

PLANNING STATEMENT — REPLACEMENT DWELLING IN THE GREEN BELT

Red House Farm, Prescott Road, Cronton

Applicant: Alex James

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1. Introduction & Purpose of Statement

This Planning Statement accompanies the full planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling at Red House Farm and the construction of a new three-storey custom self-build replacement dwelling. The site falls within the Merseyside and Greater Manchester Green Belt. This statement sets out why the proposal is acceptable in planning terms and demonstrates compliance with relevant local and national Green Belt policy.

The Design and Access Statement provides details on layout, scale, appearance, materiality, environmental matters and supporting technical reports, and should be read alongside this document.

2. Site Location & Planning Context

The site comprises a 0.36 ha rectangular plot within the rural village of Cronton. It is occupied by an existing bungalow-style dwelling, alongside single-storey storage buildings and outbuildings.

Surrounding land uses are agricultural and equestrian in nature, with sporadic residential dwellings dispersed across the wider landscape. The site has benefited from previous planning activity including approval for a new access and the erection of an agricultural grain building (ref: 22/00378/AGR).

3. Relevant Green Belt Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF identifies the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy as preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. (NPPF §137-141).

Development within the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the listed exceptions under §149 and §150. Exception §149(d) allows:

“the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.”

Local Plan (Knowsley)

Local Green Belt policies echo this national position, allowing replacement dwellings in the Green Belt if:

- they do not result in disproportionate increases in scale;

- they respect local character and rural setting;
- they do not harm openness or visual amenity.

4. Whether the Proposal Constitutes Appropriate Green Belt Development

4.1 Like-for-Like Residential Replacement

The proposal seeks to replace an existing dwelling with a new residential dwelling. The use remains identical and is therefore acceptable in principle under NPPF §149(d).

4.2 Volume and Scale

The Design and Access Statement confirms:

- Existing dwelling: **488 m³**
- Proposed dwelling: **634 m³**
- **Increase of 29.2%** over existing volume.

A sub-30% uplift in volume is widely considered proportionate in Green Belt replacement scenarios, particularly where the design restores a traditional scale and presence lost through low-rise bungalow forms.

The increase is not excessive or visually dominant in relation to the site's context nor the wider Green Belt.

4.3 Impact on Openness

The openness test concerns both spatial and visual impact. The proposal maintains the existing residential footprint and curtilage, and does not introduce additional outbuildings, hardstanding, or encroachments into adjoining farmland.

- **Built mass remains contained within the existing domestic site envelope.**
- **No new development outside the area already affected by residential use.**
- **The design is traditional in form—two-storey pitched roofs plus modest eaves-level accommodation—and avoids overly bulky additions.**

As such, the scheme does not materially reduce openness.

5. Design Quality & Integration with Local Character

The Design & Access Statement sets out a carefully considered architectural response.

Key design elements include:

- Red facing brick and sandstone details that reference local vernacular farmsteads.

- Timber framed windows and a traditional brick chimney.
- Pitched roof forms and restrained dormers ensuring rural compatibility.
- Modern glazed gables positioned to maximise light and internal amenity without elevational over-dominance.

This balanced approach respects the agricultural character of Cronton and delivers a dwelling consistent with dispersed rural residential clusters.

6. Residential Amenity

The development does not introduce harmful overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing impacts:

“The proposal does not result in unacceptable adverse effects on the amenity of neighbouring premises.”

The nearest properties are separated by open agricultural land and the built form will not burden neighbouring views or privacy.

7. Access, Highways & Parking

The proposal retains the existing vehicular access and driveway. The Design & Access Statement confirms no adverse effects to highway capacity or safety.

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On-site parking comfortably meets council standards, minimising roadside parking pressure.

8. Ecology, Trees & Biodiversity

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) found the site largely comprises improved grassland and hardstanding with **limited ecological sensitivity**.

Impacts to common rural species (birds, hedgehog, badger) can be mitigated via recommended timing and site practices.

Arboricultural assessment identifies seven trees, one group and three hedges. The proposal removes only one low-quality tree and a small section of hedge, with replacement planting incorporated to maintain landscape structure and habitat.

9. Drainage & Flooding

Existing foul drainage discharges to a septic tank; surface water drains to an existing watercourse.

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The accompanying Flood Risk Assessment (ADS Consult, Jan 2025) concludes:

- Secondary flood risks are low;
- Surface water risk is mitigated via level changes and active drainage;
- On-site sustainable systems can accommodate foul and surface water.

10. Heritage & Archaeology

An archaeological assessment (Allen Archaeology, March 2025) identifies former structures from 1786 onwards but confirms successive rebuilding, mining subsidence, and land clearance have **truncated most archaeological deposits**, rendering low potential for meaningful remains.

11. Planning Balance & Very Special Circumstances

As this scheme is deemed *appropriate development* under NPPF §149(d), **very special circumstances are not required**.

However, should the LPA seek to apply a stricter “materially larger” threshold, the proposal still demonstrates planning merit:

- Reasonable (sub-30%) uplift for liveability and energy efficiency;
- Consolidation of outdated domestic form into a single high-quality dwelling;
- No intensification of use;
- No harm to rural character or openness;
- Environmental impacts are limited and controllable.

12. Conclusion

This proposal is a policy-compliant replacement dwelling in the Green Belt. The scheme:

- Falls under the Green Belt exception for replacement buildings (NPPF §149(d)).
- Provides a proportionate increase in volume (29.2%) that does **not** materially affect openness.
- Improves architectural quality and reinstates context-appropriate rural built form.
- Causes no harm to neighbours, highways, ecology, trees, drainage, or archaeology.
- Utilises existing residential land without encroachment or sprawl.

Planning permission should therefore be granted.