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Report of the Chief Planning Officer

SOUTH & WEST PLANS PANEL

Date: 9th June 2022

Subject: 21/05552/FU - Demolition of the existing buildings and construction of replacement timber framed refectory building at Crag House Farm, Cookridge Lane, Cookridge, LS16 7NH

APPLICANT:
Caring For Life

DATE VALID:
24.06.2021

TARGET DATE:
13.06.2022

Electoral Wards Affected:

Adel & Wharfedale

Yes Ward Members consulted

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION, subject to the following planning conditions:

1. Time Limit (3 years)
2. Approved plans list
3. Material samples to be agreed (inc colour finish)
4. Door, window and rooflight details and cross-sections
5. Details of ridge, verge, eaves detailing and any external vents / flues to be agreed
6. Details of rainwater goods (locations, fittings, materials and finish)
7. Details of roller shutter to be agreed (fitting, box style, detailing, materials and finish)
8. Use restriction – use to be ancillary to the associated adult learning centre use (non residential institution - use Class F1)
9. Soft Landscaping scheme to be approved
10. Hard landscaping scheme (inc material specification) to be approved
11. Tree protection
12. Arboricultural method statement (with supervision)

13. Replacement planting (5 years)
14. Landscape Management Plan to be approved
15. Bin storage / collection details to be approved
16. Drainage scheme (surface water and foul) to be approved
17. Details of connection to on site Biomass and Solar energy systems

INTRODUCTION:

1. The application is presented to South and West Plans Panel as the application is located within the Green Belt and is considered to constitute a departure from the Development Plan. As such exceptions, as set out in the Officer Delegation Scheme, are met and it is appropriate to report the application to Plans Panel for determination.

PROPOSAL:

2. The proposal relates to demolition / removal of existing buildings and construction of replacement timber framed refectory building for use in association with the existing adult learning centre uses on the wider Crag Wood Farm site.
3. The existing buildings to be demolished / removed are a collection of single storey structures. These include two large wooden huts constructed of green painted timber with corrugated iron roofs. There is also a collection of Portacabins and storage containers which are to be removed to facilitate the proposed development.
4. The existing refectory and associated buildings have numerous uses including:
 - Serving hot meals twice a day for those in the charity's care (serving up 240 meals a day)
 - Social opportunities for beneficiaries, including parties, celebrations (Christmas dinner provision)
 - Catering Academy – a therapeutic project enabling vulnerable adults to learn vital skills
 - Benefit Support team meeting space
 - Meeting space to facilitate liaising with external agencies
 - Food bank
 - Adult Basic Education Project – equipping those in our care with functional literacy and numeracy skills
 - Break space for daytime farm projects to have refreshments
5. The proposed new refectory building is single storey in height, incorporating a dual pitched roof at varying heights. The building has a footprint measuring approximately 400 sqm. The walls of the building are constructed of timber cladding with a metal standing seam roof. The windows within the building will be aluminium with an anthracite grey finish (Ral 7016).
6. The new refectory building incorporates the following key elements:
 - A large main dining space
 - Kitchen
 - Food donation storage area
 - 2 x small offices

- 1 x small chefs office
 - Small meeting room
 - Toilets (inc accessible provision)
 - Store / Plant rooms
 - Outside seating area
7. The proposed new refectory building aims to provide all the existing uses (within the existing buildings to be demolished) under one roof. Some small-scale office provision will also be relocated from elsewhere within the wider site into the new building. These offices are for the charity's 'being there' team which helps support people in the community providing tenancy support, benefit support, friendship and a befriending service.
 8. The proposals also incorporates new tree planting to the south and west of the new building.
 9. Caring For Life (the applicant), is a registered charity, established in 1987 in Leeds, offering support to homeless, vulnerable and at-risk adults. Caring For Life offers support in a number of different ways. Firstly, through a Housing support team. Engaging through the offer of housing support, benefits advice, mental health support, budgeting advice, food parcels when required and befriending support. Secondly, offering long-term housing support through two supporting living homes, one for ladies and the other for gentlemen. Thirdly, based on Crag House Farm the charity offers 14 different daytime therapeutic activities for working age adults, ranging from working with animals, wood, plants, conservation through to arts, catering academy and training in literacy and numeracy.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

10. As previously stated the site is currently formed by a collection of existing single storey structures. These include two large huts with pitched roofs. These were former scout huts donated in the late 1980's which have since had numerous updates, repairs and re-paints and currently have a tired appearance. A series of storage containers and protacabins are also present within the red line boundary.
11. A group of trees lay close to the west and south boundaries of the site. Open grassland which appears to be utilised for informal recreation is sited directly to the north and east of the site.
12. The site of the new building lies to the north-eastern edge of the collection of building which form the wider Crag House Farm. The other buildings within the wider area are generally of agricultural appearance, however the majority of these have been converted into to either an adult learning centre use or social enterprise uses linked to charities work on the farm complex. A few buildings still remain in agricultural use.
13. Uses within the nearby buildings / land with Crag House Farm include:
 - Equestrian stables and menage
 - Animal barn & agricultural storage area
 - Upper yard: inc Apple orchard, poultry & butchery projects
 - Workshop building: inc Car workshop. Woodwork, offices, Social enterprise offices

