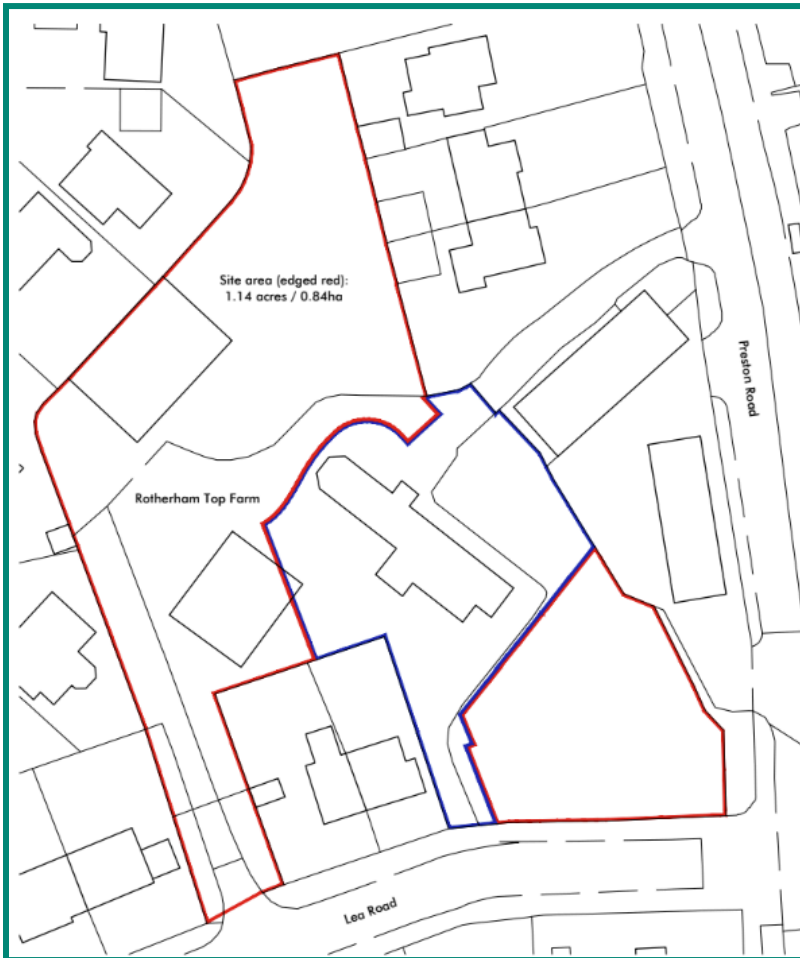


## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

12th March 2024

### Construction of 6 dwellings



### **At: Rotherham Top Farm, Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley**

Prepared by MacMarshalls Rural Chartered Surveyors & Planning Consultants  
on behalf of Primrose Holdings



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## 1. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 1.1. The application site as edged red comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land measuring approximately 0.46 hectares. The site is located within the settlement area of Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, as shown on the Inset Map (10) of the adopted Chorley Local Plan. An excerpt is included below, with an arrow marking the approximate position of the site:

