

Planning, design and access statement

Full planning permission for the conversion of
an agricultural barn into a dwelling off Staden
Lane, Buxton, SK17 9RZ.

Prepared by Fisher German LLP on behalf of Mr and Mrs Heathcote

Project title:	Agricultural Barn off Staden Lane
Agent:	Victoria Heath on behalf of Fisher German LLP victoria.heath@fishergerman.co.uk
Contact details:	Fisher German LLP The Estates Office Norman Court Ashby de la Zouch LE65 2UZ
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Document Author	Version	Date	Approved by	Date
Victoria Heath	A	08/09/2026	Scott O'Dell	08/09/2026

Professional memberships and accreditations



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Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Site and Surrounding Area.....	2
	Planning History	4
3.	The Development Proposal.....	6
	Structural Inspection Report	9
	Ecology	9
	Nutrient Neutrality	9
4.	Planning Policy	12
	High Peak Local Plan (Adopted April 2016)	12
	National Planning Policy Framework (2026)	14
	Supplementary Planning Documents	18
5.	Planning Policy Assessment.....	19
	Principle of Development.....	19
	Design.....	20
	Amenity	20
	Ecology and Biodiversity	20
	Nutrient Neutrality	21
	Highways	21
	Planning Balance and Conclusion.....	22

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the conversion of an agricultural barn into 1no. dwelling (the development) at Staden Lane, Buxton, SK17 9RZ (the site).
- 1.2. This statement should be read in conjunction with other supporting information supplied as part of the planning application, including:
 - Application Forms;
 - Site Location Plan (Drawing Number: 130700-003 LP01)
 - Existing Block Plan (Drawing Number: 130700-004-BP01);
 - Proposed Plans (Drawing Number: 130700-004-PP01A);
 - Topographical Survey;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and;
 - Nutrient Neutrality Assessment.
- 1.3. This Planning Statement describes the site and its general locality, details the proposed development and gives an overview of the relevant planning policy and legislation. There follows a full assessment of the proposals against this policy and legislative context and all other relevant material considerations.
- 1.4. It is concluded that when considering local and national planning policy, the proposed conversion and extension should be acceptable in principle. Detailed consideration has been given to heritage, ecology and landscape impact. There are no material considerations which would render the proposal unacceptable in planning terms, therefore it is respectfully requested that the application is viewed favourably and approved without delay.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The site is located within the High Peak Borough Council administrative boundary.
- 2.2. The site comprises an agricultural barn and is accessed via Staden Lane, as illustrated below:

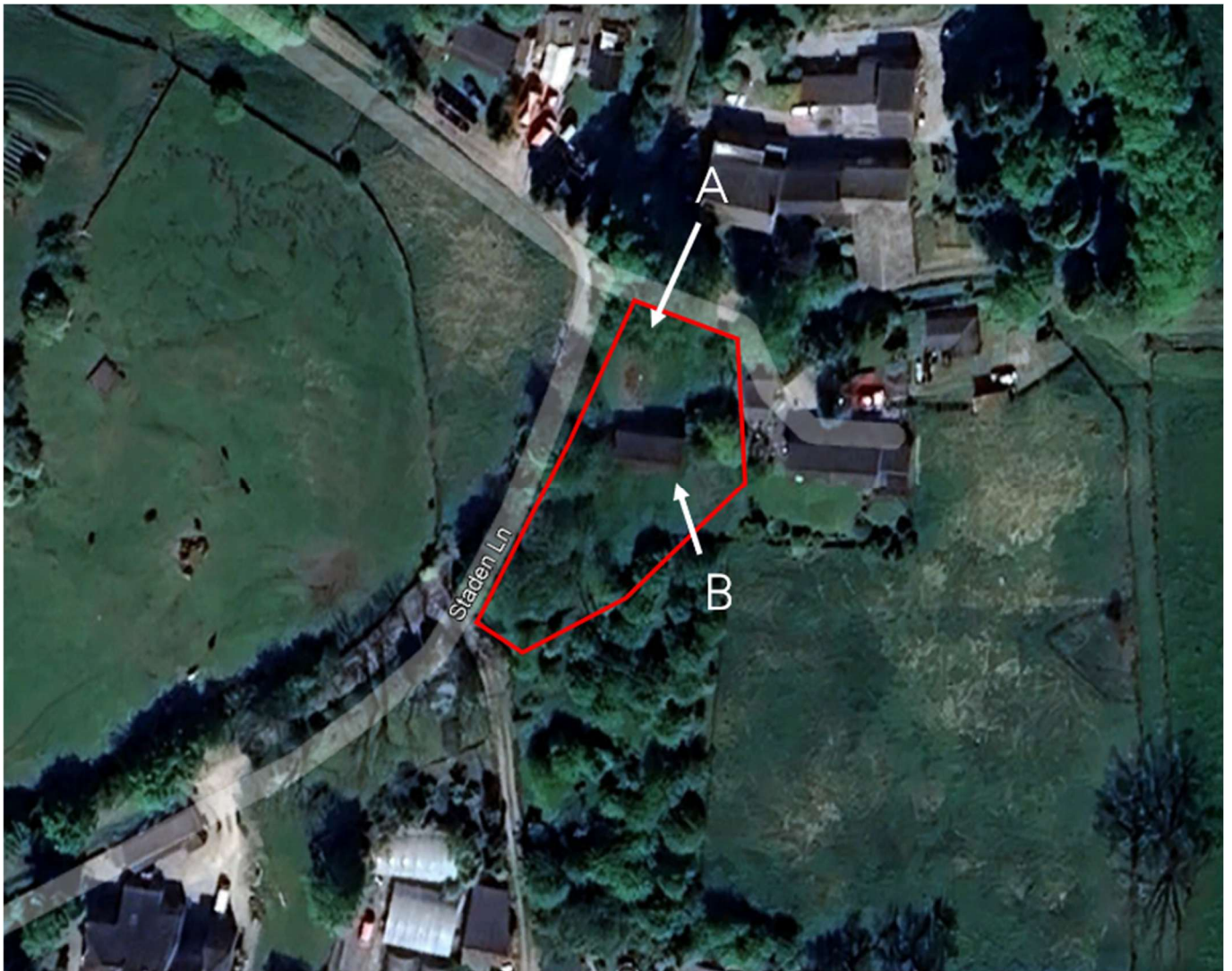


Figure 1: Site Location (Source: Google Earth)

- 2.3. Figures 2 and 3 are photographs from the site from two different viewpoints.



