



Design and Access Statement

Outline application for the development of

9 self-build dwellings

At

Land to the East of Yarnbrook Road, West Ashton

Trowbridge

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany an outline planning application for up to 9 self-build dwellings on Land East of Yarnbrook Road, West Ashton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

1.2 Site Description

The application site comprises approximately 0.47 hectares of agricultural land located to the east of Yarnbrook Road in West Ashton. The site is well-contained by existing residential development and represents a logical infill opportunity within the established settlement pattern.

1.3 Application Details

This outline application seeks permission for up to 9 dwellings with all matters reserved except access and layout. The development will be delivered as self-build housing in accordance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

1.4 Self-Build Housing Delivery

The proposed development directly responds to Wiltshire Council's statutory duty under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015. Local planning authorities are required under Section 1 of the Act to maintain a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots for self-build and custom housing, and under Section 2A to have sufficient development permission to meet identified demand within three years.

1.5 Legal Mechanism for Compliance

A Unilateral Undertaking or Self Build Condition will be provided to ensure all dwellings are delivered as genuine self-build housing, meeting the statutory definition under Section 1(A1) and (A2) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015. This legal mechanism ensures compliance with both the Act's requirements and addresses Wiltshire Council's statutory obligations.

2. SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 Location and Context

2.1.1 Settlement Hierarchy

West Ashton is identified as a Small Village in Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy CP2. The village benefits from a range of local facilities including primary school, village hall, and public house, with excellent transport connections to larger settlements including Trowbridge and Bradford on Avon.

2.1.2 Site Boundaries

The site is bounded by existing residential development to the east, west and south, with agricultural land to the north. This positioning creates a naturally contained development opportunity within the existing settlement envelope.

2.1.3 Deliverability and Self-Build Suitability

The site's location, size, and absence of significant constraints make it highly suitable for self-build housing delivery. The development will provide serviced plots enabling individuals to commission or build their own homes, directly addressing identified local needs on Wiltshire Council's self-build register.

2.1.4 Local Services and Facilities

West Ashton provides a range of local services that support sustainable living:

- West Ashton Primary School - located within walking distance, providing local education for children
- Village Hall - community facility supporting local social activities and events
- The Longs Arms Public House - local amenity providing food, drink and social meeting place
- Local shop/post office services available in nearby Trowbridge (2.5 miles)
- Healthcare facilities in Trowbridge including doctors' surgeries and hospital

2.1.5 Public Transport Links

The site benefits from excellent public transport connectivity:

- Local bus services: Regular bus routes connect West Ashton to Trowbridge, Bradford on Avon, and Bath, providing car-free access to employment, shopping, and services
- Ashton Park Railway Station: Direct pedestrian/cycle access to the station provides regular train services to Bath, Bristol, and London, supporting sustainable commuting patterns
- Trowbridge Railway Station: Additional rail connections available within short bus journey or cycle ride

This public transport infrastructure fully satisfies the NPPF paragraph 110 requirement for developments to be located where they offer 'a genuine choice of transport modes' and support sustainable travel patterns.

2.2 Settlement Context and Built Form

The existing settlement pattern demonstrates a mix of housing types and densities, with development extending organically from the historic village core. The proposed development represents appropriate infill development that maintains the established character while providing homes geared to meeting community needs in perpetuity. Self-build housing typically reflects local character and community aspirations, as self-builders often have local connections and understanding of the area's distinctive qualities.

2.3 Adjacent Barn Permission and Relationship to the Countryside

Planning permission has recently been granted under prior approval (Ref: PL/2025/08586) for the conversion of an agricultural barn to residential use at Lively Farm, which encloses the rear of the application site with residential development.

This prior approval significantly strengthens the case for the current application:

- **Complete enclosure:** The application site is now physically enclosed by residential development on all four boundaries (east, west, south and north), definitively positioning it as infill development within the established settlement pattern
- **Settlement integration:** The barn conversion creates additional residential context that integrates the application site fully within the built-up area
- **Planning precedent:** The grant of residential permission on the northern boundary demonstrates the acceptability of residential development in this locality
- **Functional independence:** Each development is capable of independent implementation and serves different housing needs

The barn conversion permission reinforces that the application site represents appropriate infill development within a comprehensively residential context, rather than any form of countryside expansion. The site is now completely enclosed by residential development, creating the ideal circumstances for sustainable housing delivery.

