

Warland Farm Design and Access Statement

Introduction

Imagine a small Pennine farm that is not only financially viable but supports the local community with employment, sustenance, and happiness, whilst preserving its historical and ecological values.

The applicants became the custodians of Warland Farm (an ancient, twenty-acre Pennine farm) in 2011, and are determined to prove that this is possible by investing in a sensitive development which allows a self-sufficient community to grow and thrive. They will then reach out to train, trade with, and promote the wider Calderdale community, becoming an exemplar for rural industry in challenging times.

This proposal will establish an arts and craft school where about two dozen local businesses can develop in close connection with restored and productive land, rejuvenating a fractured rural society and establishing a focal point to promote the wider arts and crafts community in the Roche, Calder and Ryburn valleys.

If Council support this endeavour and the school is successful, the land and facilities will be leased, at little or no cost, to the emerging community when the owners retire and will later pass into trust with the effect that the whole of Warland Farm will be protected for over a hundred years.

Already, a community of volunteers and small businesses is forming around Warland Farm on the strength of their vision of its future possibilities. More than a dozen artisans—master craft folk in building preservation, woodland management, historical blacksmithing and eco-building, along with painters, weavers, and photographers—are together designing the social structure of this community around five key principles:

- 1) Regenerate and protect the natural productivity of the land;
- 2) Practice and teach sustainable craft;
- 3) Perform and encourage local arts and culture;
- 4) Enjoy real food together; and within those principles
- 5) Maximise the kindness, happiness and mutual respect in the community.

To date, the application of these principles has led to the planting of twenty thousand trees to combat climate change through The Source Project. Coppices, orchards and gardens have been planted to provide food, raw materials and firewood for the community; an apiary with six national hives has been established; the farm's old workshops are ready to be productive again; and affordable accommodation for the artisans is being created. A fifty-acre ancient oak woodland has recently been purchased to greatly increase locally available natural resources.

The farm has also become integral to local cultural events including the Littleborough Rushbearing Festival and the Les Panards Festival in Todmorden through donated resources, supporting events and accommodation.

Over the past year, the visitors' book has gathered over a hundred supporting statements as local, national and international guests have experienced and understood the objectives and principles driving this proposal.

The applicants are now embarking upon a programme to create the built environment to best support the community. It is hoped that the proposed changes will provide direct employment, occupation and sustenance for around twenty community members as teachers, assistants and apprentices. Their activities and the proposed facilities will support and enhance Calderdale's craft and art and the events and accommodation will bring tourists and student visitors (and additional income and opportunities) into the valley. The construction process will also provide employment and training in sustainable construction methods for about a dozen locals over five years.

The components of this programme are shown in the proposals for which planning approval and Listed Building Consent are now being sought. Although there are no works intended to the listed farmhouse, the proposals are within its curtilage. The Heritage Statement includes further detail about the history of the site and the philosophy behind its development.

Amount

The main components of the proposal are:

1. The creation of affordable accommodation for the community's permanent residents—not part of this application—but a wider strategy, including the recent purchase of the cottage connected to the farmhouse and two other nearby dwellings.
2. The creation of accommodation for guests and students, principally by converting the Mickle Barn to bunkhouse accommodation.
3. The establishment of workshops and spaces where craft can be practiced and taught. This includes a new barn to the rear of the Mickle Barn to house the smithy and metalwork shop, plus a joinery and green woodwork shop, and the creation of studios and teaching spaces on the first floor of the former Shippen.
4. The provision of performance spaces, entertainment facilities and art studios; under the proposed canopy in the former pigsty area; in the bunkhouse common area; in the communal hall and studios within the former Shippen; in the yard (re-landscaped from a farmyard to a social area defined, enlivened, and protected by the new, functional structures); ad hoc spaces in the greenhouses/solar spaces; in the meadow, where the Rushcart Picnic has been held each year since 2013 and in the woodland's natural amphitheatre, for al fresco theatre and acoustic concerts.
5. The building of community food preparation and eating facilities. Self-sufficiency for the community will be based around the farm's food production and processing facilities including new greenhouses/solar spaces, a small bakery, a micro-brewery and community kitchens. These will also provide opportunities for food businesses and training, and for banquet-style events.
6. The provision of new, enabling infrastructure including water supply, foul waste and drainage, renewable energy sources and material storage spaces.