Figure 2: Photograph A



Figure 3: Photograph B

- 2.4. The site is approximately 0.14ha and adjoins residential properties to the north and east. Agricultural fields lie to the south and west. Further southwest lies Staden Business Park, and Buxton to the west.
- 2.5. It comprises 1no. two-storey traditional stone agricultural barn, with slate roof.
- 2.6. Access to the site is achieved off Staden Lane to the north of the site.
- 2.7. There are no designated heritage assets on site. The nearest is 'Staden Earthwork' (Scheduled Monument) located approximately 440m to the southwest.
- 2.8. The site is not subject to any environmental designations. The site comprises modified grassland to the south of the barn, and other neutral grassland to the north. The site is bounded by a line of trees along its western boundary and dry-stone walls line all other boundaries. Areas of ruderal vegetation introduced shrub and scattered trees are also present throughout the site.
- 2.9. The site is within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability of Flooding). The site is also at very low risk of surface water flooding.
- 2.10. A Public Right of Way/ National Trail runs to the north of the property and along Staden Lane providing connectivity between Buxton and Cowdale.

Planning History

- 2.11. The following planning history is relevant to the application site:

HPK/0002/1886 – Barn conversion and erection of garage for the use as dwelling – Refused 15/10/1984.

- **HPK/2025/0483** - Conversion of an agricultural barn into a dwelling with a single storey side extension and associated landscaping and parking –Withdrawn

- 2.12. The adjacent agricultural building was subject to a conversion to residential dwelling under HPK/0002/6903 – Approved 01/11/1984.
- 2.13. In respect of adopted planning policy (High Peak Local Plan – Adopted April 2016), the site is located within the countryside. In addition to this, the site falls within the Buxton Groundwater Source Protection Zone, and the Buxton Mineral Water Catchment.
- 2.14. Pre-application advice feedback was obtained from the Council in January 2025 (Ref: PAD/2024/0025) for the conversion and erection of a two-storey extension. At the time of writing the Council were unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, and in any event concluded that they would be able to support the conversion of the building to residential. Minor amendments to the design and appearance of the barn were sought, as well as clear justification for the proposed extension. In response to this, an amended scheme was submitted to the Council in March 2025 for the conversion and erection of a single storey extension. Further comments were provided in July 2025 confirming the Council were happy with the amendments to the fenestration to the barn. However, requested a reduction to the overall roof height of the extension. These changes, and the required justification for the extension, are provided as part of this application.
- 2.15. An application for the conversion of the barn into a dwelling with a single storey side extension and associated landscaping and parking was submitted in December 2025. The application was later withdrawn to enable further information to be obtained in support of nutrient neutrality considerations.

3. The Development Proposal

- 3.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of an existing agricultural barn into a single dwelling off Staden Lane, Buxton, SK17 9RZ.
- 3.2. The site comprises a single two-storey traditional stone agricultural barn with a timber single storey annex off the western elevation.
- 3.3. The existing agricultural barn is to be converted into a 2-bed residential dwelling with designated private parking to the front of the dwelling, and private garden to the rear.
- 3.4. Figure 5 below is an extract from the Proposed Site Plan:



Figure 5: Proposed Site Plan

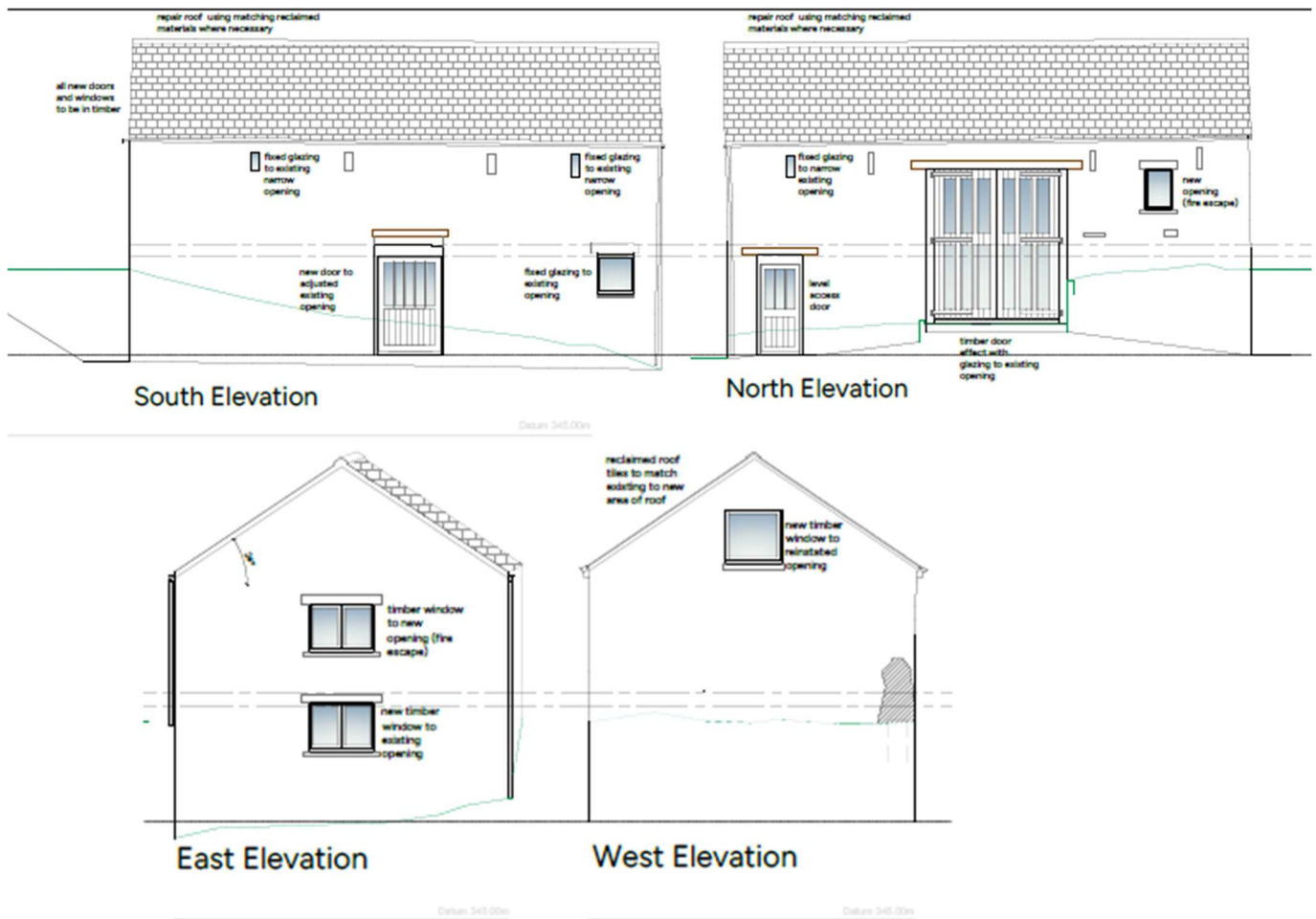


Figure 6: Proposed Elevations

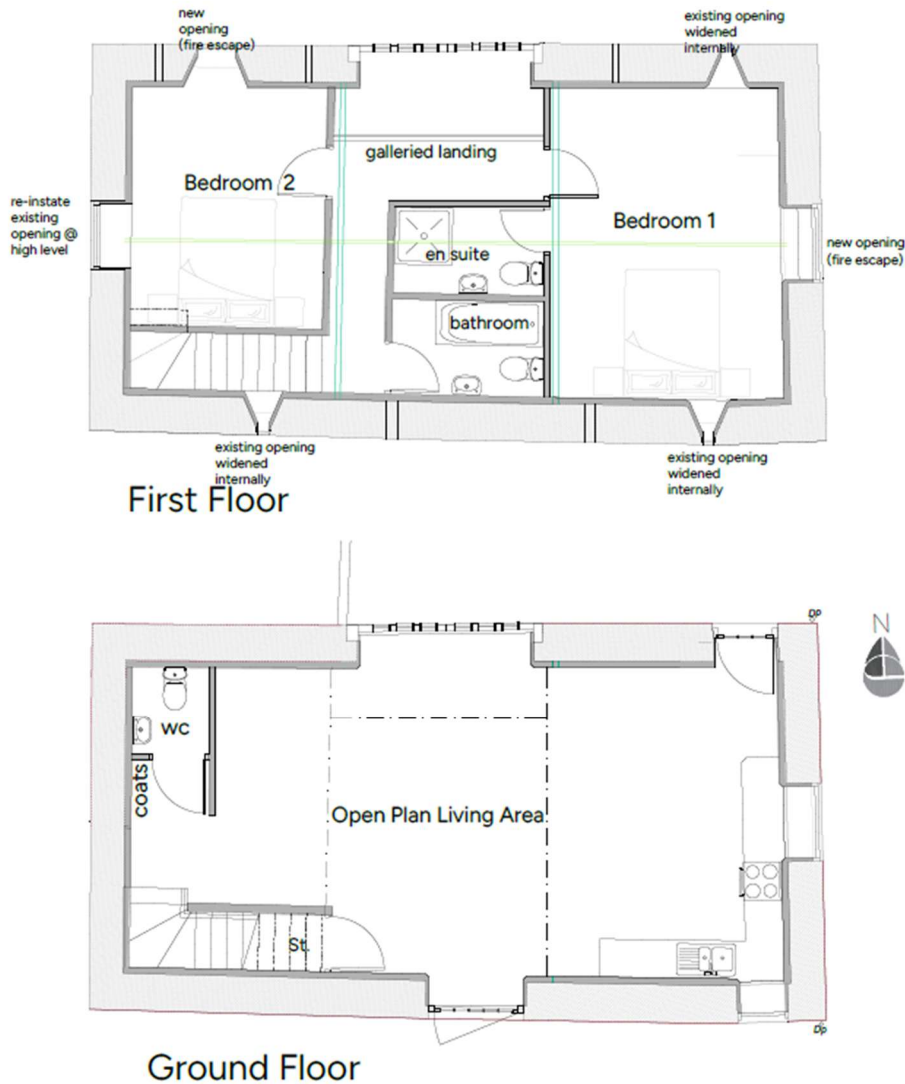


Figure 7: Proposed Floorplans

- 3.5. At ground floor level a large open plan living area and kitchen are provided with ground floor w/c and storage. At first floor, 2no. double bedrooms are provided at either end of a galleried landing. Family bathroom, and ensuite are also provided at first floor.
- 3.6. The central opening to the barn is retained, revealing a double height space with exposed features.
- 3.7. The design, scale and appearance of the proposed development is in accordance with the immediate surrounding context. The proposed conversion is sympathetic to the former agricultural barn and makes use of many of the existing features of existing openings.
- 3.8. Access is provided to the north of the site from Staden Lane.
- 3.9. Parking in accordance with adopted parking standards is provided.
- 3.10. A Structural Report and a series of Ecology Reports have been undertaken in support of this outline planning application. Each report is summarised below:

Structural Inspection Report

- 3.11. A Structural Inspection Report has been undertaken by ASP in support of this full planning application which concludes the overall condition of the barn appears to be suitable for conversion. Whilst it is acknowledged some repair works are needed, these would not be considered significant as to warrant the demolition of the existing building. The cracks observed to the rear elevation towards the east are considered to be consistent with signs of settlement. Monitoring is recommended to determine whether the settlement is on-going or historic. The report goes on to recommend cracks on stonework joints should be repaired with a suitable lime mortar mix. Hellifix ties are recommended to form a mechanical tie between the stonework.

Ecology

- 3.12. A Preliminary Ecology Assessment has been undertaken in support of this application and concludes there four designated sites within 2km of the site; Ferneydale Grassland LNR, Peak District SAC, Wye Valley SSSI and Poole's Cavern and Grin Low Wood SSSI. Notwithstanding this, the proposal is of a relatively small scale and would not create any additional foot traffic across any designated sites, and so the Assessment goes on to confirm there is not thought to be of any significant impact on the designated sites.
- 3.13. The Ecology Assessment goes on to confirm there were no records of badgers, great crested newts and reptiles. Records of bats were found, as well as habitat for barn swallows and barn owls.
- 3.14. A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment has also been undertaken and confirms the building was categorised as a Confirmed Roost and offering High potential suitability for roosting bats, with the crevice and cavity features in the stone walls offering suitable hibernation features. Bat Activity Surveys and Hibernation Surveys have also been undertaken. Activity Surveys concluded no bats emerging from the building during any of the three surveys. Small numbers of Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) Brown Long-eared, Myotis species and Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) were recorded commuting through the site and foraging around the garden. The activity was generally low with individual passes recorded occasionally throughout the surveys. Having regard to the Hibernation Surveys, the static detector registered small numbers of registrations during the night throughout the survey period. Species recorded on site by the static detector included only Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle. The above demonstrates that bats are not utilising the site as a hibernation roost as activity levels were low. Given this, no additional mitigation and or enhancement for hibernating bats is required/proposed.
- 3.15. The site is suitable for nesting birds, and the building provides suitable habitat for Barn Owl and Barn Swallow. Mitigation measures including the installation of a pole mounted owl box and the installation of Barn Swallow cups are anticipated to be conditioned.
- 3.16. The site is 0.14ha and falls under the 0.2ha exemption for biodiversity net gain and so is not required.

Nutrient Neutrality

- 3.17. A Nutrient Neutrality Assessment has been undertaken in support of this application given the site is located within a drainage catchment of the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation.
- 3.18. This assessment confirms that, prior to the implementation of any mitigation measures, the site would result in a nutrient load that could increase nutrient concentrations within the catchment, albeit by a very small amount, including the application of the relevant 20% precautionary buffer.

- 3.19. To mitigate against this, an indicative SuDS Plan has been produced and shows how if implemented it could 100% of total phosphorus through infiltration via permeable and pervious pavements, and filter strips. Delivering nutrient neutrality.
- 3.20. Figure 8 below is an extract from the associated plan:

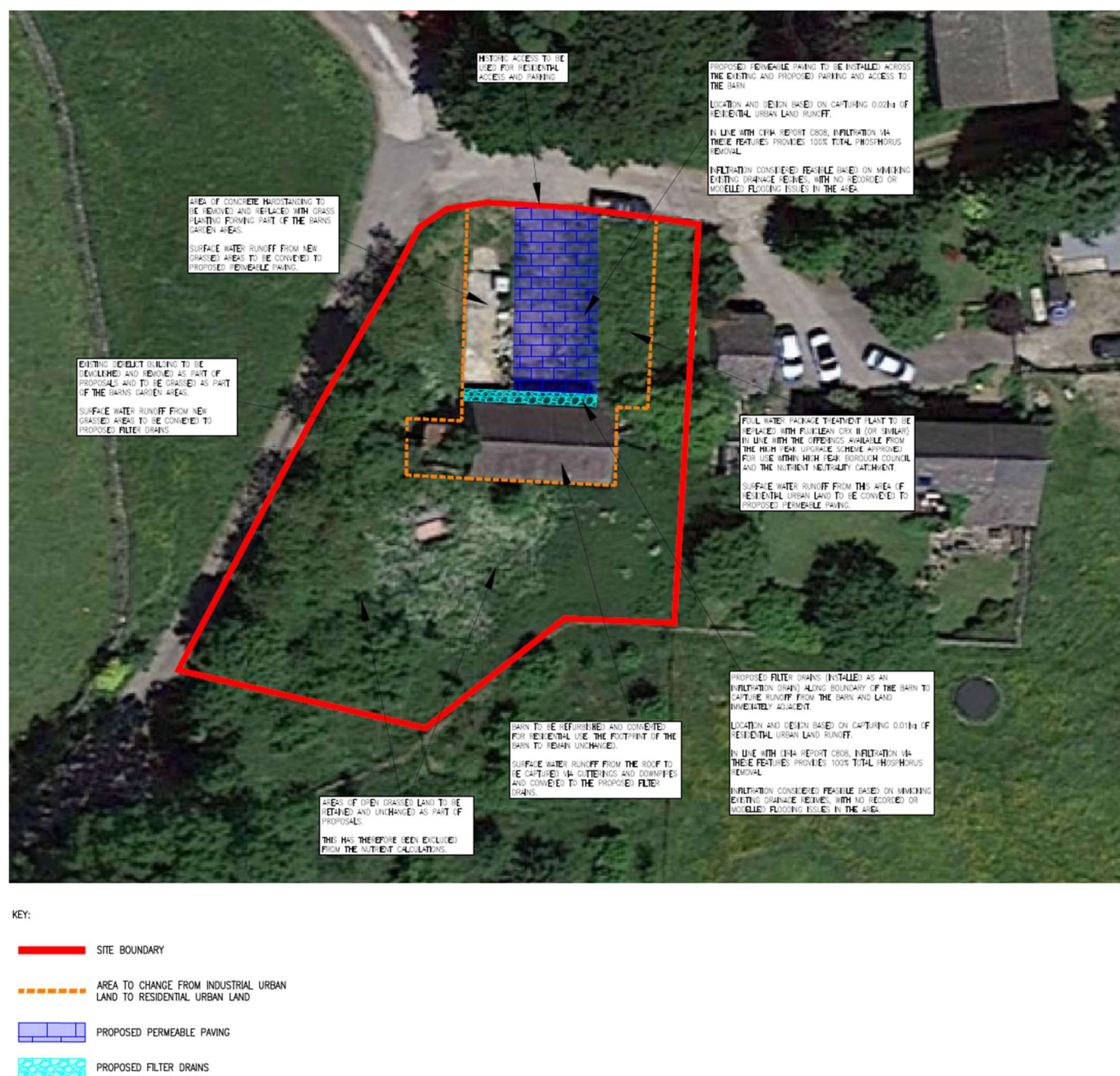


Figure 8: Extract from the Indicative SUDs Location Plan

- 3.21. Alternatively, the assessment confirms nutrient neutrality could be achieved via the High Peak Borough Council nutrient credit scheme.
- 3.22. In conclusion, the assessment confirms that there are a number of mechanisms through which nutrient neutrality can be achieved for the proposed development, all of which can be appropriately secured and maintained in perpetuity.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1. Planning policy relating to the application site is formed through:
- Local Planning Policy
 - National Planning Policy
- 4.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development Plan material to the proposal consists of:
- High Peak Local Plan (Adopted April 2016)
- 4.3. In addition to the Development Plan, applications should also have regard to National Planning Policy, which is a material consideration in any determination.
- 4.4. The High Peak Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2018) and Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document are also of relevance.

High Peak Local Plan (Adopted April 2016)

Policy S1 – Sustainable Development Principles

- 4.5. This policy states that the Borough Council will expect all new development to make a positive contribution to the sustainability of communities and to protect, and where possible enhance the environment, mitigating the process of climate change.

Policy S1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.6. This policy states that when determining planning applications the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development when considering the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy S2 – Settlement Hierarchy

- 4.7. This policy states development will be directed towards the most sustainable locations in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. Buxton is identified as a Tier 1 Market Town and so is the most sustainable location within the Borough. Market Towns will be the main focus for housing, employment service growth, consistent with maintaining where possible enhancing their role, distinctive character vitality and appearance.

Policy S3 – Strategic Housing Strategy

- 4.8. This policy states provision will be made for at least 7,000 dwellings over the period 2011-2031 at an overall average annual development rate of 350 dwellings. It goes on to state, in order to meet this target 32-43% of the total will be developed in Buxton.

Policy S7 – Buxton Sub-area Strategy

- 4.9. This policy states the Council, and its partners will seek to establish Buxton as England's leading spa town and consolidate its role as the principal service centre for the Peak District. This will be achieved through encouraging the growth of local employment opportunities and supporting the diversification and growth of the local economy by allocating suitable, deliverable sites for industrial business use sufficient to meet the economic needs of the area.

Policy EQ1 – Climate Change

- 4.10. This policy states the Council will adopt strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Council intends to meet part of its future energy needs through renewable or low carbon energy sources and will therefore encourage and support the provision of renewable and low

carbon technologies, including both stand-alone installations, and micro-renewables integrated within new or existing development.

Policy EQ2 – Landscape Character

- 4.11. This policy states the Council will seek to protect, enhance and restore the landscape character of the Plan Area for its own intrinsic beauty and for its benefit to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the Plan Area.

Policy EQ3 – Rural Development

- 4.12. This policy states outside the settlement boundaries and sites allocated for development as defined on the Policies Map, including the Green Belt, the Council will seek to ensure that new development is strictly controlled in order to protect the landscape's intrinsic character and distinctiveness, including the character, appearance and integrity of the historic and cultural environment and the setting of the Peak District National Park whilst also facilitating sustainable rural community needs, tourism and economic development.

Policy EQ5 – Biodiversity

- 4.13. This policy states the biodiversity and geological resources of the Plan Area and its surroundings will be conserved and where possible enhanced by ensuring through ensuring as a minimum no net loss and wherever possible net gain for biodiversity.

Policy EQ6 – Design and Placemaking

- 4.14. This policy states all development should be well designed and of a high quality that responds positively to both its environment and the challenge of climate change, whilst also contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Policy EQ7- Built and Historic Environment

- 4.15. This policy states the Council will conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment in accordance with sub area strategies S5, S6 and S7.

Policy EQ9 – Trees, woodland and hedgerow

- 4.16. This policy states the Council will protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, in particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows from loss or deterioration.

Policy EQ10 – Pollution and Unstable Land

- 4.17. This policy states the Council will protect people and the environment from unsafe, unhealthy and polluted environments.

