

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 4 JUNE 2019

Application No:	19/00408/FUL	
Proposal:	Demolition and replacement of an existing dwelling and the refurbishment and conversion of a traditional stone barn building to form 2 no. units of holiday let accommodation. The proposal also incorporates the partial demolition of a portal building and the demolition of a partially collapsed outbuilding.	
Location:	Grange Farm Newhall Lane Edingley Nottinghamshire NG22 8BT	
Applicant:	Mr D Brown	
Registered:	01.03.2019	Target Date: 26.04.2019
	Extension of Time Agreed Until 07.06.2019	

This application is being presented to the Planning Committee in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegation as Edingley Parish Council have supported to the application which differs to the professional officer recommendation. Cllr Rainbow has also verbally requested the application be referred to Committee if Officers are minded to refuse.

The Site

The application site forms the curtilage of Grange Farm positioned to the east of and accessed from Newhall Lane. Newhall Lane itself also forms a public right of way. The application site is approximately 0.31 hectares in extent within the open countryside with the nearest settlement being the village of Edingley to the north east of the site. There are however dispersed neighbouring properties in closer proximity to the site including the property known as Grange Close approximately 50m to the west of the site.

The site as existing comprises the existing vacant two storey red brick Farmhouse; a stone outbuilding previously used for agriculture; the remains of a brick outbuilding which has partially collapsed and a portal barn with an associated yard.

The site is located approximately 0.7km to the north east of the Newhall Reservoir Meadow Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Farm is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone associated with the designation. The site is within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency maps as well as being at very low risk of surface water flooding.

Relevant Planning History

There is no formal planning history in relation to the site albeit the applicant has sought pre-application advice prior to the submission of the current application.

The Proposal

The current proposal seeks for a number of separate elements as follows:

Demolition of Farmhouse and Replacement Dwelling

The application seeks to demolish the existing Farmhouse on the basis that the structure is extremely poor as evidenced by an accompanying structural report. The proposal includes details of a replacement two storey, 4 bed dwelling utilising the footprint of the existing dwelling. The proposed plans demonstrate a balcony on the eastern first floor elevation. The accompanying plans demonstrate an internal floor space of approximately 250m². The maximum pitch height of the proposed dwelling is approximately 8.3m with an eaves height of around 5.3m. Specific materials have not been specified through the application submission with the applicant confirming they would be amenable to a condition to agree these details if permission is forthcoming.

Refurbishment and Conversion of Outbuilding

A structural survey focusing on the existing stone barn confirms that repair works and some localised building work would be required to bring the building into use. Following these works it is intended that the building be converted to 2 no. holiday let units each comprising self-contained living facilities and one en-suite bedroom. New openings including roof lights are proposed to be introduced to the building.

Demolition of Outbuildings

The proposal also seeks planning permission for the demolition of a partially collapsed brick outbuilding and part of a portal framed building amounting to approximately 240m² (approximately 210m² of the building would be retained).

The application has been considered on the basis of the following documents and plans:

- Existing Dwelling Volume and Site – S117/1031/1 Rev. 01B (received 12th April 2019);
- Proposed Detached Dwelling – S117/1031/2 Rev. A;
- Proposed Barn Conversion – S117/1031/3 Rev. A;
- Site Location Plan and Site Plans – S117/1031/4;
- 3D Perspective View with Levels – S117/1031/5;
- Rendered Images – S117/1031/6;
- Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement;
- Protected Species Surveys;
- Structural Engineers Report dated 19th December 2016 (Farmhouse);
- Structural Engineers Report dated 4th May 2018;
- Structural Update Letter dated 12th April 2019;
- Ground Floor Proposed Strengthening – P16 – 427 SK1;
- First Floor Proposed Strengthening – P16 – 427 SK2;
- Farmhouse Repairs Budget Cost Plan received 10th May 2019;
- Letter dated 13th May 2019 by HWA Consulting Engineers;
- Letter Dated 21st May 2019 – Rebuttal to Conservation Officer comments from applicant.

Departure/Public Advertisement Procedure

Occupiers of three properties have been individually notified by letter. A site notice has also been displayed near to the site.

Planning Policy Framework

The Development Plan

Newark and Sherwood Amended Core Strategy DPD (adopted March 2019)

Spatial Policy 1 - Settlement Hierarchy
Spatial Policy 3 – Rural Areas
Spatial Policy 7 - Sustainable Transport
Core Policy 3 – Housing Mix, Type and Density
Core Policy 7 – Tourism Development
Core Policy 9 - Sustainable Design
Core Policy 12 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
Core Policy 13 – Landscape Character
Core Policy 14 – Historic Environment

Allocations & Development Management DPD

DM5 – Design
DM7 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
DM8 – Development in the Open Countryside
DM9 – Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework 2019
- Planning Practice Guidance (online resource)
- Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings Supplementary Planning Dated (Nov 2014)

Consultations

Edingley Parish Council – Support the proposal.