- Learning and Arts: inc Reception + meeting space, small benefits office, music room, art room, Grab and Go Coffee shop
 - Social enterprise: Granary Restaurant, Farm Shop
 - Farmhouse (dwelling)
 - Separate agricultural workers dwelling
 - Lower Yard: inc Garden Nursery (sales), growing areas, Conservation tool storage, large Car Park
 - Agricultural fields.
14. The site is within the setting of three Grade II listed buildings; closest is Crag House a farmhouse with 17th Century origins, the aisled barn to the west of 16th Century date and the barn to the south west of mid-18th Century date.
15. Crag House Farm lies beyond the northern edge of Cookridge and within a wider countryside setting. The whole of the site (and wider farm complex) lies within land defined as Green Belt.
16. Crag House Farm is accessed from Otley Old Road, to the north of the site via a long, made access road (two way). A large public car park is present at the entrance of the farm complex. Additional smaller parking areas (largely for staff) are also present in multiple locations around the site. A Public Right of Way (PROW) is present to the northeast of site beyond a tree belt which bounds the adjacent recreation area.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

17. The site (red line boundary) has very limited planning history with the only relevant planning application relating to amenity block extensions dating back to 2004, detailed below:
- **26/276/04/FU:** Two single storey extensions to amenities block (Approved – 2004)
18. However, the wider Crag House Farm has been subject to a wide range of planning applications since the charity took control of the site. These include planning permissions relating to agricultural uses, commercial uses (social enterprises), adult learning centre uses and renewable energy projects. These are detailed as follows:
- **19/02600/FU** - Construction of two detached timber equestrian barns (Approved – 2019)
 - **16/04815/FU** - Change of land to equestrian use and formation of all-weather equestrian arena (Approved – 2016)
 - **15/00552/FU** - Single storey agricultural workers dwelling with associated external works (Approved – 2016)
 - **14/02234/FU** - Installation of 2 biomass boilers within containers (Approved – 2014)
 - **11/05189/LI:** Listed building application to carry out alterations involving conversion of aisled barn to cafe and farm shop including extensions and demolition of existing out buildings (Approved – 2012)

- **11/05188/FU**: Change of use of aisled barn to cafe (use class A3) and farm shop (use class A1) with alterations including extensions and extension to existing agricultural building (Approved – 2012)
- **10/00128/FU** - Solar PV panels to roof of agricultural workshop (Approved – 2010)
- **08/01577/FU** - Amendment of front entrance door and arch to side of adult learning centre (Approved – 2008)
- **07/05178/FU** - Detached barn (Approved – 2007)
- **07/03264/DAG** - Determination for agricultural building (Withdrawn)
- **07/00746/DAG** - Agricultural determination for single storey extension to barn (Prior Approval Not Required – 2007)
- **06/00791/FU** - Change of use involving alterations and extensions of farm building to form new art/craft and literacy facilities to adult learning centre (Approved – 2007)

PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

19. The application was advertised as a Departure from the Development Plan and as affecting the setting of a listed building. Site notices were posted around the site and the application has been publicised in the Yorkshire Evening Post. The most recent site notices were posted on 12.01.2022, with the newspaper advert being published on 06.08.2021. The expiry date of the publicity period was 13.05.2022
20. No representations have been received to the planning application.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

21. Flood Risk Management: No Objections, subject to the imposition of planning conditions. The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and there have been no records of any recent flooding within the property or adjacent areas. An initial review has also identified that there are no other known flood risks which require mitigation and would impact on the proposed development. In principle the Lead Local Flood Authority have no objection to the proposed development subject to the full application including details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage scheme.
22. Highways Team: No Objections, subject to the imposition of planning conditions. Although the proposed building will be slightly larger (by approximately 97.2 sq.m.) than the existing building, the use will remain as existing without significant increase in parking demand. The site has a large car park to cater for staff and visitors to the garden centre / café. It is envisaged that there will be shared use (i.e. linked trips) amongst visitors travelling to Crag House Farm. Any new trips as a result of the proposed development is likely to be low and spread throughout the day, hence traffic impact is not expected to be significant. Sufficient space is available within the site for the storage of materials and construction vehicles.
23. Conservation Officer: No Objections, subject to the imposition of planning conditions. The site is within the setting of three grade II listed buildings. The proposed development would successfully preserve the setting of the listed buildings and is supported, subject to a number of details that could be controlled by condition

