features / materials, and the immediate setting of the building (ie its frontage) will be transformed from what is currently a hard, barren car park into an attractive landscaped area. This proposal will therefore deliver enhancements to built heritage, repairing, refurbishing and breathing life into what is currently an unused, deteriorating and somewhat forlorn heritage asset, in turn safeguarding it for future generations.

- 4.16 Having regard to the above assessment, we conclude that the proposal is consistent with both the Development Plan and NPPF policy.

Supplementary Planning Document Development in the Green Belt (October 2015)

- 4.17 Policy GB2 of the SPD is entitled 'Conversion or replacement of non-residential buildings in the Green Belt'. It states that proposals for the conversion of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt should satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) *The building should be of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major change, demolition or extension – the building is inarguably of permanent and substantial construction, and is readily capable of conversion without major change, demolition or substantial construction.*
- (b) *The proposals will maintain and enhance the character and wider landscape setting and site features – this proposal will achieve this, delivering both heritage and visual improvements.*
- (c) *The proposals seek to improve the external appearance of the building, in line with the Borough Council's Design Guide SPD – the external appearance will be improved considerably, at both front and rear.*

- 4.18 Policy GB4 'Alterations and Extensions to Buildings Within The Green Belt' states that extensions should satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) *The existing building is lawful and permanent in nature – this is the case.*
- (b) *The total volume of the proposal, together with any previous extensions, alterations and non-original outbuildings, would not result in an increase of more than 40% above the volume of the original building – the extent of works is very much low scale and proportionate as the figures on the following page demonstrate.*

Built Volume as existing

Main Building	51.86 x 13.67	=	708.9 m ³
Porch	2.55 x 7.63	=	19.46 m ³
Rear Extension	5.45 x 29.53	=	160.9 m ³
Boiler House	2.71 x 2.98	=	8.08 m ³
TOTAL			897.34m³

Built volume to be removed.

Porch	2.55 x 7.63	=	19.46 m ³
Boiler House	2.71 x 2.98	=	8.08 m ³
TOTAL			27.54m³

Built Volume as proposed.

Main Building	51.86 x 13.67	=	708.9 m ³
Dormers	0.94 x 1.94 x 2	=	3.65 m ³
Rear Extension	6.90 x 27.02	=	186.44 m ³
(Link)	1.14 x 14.07	=	16.04 m ³
TOTAL			915.03 m³

This equates to a **1.97138% net increase** in built volume, which is clearly proportionate, and very considerably below the policy ‘allowance’ of 40%.

(c) *The design of the extension or alteration is in keeping with the original form and appearance of the building and does not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk, or by virtue of its location. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials – as noted elsewhere, the external works will be sensitive and deliver visual and heritage improvements, respecting original form and appearance, and entirely proportionate, using good quality, sympathetic materials.*

4.19 Having regard to the above, we conclude that the proposal is consistent with the Council’s ‘*Development in the Green Belt SPD*’ as an important material consideration.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 This application proposes the reuse and associated modest enhancement works of a former (vacant) chapel building to form a single dwelling.

5.2 We understand that, during pre-application discussions, the LPA has welcomed the principle of the proposed reuse to a home.

5.3 The building is not listed and does not sit within a Conservation Area, but it is a locally listed building that possesses obvious heritage value. It is therefore acknowledged by the Applicant to be a Non Designated Heritage Asset.

5.4 The site is located in the Green Belt, and it is the Appellant's case that the proposal constitutes 'appropriate' development for following reasons:

- NPPF §149 confirms that the following are 'appropriate' forms of development:

'the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building'

And:

'the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction'

5.5 The building is inarguably of permanent and substantial construction, and its reuse as a house is therefore 'appropriate'.

5.6 Furthermore, none of the proposed alterations or the very small extent of 'extension' (ie the placing of a pitched roof over an existing flat roof) will result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The extent of extension will

equate to a net increase of just **1.97138%** in built volume, which is clearly proportionate, and very considerably below the Council's policy 'allowance' of 40%.

- 5.7 In consideration of the quality of external works, the proposal adopts a 'light touch' approach, respecting and preserving the integrity of the heritage asset, whilst removing or adapting the unsympathetic features – such as the clumsy front porch and improving the crude, utilitarian flat roofed rear extension. Contemporary, robust and contextual / sympathetic materials will be utilised (predominantly at the rear where most of the 'change' will occur), delivering visual improvement.
- 5.8 The expanse of stark hardstanding (car park) along the frontage will be grubbed up and a far more pleasant 'green' landscaped area created, with obvious enhancements to not only the asset itself, but also to the street scene.
- 5.9 We therefore contend that the proposal is consistent with all relevant policies at all levels, and should be approved accordingly.