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Design and Access Statement

Smallshaw Farm

Former cottages and dairy building

Restoration, renovation and sensitive adaptation for residential use



The former cottages and dairy building within the Smallshaw Farm group

Prepared by Storah Architecture

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1 Introduction and purpose

Smallshaw Farm has been home to the same family for four generations. The former cottages and dairy building form part of that history, but their condition has deteriorated and substantial repairs are now needed. Our proposals will restore the building as a single family home, bringing it back into use and securing its continued care.

This statement explains the proposed layout, repairs and external works, together with access to and around the dwelling. It accompanies the application drawings and Heritage Impact Assessment, which considers the building's local significance and its relationship with the listed farmhouse and conservation area.

The proposals have been prepared by Storah Architecture. The drawings show the existing building and the proposed alterations, and are to be read alongside this statement. The separate Drainage and Water Supply Statement explains the proposed services and the investigations that remain necessary.

2 The family and the design brief

The property is in the ownership of the fourth generation of the same family to live at Smallshaw Farm. The applicant wishes to make her home in the setting she has known since childhood, close to her parents and grandparents. Restoring the former cottages and dairy building allows her to do this whilst continuing the family's care of the property.

The brief is for a practical three bedroom home, with a study and sufficient space for family life. The design makes use of the existing accommodation and retains the building's character. Repairs and alterations are directed towards making the building comfortable to live in, whilst retaining the features that give it its interest.

3 Understanding the site

Smallshaw Farm lies at Catley Lane Head, to the north west of Rochdale. Its stone buildings are grouped around the yard, with stone boundaries and open land beyond. The arrangement of the buildings and the spaces between them gives the farmstead much of its character. The proposals retain this relationship.



Figure 1 The project building at centre right with the listed farmhouse group beyond

The former cottages and dairy building stand to the south of Smallshaw Farmhouse. The farmhouse is listed at Grade II, and the site lies within the Catley Lane Head Conservation Area.

The former cottages and dairy building are not separately listed. The Heritage Impact Assessment considers their local historic interest on the basis that the Council may treat them as a non designated heritage asset. Whether they also fall within the listed farmhouse's curtilage remains a matter for confirmation with the Council.

Our historical research shows that the building has accommodated both domestic and agricultural uses. The description of the proposals as the restoration of former cottages and a dairy building reflects that history. Although the date and purpose of every alteration are not known, the surviving features help explain how the building has changed over time and will be retained wherever practicable.

4 Proposed use and ground floor layout

The proposals restore the building as one dwelling, using the existing accommodation. The application drawings show the layout and the alterations needed to bring it back into residential use.