24. Landscape Officer: The site is not affected by any landscape related designations such as TPO's, Habitat network or Ancient Woodland. The proposals require the removal of 4 trees to accommodate a replacement refectory building which is used daily by the Caring for Life Charity as a meeting place and hub. The proposals include the planting of replacement large stature native/naturalised tree species and additional smaller garden trees and shrubs to the affected south and west boundaries. Given the proposed buildings use, and that it will be a replacement of existing site structures, the visual impact will be mitigated and external environment enhanced for proposed site users by the extent and location of proposed tree and shrub planting and the numbers proposed will comply with the tree replacement policy. The location is already well screened from overlooking receptors to the west and north by existing established woodland buffers. Plan discrepancies should be remedied. Planning conditions suggested if development is improved.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

25. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises of the Core Strategy as amended by the Core Strategy Selective Review (2019), Site Allocations Plan (2019), Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan (NRWLP) (2013) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (2015), Aire Valley Area Action Plan (2017), saved policies of the UDPR (2006) and any made Neighbourhood Plan (there is no such plan in this instance).
26. Listed Building: Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission... for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority ...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Local Planning Policy:

Core Strategy as amended (2019)

27. The following policies are relevant:

P9 - Community facilities and other services

P10 - Seeks to ensure that new development is well designed and respects its context

P11 - Conservation

P12 – Landscape quality, character and biodiversity

T1 - Transport management

T2 - Seeks to ensure that new development does not harm highway safety and considers accessibility requirements

G1 - Enhancing and extending green infrastructure

G8 - Protection of species and habitats

G9 - Biodiversity improvements

EN5 - Managing Flood Risk

Saved UDPR (2006) Policies

- 28. GP5 - General planning considerations
- N23 - Open space around new development
- N24 - Development proposals abutting the Green Belt or open countryside and assimilation into the landscape
- N25 – Development and site boundaries
- N33 – Development in the Green Belt
- BD3 - Disabled access and new buildings
- BD5 - Design considerations for new builds and protection of amenity
- LD1 - Landscape schemes

Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan (NRWLP)

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| 29. | General Policy 1 | General planning considerations |
| | Water 4 | Development in Flood Risk Areas |
| | Water 6 | Flood Risk Assessments |
| | Water 7 | Surface Water Run Off |
| | Land 1 | Land contamination |
| | Land 2 | Development to conserve trees & introduce new planting |

Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 30. SPD Street Design Guide
- SPD Leeds Parking
- SPG Sustainable Urban Drainage
- SPG Sustainable Design and Construction – Building for Tomorrow Today
- SPD Achieving Net Gain for Biodiversity – Guidance for Developers (Draft)
- SPG S106 Agreements and Developer Contributions

Climate Emergency

- 31. The Council declared a climate emergency on the 27th March 2019 in response to the UN's report on Climate Change.
- 32. The Planning Act 2008, alongside the Climate Change Act 2008, sets out that climate mitigation and adaptation are central principles of plan-making. The NPPF makes clear at paragraph 152 and within Footnote 53 that the planning system should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in line with the objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008.
- 33. As part of the Council's Best Council Plan 2020-2025, the Council seeks to promote a less wasteful, low carbon economy. The Council's Development Plan includes a number of planning policies which seek to meet this aim, as does the NPPF. These are material planning considerations in determining planning applications.

National Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

34. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
35. The introduction of the NPPF has not changed the legal requirement that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
36. The following sections of the NPPF are most relevant for the purposes of determining this application:
- 2 Achieving Sustainable Development
 - 4 Decision-Making
 - 8 Promoting Healthy & Safe Communities
 - 9 Promoting Sustainable Transport
 - 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places
 - 13 Protecting Green Belt Land
 - 14 Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change
 - 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
37. Chapter 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving well-designed places and states that the creation of high-quality 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, and that Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.
38. Paragraph 130 states that:
- “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*
- 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, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

39. Paragraph 134 states:

“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings”.

40. Section 13 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land. Paragraph 137 states *“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”*.

41. Paragraphs 147-150 of the NPPF are particularly relevant in relation to ascertaining whether the principle of development within the Green Belt is acceptable in any one instance. Paragraph 147 states that *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”*.

42. Paragraph 148 states *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”*.

43. Paragraph 149 states *“A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) limited infilling in villages;*
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously*

developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority”.

44. Paragraph 150 outlines certain other forms of development which are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt (provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it). *“These are:*
- a) mineral extraction;*
 - b) engineering operations;*
 - c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
 - d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
 - e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
 - f) development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order”.*
45. Paragraph 199 states:
- “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance”.*
46. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF relates to designated heritage assets and states:
- “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of;*
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
 - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

47. Provides further detailed guidance on the application of policies within the NPPF. In particular, there is guidance relating to the importance of good design and Green Belt issues amongst others.