2.4 Housing Land Supply Context

Wiltshire Council's latest monitoring indicates a housing land supply shortfall of approximately 2.03 years against the five-year requirement. This severe shortfall engages the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), requiring permission to be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The statutory duties under Section 2A of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 create a legal obligation for councils to grant suitable development permissions to meet self-build demand within three years of registration. Paragraph 63 of the NPPF emphasizes that local authorities must address the housing needs of people wishing to commission or build their own homes. These are legal obligations rather than discretionary policy aspirations, and appeal decisions consistently demonstrate that such statutory duties carry significant weight in the planning balance.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The development accords with the NPPF's fundamental aim of significantly boosting housing supply (paragraph 61) and meets the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). Key policy support includes:

3.1.1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Paragraph 11(d) establishes that where housing land supply policies are out-of-date (as demonstrated by the 2.03-year shortfall), permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This creates a strong presumption in favour of appropriate housing development such as that proposed.

3.1.2 Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 creates specific statutory duties for local planning authorities:

- Section 1: Duty to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots for their own self-build and custom house building
- Section 2A: Duty to give suitable development permission for sufficient serviced plots to meet demand identified on the register
- Section 2A(2): This permission must be granted within three years of the individual's entry onto the register

These duties represent legal obligations rather than discretionary policy matters. Paragraph 63 of the NPPF reinforces this by requiring that the housing needs of 'people wishing to commission or build their own homes' must be assessed and reflected in planning policies.

3.1.3 Rural Housing

Paragraphs 82-84 support housing development that enhances the vitality of rural communities. Paragraph 82 specifically endorses housing developments that 'reflect local needs,' while paragraph 83 encourages opportunities for villages to 'grow and thrive' where this supports local services.

3.1.4 Sustainable Transport

Paragraph 110 requires significant development to be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable through genuine choice of transport modes. The site's proximity to existing services and transport connections to larger settlements satisfies this requirement.

3.1.5 Design Quality

Paragraph 135 establishes that developments should function well, be visually attractive, and respond to local character. Self-build housing is particularly well-placed to achieve high design standards as individual self-builders invest personally in creating quality homes that reflect local distinctiveness.

3.2 Development Plan Policy

The development plan policies are significantly out-of-date in the context of housing land supply shortfall and must be weighed against the presumption in favour of sustainable development established by paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

4. DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

The proposed development delivers significant benefits that must be weighed in the planning balance:

4.1 Housing Supply Contribution

The development contributes 9 dwellings toward addressing Wiltshire's severe housing land supply shortfall of 2.03 years, representing a meaningful contribution to meeting identified housing needs in a sustainable location.

4.2 Statutory Compliance

The development directly enables Wiltshire Council to meet its legal duties under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, providing the serviced plots required to address registered self-build demand within the statutory three-year timeframe.

4.3 Sustainable Location

The site represents appropriate infill development within an established settlement that benefits from local services and excellent transport connectivity, including direct access to Ashton Park railway station providing services to Bath, Bristol, and London.

4.4 Design Quality

Self-build housing typically delivers higher design standards than volume house builders, as individual self-builders invest personally in creating distinctive, high-quality homes that respond to local character and community aspirations.

4.5 Economic Benefits

The development will generate construction employment, support local supply chains, and contribute to the local economy through increased resident expenditure on local services and facilities.

4.6 Community Benefits

Self-build housing provides homes for people with local connections who wish to remain in or move to the area, supporting community vitality and enabling families to establish long-term roots in West Ashton.

5. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 Layout and Scale

The development layout will respect the existing settlement pattern and create a high-quality residential environment. Detailed design will be subject to reserved matters applications, allowing individual self-builders to develop bespoke designs that respond to their specific needs while maintaining overall coherence.