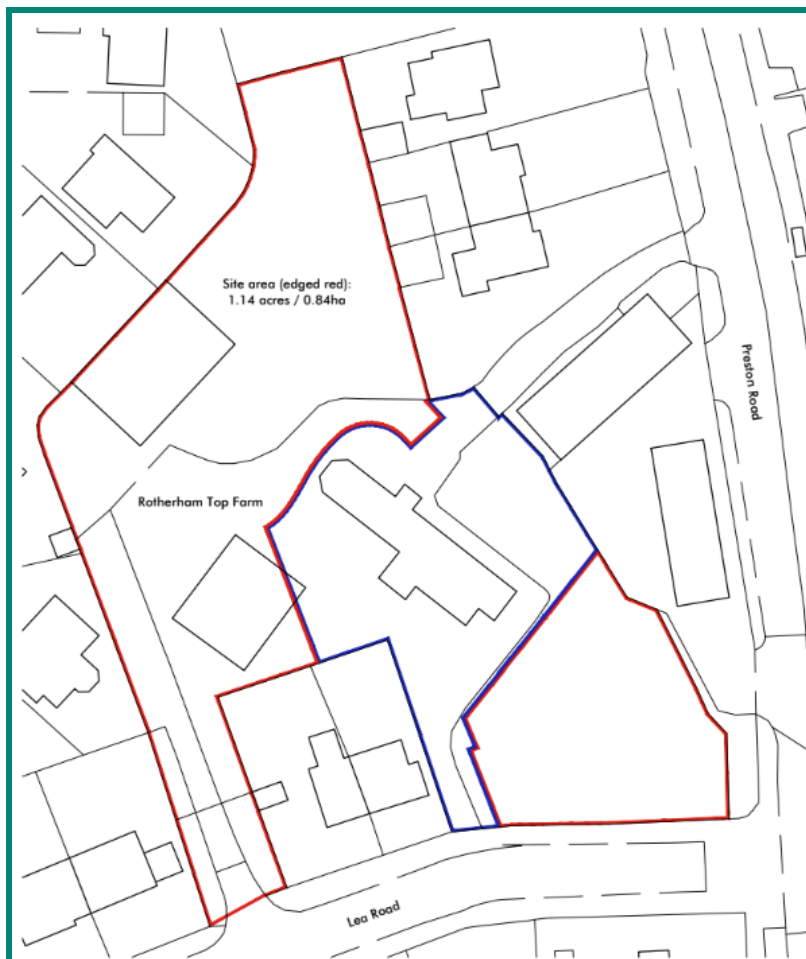


- 1.2. Rotherham Top Farmhouse comprises a Grade II listed, detached stone and slate dwelling, located roughly centrally within its existing curtilage and set back significantly from Lea Road to its south.
- 1.3. The Farmhouse has been extended and modified significantly over the years. The oldest (17th century) section of the building is its north westerly part (less a modern conservatory extension to its side), and includes an original two storey porch to its principal north-east facing elevation. Later additions and extensions are to the south east and south west of the building; all are comprehensively documented in the accompanying heritage statement.
- 1.4. The property also has two other large buildings within its grounds. Immediately to the west of the house is a large pitched roof timber building with an adjoining flat roofed car port. To the north-west is a larger building, again in brick, and with its frontage looking distinctly domestic in character, and its rear has more of a commercial appearance. Neither of the buildings within the curtilage of the farmhouse have any significance in heritage terms.