NCC Highways Authority – This application is for the demolition and replacement of an existing dwelling and the conversion of a barn to form 2 units suitable for holiday let accommodation. The proposals are to be served by the existing access onto Newhall Lane. The access width is approx. 4.7m, and due to the site location and the low number of units proposed, this is acceptable to the Highway Authority.

The site plan, ref. SI17/1031/4, demonstrates two parking spaces for the replacement dwelling and two spaces for the holiday let accommodation.

The existing vehicular access into the site is in poor condition and requires a verge crossing to be constructed and surfaced in accordance with the Highway Authority's specification.

Therefore, the Highway Authority would not wish to object to this application subject to the following:

1. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until a vehicular crossing is available for use and constructed in accordance with the Highway Authority's specification. **Reason:** In the interests of highway safety.

2. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until the access to the site has been completed and surfaced in a bound material for a minimum distance of 5m behind the highway boundary in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. **Reason:** In the interests of highway safety.

Note to applicant

The development makes it necessary to construct a vehicular crossing over a verge of the public highway. These works shall be constructed to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority. You are, therefore, required to contact VIA, in partnership with NCC, tel: 0300 500 8080 to arrange for these works to be carried out.

Natural England – Natural England has no comments to make on this application.

Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts on protected species. Natural England has published Standing Advice which you can use to assess impacts on protected species or you may wish to consult your own ecology services for advice.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission have also published standing advice on ancient woodland and veteran trees which you can use to assess any impacts on ancient woodland.

The lack of comment from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment, but only that the application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national and local policies on the natural environment.

Other bodies and individuals may be able to provide information and advice on the environmental value of this site and the impacts of the proposal to assist the decision making process. We advise LPAs to obtain specialist ecological or other environmental advice when determining the environmental impacts of development.

We recommend referring to our SSSI Impact Risk Zones (available on Magic and as a downloadable dataset) prior to consultation with Natural England. Further guidance on when to consult Natural England on planning and development proposals is available on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-planning-authorities-get-environmental-advice>

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust – No comments received.

NSDC Conservation – *Comments received 16th May 2019:*

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that, '*The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing*

applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. This is echoed in the Council's Core Policy 14 and DM9.

Summary

The farmhouse and threshing barn are non-designated heritage assets.

The proposal to demolish the farmhouse would cause substantial harm and there is no clear and convincing justification for its demolition.

The current scheme for the stone threshing barn conversion is harmful, causing less than substantial harm. The benefits of converting this building carry little weight as similar benefits could be delivered in a better scheme.

1. Proposed demolition of the farmhouse

Grange Farm as a building of local heritage interest/non designated heritage asset

Newark and Sherwood District Council does not have an adopted Local Interest List. The buildings considered to be of local interest are generally identified through the application process. In this case the building was identified as a non-designated heritage asset by the Conservation Officer through pre-application advice.

Historic England advises (Historic England, *Local Heritage Listing*, Historic England Advice Note 7 (May 2016)) that factors to consider for a building which might be considered to be of local interest, or a non designated heritage asset, include: age; rarity; aesthetic interest; group value; archaeological interest; archival interest; historic association; designated landscape interest; landmark status; social and communal value.

It is considered that this building has significance relating to its age, aesthetic interest, and group value.

'Grange' as a place name normally refers to the outlying farm serving a monastic establishment. Despite the intriguing name I cannot make any specific link to a known monastic establishment.

However, the house is a former farmhouse and in my estimation dates to the later Georgian/early Victorian era in age and style, being early to mid C19 in date. While the quality of the map is a little unclear there are buildings on the site in Sanderson's Map of 1836, but it is hard to be sure if these are the same buildings:



Sanderson's Map of 1836 on the left, compared to modern map on the right

The buildings at this farm are clearly depicted on the historic map from 1875/85:



The following features of the house point to the classically inspired architecture of the Georgian era: proportions and form of the house including use of chimneys; the brick; the use of Flemish bond; the proportion of the window openings and their decorative window header and the arched opening and overlight to the door.



The building shows architectural aspirations, certainly exhibiting polite architecture to the front elevation at least.

The distortion than can be seen on the front elevation from structural movement has not detracted from this attractive façade.

The building has Flemish bond brickwork to the front elevation, where the brick bond alternates headers and stretchers. This brick bond was first used in England in about the 1630s but really gained in popularity in the late C18 and become a dominant brick bond for the next century. It is one of the features very commonly seen in architecture of the Georgian era. The bricks here are relatively soft and varied in texture and colour, indicating a handmade brick from the local area. It is noted that Flemish bond is not used on every elevation but this is itself an important part of the building's history. Flemish bond was a fashionable bond not just because of its pleasing aesthetic effect, which is evident here, but also because it was a conspicuous show of wealth - this bond requiring more bricks per square meter (owing to the frequent use of headers) than a stretcher bond, for example. As a result few building owners could afford to use such an expensive brick bond on the less visible elevations and it was invariably limited to the most important elevation. That this expensive bond was limited to the most visible façade here speaks of the architectural aspirations of the building and the desire of the owner to display status.