The scheme comprises 278 sqm total amount of new floorspace. In addition, there are two open-sided structures/canopies creating 64 sqm of new roof area but no additional floorspace.

Breakdown of gross areas (including external walls):

- Conversion of Mickle Barn to provide bunkhouse accommodation;

Currently 171 sqm / proposed 277 sqm = 106 sqm new floorspace

- Conversion of Shippen (currently a smithy, wood workshop and storage space) to 'hub', communal hall, tea room and toilets at ground floor, and to crafts studios (with wash-up space) at first floor;

Currently 212 sqm / proposed 209 sqm = minus 3 sqm new floorspace

- Extension attached to the rear of the Shippen to create lobby/stairwell;

Currently 0 sqm / proposed 21 sqm = 21 sqm new floorspace

- Greenhouses (passive solar spaces) to front of Mickle Barn and Shippen;

Currently 0 sqm / proposed 92 sqm = 92 sqm new floorspace

- Stand-alone greenhouse;

Currently 0 sqm / proposed 25 sqm = 25 sqm new floorspace

- Open-sided shelter for bikes etc with Photovoltaic roof covering;

Currently 0 sqm / proposed 32 sqm = 32 sqm new roof area

- Open-sided canopy in former pigsty area (for covered outdoor recreation);

Currently 0 sqm / proposed 32 sqm = 32 sqm new roof area

- Bakery & tea-room and wet foods/brewery in former pigsty area;

Currently 0 sqm / proposed 37 sqm = 37 sqm new floorspace

- New Barn (self-supporting/independent structure) to the rear of the Mickle Barn to create smithy and green wood workshop, storage, office and toilets.

This was the subject of a Prior Approval application 14/40004/FOR which was confirmed as not requiring prior approval by the LPA on 24.02.2014. Whilst this represents 189 sqm of additional floor area it is not included in the additional floor area calculation for this planning application.

Layout

The new development takes place to the north-west of the listed farmhouse – maintaining the unobstructed views of its principal elevation. The green space and access track in front of the farmhouse remain unaltered, and beyond here, community members and visitors are welcomed into a re-landscaped farmyard – the entrance courtyard – which provides access to the various spaces. The proposed greenhouses/solar spaces create connected/covered routes between the farmhouse, Shippen and Mickle Barn, relating the buildings at a centrally located 'hub'. The new structures in the entrance courtyard and former pigsty area define and

shelter the external spaces but are set back from the castellated boundary wall to not be visible from the road and canal.

Scale

The scale of the converted buildings (Mickle Barn and Shippen) remains as existing and the new buildings are subservient in scale. The courtyard contains simple, open-sided, or substantially glazed structures, which are small in scale and remain visually subservient and sensitive to the Mickle Barn and Shippen. The new barn relates directly to the Mickle Barn and is deliberately set back from it and smaller in height.

Appearance

General approach:

The developments within this proposal will be exemplary. Only appropriate heritage methods and materials will be used throughout. Local and salvaged material are preferred and will be sought. All components and finishes will, as far as possible, match existing barn components. The broad conservation objective is to minimise the impact of any development on the fabric of the buildings and the information they contain about the farm's history and their construction. This manifests in a coherent architectural language of lightweight, independent, flexible, (ultimately removable and renewable) timber structures and additions situated within and around the existing historic structures. Significant and unique historic features will be repaired and preserved. Any other historical discoveries during the building work will be carefully preserved.

Guest accommodation; the Mickle Barn

A major source of income for the community will be from student fees and farm holidays. It is proposed to turn the farm's great barn, provisionally called "The Mickle Barn", into accommodation for students and guests.

The Mickle Barn is a sizeable stone barn with a corrugated asbestos roof, which replaced the original corrugated iron roof: one of the first in Calderdale. It is unusual in that it has two arched barn doors at opposite ends instead of one at the side. Planning permission to convert the barn into a dwelling has previously been granted.