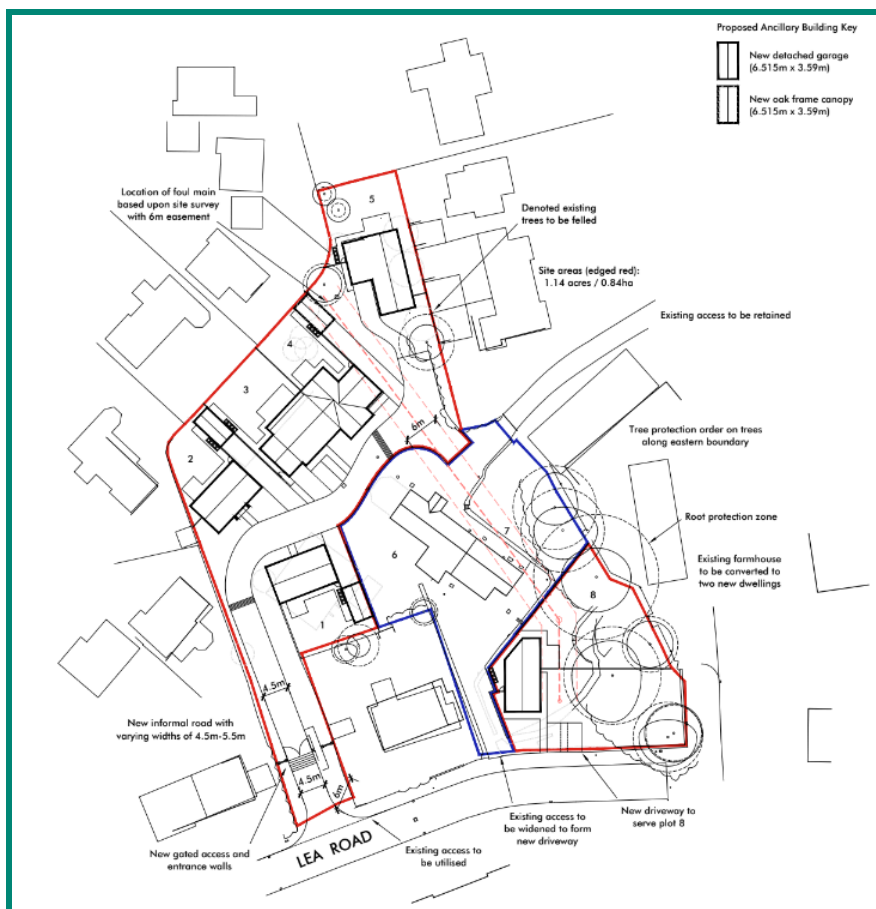
- 1.5. Vehicular access exists from Lea Road in the south-eastern corner of the site, with a further access from the west, sited between a petrol station and houses on Preston Road. There is also a separate pedestrian access from Lea Road, adjacent to a pair of modern semi-detached dwellings fronting the road and which have their rear and side elevations facing into the site. Lea Road terminates to the south east of the site and there is no longer any vehicular access through to Preston Road.
- 1.6. There is a mature belt of protected trees to the westernmost part of the site, separating and obscuring it from Preston Road.
- 1.7. Lea Road and the area to the north and west of the site comprise modern residential areas, including a mix of single and two-storey detached, semi detached and terraced dwellings, predominately in brick and tile, but also including rendered properties, with associated gardens and boundary treatments.
- 1.8. From a small easternmost section of Lea Road there are relatively open views into the site, however, there are no other views into the site from the public realm. When looking into the site from this point, one can for the most part only see the modern parts of the farmhouse.

## **2. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the modern outbuildings within the site and the construction of six dwellings - one to the south of the farmhouse and 5 others within its curtilage. Two of the proposed dwellings will be sited roughly on the footprints of the buildings to be demolished.
- 2.2. As part of the scheme, the existing access point to the south west will be utilised, and the existing footway to the south will be altered to form a driveway.
- 2.3. None of the protected trees within / adjacent the site are to be affected or removed. Eleven category C trees which are located to the northern end of the site would be removed. These trees have been identified as predominantly ornamental with no significant amenity value.
- 2.4. All the new dwellings will have a similar eaves and ridge height to the existing farmhouse, and use stone and slate to match, with timber cladding to some elevations. The resulting dwellings on plots 6 and 7 will have oak framed canopies for use as car ports. The other properties will benefit either from integral or standard garages, set back from the frontages.
- 2.5. The existing and proposed layouts are shown below:



Existing Layout



### Proposed Layout

2.6. In addition to a full suite of plans, the application is accompanied by the following documents:

- Ecological Survey and Assessment
- Drainage Strategy
- Phase 1 Land Contamination Desk Study
- Ecological Survey
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement
- Heritage Statement

### 3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Erection of conservatory to rear,  
 Rotherham Top Farmhouse, Preston Road, Whittle Le Woods, Chorley, Lancashire.  
 Ref. No: 95/00023/FUL | Received: Mon 16 Jan 1995 | Validated: Mon 16 Jan 1995 | Status: Granted

- 3.2 Listed Building Application for the erection of a conservatory to the rear, Rotherham Top Farmhouse, Preston Road, Whittle Le Woods, Chorley, Lancashire.  
Ref. No: 95/00024/LBC | Received: Mon 16 Jan 1995 | Validated: Tue 07 Feb 1995 | Status: Granted
- 3.3 Erection of car port  
Ref. No: 89/00547/FUL | Received: Fri 02 Jun 1989 | Validated: Fri 02 Jun 1989 | Status: Granted
- 3.4 Re-roofing and reinstating fire damaged store building  
Ref. No: 82/00220/FUL | Received: Wed 10 Mar 1982 | Validated: Wed 10 Mar 1982 | Status: Granted

#### 4. **PLANNING POLICY**

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. The Development Plan and relevant policies applicable to this application are:
- The Central Lancashire Core Strategy (adopted July 2012);  
  