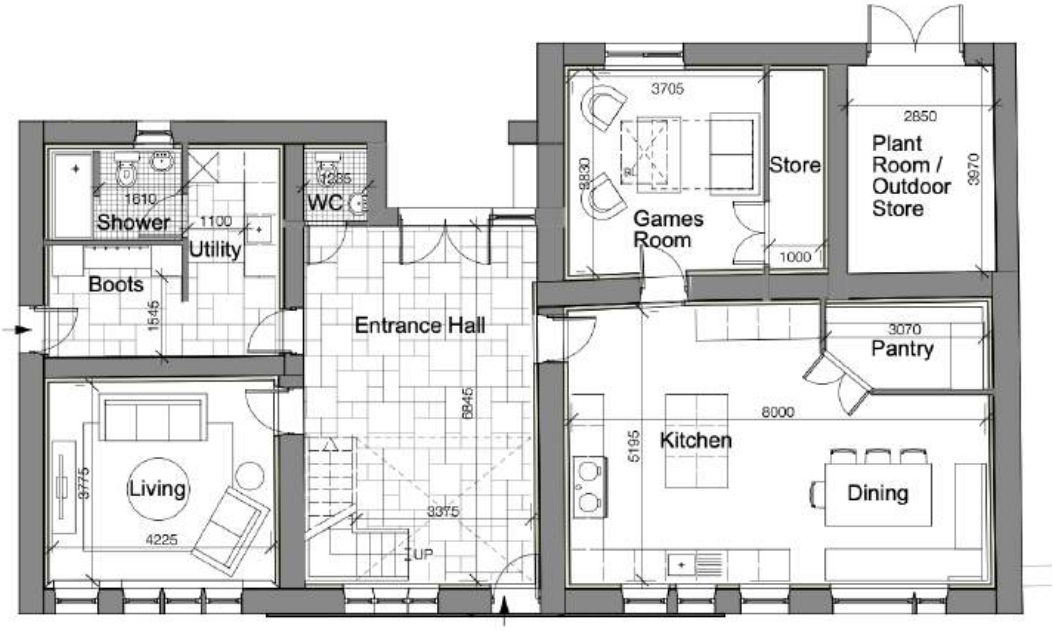


Figure 2 The proposals at ground floor level, illustrative extract not to scale

The entrance opens into a central hall, with the staircase towards the southern side. The living room occupies the western part of the main range, with the kitchen and dining room to the east. This gives the family a shared kitchen and dining space and a separate sitting room, all within the existing building.

A boot room, utility, shower and WC provide the practical facilities needed in a rural home. The rear accommodation includes a pantry, games room, store and plant room with outdoor storage. Providing these spaces within the building reduces the need for additional sheds or storage buildings around the yard.

Some internal alterations are necessary to accommodate the staircase and larger rooms. The proposals retain existing walls and features where practicable, with removal and new construction limited to the work needed to form the dwelling and repair the building.

5 First floor layout and built form

The first floor contains three bedrooms and a study, accessed from a central landing. Bedroom 1 has a dressing room and ensuite, with a separate bathroom serving the remaining accommodation. The layout provides a family home within the existing building.

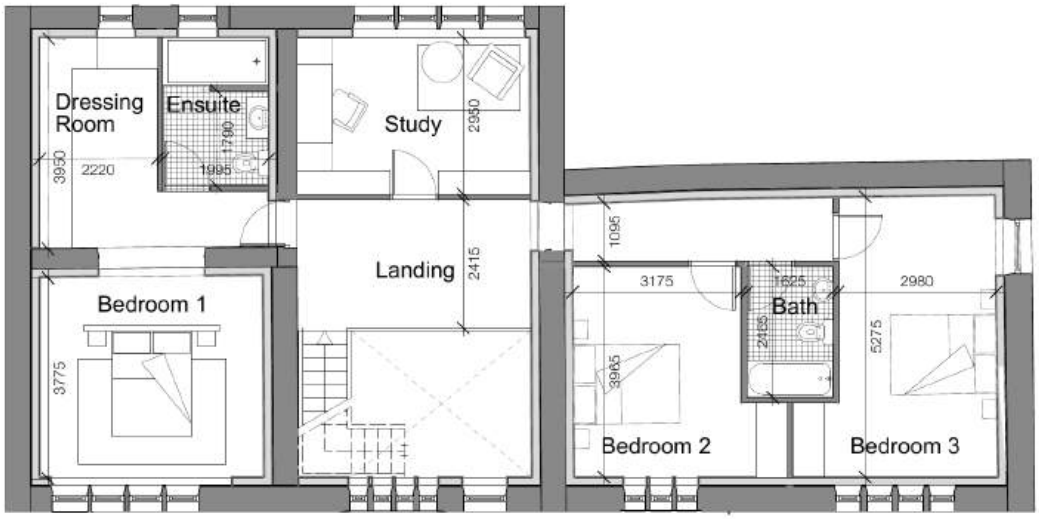


Figure 3 The proposals at first floor level, illustrative extract not to scale

The design retains the building's established scale and roof form. The farmhouse will remain the more prominent building in the group, and the restored cottages will retain their familiar relationship with it and the yard. The proposals avoid an enlarged roof profile or prominent domestic additions.

The internal floors and ceilings will fit around the existing openings and available headroom, taking account of the structural repairs. This allows the building to retain its external proportions whilst providing suitable accommodation within.

The proposed layout has been considered alongside the elevations, with rooms arranged to make use of the existing openings. Daylight, outlook and ventilation have informed the design, together with the relationship to neighbouring accommodation.