The use of formal architecture on the front is in contrast to the rear elevation, where small paned flush casements were used within segmental brick arches. Some of these small paned windows still survive. This is a more vernacular approach taken on the less visible and more working end of the building, typical of this era.



The attached outbuilding is a later monopitch brick structure of no particular architectural or historic interest. Other than the addition of this outbuilding to the side, the building plan-form is well preserved and fully legible.

As a late Georgian farmhouse alone this building would be of local historic and architectural interest, but it additionally forms part of an attractive and traditional farm complex with the barns, giving it extra significance in terms of group value. The farm buildings themselves gain significance from their association with the historic farmhouse. It also forms part of a wider group of historic Georgian farm complexes generally in the District.

It is accepted that the windows on the front elevation have been altered but the attractive splayed headers with keystones, themselves of architectural and aesthetic interest, do survive. The decorative door surround is also preserved. The symmetry of the front façade, important in classical architecture, is well preserved.

The roof covering has been altered but the roof shape has not. The use of a chimney is again another feature of historic houses generally (being heated by combustible fuel and not central heating) and is part of its legible plan form.

Internally a simple cellular layout, with rooms heated by the fireplaces, served by flanking chimney breasts, can still be read.

It is worth considering that if this building actually was better preserved it would most likely be considered to be of national importance and be Listed - the general principle being that most buildings between 1700 and 1850 which survive in anything like their original condition are likely to be listed, as attested by our large legacy of listed Georgian buildings (reference from <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/>). It is accepted then that a local interest Georgian building will therefore have had a degree of change but can still potentially be deemed of sufficient heritage to be considered of local interest.

Structural issues

To retain the house the following structural interventions would be done:

- Demolish and rebuild attached store
- Internal structural ties within the floor structure, not visible externally
- One internal 'buttress'
- Replace the roof structure
- replacement of some or all first floor floors, extent not confirmed
- rebuild the chimneys
- potentially tank or fill cellars
- lift and relay ground floor covering

The Applicants/Agent argue that the works required to retain the building would be essentially leave nothing left of the historic building, but I am not convinced this is true given my analysis below:

Externally

By my reckoning the proposed works would retain the existing external appearance of the main building with the exception of a rebuild of the chimney stacks and a new roof covering.

Given that the existing roof covering is concrete the loss of this roof covering and its replacement with a potentially more appropriate covering could actually be a heritage benefit.

The rebuilding of the chimney stacks will therefore be new fabric but could be entirely complementary. It is also not an unusual repair on historic buildings, the bricks in the chimneys being subject to greater rates of decay than normal masonry anyway.

The front façade windows are not currently original so there is the opportunity to install a better looking window here, which with the use of slim profile double glazing, for example, would still be a visual improvement but also raise u-values at the property.

The demolition of the attached store would not harm the historic or architectural interest of the building, but could actually present an opportunity for a more harmonious extension which could enhance the house. The applicants could enter in pre-app discussion over this store area but there is the potential to deliver an extension that might better meet some of the owner's aspirations for living here, while preserving and potentially enhancing the host building.

The main house will essentially be little altered externally and its repair presents several key opportunities for improvements to its appearance.

Internally

Internally, the strapping and retention of the front wall has been confirmed as structurally achievable. It has been confirmed that the straps would be accommodated into the floor structure so do not hinder the use of the building and would not be visible externally.

To retain the front façade would require one new ground floor buttress. This would be a small return of wall in a location where a wall might well have been originally (looking at how it places the window back to the centre of the wall) and may actually reinstate room proportions. I do not think this renders the room un-useable despite what the Agent first suggested - it makes a very natural addition against the opening door into this room.

Internally the lifting and relaying of the ground floor would not lose any historic interest if any historic floor covering was re-laid.

One of the options for the cellars is actually to retain and tank them. Historic fabric would therefore be retained, but I have not inspected to see what would be obscured.

The loss of the roof structure (age unknown) and some of the floors is an acknowledged loss.

With regards to internal fabric it is accepted that internal works to non-designated heritage assets are beyond LPA control anyway, but we are of course considering how pragmatic it is.

Once repaired, there is no reason why the current layout, which still retains its legible cellular layout with chimney breasts heating the rooms, cannot be retained. There is certainly no structural requirement to harm this seemingly historic planform.

Financial argument

Financial calculations confirm that to retain the building is virtually the same cost as a new build, so actually very little weight can be given to costings. We also do not know what the end value of the refurbished historic building might be, which may well outstrip the investment.

There is no evidence to suggest that the repair strategy, while physically possible, is financially impractical.

I note the Agent mentions the cost of repairing the stone barn but has not advanced an argument suggesting the repair of the stone barn is only financially possible with the demolition of the historic farmhouse, so I give no weight to this reference.

Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency has been advanced as a reason for, or at least a benefit of, demolition and rebuild. Certainly it is not a persuasive argument on its own as a reason for demolition. In terms of considering the benefits of a new building, while I appreciate the potential energy efficiency of a new build, this must always be considered against the loss of embodied energy within the building to be demolished, the carbon footprint of new building materials and the potential to upgrade the existing building envelope.