Policy 1 - Locating Growth  
Policy 3 - Travel  
Policy 4 - Housing Delivery  
Policy 5 - Housing Density  
Policy 7 - Affordable and Special Needs Housing  
Policy 17- Design of New Buildings  
Policy 22 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
Policy 27 - Sustainable Resources and New Developments  
Policy 29 - Water Management  
Policy 30 - Air Quality
  - The Chorley Local Plan (adopted 2015)  
  
Policy ST4 - Parking Standards  
Policy BNE1 - Design Criteria for New Development
  - BNE8 - Protection and Enhancement of Heritage Assets  
Policy BNE9 - Biodiversity and Nature Conservation  
Policy BNE10 - Trees  
Policy BNE11 - Species Protection  
Policy HS3 - Private Residential Garden Development

## Appendix A - Parking Standards

- Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance

4.3. The revised National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (“the Framework”) is a material planning consideration.

## 5. ASSESSMENT

### Housing

- 5.1. Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy aims to focus growth and investment on well located brownfield sites, in addition to other strategic positions and areas. Whittle-le-Woods is identified within the Core Strategy as an area where growth and investment will be encouraged to help meet housing and employment needs.
- 5.2. The site is sustainably located within the settlement of Whittle-le-Woods, and it constitutes brownfield land. It is compliant with Policy HS3 in that it constitutes infill development within a residential garden.
- 5.3. Furthermore, and in any case, the Council has a significant unmet housing need. It is understood that its five year land supply could be as little as 3 years, if not less.
- 5.4. The shortfall in the housing land supply is significant, and significant weight should therefore be attached to the delivery of housing, particularly but not exclusively within existing settlements. Indeed, the Framework, at paragraph 70 states that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. It goes on to say that local authorities should give great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. This is such a site.

### Flood Risk and Land Contamination

- 5.5. The site is located in Flood Risk Zone 1 as identified on the Environment Agency Flood Risk Map below. It therefore has a low probability of flooding.





- 5.6. A surface water management report has been submitted as part of the application. This concludes that the site is not suitable for a scheme of surface water drainage to discharge into the land. Appropriate drainage however, can be achieved via connection to the onsite combined sewer.
- 5.7. In relation to land contamination, a Phase 1 Report has been undertaken and has not revealed any sources of contamination, or actual contamination, that could not be adequately mitigated. Accordingly, any further intrusive surveys and/or remediation/validation measures could be suitably addressed via the imposition of an appropriately worded planning condition.

#### Affordable Housing

- 5.8 In accordance with Policy 7, this development would not require an amount of affordable dwellings to be provided as the site is less than 0.5 hectares.

#### Design and Heritage

- 5.9 Section 66(1) of the Act requires decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.
- 5.10 Paragraph 205 of the Framework 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.
- 5.11 Paragraph 208 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.12 Paragraph 126 of the Planning Framework states the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

- 5.13 Paragraph 130 states, inter alia, that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, establish a strong sense of place, and create safe places.
- 5.14 The cited policies of the development plan as listed within paragraph 4.2 of this report, are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Framework.
- 5.15 The development has been carefully designed, having regard to the advice of the applicant's heritage consultant, who has assessed the significance of the heritage asset and the impact of the development on its significance, as required by local and national policy and guidance.
- 5.16 The heritage assessment confirms that:
- There is no evidence of the former rural and presumably tranquil agricultural landscape in which the farmhouse was formerly situated;
  - When viewed from Lea Road, it is clearly the modern extension that is predominantly in the view, rather than the older fabric. The original historic elevations cannot be viewed and experienced from this direction due to the existence of the 20th century extension;
  - The historic setting of Rotherham Top Farm has been eroded through residential development that has occurred around it from the middle of the 20th century. The site contains structures which do not contribute positively to how the building is seen.
  - The large plot in which Rotherham Top Farmhouse is set does distinguish the house as one that is different from those which surround it. However, the Grade II property is no longer viewed and experienced in relation to the other historic buildings on the opposite side of Preston Road, or the rural landscape in which it formerly stood. The character and setting of the listed building has now been changed significantly.
  - The house is set in a large plot that contains 20th century structures which do not contribute positively to the attributes which form the significance of the dwelling. The removal of the outbuildings would not affect the significance of the farmhouse as they do not contribute positively to how it is viewed and experienced.
- 5.17 In line with the advice and guidance of the appointed heritage consultant, the proposed house to the south and the proposed house to the west have been designed to ensure that the farmhouse can still be seen within an enclosure that distinguishes it from the modern housing that surrounds the site. Indeed, all of the houses have been sensitively and appropriately designed to compliment the farmhouse. From a street scene perspective, the altered access and the dwelling and associated gardens and driveway on plot 6 will have no detrimental effect on the street scene.
- 5.18 Paragraph 131 of the Framework states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. With this in

