

North York Moors National Park Authority

Plans list item 2, Planning Committee report 16 May 2024

Application reference number: NYM/2024/0093

Development description: Conversion of and extension to redundant buildings to form one local occupancy dwelling with associated garage/workshop/store and amenity space (revised scheme to planning approval NYM/2020/0374/FL) (retrospective)

Site address: Rye Hill Farm, Great Ayton

Parish: Great Ayton

Case officer: Miss Megan O'Mara

Applicant: Mr John Grimes, Rye Hill Farm, Great Ayton, TS9 6HE,

Agent: Total Planning Solutions (UK) Ltd, fao: Mr Fahim Farooqui, 5 Roman Terrace, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS5 5QF

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Refusal for the following reason:

Reason(s) for refusal

| Refusal reason code | Refusal reason text |
|---------------------|---|
| 1 | The cumulative impact of the alterations and extensions, together with poor quality materials, is considered to be detrimental to the character and form of the original buildings, contrary to Strategic Policy C and Policy CO12 of the Authority's adopted policies, Part 4 of the Authority's Design Guide and paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework. |

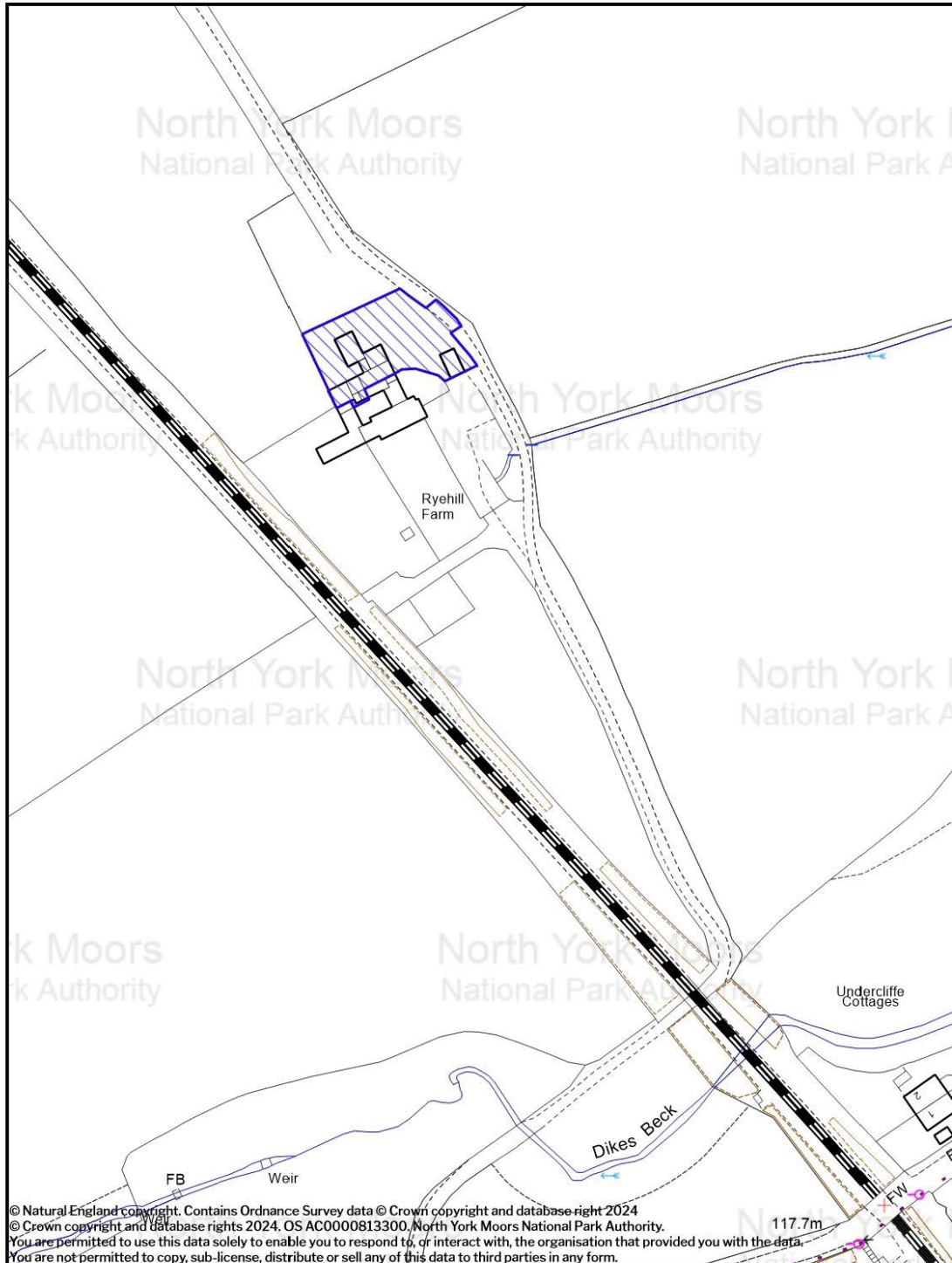
Map showing application site



**North York Moors
National Park**

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Scale: 1:1500



This photo shows the development as existing



This photo shows the buildings prior to works commencing



Consultation responses

Parish Council

No comments received

Highways

Concern must be raised with regard to the visibility available at the access road leading to the site and Station Road. There is likely to be an intensification of use of the access however this is unlikely to be a material increase in comparison to the existing use of the junction. Therefore, a highway refusal would be difficult to sustain on this occasion.

Environmental Health

No objections

Third party responses

Keith Caush, 63 Roseberry Crescent, Great Ayton TS96EW

Support – It has enhanced the area.

Angela Coates, 23 Marwood Drive, Great Ayton, TS9 6PB

Support – Improves the look of the buildings and in keeping with its surroundings.

Lisa Stephenson, 1 Oaklands, Great Ayton, TS96BB

Support – looks picturesque and a great addition to the village.

Michael Glew, 8 Sunnyfield, Great Ayton, TS9 6AB

Strongly support - In keeping with its surroundings which is not always the case with modern buildings. The mix and quality of the materials of wood, stone and brick have been tastefully designed, and I strongly support the application of the owner and the improvements made and proposed.

Mr Nick Tucker, Ryehill Farm Cottage, Station Road, Great Ayton , TS9 6HE

In my opinion the work to date has been done well. I have no wish to oppose the application for further extension.

Consultation expiry

6 March 2024

Background

Planning permission was granted in 2020 for the conversion of a group of redundant agricultural buildings at Rye Hill Farm to form one local occupancy dwelling. There were five barns on site, four of which are interconnected and approved to be used as the main dwelling and the fifth is more isolated and has been approved to be used as a garage and store. The buildings are constructed in a mix of stone and brick under pantile.

Works have commenced and nearing completion, prior to the necessary discharge of relevant conditions requiring approval of details and materials. It was also observed during a site visit by an Officer that the development has not been carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