Additional structural submission 13th May 2019

Their latest statement confirms that the front wall can be retained.

They do state that, *'The only way to overcome this and restore the front elevation wall to its as originally constructed condition would be to demolish and rebuild it.'* It is an accepted fact that the only way to get the front elevation plumb is to rebuild, but we do not necessarily need the building back to its *originally constructed condition* to still retain heritage significance. There are few buildings of this age which *would* be in their original condition. It is perfectly normal for historic buildings to have had movement and subsequent repairs and still be of significance.

I note the structural report then strays into areas of aesthetics for justifying demolition of the front façade. While the structural movement is visible on this front façade I do not believe it is unattractive, disfiguring or undermines the architectural and historic interest of this façade. This statement also confirmed that the measures required to retain the façade would not impact on the appearance of the front façade.

Conclusion

The Council has sought additional information with this application which confirms: that the building is relatively well preserved; that the building is capable of repair; that the repairs would not result in any compromise to appearance or use-ability of the house; that the repairs would retain the majority of the external appearance of the house, while internally the loss relates to the roof structure and some floors, but otherwise the historic plan form and cellar structure could be retained; that the repairs are financially little different to the cost of a new build (and have not been weighed against end values); that there is no argument submitted to suggest retention of the house would compromise the re-use of the barns; and that the repairs to the farmhouse have the potential to deliver improvement to appearance and architectural interest.

I also feel I have demonstrated how and why the building is regarded as being a local interest building/non designated heritage asset.

To demolish the building is to lose all interest and as such is substantial harm. I do not feel there has been clear and convincing justification for this harm and am not convinced that a balanced argument is made for any public benefits.

The stone threshing barn, to be retained and converted, does derive some of its interest from its setting and association with its historic farmhouse as part of a wider farm complex. Its historic context will be harmed by the demolition of the farmhouse.

2. Barn Conversions

The stone barn is a former threshing barn built of stone and with axe cut timbers. It seems very likely to be one of the buildings depicted on Sanderson's Map, but in form and materials is likely to predate this map by some time. As a threshing barn it has the distinctive pattern of a large central opening on each long elevation, with minimal other openings. There are normally breathers either side of the main larger entrances, but I note these are missing from the existing and revised plans. However a careful inspection of the stonework shows there to be a pair of low level breathers flanking the main opening and I am concerned these have not been picked up:



Perversely, in a building with few existing opening and few opportunities for natural light, I see that three of these existing openings are *not* being re-used, and yet two large openings are being

created on the north elevation. In a threshing barn the distinctive larger opening in the middle is an important pattern to retain, and the barn would not have been built with stable-like entrances either side. These new openings should be removed from the scheme. It is also very likely there will be breathers here which would be lost to these new openings.

I also think the treatment of the large central openings is harmful, opting to retain a later infill and turn the large opening into two domestic doors with solid masonry between. The large openings should be opened up read as one large aperture. Part of the issue is from using these openings to create a party wall between holiday lets. However, I see no reason why internal divisions cannot dogleg around these openings.

I also note the internal space behind the threshing entranced is being divided up and not left open to the rafters. This takes away an important and distinctive sense of space which is one of the most attractive features of successful threshing barn conversions.

I include here a relevant part of the Supplementary Planning Document on the *Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings*, which refers specifically to threshing barns at Appendix B:

Threshing barns

1. The most familiar rural building is the threshing barn. The barn was a building for housing and threshing corn and the storage of hay and straw. Barns are generally the largest building in a farm group and are made up of three or more roughly equal sized bays. One of the central bays has large doors on either side and a stone flag threshing floor. Larger barns can have two threshing bays.

2. The bays to either side of the threshing floor(s) were used for storage. The solid walls of these areas were punctured with ventilation holes to prevent the crops from becoming mouldy and these vents are often arranged in geometric patterns. Similar small openings are sometimes seen on the gable ends. Barns often have one or two window like openings covered with wooden shutters, called pitching eyes, located at high level in the sides or ends, which were used for pitching corn or hay into the barn from a cart. The large doors and patterns of ventilation holes often give a strong symmetry and formality to the appearance of threshing barns. Barns were usually built with a single, undivided internal space. A floor was sometimes inserted into one of the side bays, presumably to give flexibility for storage.

3. The most suitable new uses for threshing barns are those that can utilise the internal space without significant subdivision and do not require blank areas of brickwork to be punctured with window openings. If detailed sensitively, the large openings can be glazed and the doors retained, giving an interior of contrasting natural light levels. However, areas of masonry patterned with ventilation holes flanking the threshing bay are extremely sensitive to new window openings.

I think gable windows would be preferable to rooflights and that rooflights are not required for stairwells or bathrooms, so the number of these could be dramatically reduced or removed altogether. Paragraph 4.3 of the SPD states, '*Modest alterations such as the introduction of flush rooflights and small vents will be acceptable only if they are used with restraint and placed in discreet positions. If the overall effect of a particular proposal destroys the essential character of the building, the conversion will not be allowed.*'

In its current form this proposed conversion of a very historic and attractive threshing barn is harmful and is contrary to the adopted SPD, causing less than substantial harm to this non-

designated heritage asset. The public benefits of converting the building, in my opinion, carry little weight as there is a less harmful way to deliver the same benefit from a more suitable conversion scheme.