6 Appearance and repair strategy

Stonework and historic features

The applicant wishes to restore the building using a conservation approach. Sound stonework, substantial surrounds and other historic features will be retained and repaired wherever practicable. Repairs will use compatible lime mortar, without Portland cement or cement gauging. Appendix A sets out indicative mixes and how their suitability will be confirmed.

Replacement materials will match the scale, colour and texture of the existing materials. Sound historic mortar will remain undisturbed, with repointing confined to defective joints. Cement pointing will be removed carefully where this can be done without damaging the stone. Lintels, mullions, jambs and other distinctive features will be assessed individually for repair and retention.

Roof doors and windows

The restoration will include repair and reinstatement of the roof, retaining sound existing timbers and salvaging surviving roof coverings for reuse wherever practicable. Replacement materials will match the scale, colour and texture of the existing materials. The extent of repair and replacement will respond to the condition of the existing construction, with the aim of retaining as much historic fabric as practicable.

New and replacement windows will be timber framed, with double glazing, fitted within the existing stone openings. Frame and glazing bar proportions will respect the character of the building, with slim double glazing used where necessary to achieve this. External doors will be timber. Replacement materials will match the scale, colour and texture of the existing materials. Surviving historic joinery and glass will be retained and repaired wherever practicable. Installation will respect the existing openings, without cutting back significant stonework or unnecessarily removing sound historic fabric.

Internal wall lining and insulation

The external walls are approximately 500 mm thick, formed in gritstone with a rubble core. An insulated lining on lightweight galvanised steel framing will improve their thermal performance. Fixings will be limited to those needed to secure the lining, avoiding significant stonework and surviving historic finishes. Services will run within the lining wherever practicable, reducing the need to chase the masonry.

The proposed build up comprises the repaired stone wall, a nominal 75 mm clear cavity, an independent metal frame containing flexible wood fibre insulation, and an internal gypsum fibreboard finish. STEICOflex 036 insulation and standard fermacell gypsum fibreboard are indicative products. A nominal 12.5 mm board is proposed, subject to the framing and fire performance requirements. The assembly will include appropriate air and moisture control, with compatible joint treatment and a vapour permeable decorative finish. Foil backed boards and impermeable decorative coatings will not be used. Equivalent products may be selected where their performance and compatibility are demonstrated.

STEICOflex 036 has a declared thermal conductivity of 0.036 W/mK and a water vapour diffusion resistance factor of 2. Standard fermacell gypsum fibreboard has a declared water vapour diffusion resistance factor of 13 and is suitable for fixing to metal framing. It is a gypsum fibreboard, rather than conventional paper faced plasterboard. Both products allow water vapour to pass through, but this does not, by itself, establish the moisture performance of the complete wall lining.

Water penetration and persistent damp will be addressed before the walls are enclosed. The lining will be designed for the condition and exposure of the masonry, allowing appropriate drying and controlling condensation. The 75 mm cavity separates the frame from the irregular stonework and is not intended to be ventilated to the outside. Its suitability, and the need for any vapour control layer, will be assessed as part of the complete assembly. An impermeable vapour barrier will not be adopted as a standard detail. Insulation will be carried through reveals and junctions with floors and the roof wherever practicable, with thermal bridging through the metal frame addressed without cutting back significant stonework. Insulation thickness will respond to the applicable Building Regulations requirements and the provisions for historic and traditional buildings, within the extent of alteration shown in the application.

Condition and extent of intervention

Significant damage has already occurred, and continued exposure leaves the building vulnerable to further deterioration and loss. The unsafe condition of the interior has restricted access and hindered the structural assessment. The proposals focus on restoring the building, retaining and repairing surviving fabric wherever practicable whilst recognising that some damaged elements will require replacement.

The works will follow a coordinated sequence of temporary support, repair, salvage and local reconstruction where necessary. The extent of intervention will respond to the condition of the surviving masonry, floors and roof as safe access becomes available. Sound existing materials will be retained and reused wherever practicable, and replacement materials will match the scale, colour and texture of the existing materials.

7 Access and movement

Arrival and the farmyard

Access to Smallshaw Farm is from Rooley Moor Road via Smallshaw Road. The proposed dwelling will use the existing access and farmyard, which will continue to serve the other buildings at the property.