The applicant recently submitted an application for planning permission, seeking approval for the construction of an extension on the northern end of the conversion to form annexe accommodation. This application was refused on the grounds that the annexe extension would be detrimental to the character and form of the original agricultural buildings, in addition to the failure to comply with Policy CO12 which clearly states that buildings should be capable of conversion without the need for significant alteration or extensions.

This application seeks approval for a revised scheme of the original approval (NYM/2020/0374/FL) in order to regularise the unauthorised elements of the conversion development.

The agent has written in support of the application to retain the unauthorised changes to the approved plans, in brief he states :

The projecting stone piers cover the existing mix of brickwork which did not reflect the rest of the farm. Bamboo cladding was chosen over the approved larch cladding as it is a new sustainable product which is more durable and increasingly being used. The new eaves height and new roof were required as there was significant decay and deflection, and a new roof was needed. New stone kneelers and water tabling were introduced as they are a feature in the wider area. The increased size glazed opening was undertaken by the builder without the applicant's knowledge to use standard size blocks rather than bespoke cut stone. Additional roof lights were installed to provide more light as they are not particularly visible. The glazed roof was changed to reduce heat loss for building regulation purposes. The use of 45 degree timber post fencing is considered acceptable as there is a variety of fencing types in the locality.

Main issues

Local Plan

Strategic Policy C relates to the quality and design of development within the National Park. The policy seeks to ensure that proposed development maintains and enhances the distinctive character of the National Park through appropriate siting, orientation, layout and density together with carefully considered scale, height, massing and form.

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Proposals should incorporate good quality construction materials and design details that reflect and complement the architectural character and form of the original building and/or that of the local vernacular.

Policy CO12 relates specifically to the conversion of existing buildings in the open countryside. The policy states that development will only be permitted where the building is of architectural or historic interest and makes a positive contribution to the landscape and special qualities of the National Park. The building must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding and the building must be appropriately sized for its intended use without the need for significant alterations, extensions or other new buildings. The development must be of high-quality design that reflects the form and character of the building and provides for essential functional requirements without unacceptable harm to the fabric of the building or its setting. The design should retain existing external features which contribute significantly to the character of the building including original openings and roofing materials.

The National Planning Policy Framework, at para 140, advises Local Planning Authorities against the approval of subsequent design changes which materially diminish the quality of the development between approval and completion, e.g., design details and materials.

Discussion

The principle of converting the original traditional rural outbuildings within the open countryside for the use as a local occupancy dwelling was assessed and deemed acceptable under the previous application. As such, the principle of use of the buildings as a dwelling is not being considered under this application.