Policy EQ11 – Flood Risk Management

- 4.18. This policy states the Council will support development proposals that avoid areas of current or future flood risk and which do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, where this is viable and compatible with other policies aimed at achieving a sustainable pattern of development. When considering planning applications the Council will also have regard to all relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Policy H1 – Location of Housing Development

- 4.19. This policy states the Council will ensure provision is made for housing taking into account all other policies in the Local Plan.

Policy H3 – New Housing Development

- 4.20. The policy states the Council will require all new residential development to address the housing needs of the local people by:
- a. Meeting the requirements for affordable housing within the overall provision of new residential development as set out in Policy H4.
 - b. Providing a range of market and affordable housing types and sizes that can reasonably meet the requirements and future needs of a wide range of household types including for the elderly and people with specialist housing needs, based on evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or successor documents.
 - c. Providing a mix of housing that contributes positively to the promotion of a sustainable and inclusive community taking into account the characteristics of the existing housing stock in the surrounding locality.
 - d. Ensuring new residential development includes a proportion of housing suitable for newly forming local households.
 - e. Supporting dwellings designed to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations.

Policy CF6- Accessibility and Transport

- 4.21. This policy states the Council will seek to ensure that development can be safely accessed in a sustainable manner. Proposals should minimise the need to travel, particularly by unsustainable modes of transport and help deliver the priorities of the Derbyshire Local Transport Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

- 4.22. National policy is set out in the NPPF which was updated in August 2026. This framework seeks to ensure sustainable forms of development and good design, alongside the protection and enhancement of the environment.
- 4.23. *Policy DM3: Determining development proposals* states when considering development proposals, local planning authorities should:
- a. Work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, where necessary seeking solutions to problems arising from initial proposals, to enable a timely decision;
 - b. Take a proportionate approach to the consideration of the planning matters raised by the proposals, in a way that reflects their scale, complexity and potential impact;
 - c. Take account of planning matters raised during any pre-application engagement, including any positive responses to this engagement, as well as representations on the proposals;
 - d. Consult statutory or internal consultees only where it is necessary to do so. Decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision, there are public safety risks from proceeding without advice, or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal;
 - e. Consider whether otherwise unacceptable development proposals could be made acceptable through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations; and
 - f. Not refuse applications for development which should clearly be approved, having regard to their accordance with the development plan, the policies in this Framework and any other material considerations.
- 4.24. *Policy S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development* states decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

- a. Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;
- b. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and
- c. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.

Where a development proposal falls partly within and partly outside a settlement, policies S4 and S5 should be applied to the relevant parts which are inside or outside of the settlement boundary (as appropriate), before coming to an overall view on the proposal.

4.25. *Policy S5: Principle of development outside of settlements* states only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:

- a. Development for: agriculture, horticulture and forestry; outdoor sport and recreation; allotments; cemeteries and burial grounds; mineral extraction and processing; engineering operations and infrastructure (including for transport, energy, water and telecommunications); roadside facilities in accordance with policy TR5; national defence and security; or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;
- b. Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary;
- c. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces;
- d. The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential);
- e. Limited infilling within groups of houses;
- f. An exception site as provided for in policy HO10, or development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;
- g. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need for gypsy, traveller or travelling showpeople accommodation²⁶, provided it meets the criteria in policy HO12;
- h. Residential and mixed-use development which would:
 - i. Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B);
 - ii. Be physically well-related to the station or the settlement within which the station is located;
 - iii. Be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; and
 - iv. Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location.
- i. The development of land allocated for that purpose in the development plan (where this lies outside settlements); and
- j. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test²⁷), and where the development would:
 - i. Be physically well-related to an existing settlement²⁸ (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or

- ii. Comprise major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy E3.

In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.

Development proposals comprising isolated homes, which are those lying outside settlements or groups of houses, should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.

Development proposals which do not fall within one of the categories set out in this policy should only be approved in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of the proposal would substantially outweigh the adverse effects, including to the character of the countryside and in relation to promoting sustainable patterns of movement.

This policy does not apply to development proposals in the Green Belt or on land designated as Local Green Space, which should instead be determined in accordance with policies HC8, GB6, GB7 and/or GB8 (as appropriate). However, where development would not be inappropriate in these locations (through the application of policies HC8 and GB7), proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, and applying paragraph 2 of this policy.

- 4.26. *Policy HO11: Isolated homes in the countryside* states development proposals for isolated homes in the countryside should only be supported where one or more of the following circumstances apply:
- a. There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
 - b. The development would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets in accordance with policy HE4;
 - c. The development would reuse a redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting, including proposals which would secure the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building (subject to taking into account any harm to its significance, as set out in policy HE6);
 - d. The development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
 - e. The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - ii. Would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.
- 4.27. *Policy TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations* states so that development is located where it can support sustainable patterns of movement, enable good accessibility for different users and make the most of existing and proposed transport infrastructure, development proposals should reflect the following principles, taking into account the vision for the site, the type of development and its location:
- a. Development proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement, in the context of the area within which they would be situated, should be in locations that are sustainable (or which can be made so, taking into account planned improvements, including any provided for as part of the development itself). This means the location should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users, unless the nature of the development would make this impractical;