Parking and turning space will be provided within the site to serve the three bedroom dwelling. These areas will be arranged to allow vehicles to enter, park and leave safely, whilst retaining the character of the yard and the setting of the listed farmhouse.

Pedestrian routes and servicing

The layout has been arranged to provide a pedestrian route between the parking area and the entrance, whilst keeping the public footpath, RocCFp5, unobstructed.

Provision has been made for deliveries, refuse collection and emergency access using the existing approach. Bin and cycle storage has been positioned to avoid cluttering the yard. Any electric vehicle charging equipment will be fitted discreetly, with cables routed to minimise disturbance to the existing stonework.

Inclusive access

The proposals have been designed around the existing floor levels and openings, providing convenient access whilst limiting alterations to the stonework. A firm surfaced route will connect the parking area to the entrance, with changes in level and thresholds kept to a minimum.

The ground floor includes the principal living accommodation, together with a shower and WC. This arrangement provides flexibility for the family as their needs change. The three bedrooms are on the first floor, accessed by the staircase.

The approach to access balances the practical needs of the occupants with the constraints of restoring an existing stone building. The works will meet the applicable Building Regulations requirements, taking account of the building’s traditional construction and the fabric to be retained.

8 Landscape amenity and environmental design

External spaces and neighbouring homes

The external spaces have been designed to retain the informal character of the farmyard and its relationship with the stone boundaries and adjoining open land. Garden and sitting areas have been kept modest, without conspicuous suburban fencing or unnecessary divisions. The proposals retain existing traditional surfaces and walling wherever practicable, alongside a firm surfaced route to the entrance.

The dwelling is close to the other family homes, reflecting the applicant's wish to remain near her parents and grandparents. Window positions, sitting areas, parking and service equipment have been considered together to protect privacy and outlook and provide a comfortable arrangement for each household.

External lighting has been limited to what is needed for safe access. The approach uses discreet, low glare fittings, positioned and controlled to avoid unnecessary light towards neighbouring windows, the listed buildings and potential wildlife routes, whilst retaining the rural night time character.

Energy water and ecology

Restoration will bring the former cottages and dairy building back into use whilst retaining existing materials. The design combines repairs with improvements to the insulation of the walls, floors and roof. Ventilation and moisture control form part of this work, respecting the behaviour of the traditional stone construction.

The plant room provides space for heating and other services. Pipework and cables will be accommodated within the new construction wherever practicable, reducing disturbance to the stonework. Any external equipment will be positioned discreetly, taking account of neighbouring homes and the appearance of the building.

The building has no mains water connection. A shared borehole is proposed within the farm holding for the restored dwelling and neighbouring properties, which currently share a mains connection. Investigations will follow a favourable planning decision. The location, yield and water quality remain unconfirmed, and the borehole may lie outside the application red line. The installation will meet the combined demand, with appropriate treatment, monitoring and shared maintenance.

A new sewage treatment plant is proposed for the restored dwelling, with its discharge route subject to site assessment. The borehole and drainage, including neighbouring systems, will be considered together to protect the water supply. Any necessary permissions for works outside the red line will be secured before installation.

Roof and surface water will be kept separate from foul drainage. Disposal will respond to site levels and ground conditions, without assuming infiltration or existing drainage capacity. The Drainage and Water Supply Statement sets out the approach. A wholesome and sufficient water supply and functioning drainage will be in place before occupation.

The Preliminary Roost Assessment found no evidence of a bat roost during the inspection, but identified moderate suitability for roosting bats and recommended further surveys. Old and active swallow nests were also recorded. The timing and

method of repair will follow the ecological recommendations and subsequent survey findings, with any necessary measures incorporated into the works.

9 Design assessment and conclusion

The proposals have been considered in relation to the site, the existing building and the needs of the family. Core Strategy policies P3, T2 and DM1 are relevant to design and access, alongside Places for Everyone and the conservation area appraisal. The Heritage Impact Assessment considers the heritage policies and the effect of the works in more detail.

The building has suffered significant damage and will continue to deteriorate without repair. Restoration will retain the former cottages and dairy building as a tangible part of Smallshaw Farm's history, with a residential use that gives the family a reason to maintain it. This is the principal benefit of the proposals.