MAIN ISSUES:

- The principle of the development / Green Belt impact
- Setting of a listed building
- Design and character
- Residential amenity
- Landscape / Biodiversity

- Highways considerations
- Very Special Circumstances
- Planning Balance / Conclusions

APPRAISAL:

Principle of development / Green Belt impact

48. The site is not allocated for any particular form of development within the adopted Site Allocations Plan and the whole site lies within the Green Belt.
49. As outlined within the NPPF, the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and permanence. There is a presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt (Paragraph 147). The NPPF advises that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Local planning authorities should also ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.
50. However, paragraph 149 lists a few exceptions to this presumption including “d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces”. Paragraph 150 of the NPPF also lists certain other forms of development which are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt (provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it).
51. In addition saved UDPR Policy N33 also lays out a list of exemptions which are broadly in line with the NPPF criteria.
52. The impact of a proposal on openness is also an important consideration for any application within the Green Belt. The concept of openness means the state of being free from built development and the impact on openness is an assessment of how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up it would be if the re-development occurs.
53. The NPPG also provides some useful further guidance on the factors which can be considered when assessing the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. These include:
 - *“Openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;*
 - *The degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation”.*
54. As such the main issues when considering development proposals within the Green Belt are therefore:
 - a) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt as set out in the Development Plan and having regard to national policy framework set out in the NPPF; and
 - b) if it is inappropriate development, whether the harm, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other

considerations – so as to amount to the very special circumstances needed to justify the development.

Inappropriate development

55. The proposal will replace a series of small buildings with a new building in the same use. It is noted that paragraph 149d) of the NPPF allows the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. However, in this instance the new building will have a demonstrably larger footprint and volume than the collection of buildings it replaces. Furthermore, whilst the new building will be single storey in height it will also be markedly taller than the existing buildings. As such it cannot be reasonably argued that the proposal meets this criteria (para 149d) of the NPPF.
56. Overall, the proposed development is not considered to meet any of the Green Belt exceptions outlined within paragraphs 149 & 150 of the NPPF or Policy N33 of the UDPR. As such the proposal is considered to form inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
57. In addition, the new building will result in some harm to the Green Belt in terms of loss of openness and encroachment into the countryside. Firstly, as previously mentioned the development is notably larger than the existing collection of buildings and as such the proposal will have an impact on the spatial aspects of the openness of the Green Belt in terms of the amount of built development (volume). The existing buildings are also painted green and coupled with their low height this reduces their visual impact. In contrast the proposal is taller and will be constructed of materials which have a greater contrast to their green setting. The proposed external seating areas and hardstanding also have an additional modest urbanising impact. As such the proposal will also have an impact on the visual aspects of the Green Belt. This visual impact will be seen to some degree from the adjacent PROW to the north-east, with the harm being more prominent in winter / autumn months.
58. As such it is concluded that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development, which would also cause moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt. There is a presumption against inappropriate development in both national and local planning policy and such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The applicants have put forward a series of very special circumstances arguments which are considered later within this report.

Setting of a listed building

59. The site is within the setting of three Grade II listed buildings. The closest is Crag House a farmhouse with 17th Century origins, the aisled barn to the west of 16th Century date and the barn to the south west dating from mid-18th Century. The farmhouse and aisled barn retain elements of their original timber frame construction. The development site is well screened from the listed buildings by trees. The development site is visible from the approach road to the farm.
60. Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires that where a development affects a listed building or its setting, special regard should be given to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or

any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Further paragraph 194 NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

61. The existing refractory is a former scout hut that was donated to the charity in the late 1980s. There are also a number of shipping containers and portacabin buildings. Therefore, the buildings proposed for demolition are not curtilage listed buildings and are not part of the heritage significance of the setting of the listed buildings. Furthermore, the existing buildings are not of heritage value and as such their loss is considered to be acceptable.
62. As previously highlighted the site is screened from the listed buildings by tree cover, which will also be enhanced as part of this scheme. The proposed new building is considered to fit into the farm complex well in terms of its architecture, with its form and material successfully responding to the agricultural character of the complex. The building draws on the site's timber frame construction heritage and is considered to be an acceptable contemporary addition enhancing this part of the site's heritage significance.
63. As such the proposal is considered to preserve the settings of the listed buildings in line with Policy P11 of the Core Strategy and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Design and character