- b. Opportunities should be taken to utilise existing or proposed transport infrastructure in optimising the amount or density of development which can be accommodated in different locations, especially where this can support more walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use;
 - c. Any significant adverse impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, should be mitigated to an acceptable degree using a vision-led approach;
 - d. The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure should be identified, assessed and taken into account – including taking opportunities to avoid or mitigate any adverse environmental effects, and to secure net environmental gains such as reductions in air pollution; and
 - e. In rural areas, opportunities to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport and enhance the connectivity of an area should be taken where they exist and can be supported by the development proposed.
- 4.28. *Policy P3: Living conditions and pollution* states development proposals should be appropriate for their location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, whether these effects are on or off-site; and whether this is as a result of the development itself or the product of preexisting conditions in its vicinity. In assessing the potential effects of pollution, consideration should be given to the potential sensitivity of the site, and its intended occupiers and users, as well as that of the environment and population in the surrounding area (including where certain groups could be particularly vulnerable to its effects, such as children and older people).
- 4.29. *Policy P4: Impact of the development on existing activities* states existing businesses, community facilities, public services and defence and security activities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on their current or permitted operation as a result of development being approved after they were established. This means that development proposals should be capable of being integrated effectively with existing business, community and public service activities and infrastructure in their vicinity (including, but not limited to, uses such as pubs, music venues, places of worship, sports clubs, blue light services, defence, electricity network infrastructure and industrial and waste sites).
- 4.30. *Policy N2: Improving the natural environment* states to contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should:
- a. Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);
 - b. Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;
 - c. Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments;
 - d. Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;
 - e. Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;

- f. Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and
- g. Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.

If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused.

Development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decisionmakers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt.

- 4.31. *Policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places* states development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.32. *Chapter 5 of the Design Guide SPD (2018)* states 'alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building. The key to a sensitive approach is to take note of what is there already before preparing the design to work with, not against, the building's character. The guide principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting should be respected and retained. This means that in most cases the barn, mill or chapel, and not like a new house. When converting traditional buildings, new uses should not normally require the construction of extensions or ancillary buildings. However, if alterations are necessary and approached carefully, it may be possible to bring about a new understanding of historic buildings by make a clear distinction between what is old and what is new'.

5. Planning Policy Assessment

- 5.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of an existing agricultural barn into a single dwelling off Staden Lane, Buxton, SK17 9RZ.

Principle of Development

- 5.2. The following policies are relevant in establishing whether or not the development is acceptable in principle:

- Policy S3, Policy EQ3 and Policy H1 from the High Peak Local Plan (2016)
- Policy S3, S5 and HO11 of the NPPF (2026)

- 5.3. Policy S3 sets out the strategy for housing delivery across the Borough and depicts where the required 350 dwellings per year will be distributed across the plan period. Whilst only delivering 1no. dwelling, small sites are important to the overall housing delivery, especially when considering the Council current housing land supply (2.85 years as of March 2025). The proposed development, whilst only for 1no. unit, is in accordance with Policy S3 and contributes towards the Boroughs housing need.
- 5.4. Policy EQ3 relates to all development proposals in the rural areas and seeks to ensure that all new development is strictly controlled in order to protect the landscapes intrinsic character and distinctiveness. Policy EQ3 confirms types of residential development will be supported, including the re-use of redundant and disused buildings, where it does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. The site forms part of a small clustering of residential and agricultural buildings off Staden Lane and makes use of a redundant traditional agricultural barn. The proposed development has been sensitively converted to accommodate a 2-bed dwelling, contributing to the established local need for housing. The conversion makes use of existing openings, and new openings have been kept to a minimum to preserve the traditional character and local distinctiveness of the barn. The proposal therefore will not have any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, in accordance with Policy EQ3.
- 5.5. Policy H1 refers to the location of new housing and where such development will be supported. It encourages the re-use of land through redevelopment, infill, conversion of existing buildings and the change of use to residential on all sites suitable for that purpose. The proposal makes use of an existing redundant barn and is located within a clustering of existing residential and agricultural uses off Staden Lane. It is therefore considered suitable for residential use, demonstrating accordance with Policy H1.
- 5.6. Policy HO11 of the NPPF (2026) sets out the circumstances in which isolated homes in the countryside may be supported, including the re-use of a redundant building that enhances its immediate setting. This proposal entirely accords with this policy as it makes use of an existing redundant barn and is located within a clustering of existing residential and agricultural uses off Staden Lane.
- 5.7. Policy S3 of the NPPF (2026) establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development as a core principle of decision-making. It confirms planning applications should be determined positively, with development proposals supported where they accord with the development plan and national planning policies. It goes on to state development proposals outside settlements, such as this, should be assessed against Policy S5, which identifies the types of development that may be appropriate in the countryside.
- 5.8. Policy S5 of the NPPF (2026) is supportive of the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside, such as this, unless its adverse effects would substantially outweigh its benefits. As set out above, will not cause any adverse effects on the character and appearance of the countryside, nor in terms of amenity, highways and nutrient neutrality (to be discussed below). It contributes

towards the provision of rural housing, supporting the vitality and sustainability of Buxton, as well as to the current undersupply of housing in the district. It also supports local economic growth both through construction activity and by increasing spending within the rural economy. Taken together, these benefits attract significant weight in favour of the proposal, and it is therefore considered to fully accord with the requirements and objectives of Policy S5 of the NPPF (2026). The principle of development is therefore acceptable for the proposed conversion and extension of an existing barn to a 2-bed residential dwelling and is policy compliant.

Design

- 5.9. Policy EQ6 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality that responds positively to both its environment and the challenge of climate change, whilst also contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place. Policy EQ7 seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
- 5.10. Chapter 5 of the Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that the principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting should be respected and retained.
- 5.11. The proposed development is a well-designed sensitive conversion and extension to a traditional barn, maintaining many of the existing openings and features. Works are considered to be minor, having would not cause harm to the wider rural setting.
- 5.12. Following a second round of pre-application feedback the amount of glazing proposed to the front opening has also been reduced. The newly proposed timber door reads more like existing barn opening, retaining the traditional appearance. The proposed glazing is limited but still allows lots of light to flow through onto the proposed galleried landing.
- 5.13. To conclude, the above demonstrates accordance with Policy EQ6, Policy EQ7, Chapter 5 of the Design Guide SPD, and relevant policies in the NPPF (2026).

