

PLANNING STATEMENT

Land to the rear of Manor Farm, Wood Lane, Norton Juxta Twycross

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the:

Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and the erection of 4 custom build dwellings with associated access, landscaping and infrastructure

on land to the rear of Manor Farm, Wood Lane, Norton Juxta Twycross.

The application is accompanied by a comprehensive suite of technical reports and supporting documents, including a Design and Access Statement, Custom Build Statement, Transport Note, Drainage Strategy, Landscape Strategy, Ecology Report, Arboricultural Report, Noise Assessment, and Phase 1 Ground Investigation.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises an existing warehouse and barn complex with associated hardstanding, together with adjoining grassland, located to the rear of existing built form along Wood Lane. The existing buildings and hardstanding are of limited visual and environmental quality.

The site is enclosed by established boundary vegetation and hedgerows, providing a clear degree of containment and a logical opportunity for redevelopment. Vehicular access is taken from Wood Lane, an unclassified road subject to a 30mph speed limit.

The site lies within Landscape Character Area H — Twycross Open Farmland, on the edge of the rural hamlet of Norton Juxta Twycross, as defined by the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD 2016. The site is not located within a Conservation Area or any other statutory designation.

3. Planning History and Fall-Back Position

The following consents have been granted on and adjoining the application site:

- 25/00223/DGDO — Prior approval for demolition of barn: APPROVED
- 25/00871/P3CR — Prior approval for change of use of two agricultural buildings to two office units (Class E): PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED AND GRANTED
- 25/00688/NMA — Non-material amendment to permission 78/00014/4M: APPROVED

The prior approval for change of use to office units (Class E) represents a material fall-back position. The Council confirmed at pre-application stage (ref. 25/10134/PREHMO) that the fall-back position will be taken into account in the determination of any planning application.

The accompanying Transport Note demonstrates that the consented Class E office use could generate 30–33 two-way vehicular trips in the peak hours, compared to approximately 5 two-way vehicular trips for the proposed residential development. The proposed residential development represents a significantly more beneficial outcome than the fall-back in transport terms, environmental quality, and contribution to local housing need. This weighs in favour of the proposed development in the planning balance.

An extant planning permission (13/01095/FUL) also applies to adjoining buildings for conversion to residential dwellings, providing further established context for residential use in this immediate location.

4. The Proposal

The proposal seeks to redevelop the site to provide four high-quality custom build dwellings, arranged in a courtyard configuration reflecting the character of traditional farmstead development.

The scheme has been carefully designed to:

- respond to the rural context and Twycross Open Farmland landscape character area
- reflect the Gopsall estate vernacular through use of appropriate materials
- retain and enhance boundary vegetation and existing hedgerows
- create a cohesive and well-landscaped environment
- avoid suburban estate characteristics

The submitted drawings establish a clear and fixed framework in terms of layout, scale and massing, architectural form, materials and landscape structure. This is a full application — drawings are not indicative. The applicant has elected to bring forward a full application rather than the outline approach considered at pre-application stage, in order to provide certainty for the Council and the local community on the final design outcome.

5. Principle of Development

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF and Policy DM1 of the SADMP set out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy DM4 — Safeguarding the Countryside

The site lies within the countryside for planning purposes. Policy DM4 of the SADMP is a criteria-based policy with the aim of enabling sustainable development within the countryside whilst also ensuring the physical separation of settlements. The policy requires development to fall within one of the circumstances at (a)–(e) and to satisfy criteria (i)–(v).

The proposed development is considered to accord with Policy DM4 on the following basis:

- The site comprises an existing warehouse and barn complex with associated hardstanding, occupying a defined and contained parcel of land. The redevelopment of an established built footprint with low-

density, design-led residential development is consistent with the spirit of the policy and with national objectives for making effective use of land.

- The development is small in scale — four dwellings — and contained within an established site with clear physical boundaries defined by existing vegetation and built form.
- The proposal results in the removal of existing buildings of limited visual and environmental merit (including structures containing PACM cladding identified in the Phase 1 contamination assessment), and their replacement with a high-quality residential development which will result in a clear visual and environmental enhancement.
- The development retains and reinforces the established landscape structure of the site, including boundary hedgerows and trees, and introduces a wildflower meadow and orchard planting that enhance biodiversity and landscape character.
- The scale, massing and design of the proposed dwellings reflects the character of the immediate rural context and the Gopsall estate vernacular, and avoids any suburban estate character — directly addressing the pre-application design advice.
- Settlement separation between Norton Juxta Twycross and surrounding settlements is unaffected by the proposal, which lies within an established built parcel on the edge of the hamlet.

Policy DM4 has been tested at a number of recent appeals, with Planning Inspectors making varying observations on the policy's consistency with the Framework. The pre-application response specifically acknowledged this position. In this context, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is a relevant consideration, and the benefits of the scheme — including the delivery of custom build housing and the removal of the consented office fall-back — weigh positively in the planning balance.

