

**PROPOSED LANDSCAPE / ACCESS WORK**

**THIRLEY COTES FARM, HARWOOD DALE, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**FOR P&G DURBIN PROPERTIES LTD**

Background

Thirley Cotes Farm is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century farm house and farm buildings, it is thought that this was developed by a local estate and it is also thought that this estate was also responsible for the development of a similar farm in the locality. The farmhouse is of a simple design which would have been intended for a yeoman tenant farmer which would have been appropriate to the farmers standing in the community but without excessive ornament. The farm buildings built round a courtyard are also of a similar period. The lack of development over 200 years suggests that the owning estate had little appetite for developing the buildings.

No doubt at some time, probably after the first world war, with the effect of death duties etc the large estates tended to be broken up and sold off. The 2009 Google earth of Thirley Cotes shows the existing buildings in their current form but there are two probably additional framed barns to the north of the main barn, these have subsequently been demolished.

The previous owners of Thirley Cotes Farm secured planning approval to convert the outbuildings and barns into holiday cottages and part of these approvals were built out with the conversion of the main barn into Holly, Sycamore, Oak and Willow cottages. Although these cottages received a five star rating from the tourist authority they never traded successfully and the development was purchased in March 2017 by P&G Durbin Properties with a view to incorporating the development into their existing portfolio of holiday cottages. P&G Durbin have many years experience with holiday cottages having developed a national cottage letting company which has subsequently been sold to a multinational tourism company. Thirley Cotes was identified as an exceptionally good location for this type of development.

Thirley Cotes Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building having been first listed in November 1985. The listing advises 'Farmhouse. Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Coursed, squared, grey sandstone. Slate roof. Central hallways plan, two rooms deep. Two – storey, symmetrical 3 – window front. Glazed, lean to porch to centre door. Sixteen – pane sashes with plain lintols throughout. Stone coped gable walls and plain kneelers. End stacks.'. The listing does not mention the farm buildings but clearly appropriate consideration has to be given to the listed building.

A meeting was held at the Helmsley Planning Office with Hillary Saunders the Area Planning Officer, Andy Rollinson - Planning Consultant, Peter Durbin – Owner and David Bamford – Architect, to talk through the proposals for further development and the initial phase was considered to be to address the formation of

private gardens for the existing holiday cottages to improve access and car parking for the present and future and landscaping generally.

At the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June it was discussed that the farmhouse could be used as a holiday cottage without the need for a formal planning approval but any alterations to the garden area would need Listed Building Consent.

### Object of the Application

The object of this initial application is as follows.

- To enclose and create private garden areas for cottages rather than the communal situation that currently exists.
- To improve access and car parking including consideration for some extra spaces for the future.
- To provide private car parking to the farm house with some revised landscaping external terrace and a hot tub.
- To revise the hard landscaping within the farm yard.
- To create a formal refuse storage area.

### Heritage Statement

As referred to previously Thirley Cotes Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building constructed in coursed local stone with plain stone sills and heads, the roof is in blue slate with stone gable cappings and plain stone chimneys at the head of the roof to each gable. The lean to porch to the front entrance has been removed and there are some simple stone steps giving access to the front door. The rear of the property is almost a mirror image of the front with a central back door.

Windows to the front and rear are sixteen pane vertical sliding sash windows with single glazing. On both gables to the loft area there is a horizontal timber sliding sash window with single glazing which is typical of the area.

Thirley Cotes Farm has a substantial walled garden to the front (south) and extending to the west. This is currently largely grassed although the Google earth photograph of 2009 shows a mature hedge enclosing just the front garden very much in line with the gable and the remaining walled garden shows some regimented trees indicating an orchard and possibly a kitchen garden. The outbuilding to the north side of this garden clearly also had a lean to greenhouse arrangement. This all suggests that this large garden was intended to provide a generous kitchen garden facility to the farmhouse which would have been appropriate.

The farm buildings which are not referred to in the listing are generally of a fairly uniformed construction indicating that they are of a similar age and probably date back to the same period as the Farmhouse itself. In general they are constructed in coursed local stone under a pantile roof with cut stone gable cappings. Openings are generally plain and there is no ornament.

The group of buildings generally make a positive contribution within the North Yorkshire Moors National Park.

Buildings generally need to find a sustainable use that will allow them to be maintained for the future. Otherwise they clearly begin to fail and become derelict in a relatively short space of time. It is clearly important at Thirley Cotes Farm that all the traditional buildings should be given a sustainable use to maintain the buildings and their contribution in the landscape for the future.

