

## Holiday Accommodation at Rudda Farm, Staintondale, for Mr and Mrs M Else: Planning Statement

- 1 The Else family owns Grange Farm in Staintondale, a large and successful dairy cattle farming business. They have recently bought two adjoining holdings, Rudda Farm and Island Farm. They have surplus buildings and farm houses and wish to make good use of them as holiday accommodation as a form of agricultural diversification.
- 2 This planning application relates to Rudda Farm. There is a separate application for Island Farm. I have prepared the Planning Statement on behalf of the applicants, Mr Mathew and Mrs Thelma Else, in conjunction with Terry Horton, MBIAT, ACIOB, who is the agent for the planning applications.
- 3 At their original holding, Grange Farm, they own 450 acres and rent a further 170. There is a good set of modern farm buildings, some very recently built. There are also three dwellings, all subject to agricultural occupancy conditions. A fourth dwelling, Grange Lea, is in separate ownership, still being owned by a member of the family from whom the Elses bought the farm in 1990.
- 4 A further 540 acres have been purchased with Rudda and Island Farms, of which 370 are at Rudda Farm. The total combined holding of all three farms is therefore now 1,160 acres (470 hectares including rented land). There are two dwellings at Rudda Farm, and one at Island Farm, which are not needed by the Elses.
- 5 The buildings at Rudda Farm are as follows
  - Rudda Farmhouse, two storey house, facing onto Rudda Road
  - Rudda Farm Cottage, single storey and attached to the farmhouse. Subject of agricultural occupancy condition.
  - Traditional barns, proposed for conversion to four holiday units, north of these houses.
  - Modern farm buildings, north of the traditional barns.
- 6 Rudda Barns. These consist of an L shaped range of two storey barns. Some walls are of coursed stone facing east and south, and some are of red brick, facing west. All have a clay pantile roof. Their usefulness in agriculture is limited, particularly because of low ceilings. On the west side are stables. They are all described in detail in Terry Horton's design and access statement. They are also subject of a
  - Structural appraisal by Richard Agar, dated July 2011, originally for a previous planning application and renewed recently. The buildings are in good structural condition.
  - A bat survey by Wold Ecology, originally dated August 2011. There was no evidence of bats on site. It will be renewed shortly, when bats would emerge from hibernation.
- 7 It is proposed to convert the barns and stables to four holiday cottages. They are shown on the plan as A-D. C would have three bedrooms, all the others two each.
- 8 Buildings A-C have previously been given planning permission for conversion to a dwelling for the previous owners, Mr and Mrs D Gascoine. The most recent consent was NYM/2011/0537/FL, approved 2 May 2012 but which expired in 2015. Planning permission had first been given in 1997 (NYM/4/027/0037C/PA) and renewed in 2002 (...37F/...).
- 9 Details for the most recent approval were for generous accommodation, with a large kitchen, a lounge, a study/playroom and five bedrooms. Condition 3 states  
*"3 The accommodation hereby approved shall not be occupied as a separate independent dwelling and shall remain ancillary to the use of the main dwelling known as Rudda Farm and shall form and shall remain as part of the curtilage of this main dwelling as a single planning unit and shall be used only for members of the family of the occupier of the main dwelling or by persons solely or mainly employed in the running of Rudda Farm or by persons using the property for holiday letting. For the purpose of this condition "holiday letting" means letting to the same person, group of persons or family for period(s) not exceeding a total of 28 days in any one calendar year."*