3. Demolition of small brick and stone barn

There is one further small historic barn on the site which is due for demolition. This is a very dilapidated simple gabled brick barn with stone footings to one gable wall. The building is so decayed that it is impossible to determine form or function of this building. While there may well be age to the stone footings, the degree of significance is so reduced that I have no objection to its demolition.

NSDC Environmental Health (contaminated land) - This application includes the construction of a new residential dwelling and the conversion of a barn to holiday accommodation. Agriculture is a potentially contaminative land-use and such land can possibly be used for a wide variety of potentially contaminative activities including: non-bunded fuel storage, repair and maintenance of agricultural machinery/vehicles, storage of silage and other feed, slurry tanks/lagoons, disposal of animal waste and disposal of asbestos. There is clearly the potential for the site to have been contaminated from this former use. As it appears that no desktop study/preliminary risk assessment has been submitted prior to, or with the planning application, then I would request that our standard phased contamination conditions are attached to the planning consent.

Archeological Advisor - No archaeological input required.

NSDC Access and Equalities Officer – Observations in relation to Building Regulations.

No letters of representation have been received.

Comments of the Business Manager

The starting point for development management decision making is S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which states that determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

As is acknowledged by the description of the proposal above, the application seeks permission for various elements which lend themselves to slightly separate planning assessments. Thus in the interests of transparency the following appraisal is divided in to the distinct elements of the scheme in terms of the principle of the development.

Demolition of Farmhouse and Replacement Dwelling

The Adopted Development Plan for the District is the Core Strategy DPD (2019) and the Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2013). The adopted Core Strategy details the settlement hierarchy which will help deliver sustainable growth and development in the District. The intentions of this hierarchy are to direct new residential development to the Sub-regional Centre, Service Centres and Principal Villages, which are well served in terms of infrastructure and services. Spatial Policy 1 (Settlement Hierarchy) of the Council's Core Strategy sets out the settlements where the Council will focus growth throughout the District. Beyond this Spatial Policy 3 (Rural Areas) confirms that development in the open countryside, as is applicable to this site, will be strictly controlled and limited to certain types of development as outlined by Policy DM8.

In respect of replacement dwellings, Policy DM8 states that, *“planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that the existing dwelling is in lawful residential use and is not of architectural or historical merit.”* It is also reaffirmed that, *“replacement dwellings should normally be of a similar size, scale and siting to that being replaced.”*

The house is a former farmhouse estimated to date to the late Georgian/early Victorian era in age and style. While the quality of the map is a little unclear it looks like an enclosure of land at this site exists in Sanderson’s Map of 1836 but that the building itself doesn’t. Certainly the site is on historic maps from 1884 onwards but there is a suggestion that the building well pre-dates this. Looking at the proportions and form of the house, the brick, the use of Flemish bond, the proportion of the window openings and their decorative window header, these point to the typical classically inspired architecture of the Georgian era. The building was once of some status, certainly exhibiting polite architecture to the front elevation at least.

While I accept that the windows and perhaps the door have been altered on the farmhouse, its overall form, approximate age and style of the building is clearly legible. As a late Georgian farmhouse alone this building would be of local historic and architectural interest, but it additionally forms part of an attractive and traditional farm complex giving it extra significance.

Given the identification as a building of architectural and historical merit there is a presumption against its replacement through Policy DM8. In addition, the application falls to be assessed against the heritage section of the NPPF. Paragraph 197 states:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

The demolition of the existing dwelling as proposed would lead the entire loss of significance of the asset. The application submission has been accompanied by a Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement. The following is an extract from the Heritage Impact Assessment section:

“...the farm house is quite plain and functional and lacks anything architecturally significant or special on the exterior that contributes towards making it an important example of a late Georgian early/Victorian farm house.”

The statement goes on to consider the heritage significance of the farmhouse to be low. Whilst it is confirmed that it would be physically possible (on the basis of the submitted structural survey) to repair the farmhouse, the structural condition is concluded as being so poor that there would be little remaining of the original historic structure. This has been further confirmed through a letter dated 13th May 2019 from their Structural Engineers which confirms that the front elevation is suffering from distortion having bowed outwards by an estimated 100mm-150mm.

In applying the balancing act of the NPPF, the applicant’s position is that the benefits of the restoration of the stone barn (discussed separately below) to provide holiday accommodation would be enough to outweigh the total loss of the non-designated farmhouse.

The application has been assessed by internal Conservation Officers as listed in the comments section above. The detailed comments make reference to the protracted discussions which have taken place during the life of the application including through the consideration of financial

evidence. The details and justification submitted have ultimately not been persuasive to Officers in terms of accepting the loss of the non-designated asset in principle. The Structural submissions evidence that the house is capable of conversion and in being converted would, contrary to the applications submissions, still retain a large degree of the existing historic interest. The bowing referred to above is not visible to the naked eye on site and does not affect the historic interest of the building. Officers therefore consider that the first requirement of Policy DM8 in respect to replacement dwellings has not been met in that the building is of historic merit and thereby worthy of retention.