mind, the siting of the dwellings has also taken into consideration the mature belt of protected trees to the east. The arboricultural report demonstrates that those trees will not be affected, and that the dwellings are far enough away from the retained and protected trees to permit light infiltration to the windows, ensuring that there will not be any need for any future pruning as a result of loss of light/outlook etc.

- 5.19 The siting and design of the properties has also been chosen to ensure that there is no detriment to existing properties within and outside of the site by reason of loss of light, privacy or outlook, having regard to the Council's separation distances.
- 5.20 As a whole therefore it is clear that the development has been carefully thought out and will introduce well designed new dwellings and alterations to the farmhouse in a manner that has due regard to the area and the heritage asset. The proposals would not cause substantial harm to the Grade II listed Rotherham Top Farmhouse as its archaeological, historic, aesthetic and architectural values will remain.

#### Ecology/Biodiversity

- 5.21 Paragraph 180 of the Framework states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, by inter alia, minimising impacts on and providing net gains in biodiversity.
- 5.22 In accordance with paragraph 186 significant harm to biodiversity should be avoided, adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for.
- 5.23 In this instance no significant harm to biodiversity has been identified. The submission includes a bat survey confirming that no bat roosts were identified on site, and nor was any bat activity recorded. Precautionary working methods are recommended.
- 5.24 The submission also includes a Preliminary Ecological Assessment recommending the following mitigation measures:
- Reasonable Avoidance Measures relating to great crested newt, reptiles, and badgers;
  - Consideration for common amphibians, hedgehogs;
  - Lighting considerations for bats;
  - Soft landscaping to benefit a range of species;
  - Nesting bird check before vegetation clearance in nesting bird season;
  - Eradication of cotoneaster.

In addition, in order to provide ecological enhancements, the following are recommended:

- Hedgehog highways to facilitate movement across the site;
- Soft landscaping including linear features such as hedgerows and trees between garden plots where possible;

- Bird and bat boxes to be placed on the new buildings and retained trees.

There is no reason as to why those mitigation and enhancement measures cannot be implemented, and it is considered that they can be addressed via suitably worded planning conditions.

#### Access and Highway Safety

- 5.25 Paragraph 115 of the Framework indicates 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 on the road network would be severe.
- 5.26 The development will utilise existing access points, and a private driveway will be created to serve the resulting dwelling on plot 7. Given Lea Road does not link to Preston Road, there will be no detriment to highway safety caused by it. Furthermore, each property has adequate parking and there is the ability for all vehicles to turn and exit onto the highway in a forward gear.
- 5.27 The proposed parking, turning and access points into the site are therefore considered acceptable and compliant with the Framework and the relevant Development Plan policies.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 As mentioned previously, paragraph 208 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 6.2 There are clear public benefits in this case that outweigh the identified less than substantial harm. The proposal constitutes a residential development in a sustainable settlement location. The Council has a significant shortfall in its housing land supply and this site can make an important contribution to reducing that shortfall. It is available now, and can easily be delivered within five years. The Framework states that great weight should be given to small and medium sites within existing settlements. It has been demonstrated that it constitutes a high standard of design that causes no harm to the amenities of neighbours, highway safety, visual amenity, drainage, and subject to conditions will not be detrimental to ecology/biodiversity.
- 6.3 It is therefore respectfully requested that the application is approved.

#### **Produced and signed by:**

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Ref: C209-10

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