



**Sheila Wright Planning Ltd.**

## **Planning Statement**



**Conversion of former care home to a pair of semi-detached houses**

**Longworth House, Ramsgreave Road, Blackburn BB1 9DJ**

**August 2025**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of Watson Saunders Associates Ltd in support of a planning application for the extension and alteration of the former care home at Longworth House, Ramsgreave Road, Blackburn and its conversion to a pair of semi-detached houses.
- 1.2 The building has been vacant for some years following the closure of the care home due to viability issues. The site was unsuccessfully marketed as a business, as was noted in a pre-application response by the Council in 2021 which is referred to in more detail in section 3 of this Statement.
- 1.3 The proposed new houses would be occupied by two branches of the same family.
- 1.4 The proposed works have been sympathetically designed to enhance the building and create comfortable, contemporary family living spaces, whilst being appropriate to the rural area in which the property sits.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement will demonstrate the compliance of the proposed development with relevant local and national planning policies. In accordance with planning law it should therefore be approved.
- 1.6 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the application drawings submitted by Watson Saunders Associates.
- 1.7 In addition to this Statement the following reports are submitted in support of the application:
  - Bat Survey - Preliminary Roost Assessment (Pennine Ecological)
  - Bat Emergence Surveys (Pennine Ecological)
  - Arboricultural Method Statement (Mulberry)
  - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Mulberry)
- 1.8 The remaining sections of this Statement cover the following:
  - 2 The Site and its Surroundings
  - 3 Planning History
  - 4 Pre-Application Enquiry 2021
  - 5 Proposed Development
  - 6 Planning Policy Framework
  - 7 Planning Assessment
  - 8 Conclusion

## 2. The Site and its Surroundings

### 2.1 The Site

- 2.2 The site is Longworth House, Ramsgreave Road, Blackburn. It is a large property is located in an extensive plot to the north west of the road, as shown in the image below.



Google image

- 2.3 The building was formerly used as a care home but the use ceased a number of years ago. The *Lancashire Telegraph* reported on 11/11/2018 that the property had been put up for auction. The House has lain vacant since then.  
<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/17215776.former-care-home-auction/>
- 2.4 Longworth House is an imposing two-storey building with an 'L' shaped plan form. It is set back from the road and situated within an extensive plot. Its external appearance is quite simple in design, materials being, stone render and slate. Both internally and externally it has undergone some unsympathetic alterations/extensions which were associated with the former care home use as can be seen in the images below.



Front elevation (image courtesy of Pennine Ecological)



Rear elevation (Image courtesy of Pennine Ecological)

- 2.5 There are gardens to the rear and front. The latter includes mature trees along the boundary with Ramsgreave Road and flanking the drive.
- 2.6 There is an existing car park, situated to the side south western side of the house, with spaces for 10 cars.
- 2.7 Longworth House is located within a cluster of residential properties, some of which can be seen in the aerial images above as well as on the block plan below.



2.8 There is another cluster of houses and the Spread Eagle public house just to the west along Ramsgreave Road at its junction with Barker Lane.

### 3. Planning History

3.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council's on-line planning records show the following previous planning applications on the site:

- 3/2005/0537** Extensions and alterations to provide staff and visitor accommodation. Approved 05/10/2005.
- 3/2002/0219** Extension to form four bedrooms and a conservatory (Resubmission). Approved 26/11/2002.
- 3/2002/0220** Manager's dwelling (resubmission). Refused 26/11/2002. Dismissed on appeal 07/05/2003
- 3/2001/0395** Detached dwelling to form living accommodation for owner of residential care home. Approved 14/08/2001.
- 3/2001/0295** Two storey extension incorporating bedrooms, en-suites, assisted bathrooms and conservatory. Approved 14/08/2001.
- 3/2001/0071** Dining room extension to residential home. Approved 28/03/2001.
- 3/2000/0833** Erection of detached dwelling house. Refused 18/01/2001.
- 3/2000/0613** Dining room extension. Approved 26/09/2000.
- 3/1997/0722** First floor balcony and staircase entry/exit to owners private flat. Approved 02-12-1997.

## 4. Pre-Application Enquiry 2021

4.1 A pre-application enquiry was submitted to the Council in 2021 for the proposed conversion and extension of Longworth House to create 6 apartments.

4.2 The Council's response, issued by Laura Eastwood on 08/06/2021, set out the following points which are relevant to this application.