It is proposed to convert the barn into bunkhouse accommodation by inserting a traditional oak frame. This will provide support for the internal walls, floors and fittings; provide space for insulation; and bracing for the stone walls.

An accessible apartment and kitchen and common room occupy the ground floor of the barn. The step in the original floor (between the threshing floor and stables is retained (although a new, suspended timber floor is required over the stables' floor to create a level floor in the accessible apartment). Sanitary accommodation is stacked centrally for convenient access and practical services and drainage distribution. A full height void is retained above the common room – maintaining the experience of the original scale of the interior space. This void, and the positioning on section of the Bunkroom 4 mezzanine floor (above the rear of the apartment) also avoids the interruption of the arches with new floor structure. Because the New Barn will brace and insulate the north-east wall of the Mickle Barn externally, its stone construction will remain visible from inside (while meeting Building Regulations). 'Occasional' doors provide flexible separation between the apartment and hostel, and when opened allow an appreciation of the size and unique design of the threshing hall. The great barn's arrangement of carriage doors, one at each end of the threshing hall, is a unique response to the farm's hillside site and every effort has been made to reveal their relationship. The carriage doorways will have timber shutters to match the original doors. A glazed door screen in the apartment lounge area sits within the new structural frame, behind the arch and shutter doors.

The new entrance doors to the stairwells are also timber to match the original doors and are placed in-check behind the existing stone jambs.

The first floor contains bunkrooms and retains the position of the hayloft, mimicking its construction to act as a historical reference. The fixed, fire rated glazed screen to the side of the stairs to the loft level enhances the experience of the original space. A new window is required for each of the bunkrooms 1 & 2 to provide natural light and ventilation. These are relatively small and will have matching natural stone surrounds, darkened glass windows placed in-check behind the new stone surrounds, with charcoal-grey timber shutters so that the original windows remain visually prominent.

As the existing truss chords interrupt the space at midriff level, the existing trusses need to be removed to accommodate the new upper floor accommodation in the barn. Options for working around this problem were thoroughly explored but no adequate solution was found. The new truss design provides headroom and clearance within the central section of the new floor (as indicated on cross section through Mickle and New Barns and the proposed north-west elevation). The new loft floor, and the additional bunkrooms 3 & 4, are essential to the financial viability of the conversion and the social aims of the overall proposal. Safe, convenient access across the whole of the floor to the fire protected stairwell is also essential in the event of a fire and to meet the Building Regulations. The condition of the existing roof timbers will therefore be assessed, and they will be salvaged where possible, the original Baltic pine roof purlins reused, and new oak trusses introduced. It is proposed to raise the roof marginally in order to keep these new and existing oak structural elements exposed internally and to accommodate natural (environmentally friendly) insulation above. This insulation has moisture vapour 'breathability' better suited to historic properties but requires greater thickness than rigid, oil-based/closed-cell plastic insulation products to achieve an equivalent U-value. The external walls will be built up with identical stone and mortar from the original quarry on the farm.

The material and construction of the great barn roof was advanced for its time: just two lightweight trusses between the gable ends, originally covered with corrugated iron sheeting; now cement/asbestos. Replacing this with generic stone or slate, as demanded by previous planning conditions, would wipe out all record of the original roof. The roof will therefore be replaced with corrugated cement sheet to retain both its current and its original appearance. Additional roof lights are proposed to provide natural light and ventilation, working as closely as possible with the symmetry of the existing building, rather than large, unrelated openings on each pitch as in the previous approval.

There are three main areas between the castle walls and the Mickle Barn: the former pigsties to the west (about 5m wide), the slurry pit in the middle (4m) and a paved area next to the barn (3m). It is proposed that this paved area be covered by a greenhouse or 'solar space', built as an independent structure slightly forward of the barn, which will act as:

- a south-west facing greenhouse for tender produce.
- a weather shield for the barn.
- a solar heater, turning the dark external wall of the barn into a heat store and venting hot air into the upper accommodation levels.