It is noted that the applicant has submitted a rebuttal letter to the comments of the Conservation Officer received 22nd May 2019. Reference is made to the use of language such as ‘clear and convincing’ and ‘less than substantial harm’. Officers would agree that the use of this language in the NPPF is in respect to designated heritage assets and therefore not relevant in the assessment of the current application. Members will be aware that the Conservation Officer comments form a consultee response and are not the sole basis of the decision which falls to Officers and indeed Members to weigh all matters of material consideration. For clarity, the appraisal of this application has been done on the basis of paragraph 197 of the NPPF in relation to non—designated assets.

Irrespective of the above discussion Policy DM8 seeks to ensure that replacement dwellings are normally of a similar size, scale and siting in comparison to the dwelling to be replaced. The submitted plans demonstrate the volume of the existing dwelling as being 435m³ (excluding the part collapsed outbuilding) with a maximum pitch height of approximately 7.74m and eaves height of around 5.45m. Whilst the Planning, Design and Access Statement implies the proposed replacement dwelling is slightly larger, no specific figures are given in respect to the proposed volume figure. This has been sought during the life of the application for comparative purposes. The figures in respect to the existing dwelling include a part collapsed outbuilding albeit it has been confirmed that the volumes are approximate as the height of the outbuilding is not known given its state of partial collapse. The following table details the respective increases sought:

	Height (m)	Footprint (m ²)	Floor Space (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Existing Dwelling	7.74	104	166	500
Proposed Dwelling	8.3	133	250	790
% Increase	7%	28%	51%	58%

The proposed dwelling would be sited in the same positioning as that to be replaced. However, there is no doubt that the proposed dwelling would be larger in its size and scale as demonstrated above. Policy DM8 is not prescriptive in terms of potential increases in size which would be allowed although it is acknowledged that the level of accommodation offered by some older dwellings does not reflect current living standards. The example given in this respect is in regard to indoor bathrooms and thus does not in my view apply to the current application where the level of floor space appears more than adequate to provide for modern living. Moreover, the policy is clear that the Council does not wish to see the whole sale replacement of small with large dwellings.

The simple identification that the proposed replacement dwelling would represent an increase in dwelling size and scale is not enough to justify refusal alone without any resultant harm. In the case of the current application the proposal involves elements of demolition. Thus overall on site the volume of built form would be comparable in the proposed development scenario and would be similar in character impacts. Moreover in the scenario where the existing dwelling was to be

retained, it would be potentially reasonable to allow for some degree of extension to bring the building back into a viable use. On balance the level of size and scale increase is considered acceptable however it is nevertheless considered reasonable to remove permitted development rights for extensions if development is approved to ensure that the impacts on the character of the countryside are appropriately controlled and considered.

Refurbishment and Conversion of Outbuilding

This element of the proposal seeks to convert the existing stone barn to the north of the dwelling to create two units of holiday accommodation set at two floors with an open plan living area at ground floor and a bedroom and en-suite at first floor. Two separate staircases would also be inserted internally. The stone outbuilding proposed for conversion is also considered to be a non-designated heritage asset potentially previously used as a threshing barn as indicated by the larger opening.

The retention of the non-designated heritage asset is supported in principle. Policy DM8 outlines an allowance for the conversion of existing buildings and The Council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in relation to applications to convert traditional rural buildings. Generally speaking, the less alteration that is required, the more appropriate the new end use will be. The proposal would introduce new openings to the north elevation as well as 6 new roof lights. No extensions are proposed to facilitate the proposed use. The specific design impacts are considered in further detail below.

Policy DM8 also details allowances for tourist accommodation where it is necessary to meet identified tourism needs, it constitutes appropriate rural diversification, including the conversion of existing building, and can support local employment, community services and infrastructure.

Core Policy 7 (Tourism Development) as revised by the Amended Core Strategy adopted March 2019 recognises the economic benefits of sustainable tourism and visitor based development (including accommodation) and therefore shows a broad support for tourism development which meets identified needs. Assessment is based on a hierarchical approach with the following being related to tourism development in the open countryside:

Within the open countryside the proposal representing sustainable rural tourism development which meets one or more of the following:

- *Forms part of a rural diversification scheme;*
- *Supports an existing countryside attraction;*
- *Has a functional need to be located in the countryside;*
- *Constitutes the appropriate expansion of an existing tourism or visitor facility;*
- *Supports local employment;*
- *Meets an identified need not provided for through existing facilities within the main-built up areas of 'settlements central to the delivery of the spatial strategy', or villages covered by Spatial Policy 3 'Rural Areas'; or that*
- *Supports rural regeneration through the appropriate re-use and conversion of existing buildings.*

The development would readily align with the final point in that it would bring the existing barn, which is a non-designated heritage asset, back into use. The case presented by the application is that the use of the building for holiday lets would also represent a rural diversification scheme which would bring a small income for the site owners which would in turn support and diversify

the rural economy. I would not dispute this and overall find the principle of the conversion of the barn to tourist accommodation to be acceptable.