64. Policy P10 of the Core Strategy deals with design and states that *inter alia* alterations to existing, should be based on a thorough contextual analysis and provide good design that is appropriate to its location, scale and function. Developments should respect and enhance streets, spaces and buildings according to the particular local distinctiveness and wider setting of the place with the intention of contributing positively to place making, quality of life and wellbeing. Proposals will be supported where they accord with the principles of the size, scale, design and layout of the development and that development is appropriate to its context and respects the character and quality of surrounding buildings; the streets and spaces that make up the public realm and the wider locality.
65. The site sits on the edge of a complex of agricultural buildings, within a wider countryside setting. The proposed design and materials of the building are considered to be sensitive to and assimilate into this setting. It is noted that the new building is of considerable scale, however the design of the building with contrasting ridge height helps to break up the mass of the building. The scale and height of the building will not be out of keeping with the surrounding buildings.
66. Furthermore, the outside seating areas and hardstanding are also significantly limited in nature which reduces their visual impact. Notably, the proposal will result in the loss of the existing buildings which are of limited architectural merit, lack consistency and do not appear appropriate to their setting. The new building is of cohesive design and notwithstanding its larger scale, will result in a visual uplift on the site. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of visual amenity, in line with the requirements of Policy P10 of the Core Strategy, Policies BD5 and GP5 of UDPR and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Residential amenity

67. Core Strategy Policy P10 and saved UDP policy GP5 note that development should protect amenity whilst policy BD5 notes that “all new buildings should be designed with consideration given to both their own amenity and that of their surroundings”.
68. The proposal is set a significant distance from any neighbouring properties outside of Crag Wood Farm and as a consequence it will not be detrimental to the amenity of any of these neighbouring properties.
69. It is noted that two residential dwellings are situated within the Crag Wood farm complex, however these are within the same ownership as the new building. Notably, the new building is in the same use and the level of activity associated with the new building is not considered to be material greater than the existing situation. The nature of the proposed use which is ancillary to the wider Adult Learning Centre use (Use Class F1), also not does give rise to any significant amenity concerns.
70. Overall, the proposal is not considered to have an unduly detrimental impact on the amenity of any neighbouring residents, in line with Policy GP5 of the UDPR.

Landscape / Biodiversity

71. The site is not subject to any landscape or biodiversity related designations. It is noted that the site is closely bounded by a group of unprotected trees (pines and alder) to its western and southern edges. In general development plan policies advise that developments should seek to retain and not harm existing trees and vegetation.
72. In total 8 trees will be removed to facilitate the development, with 4 of these trees being removed due to poor condition (Category U). However, the proposal also incorporates substantial tree planting proposals which will significantly extend the existing tree belts which exist to the south and west of the building. This tree planting will include large stature native species as well as a range of smaller trees and shrub planting. Overall, the level of replacement planting will vastly exceed the 3 for 1 replacement required under policy LAND2 of the Natural Resources and Waste DPD. As such the proposal will result in net gain in tree planting across the wider site which is also likely to lead to improvements in biodiversity and landscape assimilation. The proposal has also been designed in line with the Council’s Guideline Distances to Trees document, and as a consequence the proposal should not unduly jeopardise the trees future health.
73. Overall, the limited level of tree loss is considered to be justified in light of the mitigation which has been proposed. As such the proposal is considered to comply with Policies G1 and G9 of the Core Strategy, Policy LAND 2 of the Natural Resources and Waste DPD and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Highways considerations

74. Core Strategy policy T2 and saved UDP policy GP5 note that development proposals must resolve detailed planning considerations and should seek to maximise highway safety. This means that the applicants must demonstrate that the development can achieve safe access and will not overburden the capacity of existing infrastructure.
75. The applicants have advised that they don't envisage the number of users of the site to increase due to the proposals. Whilst the proposal will result in a larger building, this is required to meet current requirements. As such there will not be a material change to the parking demand as a result of the proposed development. The site benefits from a large existing car park which caters for staff and visitors to the garden centre / café. Additional discreet parking areas are also available within the wider site. It is envisaged that there will be shared use (i.e. linked trips) amongst visitors travelling to Crag House Farm. Any new trips as a result of the proposed development are likely to be low and spread throughout the day, hence traffic impact is not expected to be significant. Sufficient space is also available within the site for the storage of materials and construction vehicles. As a consequence the proposal complies with Policy T2 of the Core Strategy and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Very Special Circumstances

76. As previously noted the development is considered to form inappropriate development within the Green Belt, whilst also leading to a moderate loss of openness and encroachment into the countryside. Planning policy is clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm (none identified) resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
77. The applicant has put forward several matters which they consider to constitute very special circumstances. These can be summarised as follows:
- Functional need for replacement building / Improvements in care provision
 - Existing buildings are at the end of their lifespan and are inefficient / unsuitable
 - Existing buildings not large enough for need
 - Charities requirements have evolved
 - Increased functionality of new building
 - Accessibility / health and safety improvements
 - Environmental improvements
 - New building more energy efficient than existing buildings
 - Development will link up to existing biomass and solar panels on wider site.
 - Increase in tree planting
 - Visual uplift
 - New building will be a visual improvement compared to existing buildings
78. These factors, propounded as 'Very Special Circumstances' by the applicant are considered in turn below:

a) Functional need for replacement building / Improvements in provision

79. This is a matter which could in principle, and in combination with other factors, be considered to constitute a very special circumstance. The charity and wider site currently supports a significant number of vulnerable adults each week and is of significant benefit to wider society. The existing buildings on the site are integral to providing this support and day-to-day care. The existing buildings are old, have poor connectivity and do not meet the full needs of charity. Some of the issues the applicants raise include rotting buildings, rusting storage containers not suitable for food storage, health and safety issues, declining energy efficiency, insufficient safe eating space, with people having to stand and beneficiaries having to eat meals off their knees.
80. It is evident that the buildings are in a poor state of repair and have exceeded their originally intended lifespan. If the buildings are not replaced it could ultimately result in the loss or significant reduction in the charities work at the Crag House Farm complex which would be detrimental to wider planning goals in relation to social care. All of the other buildings within the wider site appear to be in use and it does not make sense to look for alternative sites outside of the farm, given the proposals integral link to the existing uses on the site. It is noted that the proposal is larger than the existing buildings but the existing buildings are above capacity and a larger space is required to meet the functional need of the charity. For instance, the new building will provide a safe seating / eating area for the beneficiaries and support workers, meaning that they no longer have to eat meals from their laps or stand. The applicants have also advised that their existing offices for their benefits advice team are currently small with no privacy to talk to beneficiaries about their complex situations. The proposals seeks to incorporate these into the new facility to help have a suitable meeting place and a quiet room to help discuss these complex matters. It is therefore evident that a larger space requirement appears to be justified.
81. The new building would also provide notable improvements in terms of accessibility (inc disabled access) and health and safety. Both of these issues are very important given the type of beneficiaries that the charity supports. Furthermore, it is evident that having all of the uses within one building would be beneficial to the functionality of the charity work creating more flexible and safer spaces.

b) Environmental improvements

82. This is a matter which could in principle, and in combination with other factors, be considered to constitute a very special circumstance. The applicants have advised that the existing buildings are environmentally inefficient. In contrast the new building will be designed to reduce energy heat loss, and will be air tight, including the use of environmentally sensitive insulation so that the need and demand for energy to heat the building will be at a minimum. It is also intended that the heating within the new building will be powered by the existing onsite biomass energy source, whilst the electricity will be provided by the existing onsite solar panels. The proposal will also result in a net increase in tree cover which will lead to environmental gains.

83. Firstly, whilst an energy statement detailing the existing vs the proposed energy efficiency on site has not been provided it is evident that the existing buildings would have a low level of energy performance and that a new building, constructed in line with current Building Regulations requirements would be a significant improvement in this regard. Likewise, connecting the building to existing renewable and low carbon energy sources on site is a benefit, albeit a large amount of this benefit is existing and utilizes residual capacity. Nevertheless, the proposal goes above and beyond the current planning requirements in this regard. Furthermore, whilst the Development Plan already incorporates strict replacement planting policies, the proposal will go beyond this policy requirement, leading to a net gain in tree cover and resulting in environmental benefits.