Workshops and workspaces: the New Barn

It is proposed to extend at the rear of the Mickle Barn to create a new barn. A previous proposal was deemed no prior approval required (Application 14/40004/FOR) though this has been allowed to lapse. The current proposal has a slightly larger floor area and a different roof profile. The increase in size is necessary to accommodate a smithy (as well as the green woodworking shop) at ground floor level and

provides more space for wood storage at the upper level (served by a hoist and taking-in doors above the main barn entrance doors). Voids in the first floor allow manoeuvring of long timbers within the space. The ground floor also has a boot room and sanitary accommodation, and the first floor has a site administration office. It is intended that the apex of the roof will contain nesting spaces for swallows, owls, bats etc. hence the catslide dormer openings in the roof.

It will be a traditional timber frame with timber cladding. The cross section adjacent to the Mickle Barn is an extrusion and extension of the new Shippen roof, which then lowers in pitch resulting in essentially a single-storey building back to the hillside.

The new barn is positioned inconspicuously, making use of existing ground levels to nestle into the hillside, and has negligible impact on the other buildings (and specifically the listed farmhouse). It is most visible on the north-west elevation, where its relationship to the Mickle Barn clearly becomes important. The wall face is set back from the Mickle Barn wall face and the height of the new barn is sub-ordinate to it. Just as the quality of stone (and stone construction) gives expression to the Mickle Barn, the quality of timber (and timber construction) gives expression to the new barn. The differences are made deliberately apparent, and each 'holds its own' both architecturally and historically.

Performance, gathering and teaching spaces and art studios: the Shippen

The spatial relationship of a farmhouse and its barns is key to understanding its history and operation, according to Historic England. The connection of the Shippen to the great barn has not been lost, (unlike the previously approved conversion design - which allowed the demolition of one quarter of the shippen structure). The proposed draught lobby and stairwell and the entrance Hub interface between the spaces and different floor levels of the Mickle Barn, New Barn and Shippen, connecting them with the forest garden and woodlands behind.

Currently, the Shippen houses a joinery and a blacksmiths shop on the ground floor, and storage rooms in the hay loft. It is proposed that the workshops and the storage contents be transferred to the New Barn upon its completion. The Shippen will then become a communal hall with studios above, supported by ancillary accommodation. The division of the proposed new spaces is determined by the existing structural bays.

The existing, temporary Shippen floor will remain in use for the Mickle Barn carpentry, after which it will be removed and the original brick pavers exposed, refurbished, and retained/re-laid as the ground floor finish. The water trough remains a key feature of the space, with a grated channel formed in the floor carrying water from it out to the courtyard via the solar space.

Raising the roof of the Shippen provides greater useable floor area at first floor and is necessitated by the need to remove the current, makeshift roof structure and asbestos roof covering. The alteration, in this phase of the historic development of the building, is plainly articulated by the clerestory windows at the rear, north-east elevation (in turn, providing light to the craft studios), and the proposal to raise the front wall face using timber cladding (as distinct from stone).

An incidental effect of raising the roof is that the blocked-up Mickle Barn window on the south-east elevation can be reinstated and opened-up to the void above the Hub space and the void above the common room in the Mickle Barn.

The covering of the Shippen roof will be replaced with corrugated cement sheet to match the Mickle Barn, as it was also originally corrugated iron. The chimney for the blacksmith's forge will be re-instated in matching brick.

There is a paved area in front of the Shippen on which another solar space is proposed, providing the same sustainability benefits as that which is in front of the Mickle Barn. The two structures connect to form a draught lobby at the main entrance into the buildings which contains a ramp for wheelchair users to negotiate the different floor levels. The solar spaces are of course transparent, and the 'host' buildings remain clearly readable behind.