What is being assessed under this application is the scheme of conversion that has been completed. As the scheme of conversion is not in accordance with previous approval NYM/2020/0374/FL, planning permission is required to regularise the unauthorised development.

Whilst permission should have been sought before changes were implemented, there are some elements within the scheme that are considered to be acceptable, such as the revisions to the garden room infill extension, revisions to the fenestration on the west and north elevations of Barn D, revisions to fenestration on north elevation of Barn B, the introduction of additional rooflights and the revised openings to the garage/outbuilding.

It is also appreciated that since the initial site visit, the applicant has agreed to rectify some elements of the unauthorised work, such as removing the overhang created on Barn D, correcting the flat top water tabling to Barn B back to a ridge and the removal of poor-quality faux pin back on east (front) elevation. The applicant also states that they intend to replace poor quality windows that have been installed with units with structural glazing bars and of appropriate design, however plans and sections have not been submitted with this application. Amended window details and the principle of use of aluminium were approved under application NYM/2023/0192, but again, what has been installed is not strictly in accordance with the approved details.

The following elements, however, are considered to be contrary to the Authority's adopted policies and design guidance. The applicant has been clear that he is not willing to amend these elements and requested that the application be determined as submitted.

Alterations and extensions

There is little doubt that conversion for residential purposes remains the most popular option for the re-use of traditional rural buildings. However, as Part 4 of the Authority's Design Guide highlights, it is also the most difficult and challenging - as well as potentially the most harmful. This is due to the inherent need to adapt the physical fabric of the building to provide habitable accommodation through internal subdivisions, the creation of upper-floors, attendant openings in walls for windows and doors and the need for domestic flues and other pipe work. This can be seen at Rye Hill Farm with the introduction of a number of flues and rooflights, including one flue and one rooflight on the roadside elevation of the conversion – neither of which were included in the approved plans. These features on a front or prominent elevation are typically negotiated out of a scheme during the decision-making process and are better located on a more discrete roofslope.

The applicant has also introduced two additional openings on the east (roadside) elevation of Barn D. This barn was of brick construction and the elevation facing the roadside was entirely blank and remained as such in the approved plans. Policy CO12 is very clear that existing openings should be utilised in favour of creating new openings, due to the negative impact this can have on the original character of the building. Traditional rural buildings are often characterised by long, uninterrupted elevations of masonry. Where openings do exist, they are usually small and functional: ventilation slits; stable and byre doors and windows; hayloft loading doors and the like and form an important element of the building's character. The pattern of openings is a direct product of the historic function of the building over time, its size and character. Traditional rural buildings were essentially cheap and functional with openings and other features provided only where they were essential. Given that many buildings were used as a means of shelter or for storage, openings were generally kept to a minimum with more exposed elevations having fewer openings than those which provided light, ventilation or access.

The applicant contacted the Authority regarding the principle of adding openings to the east elevation of Barn D. It was advised that the Authority could potentially support the introduction of two ventilation slit style openings, which are visually unobtrusive and agricultural in character, alternatively, one small square opening could be introduced on this elevation, off centred and matching the proportions of existing windows. An existing blocked opening on the north elevation of Barn D was approved to be re-opened and would have provided light to the hallway serving the two bedrooms in this element of the conversion. However, instead of utilising the existing opening or following the Authority's advice, two horizontal openings have been introduced that fail to reflect the character of the original building, appearing overly domestic and therefore considered to be harmful. As such, the Authority does not support the retention of these openings.

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Part 4 of the Authority's Design Guide states that a sensitive scheme of conversion is more likely to be achieved if the development respects the basic shape and traditional design of the original building; extensions will rarely be supported. It also states that a scheme should make as few alterations as possible to external walls. If changes are required, they must be located away from main elevations. The Design Guide also states that sensitive schemes will maintain the character of the roof by limiting the number of alterations.

The completed scheme at Rye Hill Farm includes an extension to the footprint of Barn C, together with an extension to the roof structure to join the roof of Barn A. Policy CO12 and Part 4 of the Design Guide clearly state that rural buildings should be capable of conversion without the need for significant alterations or extensions. The extension of the footprint of Barn C is contrary to policy, and whilst not particularly harmful in terms of the appearance of the building, it does set a harmful precedent of extending traditional agricultural buildings in the open countryside. In addition to the extension of Barn C, the roof structure has been altered to extend the ridge to meet Barn A, in-filling the gap between the original roof structures. Prior to these alterations, the buildings were readable as individual units, but Barn C and Barn A now appear as one. The combination of the extension and roof alterations contribute towards the loss of the original character, identity and specifically the form of the original buildings, contrary to Policy CO12 and Part 4 of the Design Guide. As such, the Authority cannot support these elements of the development.

