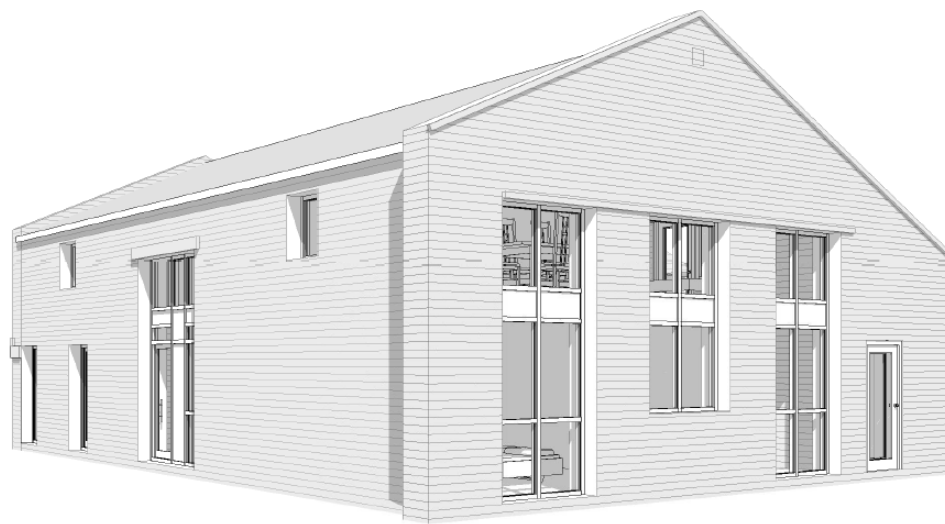


Sheep Bank Farm, Whittiker,
OL15 0LH

Design & Access Statement



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**SOLID
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1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Solid Void on behalf of David Rushton to supplement a full planning application for the conversion of the existing barn, including external and internal modifications to the building to create 3no. holiday lets. This proposal will diversify and financially support the established agricultural business that has been created at Sheep Bank Farm by Mr Rushton since he took possession of the land and property in 2024.

Sheep Bank Farm sits in a rural location, surrounded by approximately 80 acres of agricultural in the hills above Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The site is accessible from Syke Road, via Rakewood Road and typically an agricultural track with very low numbers of vehicle movements along it. The existing farmhouse has recently secured planning permission and those proposals have enabled the applicant to renovate it from its dilapidated state and bring it up to modern day living standards, including some modest extensions to the property and window replacement throughout.

The centre of Littleborough is 1.2km due north of the site, along the B6225, with Smithy Bridge 1.2km due west of the site. The area is largely rural in character with nearby country pubs, working farms, golf club and converted barns into family dwellings.

The site sits within green belt, and the predominant focus of this designation is to prevent over-development, urban sprawl and maintain the openness of the green belt. Therefore, these proposals seek to simply convert the existing barn, such that there is no additional volume created and the current massing of the property is maintained.

On this basis, the proposals do not create 'harm' and preserve the openness of the greenbelt.

2.0 Planning Policy

The applicable planning policies in respect of this application are as follows:

Rochdale's Core Strategy (adopted 2016)

G/D/2 – Green Belt

D/4 – Control of Development in Green Belt

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

3.0 Use

This planning application seeks to renovate and convert the existing agricultural barn into 3no. holiday let rental properties via a full planning application.

The dwellings will be use class C3.

4.0 Amount

The proposals seek to create 3no. 3-bedroomed (5-person) holiday let dwellings, arranged over two storeys.

5.0 Layout

The main entrances to the proposed dwellings will be situated to the west and to the south elevations. Where possible, existing or blocked up features of the existing barn have been utilised with minimal new interventions introduced to form windows and doors.

Internally, the units are arranged over two storeys with a centralised stair providing access to the main living space at the first floor. The open plan lounge, kitchen and dining area gives direct access onto an easterly facing outdoor roof terrace, which is set within the pitch of the roof and affords holidaymakers spectacular views of the moors and Hollingworth Lake. The roof terrace provide external amenity space with allocation for a small outdoor sitting area and relaxing spa pool. The ground level provides a family bathroom, 2no. double bedrooms and a single bedroom in each property.

6.0 Scale

The scale and massing of the existing building will not change as part of these proposals.

7.0 Landscaping

The existing landscaping around the farmhouse is agricultural grassland with well-worn hardcore agricultural tracks/car parking aprons. Given the ample space to provide 6no. car spaces (2 per unit) and a desire to keep the development in an agricultural character, we do not propose any additional new landscaping amendments outside of the barn.

The new roof terraces are the only dedicated private amenity space that have been designed for the use of the holiday-let units.

8.0 Appearance

The renovation of the barn will use either reclaimed materials, or materials of similar appearance to ensure that suitably compliment the host property. Materials such as natural stone, timber framed windows, slate roof and metal rainwater goods are high quality and will enhance the character of the historic barn.

New window proportions are influenced by the proportions of the existing and are framed with natural stone surrounds to match the vernacular of the property.

New windows openings utilise existing blocked up old window openings generally and occur in a variety of heights and sizes, akin to the organic way in which historic barns 'evolve' over their lifetime.

The new first floor glazed window/doors provide a contemporary addition to the holiday lets, opening up the spectacular views towards Hollingworth Lake Country Park and beyond.

9.0 Access

The existing vehicular access is proposed to be retained onto Rakewood Road via Syke Road. There is ample space for at least 6 or more cars to be parked directly outside the farmhouse and barn.

10.0 Green Belt Assessment

The barn will be converted and therefore no additional volume will be added to the existing building structure.

11.0 Heritage Statement

The application property is is Sheep Bank Farm, Littleborough, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property is an isolated farmstead, now private residence, located off Whittaker Lane amid open moorland southeast of the town centre and consists of a house and adjacent barn. The proposed works affect the barn only.

The site's origins date back probably to the later 17th century as the house incorporates the remnant of a building of this date in its south wing. The main body of the house dates probably from the early 19th century and a long, partly-blocked first floor mullioned 'weaver's window' testifies that its occupants were engaged in both farming and textiles, typical of the dual economy that existed in Pennine districts at this time. They may also have been involved in coal mining, as the OS map of 1847-1848 (below) shows two pits nearby. The map also shows the layout of the farmstead has altered little since then. The 1908 OS edition (following page) records that the present house was subdivided to form two properties.

The property is significant for its architectural and historic interest in the local context as a Pennine farmhouse of early 19th century date incorporating late 17th century remains. Together with its adjacent barn, its forms a rugged moorland group that testifies to the combination of farming and textile production – the latter demonstrated by the long weaver's window in the house – that characterised the local economy at that time. The architectural interest of the building has however been compromised by alteration over time, and its significance is primarily embodied in its external envelope. In relative terms, the significance of the building, as it is a non-designated heritage asset, is low.

On the basis of the above summary, the proposals will enhance the setting on the non-designated heritage asset and will not cause harm or detriment.