Food preparation, eating and entertainment facilities: the former Pigsty area

The crenellated yard walls are a prominent local landmark, clearly visible from the A6033 and the Rochdale Canal. It is a unique folly that shows the response of the wealthy farm owners to the influx of traffic, via the canal and then the road, into their previously silent, impassable marsh. Pigsties, shippens and human toilets conveniently placed for a midden are typical developments from Edwardian times, but few had sewers connecting them to an underground slurry pit. The pigsties' towers at Warland Farm are surely unique; they form part of the yard wall giving a shape often mistaken for castle ruins. Pork products must have been of great value to the farm. The line of the pigsty roofs, their external walls and the broken roots of their internal slab walls are still in place. What remains of each of these features—sewerage system, castle walls and internal walls—will be preserved.

The title plan still outlines the complexity of small stone buildings and areas that were within this part of the site. The remains of these can be seen on this historic aerial view:



These elaborate pigsties are mimicked by new, timber-framed structures which match their original size and shape. These will protect their remaining evidence from further weathering and will brace the turrets in the castle wall. Their modern use will be as a bakery, bread oven and a space for preserving and for making cheese and beer. Linking these is a canopy providing shelter for various social functions, including food preparation at harvest time, outdoor eating, dancing, and performance.

The Pigsty Bakery is an essential community asset and focus. The four-foot masonry oven can prepare food for twenty for a week on one charge of firewood. The oven is housed in one side of an oak framed building that takes the form of the sow house in the original pigsty. The shape and height of the inverted roof were dictated by the stone flashings of the Victorian pigsty. The area in front of the oven (under the proposed canopy), retains the original concrete sow house floor, and can be used as a work floor for the bakers. In the corner of the castle walls, under the other half of the sow house roof, is a closed, well insulated Tea Room. It has storage for crockery etc., a wood burning stove, the bakers' library, comfy chairs, table, and a view through the original window opening across the valley.

The oak-framed canopy sits between the Bakery and the Brewery. The roof will be twin-wall, translucent polycarbonate sheeting. The flooring will initially be a pine deck, but this will be replaced when beechwood blocks are available from the applicants' woodland. The structure does not extend all the way to the west pigsty wall so that it does not interfere with the way the faux castle looks from the road and canal. There is a fire pit under the canopy roof, which acts as an irori (Japanese charcoal barbecue); a place to boil large vessels for the brewery and an occasional source of heat. When not in use it is covered by a wooden hatch flush with the floor.

While the Pigsty Bakery is concerned with cooking, the Cauldron is intended to allow wet processes such as preserving, brewing, distilling (herbal essences) and cheese making. The building will take the form of the boar house in the original pigsty, that is, with the same inverted roofline as the sow house (now the bakery).

A folly castle wall originally extended across the yard and formed the back wall of the boar house. Aerial photographs show this was removed in stages between 1967 and the millennium, and the shorter, lower, existing wall was then built to create an ornamental garden area. The previous owner explained that the high stone wall was always unstable; indeed, the current wall is not completely sound. To close in the back of the Cauldron, it is intended to recreate the look and feel of the original wall, using matching stone and detail and including a window providing views through to the entrance courtyard.

None of the proposed structures will be visible from the road.

The entrance courtyard buildings

The new greenhouse will contribute to the farm's food production and will be constructed as an oak frame over a natural stone plinth wall. The farm's self-sufficient energy strategy is to use home grown firewood for heating and cooking, backed up by electricity generated and stored on site. Wood storage, (and bicycle and disabled parking spaces - with electric bike and car charging points), are provided under the shelter of the oak-framed 'solar bike shed' - which runs along the south-west facing wall. The photovoltaic roof covering will provide clean electricity for the community. This structure is low and set back from the wall (by a rampart) so that it is not visible from the road.

Landscaping

The new greenhouses/solar spaces will predominantly contain plants and the other open-sided structures and canopies defining the entrance courtyard and former pigsties area are garden-type structures – all effectively blurring the distinction between ‘buildings’ and ‘landscape’ The disposition of new buildings and structures, and the introduction of water features, trees and sitting areas, will transform what was a purely utilitarian space into a beautiful, sheltered courtyard for the enjoyment of the evolving Warland Farm community. The surfacing of the courtyard will be reclaimed stone flags, cobbles, and gravel (within a retention system) and will therefore remain substantially water permeable. The pattern of landscaping indicated reflects the different geometries/orientation of the existing buildings.