Amenity

- 5.14. Policy H3 requires all new housing to have a high standard of residential amenity by virtue of meeting or exceeding the Nationally Described Space Standards. The proposed development has been designed to meet NDSS and so accords with Policy H3.
- 5.15. Policy EQ6 and guidance contained within the Residential Design Guide SPD (2005) seeks to ensure that proposal is well designed and have limited impacts on residential amenity. Policy EQ10 seeks to ensure that proposals have no adverse impact on public health. The proposed development demonstrates a high quality of design and has been sensitively converted maintaining most of the original features and openings. Separation distances exceed minimum standards ensuring no adverse impacts to neighbouring properties. Internal layouts exceed the minimum floor area and bedroom dimensions exceed dimensions set out in NDSS. There are no known potential land contamination issues present. The proposal therefore accords with Policy H3, Policy EQ6, Policy EQ10 and guidance contained within the Residential Design Guide SPD (2005), and relevant national planning policies.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.16. Policy EQ5 seeks to conserve and where possible enhance the natural environment.
- 5.17. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Bat Roost Survey and Activity/Hibernation Surveys have been undertaken in support of this application.
- 5.18. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal concludes there four designated sites within 2km of the site; Ferneydale Grassland LNR, Peak District SAC, Wye Valley SSSI and Poole's Cavern and Grin Low Wood SSSI. Notwithstanding this, the proposal is of a relatively small scale and would not

create any additional foot traffic across any designated sites, and so the Assessment goes on to confirm there is not thought to be of any significant impact on the designated sites.

- 5.19. The Ecology Assessment goes on to confirm there were no records of badgers, great crested newts and reptiles. Records of bats were found, as well as habitat for barn swallows and barn owls.
- 5.20. The subsequent Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment confirmed the building were categorised as a Confirmed Roost and offering High potential suitability for roosting bats, with the crevice and cavity features in the stone walls offering suitable hibernation features. Bat Activity Surveys and Hibernation Surveys were therefore undertaken. Activity Surveys concluded no bats emerging from the building during any of the three surveys. Small numbers of Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) Brown Long-eared, *Myotis* species and Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) were recorded commuting through the site and foraging around the garden. The activity was generally low with individual passes recorded occasionally throughout the surveys. Having regard to the Hibernation Surveys, the static detector registered small numbers of registrations during the night throughout the survey period. Species recorded on site by the static detector included only Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle. The above demonstrates that bats are not utilising the site as a hibernation roost as activity levels were low. Given this, no additional mitigation and or enhancement for hibernating bats is required/proposed.
- 5.21. The site is suitable for nesting birds, and the building provides suitable habitat for Barn Owl and Barn Swallow. Mitigation measures including the installation of a pole mounted owl box and the installation of Barn Swallow cups are anticipated to be conditioned.
- 5.22. The site has an area of approximately 0.14ha and benefits from the relevant exemption for sites below 0.2ha. As such, the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements do not apply to this proposal.
- 5.23. The above demonstrates accordance with Policy EQ5, and relevant national planning policies.

Nutrient Neutrality

- 5.24. Policy S7 seeks to framework to protect the wildlife habitats of the River Wye and the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation.
- 5.25. The Nutrient Neutrality Assessment submitted demonstrates there are a number of mechanisms through which nutrient neutrality can be achieved for the proposed development, all of which can be appropriately secured and maintained in perpetuity.
- 5.26. The proposal therefore causes no adverse impacts and entirely accords with Policy S7 and relevant national planning policies.

Highways

- 5.27. Policy CF6 seeks to ensure that development can be safely accessed in a sustainable manner, and that relevant parking standards are proposed.
- 5.28. The proposed development is accessed off Staden Lane, which is a single track, unadopted road.
- 5.29. 2no. off-street parking spaces are proposed, in accordance with parking standards.
- 5.30. Staden Lane already serves residential development, and the addition of 1no. 2-bed dwelling is not thought to give rise to any issues with regards to highway safety or parking provision. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CF6 and relevant national planning policy.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 5.31. This application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of an agricultural barn into a single dwelling at Staden Lane, Buxton, SK17 9RZ.
- 5.32. The site comprises a single two-storey traditional agricultural barn located within the countryside to the northeast of Staden Business Park. Whilst located within the countryside it is bound by residential development to the north and east. Agricultural fields lie to the west and south.
- 5.33. Policy S5 of the NPPF (2026) is supportive of the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside, such as this, unless its adverse effects would substantially outweigh its benefits. As set out above, will not cause any adverse effects on the character and appearance of the countryside, nor in terms of amenity, highways and nutrient neutrality (to be discussed below). It contributes towards the provision of rural housing, supporting the vitality and sustainability of Buxton, as well as to the current undersupply of housing in the district. It also supports local economic growth both through construction activity and by increasing spending within the rural economy. Taken together, these benefits attract significant weight in favour of the proposal, and it is therefore considered to fully accord with the requirements and objectives of Policy S5 of the NPPF (2026). The principle of development is therefore acceptable for the proposed conversion and extension of an existing barn to a 2-bed residential dwelling and is policy compliant
- 5.34. The application is supported by a series of third-party reports including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including bat surveys), a Structural Survey and Nutrient Neutrality Assessment.
- 5.35. It is in accordance with all key local and national planning policies, and has been sensitively designed in terms of scale, massing and appearance where it remains well screened and in keeping with the open countryside setting. It should therefore be considered acceptable in planning terms and the planning application should be considered positively and approved without delay.