We consider that the proposals offer an appropriate way to secure the building's future. They provide the applicant with a home close to her family, whilst retaining the scale, materials and character of the farmstead. The conservation approach to repairs will allow the building to remain a recognisable part of Smallshaw Farm for future generations.

Sources and supporting information

Storah Architecture, the proposals, floor plans, drawing 26 029 217, September 2026. Figures 2 and 3 are illustrative extracts, not measured drawings.

Site Surveying Services Ltd, existing measured floor plans and elevations, drawings S260455 DR M 001 and 002, June 2026.

Storah Architecture, Smallshaw Farm and buildings Historical development, our historical research report.

Storah Architecture, Smallshaw Farm Heritage Impact Assessment, working draft, September 2026.

Storah Architecture, Smallshaw Farm Drainage and Water Supply Statement, Draft 01, October 2026.

Focus Environmental Consultants, Preliminary Roost Assessment, Barn at Smallshaw Farm, June 2026.

Client and architect supplied site photographs, annotated site plan and rights of way information. Figure 1 is from the supplied project photography.

Historic England, Smallshaw Farmhouse, National Heritage List for England entry 1084252.

Rochdale Borough Council, Catley Lane Head Conservation Area Appraisal, 2017, included in the committee report pack.

Rochdale Borough Council, Core Strategy, adopted 2016.

Rochdale Borough Council, Places for Everyone, adopted 2024.

Planning Practice Guidance, Making an application, Design and Access Statements. Online sources reviewed September 2026.

STEICO, STEICOflex 036 technical data and product guidance, www.steico.com/uk/products/insulation/insulation-between-studs/flexible-thermal-insulation, reviewed October 2026.

fermacell, standard gypsum fibreboard product data and installation guidance, www.fermacell.com/gb-en/products/wall/gypsum-fibreboard, reviewed October 2026.

Historic England, Internal Wall Insulation, technical guidance on moisture risks and junctions, reviewed October 2026.

Appendix A Indicative lime mortar specification

Repairs will retain sound historic fabric and use mortar compatible with the stonework. The mixes below provide starting points for trials. Selection will take account of the surviving mortar, stone condition, joint widths and exposure.

Indicative lime mortar mixes

For suitable sheltered masonry, a mix of 1 part mature non hydraulic lime putty to 2.5 parts washed, sharp, well graded sand by volume will be trialled, a ratio of 1:2.5. Where an early hydraulic set is needed and is compatible with the masonry, an alternative trial mix will use 1 part natural hydraulic lime NHL 2 to 2.5 parts suitable sand by volume. These are alternative binders and will not be combined.

The same mix will not be used throughout without regard to exposure and condition. Exposed masonry, roof bedding and structural rebuilding will be assessed separately. Any change in binder strength or proportion will be justified by the work concerned. Portland cement, cement gauging and cement based pointing or render will not be used for repairs to historic masonry.

The sand colour and grading will complement the surviving historic mortar, with particle sizes suited to the joints. Proprietary mortars may be used where their composition and suitability are confirmed, without cement or unapproved waterproofing additives.

Samples workmanship and protection

A specifier and mason experienced in conservation work will confirm the mix. Representative sample panels will be prepared for agreement with the architect and local planning authority before general use. These will establish the colour, texture and joint finish, taking surviving sound mortar as the reference.

Repointing will be confined to defective joints, retaining sound historic mortar. Cement pointing will be removed only where this can be done without causing greater damage to the stone. Joints will be prepared carefully, dampened and filled with properly compacted mortar. Raised ribbon pointing and unnecessary widening of joints will be avoided.

The mortar will be applied and cured in accordance with the supplier’s instructions and the agreed method statement. The work will be protected from frost, driving rain, strong sun and drying winds, with sufficient time and moisture allowed for curing.

Historic England, Repointing Brick and Stone Walls, 2017.

SPAB, Lime, guidance on binder selection and compatibility.

Cornish Lime, Mature Lime Putty, indicative mix proportions.

Masons Mortar, St Astier NHL 2 product data, mix performance and curing. The suggested trial ratio is not a site specific manufacturer recommendation.