Access

The current farmyard and existing buildings do not allow independent use by wheelchair users. The relandscaping of the farmyard will create a level circulation space which, via the ramp in the entrance lobby and adaptation of the existing buildings, will allow full accessibility to all ground floor areas. Options are available for providing all first-floor functions within accessible areas. A designated accessible apartment provides accommodation at ground floor.

In line with the sustainability objectives the proposal aims to minimise traffic impacts. It is estimated that, on average, two or three courses will be in progress per day, each attended by half a dozen students. The artisan teachers will be required to live close by in affordable housing that is being created within the existing housing stock and which has its own parking provision. Students will stay on site during their course and access local entertainment and facilities by public transport and a shared minibus, by bicycle and by walking.

People with a disability will be able to park in the farmyard; any others arriving by car will be required to park at Warland Mill which has been acquired for the purpose and has capacity for about twelve vehicles. Energy created on site will be used to provide electric car charging points.

Previous planning applications have met with objections that extra traffic will cause problems at the intersection of Warland Gate End and the A6033 Rochdale Road. In the intervening time, Council have allowed one farm to become a car sale yard, and the average number of cars per household has almost doubled, all without any noticeable increase in traffic incidents.

The recent reduction in the speed limit, from 50 to 40mph, has dramatically reduced dangerous driving on the main road and reduces any risks for traffic emerging from Warland.

Sustainability

The proposed development represents a significant point in the architectural timeline of the place: after hundreds of years of self-sufficiency and productivity, the farm's fundamental purpose as the heart of its community had failed, and this will be re-established by creating a built environment that enables a novel social structure in tune with the current context of a global crisis requiring urgent environmental, economic, and socially sustainable solutions. The proposal embodies complex and interconnected principles which relate directly to sustainability issues whilst fostering and encouraging new and exciting possibilities, and in the spirit of holism, it is sincerely believed that the ‘whole’ will become greater than the sum of its parts. This is arguably the most authentic, far-reaching, and deeply sustainable rural regeneration project in the region, and a national and international flagship of its kind.

Ecology

The ecology of Warland Farm is a very high priority within these proposals and the plantations that surround them.

Ten years ago, the land was a grassy monoculture but has now been planted with dozens of different ecological niches including woodland, flower meadows, hedgerows and traditional orchards.

When the applicants arrived at Warland Farm they found that, apart from swallows and spiders, the barns provided no home for wildlife. A bat survey related to the previous planning approval found no evidence of their presence. The swallows stopped nesting here four years ago after a Mediterranean storm disrupted their migration. For the last ten years, the great barn has been lit and in continuous use as storage and workshops, during which time nesting boxes of various sizes have been unused and no bats have been observed. The structure of the roof is minimal to support corrugated sheets, not the typical stone tiles for this area, and the internal walls are soundly pointed: there are few cracks or crannies to provide roosts

Only a few domestic pigeons remained in occupation by last autumn, when 1" grilles had to be installed to prevent damage to stores due to their messy habits. To provide habitat for all kinds of wildlife to return, the new barn's upper roof will be formed into isolated catslide dormers and it is hoped that, with careful design and experimentation, bats, swallows and owls will take up.

Contamination

There is no evidence or record of any activity that has contaminated the site.

Prior to Treesponsibility's creation of woodlands at Warland Farm, they commissioned several ecologists to survey the land for potential impacts. Their report concluded that, while being degraded by overgrazing, the fields had never been subject to uses other than traditional farming and that it has not seen modern fertilisers.

The barns have been in continual use as animal shelters and workshops, including the smithy which serviced the quarry and mill at Warland. The only waste product was clinker from the forge that was used to make the old road behind the farmhouse which is now paved over. From 1960 to 2011, the workshop was only used as a hobby space by the previous owner, mainly for car restoration. The current joinery and smithy produce no contamination.

Given all this, and having inspected historic maps of the site, and having conducted many walkovers of the site, we can see no reason to suspect that any industrial or any other potential contaminating uses have been carried out on the site. We can therefore see no reason to carry out an intrusive survey.

WARLAND FARM DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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