### Design Statement

The existing holiday cottages have not been reaching their potential, partly due to the lack of outlook from the cottages which has clearly been restricted by the use of existing openings, but probably and more importantly by the lack of any private space externally. The photographs indicate a very uninviting area of hard standing which provides shared access and sitting out space for the four cottages. It is clearly therefore important to establish some modest private space for each of the cottages. It is envisaged that this will be achieved by the creation of dry stone boundary walls to match the local vernacular, these would be maintained with a height of 1.8m between the cottage gardens and these will then swan neck down to 1.2m to provide a view from the garden areas. It is then envisaged that the garden areas will be largely paved using appropriate stone paviors with some perimeter planting and the occasional appropriate tree with an open canopy to prevent unnecessary overshadowing – birch or similar. This type of enclosure is reminiscent of stock enclosures on traditional farms and is therefore appropriate.

Concerning access and parking, vehicular access is required to the foul treatment system in the paddock and clearly this can only be achieved at the rear of the cottage gardens. The parking requirement for the development, excluding the farm house, is eight vehicles for the four cottages, two for the office, one for delivery and perhaps three visitor parking spaces. The existing car park does not satisfactorily cater for this number so it is proposed that additional parking is created off the access to the rear of the cottages. It is generally preferred that parking is as close as possible to the cottages with the need to carry luggage and provisions.

In terms of materials for the access this is currently in gravel which requires constant maintenance, particularly where vehicles turn and it would be better if this was constructed in tarmac with an applied resin bonded gravel finish to the more trafficked areas and then keeping the gravel to the parking bays and the less trafficked access. The use of the bonded gravel will maintain the softer visual appearance.

Currently the bins are located off the existing drive / parking area and are rather unsightly. Clearly it would be better to construct a refuse store located in the heavily planted access area which will keep the visual impact to a minimum and provide easy access for the bin wagon and an obvious point for the guests to deposit rubbish.

There is a small additional leisure facility for the development in the form of a timber shed containing a snooker table and other games facilities, some outside play equipment and a hot tub. It is proposed that these be retained in their current position although it is envisaged that this facility will be replaced with something more appropriate in the future and it is envisaged that the area where this facility is currently located would be given over to additional parking to allow the conversion of the remaining redundant barns.

Concerning the farmhouse itself it is proposed that the existing fence and gate arrangement giving access to the small lawned area to the rear of the office / laundry is replaced with a larger five bar gate and matching timber fencing to give access to a gravelled parking area for the farmhouse. It is envisaged that this will then provide the primary access via a stone paved pathway leading to the front of the property.

To the front of the listed farmhouse it is proposed that the small semi-circular paved area is replaced and extended to form a more generous paved terrace using traditional York stone paving retaining the existing access steps to the farmhouse.

To allow the farmhouse to maximise its potential it is proposed that a hot tub is installed to the right hand side of the entrance steps. This is a good location as this is sheltered and south facing, it's location at this low level does not detract from the appearance of the farmhouse from the garden and more importantly it is not seen at all from any public vantage points.

Also on the existing farmhouse it is proposed that the curved wall to the rear of the property is lifted up to the level of the wall running parallel to the gable and then finished with a timber five bar gate and fence to provide enclosure to the farmhouse.

### Landscape

The work generally is very minor in nature and will have no effect on the setting of Thirley Cotes Farm within the National Park. The only effect will be to the benefit of the guests using the cottages at Thirley Cotes Farm.

It is envisaged that the cottage gardens will have stone paved terraces with planted borders and one appropriate open canopy tree such as a birch to give some softening to the landscape.

Round the proposed access it is intended to form planted margins using appropriate low maintenance amenity shrubs.

The central courtyard is currently not a particularly attractive space with a central grassed area and concrete hard standing to the perimeter. It is proposed that the courtyard is formalised with a stone paved pathway with gravel margins to the cottages incorporating planted troughs.

### Access

The cottages currently have (which will be maintained) level access. However only Willow Cottage would be able to provide accommodation for wheelchair users as this is the only cottage on a single floor. It is intended that future development will provide specific access and accommodation for wheelchair users.

As referred to a new refuse store is proposed providing direct access from the Highway for refuse vehicles.

### Drainage

The surface access areas will be drained to a soakaway system into the adjoining land as indicated.

The proposed works will have no effect on the foul drainage system.

Thirley Cotes Farm is not in a flood zone and there is no history of flooding.

### Ecology

These minor works to existing public spaces will have no effect on the local ecology.