- The site is within open countryside but is within a cluster of residential development collectively known as the top of Ramsgreave and is close to a public house. The site is located between Mellor and Ramsgreave which are settlements served by local services and is approximately 1 mile from each as well as being a short drive to the centre of Blackburn which is approximately 2.5 miles away.
- The property is a former care home and it is noted in the supporting statement [2021 pre-app] that it has closed due to viability issues and unsuccessfully marketed as a business. It is apparent that the property was formerly a dwelling and therefore a continued residential use of the premises would not be unacceptable in terms of surrounding land uses.
- There is nothing to suggest that the building is not structurally sound, albeit in need of refurbishment.
- The site lies within a small cluster of dwellings with the Mullions to the East, 9-15 Ramsgreave Road to the West and Springfield and 8 and 6 Ramsgreave Road opposite. The nearest neighbour is approx. 45 metres away. It is set back within the site which is substantial and the overall footprint and position will not change. It is not considered that the conversion to 6 dwellings [as then proposed] would have a detrimental impact on residential amenity or a materially different impact than its former use.
- It is not considered the conversion [to six apartments] would have a material impact on the highway network and would probably generate less vehicle movements than the care home use.
- Subject to satisfactory supporting information being submitted the proposal would be considered to accord with the relevant development plan policies and is acceptable in principle.

## 5. Proposed Development

- 5.1 The application is for the extension, alteration and conversion of Longworth House from its former use as a care home (Class C2) to a pair of semi-detached houses (Class C3). The building would originally have been in residential use before it was turned into a care home.
- 5.2 The building will be divided roughly equally between the two semi-detached houses. Much of the work will be internal. As might be expected for care home use the building has been partitioned into a large number of small rooms as can be seen in the existing floor plans, below. Some internal walls will, therefore be removed and new ones built.



Existing floor plans and elevations

- 5.3 The aim of the proposals is to create comfortable and attractive family living spaces for two branches of the same family, whilst retaining the essential character of the building, recognising that some of the alterations and additions associated with the care home use were less than sympathetic.
- 5.4 The proposals, shown in the proposed floor plans and elevations below, include:
- New front porticos (one for each of the houses);
  - Single storey extensions to side and rear;
  - Partial double storey extension; and
  - Dormers to front and rear, allowing the roof space to be used for bedrooms.



or similar.

5.8 Proposed new walls will be in facing brick or similar approved. The new porticos will be in natural stone or similar.

5.9 The existing access on to Ramsgreave Road will be retained, as will the existing car parking area which has 10 parking spaces.

5.10 **Specialist Reports**

5.11 Arboricultural Impact Assessment

5.12 The AIA carried out by Mulberry, dated 17 July 2025, notes that no trees are to be removed due to either the proposed works or condition.

5.13 A precautionary method of working near trees is detailed in the accompanying Arboricultural Method Statement.

5.14 The AIA concludes that: *“It is considered that in following the advice in this document, any negative factors affecting trees on the site will be minimised.”*

5.15 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

5.16 The PRA undertaken by Pennine Ecological in July 2025 concludes that:

*“Based on the PRF’s [Potential Roost Features] identified and the surrounding habitat, the bat roost potential associated with the property is considered to be Moderate.*

*Based on the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines, 4th Edition (2023), these features will require two dusk surveys undertaken between May – September (see Table 7.1 below). The two surveys must be a minimum of three weeks apart.”*

5.17 The dusk (emergence) surveys have been commissioned by the applicants and are currently in the process of being undertaken. The associated report will be supplied to the LPA as soon as it is available.

## 6. Planning Policy Framework

### 6.1 Development Plan

6.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.3 The Development Plan comprises the Core Strategy, adopted in 2014.

6.4 The following policies of the Core Strategy are relevant to the proposed development.

### 6.5 Policy DS1 Development Strategy

6.6 The policy states that the majority of new housing development will be concentrated within an identified strategic site located to the south of Clitheroe towards the A59, and the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley, as well as some of the larger villages.

### 6.7 Policy DS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

6.8 The policy states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

### 6.9 Policy DMG1 General Considerations

6.10 The policy sets out a number of criteria that all development must meet, including, relevant in this case:

- Be of a high standard of building design;
- Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials;
- Consider visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities;
- Use sustainable construction techniques where possible;
- Consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.
- Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.

### 6.11 Policy DMG2 Strategic Considerations

6.12 The policy states that within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.

6.13 Policy DMG3 Transport and Mobility

6.14 All development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with currently approved standards.

6.15 Policy DME1 Protecting Trees and Woodlands

6.16 The visual, botanical and historical value, together with the useful and safe life expectancy of tree cover will be important factors in determining planning applications. A detailed tree protection plan should be submitted with an appropriate level of detail.