c) Visual uplift

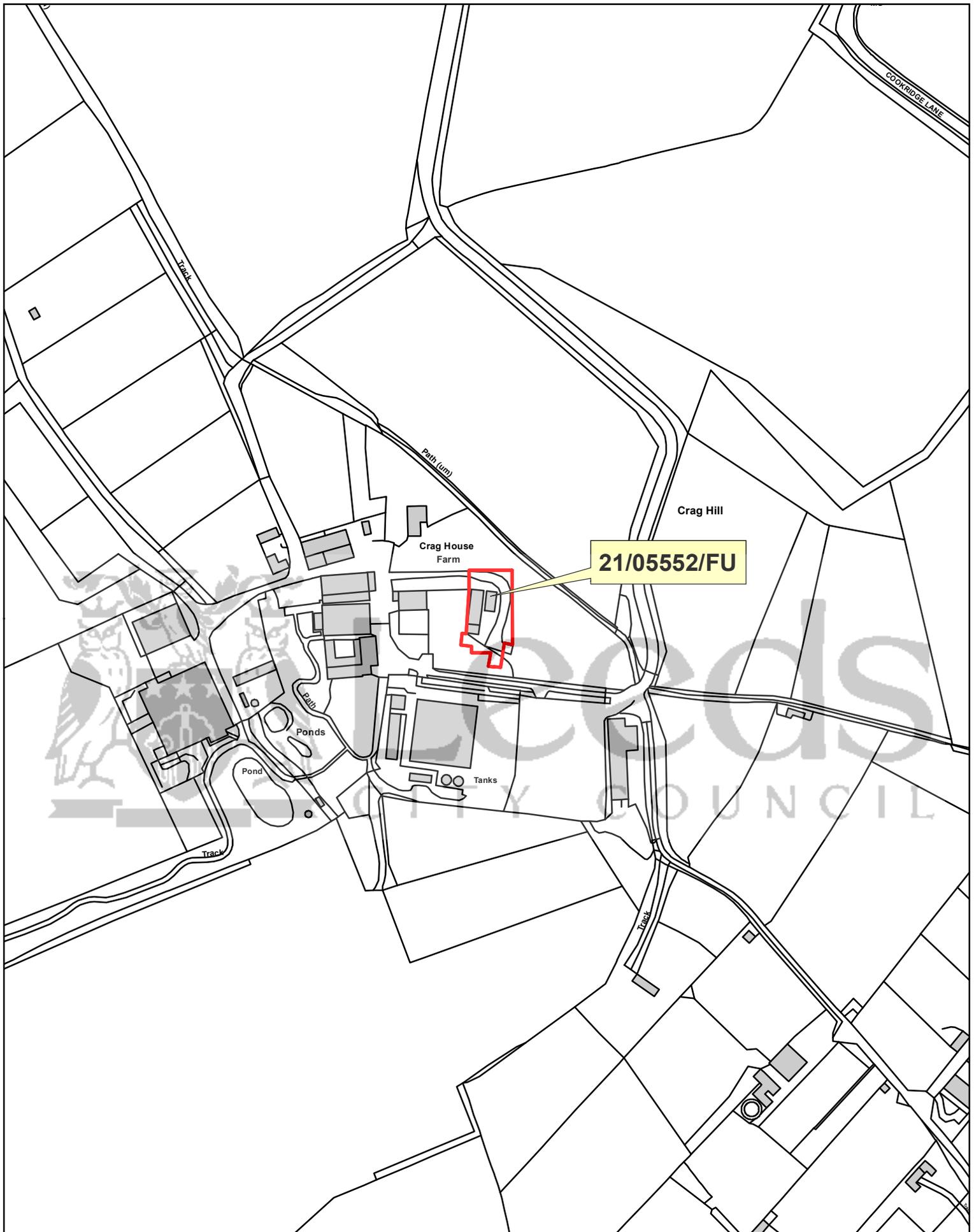
84. Again, this is a matter which could in principle, and in combination with other factors, be considered to constitute a very special circumstance. The applicant has stated that the existing buildings on site are an eyesore and that the proposal will result in a visual uplift in this regard. It is agreed that the existing buildings are of very limited architectural merit and new development would be a significant improvement in this regard. It is acknowledged that a smaller new building could result in a similar improvement, nevertheless the proposal will result in a tidier site and a more visually appealing site, to which positive weight can be attached.

Conclusions regarding Very Special Circumstances

85. As previously detailed the proposal is considered to constitute inappropriate development. Moreover, there would be harm arising from the inappropriateness of the development, as well as moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt, conflicting with one of the purposes of including land within it (safeguarding the countryside from development). These matters attract substantial weight against the development. The matters raised in support of the proposal via the very special circumstances arguments have been considered both individually and cumulatively.
86. Overall, it is considered that the proposal will result in significant wider economic, social and environmental benefits. Most notably, the proposal will allow the charity to continue and improve its support to vulnerable adults on the site which has significant wider planning benefits. As such, cumulatively the advanced very special circumstances arguments are considered to outweigh the aforementioned moderate harm to the Green Belt and any other harm, representing very special circumstances in this instance. Consequently, the proposal is considered to satisfy the relevant Green Belt policies. Given that the very special circumstances arguments are inherently linked to the wider adult learning centre / non residential institution uses on the wider site it is appropriate to attach a planning condition restricting the future use of the new building to those ancillary to a adult learning centre use.

PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSIONS:

87. In light of the above, it is concluded that the proposal would not conflict with the aims of the Green Belt given that very special circumstances have been demonstrated. It is also considered that there would no other material harm arising from the development. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with up-to-date planning policies within the Development Plan with no material considerations to indicate otherwise. In accordance with guidance within the NPPF and the local planning policy guidance, it is recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions.
88. As such, the application is recommended for **approval** (subject to planning condition).



SOUTH AND WEST PLANS PANEL

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PRODUCED BY CITY DEVELOPMENT, GIS MAPPING & DATA TEAM, LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