Barn C did not feature water tabling originally, but this has since been introduced. There is no objection to the retention of features such as this where originally present, however the introduction of a new element like water tabling on a building where it was not previously present can harm the original character of the building. Both Barn C and Barn D were very simple and utilitarian in appearance, whilst Barn A had a little more detail incorporated into its original construction. Stone kneelers have also been added to Barn A, B and C; stone kneelers were not present in the original buildings, nor does the adjacent farmhouse feature kneelers. Part 4 of the Authority's Design Guide states that the relationship between a building and the immediate locality can make the difference between a good scheme and poor one – particularly within a protected landscape like a National Park. A sensitive conversion respects the ties that a building has with its farmstead. In this instance, adding features that are not present on the adjacent main farmhouse (formally associated with the converted agricultural buildings) affects the readable hierarchy of the buildings with the surrounding setting.

The introduction of the carved stone kneelers has resulted in the appearance of a raised eaves height, and one at a particularly awkward height on Barn C. It is considered that the combined impact of the introduction of carved stone kneelers and additional stone water tabling contributes towards the dilution of the original character and form of the former agricultural buildings, and general domestication of the buildings. As such, the Authority cannot support the retention of these elements.

Barns A, B and C are constructed of stone; however, Barn D was constructed of brick; the differing materials contributes towards the character and legibility of these buildings.

Barn D has now been covered entirely with short individual strips of composite bamboo cladding. Typically, in order to reflect the local vernacular, when the cladding of a building is permitted, it should be full length boards of larch, usually left to weather naturally. The dark stained composite bamboo has been applied in short boards, resulting in an incoherent and overly modern finish. Not only is the material of poor quality and appearance, the cladding of this building has also resulted in the loss of the original character of the building by completely obscuring the original brick walls. It is possible that the Authority could have supported the partial cladding this building in larch, so that some of the brick was left visible. However, the composite cladding is considered to be harmful in this instance and therefore this element of the development cannot be supported by the Authority.

Outbuilding

There is a small outbuilding that runs parallel with the road and is identified on the plans as Barn E. It was observed during the Officers site visit that this building has been rebuilt without permission. The applicant has, in his view, replaced the building to match but with the addition of cladding. The replacement building has a pantile roof, which is considered to be an enhancement on the original concrete tile, however it has been clad with the same composite bamboo cladding on Barn D. The cladding cannot be supported on the outbuilding for the same reasons as those given for Barn D above. The eaves height of the building has also increased; this in itself is not an issue but in doing so, a gap has been created between the stone posts and the roof structure. Instead of filling this gap with stone to match it has been capped; a feature of which is not typical of such buildings within the National Park. The original outbuilding appeared to have been a stone post shelter, which has brick walls added at a later date to fill in the openings between the stone posts. The brick walling sat flush with the stone posts, however the replacement building has the stone posts projecting and infilled with the composite cladding.

The harm in this instance is considered to be caused by the capped stone posts and the cladding. The harm could be minimised by infilling the gap between the eaves and post with stone to match and the cladding replaced with vertical larch cladding left to weather naturally.

Conclusion

The National Planning Policy Framework advises Local Planning Authorities against the approval of subsequent design changes which dilute the character and appearance of approved schemes. Part 4 of the Design Guide sets out that seemingly small-scale changes to traditional rural buildings, such as door and window alterations, or the change of use of former open countryside into domestic garden can all result in the gradual suburbanisation of villages and the countryside. Cumulatively, the changes incurred as a result of these pressures can have a harmful visual impact on the otherwise unspoilt character of individual settlements and the wider landscapes of the National Park.

It is considered that whilst some elements of the scheme are acceptable, there are a number of elements that when present in conjunction with one another result in a

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culmination of seemingly minor alterations that ultimately have a detrimental impact to the original character and form of the original rural buildings.

What once was a cluster of utilitarian buildings within the open countryside, is a development more akin to a modern new build single storey dwelling. It is considered that a number of elements within the scheme fail to comply with the Authority's adopted policies and Design Guidance, development of which the Authority has a duty to resist. As such, in view of the above, the application is recommended for refusal.

Public Sector Equality Duty imposed by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

The proposal is not considered to unduly affect any people with protected characteristics.

Pre-commencement conditions

Not applicable.

Contribution to Management Plan objectives

Not applicable.

Explanation of how the Authority has worked positively with the applicant/agent

The Authority's Officers have appraised the scheme against the Development Plan and other material considerations and concluded that the scheme represents a form of development so far removed from the vision of the sustainable development supported in the Development Plan that no changes could be negotiated to render the scheme acceptable and thus no changes were requested.