Demolition of Outbuildings

The other outstanding element of the proposal not discussed above is the demolition of both a partially collapsed brick building and part of a portal framed agriculture. Whilst the loss of the brick building is regrettable, having visited the site it is clear that this building is beyond means of repair and therefore it is considered unreasonable to resist its demolition in the context of the proposed redevelopment of the site.

The modern portal framed building is not considered to be of any specific architectural merit such that its partial demolition could be resisted in principle.

Impact on Character and Design

Policy DM5 of the Allocations and Development Management DPD considers the matter of design. Criterion 4 of this policy outlines that the character and built form of new proposals should reflect the surrounding area in terms of scale, form, mass, layout, design, materials, and detailing. Policies CP14 and DM9 of the Council's LDF DPDs, amongst other things, seek to protect the historic environment and ensure that heritage assets are managed in a way that best sustains their significance.

Clearly the loss of the farmhouse as proposed would negatively impact upon the character of the site itself. If Members were minded to accept this element in principle however, it still falls to assess the design of the replacement dwelling and indeed the design interventions to the conversion of the stone barn.

The proposed replacement is designed of a notably modern character with domestic elements including bay windows and a first floor terrace balcony. Unfortunately there is little reference to the farmhouse which the dwelling would replace. Equally there is little in design terms to assimilate the proposed dwelling with the stone outbuilding which would be retained.

In respect to the barn conversion element of the proposal, the design has been assessed through the comments of the Conservation Officer above:

Perversely, in a building with few existing opening and few opportunities for natural light, I see that three of these existing openings are not being re-used, and yet two large openings are being created on the north elevation. In a threshing barn the distinctive larger opening in the middle is an important pattern to retain, and the barn would not have been built with stable-like entrances either side. These new openings should be removed from the scheme. It is also very likely there will be breathers here which would be lost to these new openings.

I also think the treatment of the large central openings is harmful, opting to retain a later infill and turn the large opening into two domestic doors with solid masonry between. The large openings should be opened up read as one large aperture. Part of the issue is from using these openings to create a party wall between holiday lets. However, I see no reason why internal divisions cannot dogleg around these openings.

I also note the internal space behind the threshing entrance is being divided up and not left open to the rafters. This takes away an important and distinctive sense of space which is one of the most attractive features of successful threshing barn conversions.

I would concur entirely with the comments of the Conservation Officer. Ultimately the application has not taken the full opportunity to utilise the existing value of the barn failing to comply with the advice of the associated SPD. This element of the proposal alone is inappropriate to the non-designated heritage asset of the barn. The applicant has been offered the opportunity to amend the scheme in line with the Officer recommendations (notwithstanding that this would not overcome the overall principle objection to the wider scheme) but has chosen to bring the application before Members in its current form.

Impact on Amenity

Policy DM5 of the Council's DPD requires new development to respect the amenities of the surrounding land uses to ensure that there is no adverse impact by virtue of overshadowing, overlooking or overbearing issues.

The closest neighbouring resident is the dwelling known as Grange Close approximately 50m to the west of the site. Given that the site as existing features significant built form, and indeed taking into account the distances between the site and the neighbouring dwelling, I am confident that the development would not impose detrimental overbearing or overlooking impacts.

The proposal involves the conversion of the existing barn to 2 no. holiday lets. This, in addition to the replacement dwelling, would intensify the use of the site. However, the holiday lets are modest in their size which would be self-governing in terms of how many people would be at the site at any one time. The occupation of a single dwelling and two small holiday lets is not considered to amount to a level of activity which would lead to a noise and disturbance which would warrant concern from a neighbouring amenity perspective.

It is noted that the occupiers of the replacement dwelling would share a close spatial relationship with the transient occupiers of the holiday lets. However, through the redevelopment of the site, the site would implicitly become a mixed use site to a degree that any future occupiers of the replacement dwelling would be aware of the situation in terms of the adjacent holiday let accommodation.

Consequently no detrimental amenity impacts have been identified which would warrant resistance of the proposal in their own right.

Impact on Ecology

Core Policy 12 states that the Council will seek to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the District and that proposals will be expected to take into account the need for the continued protection of the District's ecological and biological assets. Policy DM7 supports the requirements of Core Policy 12 and states that development proposals affecting sites of ecological importance should be supported by an up to date ecological assessment.

The application includes the demolition of a number of existing buildings within the site and therefore has the potential to affect breeding bats and birds. On this basis, the application has been accompanied by a Protected Species Survey undertaken by BJ Collins dated September 2018.

The surveys recorded limited evidence of bat roosting within the attic space of the farmhouse including feeding remains typical of the Brown long-eared bat. Additionally, the stone barn showed evidence of a tawny owl and a bird of prey internally.

Given that the building supports a day roost and a night roost, any redevelopment will require a European Protected Species (EPS) license from Natural England.