Policy 13 — Rural Hamlets (Core Strategy 2009)

Policy 13 of the Core Strategy relates to rural hamlets including Norton Juxta Twycross. The policy supports small-scale development that is appropriate in scale and character to the hamlet. The proposed development of four dwellings on a contained site at the edge of the hamlet, designed to reflect traditional rural farmstead character, is consistent with this policy framework.

Five-Year Housing Land Supply

The Council's most recent housing land supply position should be confirmed at the point of determination. To the extent that the Council is unable to demonstrate a deliverable 5-year housing land supply, the tilted balance under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged, and the proposal — which delivers four custom build dwellings of high design quality — should be afforded substantial positive weight.

6. Custom Build Housing

The proposed development will deliver four custom build dwellings, contributing towards identified demand for this form of housing within the Borough.

The pre-application response (ref. 25/10134/PREHMO) referred to the scheme as 'self-build' but the Council confirmed that the description could use either 'self-build' or 'custom build' terminology, both of which fall within the framework of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 and the Council's Custom and Self-Build (CSB) register. The applicant has elected to deliver the scheme as custom build rather than self-build. This reflects the developer-led delivery model under which the

developer constructs the structural shell and external envelope to weathertight stage, with purchasers engaging during the construction programme to influence internal layout, internal specification and finish prior to completion. A pure self-build approach — under which the purchaser would commission their own dwelling on a serviced plot — would not be compatible with the proposed developer-led model. Custom build is therefore the legally and technically accurate categorisation, and falls squarely within the PPG definition requiring 'primary input into the final design and layout' by the initial owner.

Purchaser input is primarily focused on internal layout, specification and finish. The external envelope of each dwelling — including form, scale, massing, fenestration, materials and roof design — is fixed by the planning permission and constructed by the developer to a coherent and high-quality design. This is integral to the developer-led delivery model, which requires the shell to be constructed to a fixed external design in order to maintain the build programme and ensure design quality across the development. Customisation remains available after construction has commenced, but the scope of customisation reduces progressively as the project moves forward and relevant works are completed. The earlier a purchaser engages, the broader the scope for input — including on limited plot-specific elements such as hard landscape details and boundary treatments within the approved framework.

As set out in the accompanying Custom Build Statement, the key features of the delivery model are:

- marketing of all four dwellings as custom build opportunities commences immediately upon grant of planning permission
- the developer will construct the structural shell and external envelope in accordance with the approved drawings
- demolition and enabling works commence as soon as practicable following planning permission
- purchasers will be actively sought from day one and will be able to engage prior to completion to influence internal layout, internal specification and finish
- a 12-month marketing period applies, after which a cascade to open market sale operates if required

There is no requirement for a purchaser to be identified before commencement. National guidance requires only that the initial owner has primary input into the final design and layout — not that this occurs before construction starts.

The applicant is registered on Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's CSB register. The Council's register currently records 63 individuals, of whom 59 are seeking detached properties and 32 have expressed a preference for a rural location. Whilst the pre-application response noted that no individual has explicitly referenced Norton Juxta Twycross as a preferred location, the CSB register does not record specific village-level preferences, and the site falls squarely within the broader category of rural locations identified by 32 registrants.

The Council currently has a shortfall of self-build and custom build properties across the Borough. The provision of four units makes a material contribution to addressing that shortfall. The pre-application response indicated that this consideration would be afforded moderate weight in the planning balance.

The delivery of the development as custom build housing will be secured through a Section 106 agreement or unilateral undertaking, as detailed in Section 10 of this statement.

7. Design and Landscape

The proposal has been designed to reflect the character of a traditional rural farmstead, with buildings arranged around a shared courtyard space. Full details are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Key design principles include:

- simple, well-proportioned building forms with pitched roofs and lower eaves heights appropriate to the rural context
- use of high-quality traditional materials reflecting the Gopsall estate vernacular, including natural stone, clay roof tiles, and timber or aluminium windows and doors
- a strong landscape framework incorporating retained boundary vegetation and new planting
- an informal shared surface courtyard that avoids suburban estate characteristics
- a minimum 21m back-to-back distance between habitable room windows, in accordance with the pre-application advice

The development will result in a significant visual enhancement over the existing agricultural buildings, which are of limited merit. The landscape strategy reinforces the rural setting and supports integration of the development into its surroundings.