6.17 Policy DME2 Landscape and Townscape Protection

6.18 Development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features.

6.19 Policy DME3 Site and Species Protection and Conservation

6.20 Development proposals that are likely to adversely affect animal species protected by law will not be granted planning permission.

6.21 Policy DMH3 Dwellings in the Open Countryside and the AONB

6.22 Within the open countryside residential development will be limited to a small number of exceptions including, relevant in this case, the appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.

6.23 Policy DMH4 The Conversion of Barns and Other Buildings to Dwellings

6.24 Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of buildings to dwellings where certain criteria are met including:

- The building is within a defined settlement or forms part of an already established group of buildings;
- There would be no need for public expenditure on infrastructure;
- There would be no materially damaging effect on the landscape qualities of the area or harm to nature conservations interests:
- There would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy;
- The proposals are consistent with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.
- The building to be converted must be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for extensive building or major alternation, which would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building.
- The building should be of a sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions which would

- harm the character or appearance of the building;
- The character of the building and its materials are appropriate to its surroundings and the building and its materials are worthy of retention because of its intrinsic interest or potential or its contribution to its setting.

## 6.25 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024**

### 6.26 **Sustainable Development**

6.27 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

6.28 Paragraph 8 sets out three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development:

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.29 Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

### 6.30 **Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Housing**

6.31 Paragraph 61 states that to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.

6.32 Paragraph 73 notes that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for

Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly.

**6.33 Achieving Well-Designed Places**

6.34 Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

6.35 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments (inter alia):

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

## 7. Planning Assessment

7.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plan is the Core Strategy. The NPPF is also a material consideration in planning decisions.

7.2 We consider that the following are the main planning issues:

- Principle
- Design
- Amenity
- Highways and parking

### 7.3 Principle

7.4 Longworth House was originally a residential property before being turned into a care home. A return to residential use would be in complete accord with neighbouring properties.

7.5 The site is located in open countryside where new residential development is normally restricted. However, the proposed development relates to an existing building, the form of which will be largely retained, with only modest changes to the footprint. The building is set within a cluster of other residential properties. The proposed development will have no materially greater impact on the character of the surrounding than the existing.

7.6 For these reasons, the proposed development complies with policies DS1, DS2, DMG2, DME2, and DMH3, as well as with the sustainability objectives of NPPF.

7.7 Therefore the principle of the development is acceptable.

### 7.8 Design

7.9 The proposed development has been designed to a very high standard.

7.10 The design approach is based on retaining the essence of the character of Longworth House and creating two attractive and comfortable homes, offering a great standard of contemporary family living.

7.11 The design is restrained and elegant, appropriate to the building's rural location and its setting within a cluster of residential properties.

7.12 For these reasons the design is of high quality and fully accords with Policies DMG 1, DME2, DMH3, DMH4 and the design provisions of NPPF.

7.13 The design also safeguards trees and bats in accordance with policies DME1 and DME3.

7.14 **Amenity**

7.15 Whilst Longworth House sits within a cluster of houses it is set back away from the other properties and enclosed within extensive grounds. The nearest property is 45m away and the proposed works will be within or very close to the existing footprint.

7.16 There will be no detrimental impact on the amenities of any of the neighbouring properties.

7.17 The proposed development will thereby accord with policies DMG1 and DS2 and the sustainability provisions of NPPF.

7.18 **Highways and Parking**

7.19 The existing access and parking arrangements will be retained. There will be no material impact on the highway network and traffic generation associated with the two houses is likely to be significantly less than the former care home use.

7.20 The proposed development therefore fully accords with Policy DMG 3.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The proposed development is the extension and alteration of Longworth House and its conversion from care home (C2) to a pair of semi-detached houses (C3).
- 8.2 The conversion of the existing building is appropriate in terms of the Council's open countryside and sustainability policies and the sustainability objective of NPPF.
- 8.3 The proposal has been designed to a very high standard to retain the essence of the character of the building and ensure that it fits in with its rural setting.
- 8.4 There will be no detrimental impacts on landscape character, residential amenity, highway safety, trees or protected species.
- 8.5 The proposed development accords with all relevant local and national planning policies and the presumption in favour of sustainable development fully applies. In accordance with planning law, therefore, it should be approved.
- 8.6 The Council is therefore respectfully asked to grant planning permission.