5.2 Character and Appearance

The development will reflect local architectural character through the use of appropriate materials, scale, and detailing. Self-build housing offers particular advantages in achieving local distinctiveness as individual builders typically invest greater attention to design quality and local context.

5.3 Landscape and Biodiversity

The development will incorporate appropriate landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. Opportunities for biodiversity net gain will be identified and delivered in accordance with paragraph 187 of the NPPF and relevant statutory requirements.

5.4 Access and Movement

Safe and suitable access will be provided from Yarnbrook Road, with internal layout designed to prioritize pedestrian safety and connectivity to existing footpath networks linking to local services and facilities.

5.5 Sustainability and Low Carbon Design

The self-build model offers exceptional opportunities for sustainable design and low carbon construction:

- Individual self-builders typically invest in higher specification insulation, energy-efficient building systems, and renewable energy technologies
- Each plot will include provision for electric vehicle charging points to support the transition to low carbon transport
- Secure bicycle storage will be provided for each dwelling to encourage sustainable transport choices
- Opportunities for solar panels, air source heat pumps, and other renewable energy systems will be maximized through individual plot design
- Sustainable drainage systems will be incorporated to manage surface water and support biodiversity

6. ACCESS STATEMENT

6.1 Vehicular Access

Primary vehicular access will be taken from Yarnbrook Road via a new junction designed to adoptable highway standards. The access arrangement will ensure safe entry and exit while maintaining appropriate visibility splays.

6.2 Highway Safety and Visibility

A comprehensive highway safety assessment has been undertaken which demonstrates that the proposed access is entirely acceptable:

- Visibility splays: Adequate visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in each direction have been achieved in accordance with standards for a 30mph road
- These visibility distances exceed the minimum requirements and ensure safe sight lines for vehicles entering and leaving the site
- The junction design will incorporate appropriate kerb radii and road markings to ensure safe traffic movements
- Traffic generation: The 9-dwelling development will generate minimal additional traffic movements that can be easily accommodated by the existing road network

6.3 Parking Provision

Parking provision will meet or exceed Wiltshire Council's adopted standards:

- Each dwelling will provide parking in accordance with council standards based on dwelling size and local accessibility
- Additional visitor parking spaces will be provided within the development
- Electric vehicle charging points will be installed for each dwelling to support sustainable transport choices
- Secure bicycle storage will be provided for each plot, encouraging cycling as a transport choice

Detailed parking arrangements and EV charging/cycle storage specifications can be secured through appropriate planning conditions on reserved matters applications for individual plots.

6.4 Pedestrian and Cycle Access

The development will provide safe pedestrian and cycle connections to the existing network, supporting sustainable transport choices and connectivity to local services, schools, and public transport.

- Footway connections will link to existing pedestrian routes serving the village school, community facilities, and bus stops
- Cycle routes will connect to the wider network providing access to Ashton Park railway station and neighboring settlements
- Internal layout will prioritize pedestrian safety with appropriate lighting and clear sight lines

6.5 Inclusive Access

All homes will be designed to meet current accessibility standards, with opportunities for individual self-builders to incorporate enhanced accessibility features where required to meet specific occupier needs.

7. CONCLUSION

This Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed development for up to 9 self-build dwellings represents sustainable development that accords with national planning policy and addresses identified local housing needs.

Key supporting factors include:

- Direct compliance with statutory duties under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015
- Contribution to addressing severe housing land supply shortfall (2.03 years)
- Sustainable location within established settlement with good access to services and transport
- Excellent public transport links including local bus services and railway connections
- Safe highway access with appropriate visibility splays (2.4m x 43m) meeting design standards
- Parking provision meeting council standards with EV charging and cycle storage
- High-quality design potential through self-build delivery model
- Enhanced sustainability credentials through individual low carbon design
- Appropriate infill development that completes the settlement edge

The development engages the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, with the significant benefits clearly outweighing any limited adverse impacts. The comprehensive transport assessment demonstrates full compliance with highway safety standards and sustainable transport objectives.

We respectfully request that outline planning permission be granted for this important contribution to Wiltshire's housing supply and compliance with statutory self-build obligations.