8. Technical Matters

Access and Highways

Vehicular access is taken from the existing access on Wood Lane. The access arrangements have been designed in accordance with the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG), including:

- an access width of approximately 4.3m for a minimum of 5m behind the highway boundary, with 0.5m strips each side, in accordance with the 4.25m minimum width set out in Table 13 of the LHDG for an access serving 2–5 dwellings
- vehicular visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in accordance with Table 6 of the LHDG, within land under the applicant's control
- 1m x 1m pedestrian visibility splays on each side of the access
- internal access road and courtyard width of approximately 4.8m, exceeding the 3.7m minimum required by the LHDG and the pre-application response for emergency vehicle access beyond the initial 45m
- tegula block paving throughout the internal courtyard and access road, hard bound from the highway boundary
- swept path analysis confirming that an 11.2m refuse vehicle and an 8.2m fire tender can access and manoeuvre to serve all plots including Plot 4
- a refuse bin collection point provided at the central turning head, where the refuse vehicle accesses the bins directly. Residents present bins at the turning head on collection day. The refuse vehicle does not need to reverse and exits the site in forward gear
- no vehicle required to reverse more than 20m

Parking is provided at a minimum of three spaces per plot (dimensioned at 2.4m x 5.5m in accordance with Table 28 of the LHDG), with garage dimensions meeting the minimum standards required by the LHDG. Each dwelling is provided with a dedicated active electric vehicle charging point, with passive provision for future additional points.

As the proposed dwellings are situated more than 45m from the public highway, the access has been designed to accommodate emergency vehicles in accordance with the pre-application requirement and BS5906:2005, including the minimum 3.7m carriageway width beyond the initial access width and the no-reverse-over-20m requirement.

Given the scale of the development, the LHA confirmed at pre-application stage that the site will remain a private road and will not be considered for adoption. The site will be privately maintained by a management company funded by the owners of the four dwellings, on a proportional basis. This arrangement will be secured through the Section 106 agreement or unilateral undertaking.

The accompanying Transport Note confirms no fundamental highways constraints and concludes that the proposal will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network, in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

Drainage

A Drainage Strategy and Water Quality Assessment accompanies the application. The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1. The EA surface water mapping identifies a higher risk of surface water flooding towards the south-east of the site, which the drainage strategy specifically addresses.

The strategy adopts a SuDS-based approach comprising:

- tegula block paving on driveways and parking areas providing permeable surface water management
- rainwater gardens serving residential roofs
- subsurface cellular attenuation tank with Hydro International Hydrobrake Optimum flow control
- controlled discharge to the watercourse to the south of the site at 2.0 l/s — representing significant betterment over existing brownfield runoff rates of up to 210.98 l/s in the 1-in-100-year plus climate change event

Infiltration has been ruled out on the basis of clay subsoil (Gunthorpe Member Formation) confirmed by site testing and BGS mapping. Foul water will connect to the existing public foul water sewer to the north of the site along Wood Lane. Land Drainage Consent from the LLFA will be required for the placement of a headwall in the bank of the watercourse and will be secured by condition. The strategy demonstrates the development will be safe for its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain and Habitats Regulations

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal accompanies the application. No overriding ecological constraints have been identified. Key findings are:

- no statutory designated sites on or within 2km of the site
- no bat roosts confirmed — further emergence surveys required for Building B1 prior to demolition, to be secured by condition
- Great Crested Newts addressed via enrolment in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland District Level Licensing Scheme
- standard precautionary mitigation for nesting birds, badgers, reptiles and hedgehogs to be secured by condition
- ecological enhancements including bat boxes, bee bricks, native hedgerow planting and pollinator-friendly planting proposed

The drainage strategy identifies that surface water discharge ultimately flows into the River Mease catchment. The River Mease is a Special Area of Conservation and is subject to specific nutrient neutrality considerations. The applicant is engaging with Natural England and the Local Planning Authority to confirm whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required and to establish the appropriate nutrient neutrality position prior to determination. This matter was not raised at pre-application stage but the applicant will ensure it is properly addressed.

The application site extends to 0.81 hectares. As the site exceeds 0.5 hectares the biodiversity net gain exemption for self-build and custom housebuilding is not available. A Biodiversity Metric is being prepared in accordance with the statutory DEFRA methodology (using the small sites metric as appropriate). The development will deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity units, maximising on-site gains through the proposed landscaping strategy including native planting, wildflower meadow, retained boundary hedgerows and soft landscape edges. The biodiversity gain plan will be secured by pre-commencement condition.

Noise

A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by Nova Acoustics Ltd. The report confirms the site is suitable for residential use. The dominant noise source is road traffic. The neighbouring commercial unit (Overhead Line Fittings UK Ltd) was assessed under BS4142 and whilst the rating level exceeds background by 12dB, the specific noise level is below BS8233 external amenity thresholds, road traffic dominates, and existing residential uses are equidistant from the commercial source. The report concludes noise impact on the proposed dwellings will be low in context. A standard glazing and ventilation specification is recommended and will be secured by condition. External noise levels are sufficiently low to permit openable windows as the primary overheating strategy.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

A Phase 1 Land Contamination Risk Assessment has been prepared by Castledine Environmental Ltd. The report concludes a HIGH risk rating for end-users due to the historical site use, significant made ground deposits, PACM cladding and roofing, and fuel and chemical storage identified during the site walkover.