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- 10 The principle of conversion to residential use has therefore already been established for most of this building, although the permission has recently expired. It is noteworthy that condition 3 allowed holiday letting among other uses.
- 11 Existing Dwellings at Rudda Farm. The existing dwellings are now called Rudda Farmhouse and Rudda Farm Cottage. Their planning status was established in a Section 52 agreement dated 23 October 1978 between John and May Longstaff, the then owners of Rudda Farm, and North Yorkshire County Council. (Section 52 agreements have been superceded by Section 106 agreements.) The Agreement was made in connection with an appeal concerning relaxation of a planning condition. The appeal was eventually allowed, on 13 March 1979. The Agreement also covered two other dwellings (now called Wardyke House and Wellfield Bungalow) which were then part of the Rudda Farm holding but are no longer so.
- 12 It appears that what is now called Rudda Farmhouse was previously Nos 1 and 2 Rudda Farm Cottages, while the present Rudda Farm Cottage had been No 3.
- 13 The planning status of what is now Rudda Farmhouse was established by the 1978 Section 52 agreement as  
*“(a) that notwithstanding any planning permission granted before the date of this Agreement the cottages shall from the date of this Agreement be used or be available to be used as a single dwelling only and shall not at any time in the future be used as two separate dwellings unless planning permission in that behalf has first been granted by the local planning authority.”*
- 14 That of Rudda Farm Cottage was  
*“(b) that the occupation of the cottages Number 3 Rudda Farm Cottages ... shall at all times after the date of this Agreement be limited to the person solely or mainly employed or last employed in the locality in agriculture as defined in Section 290 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 or in forestry (including any dependants of such a person residing with him) or a widow or widower of such a person.”*
- 15 Proposal for Rudda Farm Cottage. The existing dwellings are not needed for the operation of the farming business. Grange Farm is only 700 metres away and has been mentioned the Else family has three dwellings there.
- 16 Mr Else has considered trying to find an agricultural worker to rent Rudda Farm Cottage, to comply with the current agricultural occupancy condition. However there are now very few farms in the area especially after his consolidation of Grange Farm by acquiring the two further ones. Therefore there is very limited demand for farm dwellings to rent. Farmland at Staintondale is bounded by extensive nearby open moorland to the west and north and by the North Sea to the East. The difficulty in finding agricultural occupants has been demonstrated locally and recently at Church Farm, Staintondale, which was vacant but subject to such an occupancy condition. It has been for sale for two years and is still unsold.
- 17 However, circumstances might change in future and there may be need for an agricultural worker to live at Rudda Farm. Mr Else is therefore applying to widen the permitted use, to include holiday occupation as well as agricultural. It would then resemble the type of restriction formerly imposed on the barn conversion and described in paragraph 9.
- 18 The National Park Authority's planning policy is set out in its Local Development Framework (LDF). It says that dwellings no longer required for agriculture *“should not be kept vacant”*. This is at paragraph 9.27 in the explanatory text of the Core Strategy Document for the LDF. Development Policy 22: Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions states  
*“The removal of agricultural occupancy conditions will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the accommodation on the holding or in the locality. Where permission is granted, the condition will be substituted with one which restricts occupancy to local needs as defined in Core Policy J. Where a local person cannot be found to occupy the dwelling permission may be granted for temporary holiday use or rented accommodation for local needs.”*

- 19 Application is therefore being made for planning permission to vary the planning condition at Rudda Farm Cottages to allow temporary holiday use as well as the existing agricultural employment use. Such a range of permitted uses would allow for a range of options. It would be similar to the previous planning permission for the barns quoted in 9 above.
- 20 There are no existing restrictions on the use of Rudda Farmhouse as a single dwelling, therefore no planning permission is needed for change of occupation.
- 21 **Conversion of Traditional Barns.** These are too small to be of much beneficial agricultural use. As explained modern purpose built farm buildings are on adjoining land. The traditional barns are variously built of stone or brick and with red clay pantiled roofs. An unattractive building within the L built of concrete blocks would be removed. The design philosophy is to restore the buildings and thereby give them a new lease of life. Particular care has been taken with windows on the east elevation, which reuse former window openings. The works are fully described in Mr Horton's Design and Access Statement.
- 22 **Assessment.** As mentioned the buildings are in good structural condition. The use of the existing surplus dwellings and the proposed conversions would be for holiday accommodation. It would therefore allow the business to diversify. This is prudent at a time of challenge for hill farming.
- 23 The proposals accord with the following policies in the LDF related to the rural economy.
- Core Policy H: Rural Economy. By supporting the agricultural sector and opportunities for diversification.
  - Development Policy 13: Rural Diversification. Existing buildings would be used and the activity is compatible with the existing farm activity.
  - Development Policy 14: Tourism and Recreation. The facility would provide opportunity for visitors to enjoy the National Park.
  - Development Policy 22: Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions. The policy encompasses holiday use.
- 24 The proposals are also supported by paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by supporting rural enterprise, promoting agricultural diversification and supporting sustainable rural tourism and leisure.
- 25 The proposals relating to building work accord with the following policies in the LDF
- Core Policy G: Historic Assets. Although not listed or within a conservation area the buildings are traditional, of character and prominent in the landscape. The proposals would represent re-use of them and would help guarantee their future.
  - Development Policy 3: Design. The materials and design particularly would be compatible and would enhance the existing buildings.
  - Development Policy 8: Conservation of Traditional Unlisted Rural Buildings. The policy encourages conversion to uses including holiday accommodation with traditional buildings of architectural or historic importance, especially if located within an existing group of buildings.
- 26 The proposals are also compatible with paragraph 131 of the NPPF, as they would sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets.
- 27 **Conclusion.** I believe that these proposals are in accordance with planning policy. I hope they can be supported.