SCALE : 1 / 2500



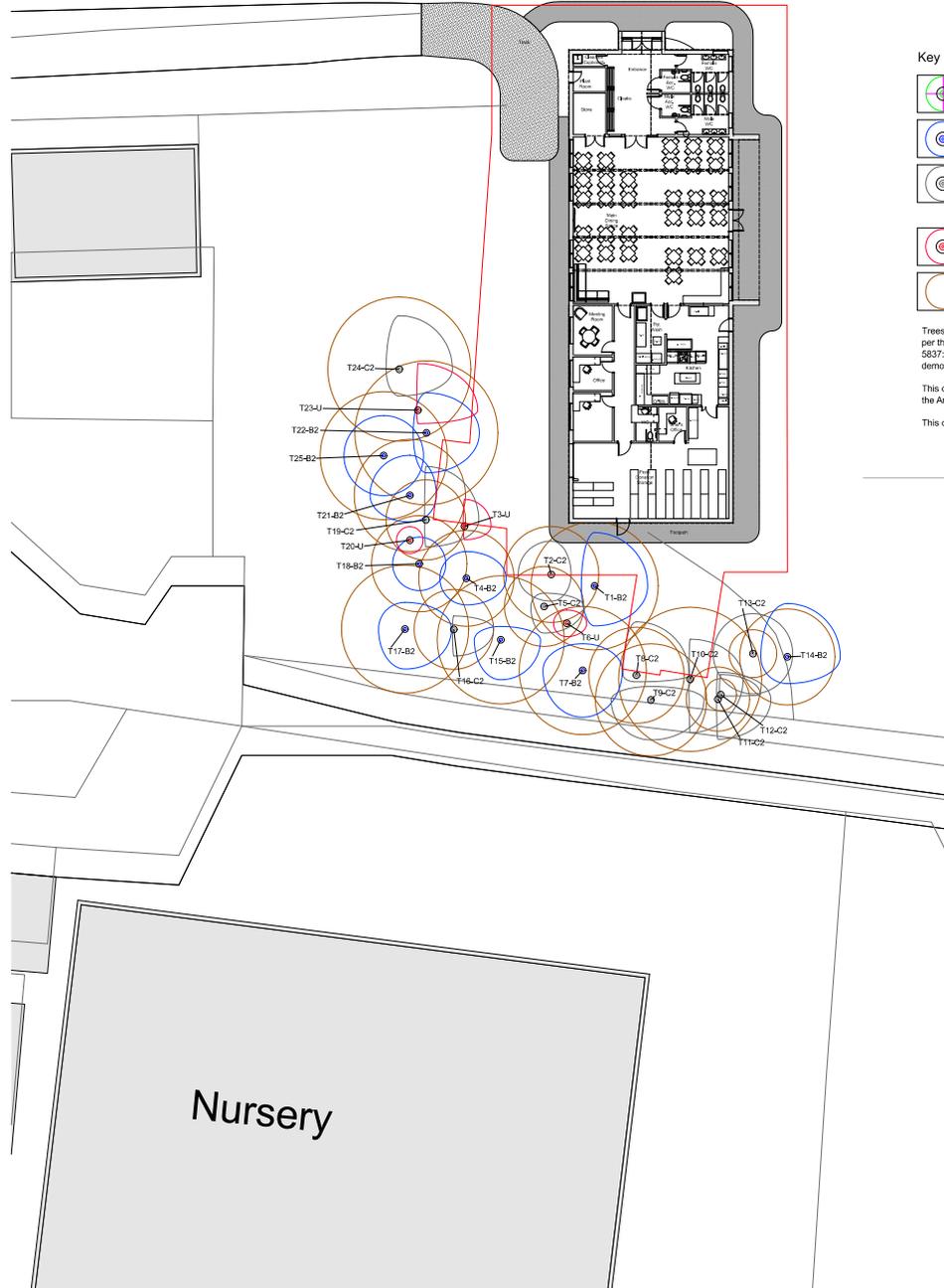
Track



Site Plan Existing

1:200

Track



Site Plan Proposed

Key

- Tree retention category A
High quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 40 years
- Tree retention category B
Moderate quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 20 years
- Tree retention category C
Low quality with an estimated life expectancy of at least 10 years, OR young tree with a stem diameter below 150mm
- Tree category U
Poor condition with an estimated life expectancy of less than 10 years
- RPA
minimum Root Protection Area

Trees have been surveyed and categorized as per the recommendations and guidance in BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the Arboricultural Survey report.
This drawing is to be reproduced in colour.

Tree Key



Rev	CD	Change Name	Date
1	CS	Drawn	05/03/2021
2	CS	Checked	05/03/2021
3	CS	Approved	05/03/2021
4	CS	Revised	05/03/2021
5	CS	Final	05/03/2021
6	CS	Final	05/03/2021
7	CS	Final	05/03/2021
8	CS	Final	05/03/2021
9	CS	Final	05/03/2021
10	CS	Final	05/03/2021

Construction shall not proceed until the contractor has received the necessary approvals from the relevant authorities and safety measures in place to the design specified on this drawing and during the construction.

The Designer shall be responsible for the design and shall ensure that the design is suitable for the intended use of the site.

No.	Description	Date
1	Drawn by	CR
2	Checked by	NS

Client: Caring For Life
 Refectory, Crag House Farm,
 Otley Old Road, Leeds,
 LS16 7NH
 Project name: LS16 7NH
 Project number: Y-201114
 Date: 11/04/2022
 Scale: 1:200@ A1

P-002 revision C
 Site Block Plan Existing and Proposed