Local Planning Authorities are required to consider the likelihood of a licence being granted when determining a planning application and should have in mind the three tests set out in Regulation 53 of the Habitats Regulations, namely:

- i. The consented operation must be for “preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”; and
- ii. There must be “no satisfactory alternative”; and
- iii. The action authorised “will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

In the case of the current application determination, it is considered that bringing the site back into use with a residential dwelling and additional tourism offer would represent a public benefit. As too would the restoration and conversion of the stone barn noting that it is a non-designated heritage asset. There is not considered to be a satisfactory alternative in this case albeit clearly the retention of the existing farmhouse would be favourable in ecological terms.

Provided that the proposed mitigation outlined at Chapter 6 of the Bat Survey and Mitigation Report is undertaken (which includes the installation of bat tubes), then I am satisfied that the development would not be detrimental to the population of the species. The mitigation measures could be secured by planning condition such that it is considered that the favourable conservation status of the bats would be maintained in this instance in accordance with the aims of Core Policy 12 and Policy DM7.

Impact on Highways

Spatial Policy 7 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that vehicular traffic generated does not create parking or traffic problems. Policy DM5 of the DPD requires the provision of safe access to new development and appropriate parking provision.

The replacement dwelling would have a negligible impact on the highways network as there would be no net addition of dwellings. However, the inclusion of holiday lets does present the risk of an increase in highways movements. As is referenced earlier, the holiday let units are modest in their size such that it is not anticipated that there would be more than one car per unit. On this basis the highways movements are not likely to be noticeable in the overall highways network.

The application has been assessed by NCC as the Highways Authority with their comments listed in full above. These confirm no objection subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to a vehicular crossing and a bound access material.

Overall Balance and Conclusion

Although the proposal relates to a site within the open countryside, it also constitutes an existing residential curtilage and therefore the principle of residential development and additional tourism accommodation within the site is accepted. However, the existing dwelling which is proposed for demolition is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. As is confirmed by paragraph 197 of the NPPF 2018, a balanced judgement will be required in consideration of proposals affecting non designated heritage assets. In this case, noting a total loss of significance, Officers consider that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that this would be justifiable. Moreover, the stone barn intended for conversion as part of the scheme would have unsympathetic alterations contrary to the advice within the Conversion of Rural Buildings SPD. Overall, the proposal would amount to the complete loss of a non-designated heritage asset as well as the unsympathetic conversion of another. This would not be outweighed by the benefits of the proposal (notably the tourism offer) which Officers consider could be delivered in a far more sympathetic manner.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is refused for the following reason

Reasons

01

The proposal includes a replacement dwelling following the demolition of the existing property within the site. The existing dwelling is an attractive red brick late Georgian/early Victorian property regarded as a local interest building (and thereby a non-designated heritage asset). As a late Georgian farmhouse alone this building would be of local historic and architectural interest, but it additionally forms part of an attractive and traditional farm complex giving it extra significance.

The proposal includes the demolition of the entire dwelling which would result in the total loss of the significance of a non-designated heritage asset which has not been adequately justified noting that the evidence submitted demonstrates the building to be capable of conversion without significant intervention or cost in comparison to its replacement. The balanced judgement required by paragraph 197 of the NPPF 2018 is therefore tilted against the proposal. The proposal would also be contrary to Core Policy 14 (Historic Environment) of the Core Strategy and Policy DM8 (Development in the Open Countryside) and Policy DM9 (Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the Allocations and Development Management DPD.

02

The proposal includes the conversion of an existing stone barn to two units of holiday accommodation. The building is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset and whilst its conversion and retention is supported in principle by Policy DM8, the design interventions proposed in this case are not considered to be sympathetic to the non-designated asset. The scheme does not intend to re-use existing openings as per the advice of the Conversion of Rural Buildings SPD and instead relies on the introduction of large new openings which are in themselves considered harmful. The benefits of the additional units of tourism accommodation would not outweigh the identified harm and therefore the proposal would be contrary to Core Policy 14 (Historic Environment) of the Core Strategy; Policy DM8 (Development in the Open Countryside) and Policy DM9 (Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the Allocations and Development Management DPD as well as the aforementioned SPD and the NPPF which both form material planning considerations.

Notes to Applicant

01

You are advised that as of 1st December 2011, the Newark and Sherwood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule came into effect. Whilst the above application has been refused by the Local Planning Authority you are advised that CIL applies to all planning permissions granted on or after this date. Thus any successful appeal against this decision may therefore be subject to CIL (depending on the location and type of development proposed). Full details are available on the Council's website www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/cil/

02

The application is clearly contrary to the Development Plan and other material planning considerations, as detailed in the above reason(s) for refusal. Working positively and proactively with the applicants would not have afforded the opportunity to overcome these problems, giving a false sense of hope and potentially incurring the applicants further unnecessary time and/or expense.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application case file.

For further information, please contact Laura Gardner on ext 5907.

All submission documents relating to this planning application can be found on the following website www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk.

Matt Lamb
Director Growth and Regeneration