The following condition sequence will apply:

- Pre-commencement: asbestos survey to be completed by appropriately qualified personnel and submitted to the LPA prior to any demolition or site works
- Pre-commencement: Phase 2 intrusive site investigation (trial pits and boreholes) to be completed, submitted to and approved by the LPA, including ground gas and vapour monitoring
- Pre-occupation: verification report to be submitted to and approved by the LPA confirming remediation has been completed satisfactorily

A watching brief and discovery strategy will be maintained throughout construction in accordance with the recommendations of the Phase 1 report. The applicant notes that the site is topographically above the new residential development to the north and the Phase 2 scope will specifically address migration risk to those neighbouring properties.

Trees and Arboriculture

A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) have been prepared by Arb Innovators Ltd in accordance with BS5837:2012. The survey identified 19 arboricultural features comprising 16 individual trees and 3 groups. No Category A trees are present and no Tree Preservation Orders apply.

The development necessitates the removal of 10 arboricultural features including 6 Category B trees and Group G1. This represents a moderate to high magnitude arboricultural impact. A comprehensive compensatory planting strategy is proposed, prioritising native and locally appropriate species, re-establishment of boundary screening along the eastern and southern boundaries, and replacement of lost canopy cover. A Landscape Management Plan will be secured by condition.

Retention of T6 is conditional upon confirmation that earthworks do not exceed 20% of the root protection area — this will be confirmed through the detailed Arboricultural Method Statement which will be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to commencement of development. Tree Protection Fencing will be installed at calculated RPAs throughout construction.

9. Open Space and Outdoor Sports

The application site generates a requirement for off-site open space and outdoor sports contributions in accordance with the Council's 2025 Open Space Assessment and Outdoor Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy 2025.

Based on the draft calculation attached to the Council's pre-application response, the following off-site contributions are anticipated:

- Off-site open space provision contribution: £9,801
- Off-site open space maintenance contribution: £7,519 (covering a 10-year period)
- Total open space contribution: approximately £17,320

An outdoor sports contribution will also be calculated by the Council following submission of the application. These contributions will be secured through the Section 106 agreement.

In addition, the development will be liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) at the prevailing rate applicable to the site under the Council's adopted CIL Charging Schedule. The applicant will engage with the Council on CIL liability and any applicable reliefs at the appropriate stage.

10. Planning Obligations

A Section 106 agreement or unilateral undertaking will be required to secure the following obligations:

- Custom build marketing — commencement of marketing immediately upon grant of planning permission, directed in the first instance to individuals on the HBBC CSB register
- Custom build purchaser input — purchasers to be afforded meaningful opportunity for input into internal layout, specification and finish prior to completion
- 12-month marketing period — each dwelling to be marketed as custom build for a minimum of 12 months before cascade to open market
- Off-site open space provision contribution — £9,801
- Off-site open space maintenance contribution — £7,519
- Outdoor sports contribution — to be calculated by HBBC
- Biodiversity Net Gain — 10% net gain to be secured (if not conditioned)
- Private estate management arrangements for the internal access road and shared courtyard

11. Planning Balance

The proposed development delivers a number of clear and demonstrable benefits:

- redevelopment of a contained and established built parcel within a rural setting
- removal of existing buildings of limited visual and environmental merit, including structures containing PACM
- provision of four high-quality rural custom build dwellings in a courtyard arrangement using natural stone, clay tiles and tegula paving that respects and enhances the character of the area
- delivery of custom build homes with immediate marketing to registered purchasers, making a material contribution to the Council's identified shortfall
- landscape and visual enhancement including wildflower meadow, native planting and retained boundary hedgerows delivering biodiversity net gain
- electric vehicle charging provided for each dwelling supporting sustainable transport
- SuDS drainage strategy delivering significant betterment over existing surface water runoff rates

- a meaningful fall-back position in the form of an extant prior approval for office use, which would generate materially more traffic and HGV activity than the proposed residential development

These benefits significantly outweigh any limited harm associated with development in the countryside. The scheme represents a sustainable and appropriate form of development having particular regard to the redevelopment of an established built parcel, the delivery of custom build housing, the high quality of the design response, and the consented office fall-back.

12. Conclusion

The proposal represents a well-considered and high-quality form of development which:

- responds appropriately to its rural context and the character of Norton Juxta Twycross
- delivers a small-scale and contained residential scheme on an established built parcel
- provides four genuine custom build homes, immediately marketed to registered purchasers
- is supported by comprehensive technical evidence addressing all matters raised in the pre-application response
- accords with the development plan, national policy, and the Council's own pre-application advice

The application should therefore be supported and granted planning permission.