

DESIGN, HERITAGE AND ACCESS STATEMENT

23 MARCH 2018

PROPOSED BARN CONVERSION TO HOLIDAY COTTAGES

THIRLEY COTES FARM, HARWOOD DALE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

FOR P&G DURBIN PROPERTIES LTD

Background

Thirley Cotes Farm is an early 19th 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 additional framed barns to the north of the main barn, these have subsequently been demolished.

The previous owners of Thirley Cotes Farm secured planing 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 19th 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.

Since purchase in April 2017 P&G Durbin Properties have set about making the development viable. The Farmhouse has been converted into a holiday let and the narrow service building to the rear of the Farmhouse has been refurbished to provide office, service and laundry facilities. Planning / Listed Building Approval

has also been obtained for additional landscape / access work which is being bought about in January – March 2018. Letting of the Farmhouse has proved a great success and the other cottages are also improving.

A meeting was held on the 2nd June 2017 at the Helmsley Planning Office with Hilary Saunders the area Planning Officer, Andy Rollinson Planning Consultant, Peter Durbin Owner and David Bamford Architect to talk through proposals for development at Thirley Cotes Farm. This included the use of the Farmhouse as a holiday let and the alterations to the landscape and access referred to above. It also considered the conversion of the remaining barns for holiday lets. In principle the Planning Authority advised that they were supportive of conversion of the redundant buildings, two of which have had previous approvals (now lapsed), providing of course the detailing of the conversions is sympathetic and appropriate.

Object of the Application

The object of this application is to convert the remaining traditional barns at Thirley Cotes Farm into short break holiday cottages. It is intended that these holiday cottages will be professionally managed and of the highest standard. This will enhance the provision of this type of accommodation in the National Park and will therefore encourage tourism with a consequential benefit to the local economy. It will also provide the buildings with a sustainable future and generally enhance the landscape of the National Park.

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 uniform 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

As can be seen from the attached photographs the remaining unconverted barns at Thirley Cotes Farm are generally in sound condition for their age. The stone walls are generally plumb with no signs of significant movement. The structure of Rowan Cottage has been refurbished in recent years with a new roof and the masonry has been pointed. The barns to Hornbeam have generally not been refurbished but again the masonry is sound and the roofs are relatively true and sound although the roofs are clearly approaching the end of their lives and will require reroofing to provide a sustainable future. The walls to Mulberry are also sound and the roof structure is reasonably true and sound although at some time, probably 30-40 years ago, the roof finish has been replaced with asbestos sheeting which clearly needs to be replaced with an appropriate pantile which will clearly enhance the group of buildings.

The previous owners refurbished the Rowan Cottage barn as an open garage for the Farmhouse which is now therefore redundant. The north elevation is open with three brick piers suggesting that it was previously an open byre. It is proposed that these openings are infilled with glazed screens which will provide a light and attractive interior to the cottage. The northerly aspect will have some benefit in that it will receive early morning and evening sunlight which is particularly important in that holiday cottages tend not to be occupied during the day and therefore the early morning and evening is important. The glazed screens will also give access onto an attractive landscaped terrace which will be in sunlight for most of the day due to the low eaves height and pitch of the roof. It is envisaged that the roof space will be left open over the reception and kitchen area maintaining the feel of the traditional barn and maintaining the high level gable window on the east elevation. It is also envisaged that conservation roof windows will be fitted over the kitchen and dining area to bring sunlight into the living space.

Hornbeam Cottage comprises the existing small barn to the south of the courtyard and a section of the larger barn to the south west of the courtyard. It is envisaged that the buildings will be refurbished to include refinished roofs in a matching clay pantile and repointed masonry; the existing openings are generally to be retained with simple glazed screens. From the 2009 aerial photograph it is clear that there was a lean-to greenhouse along the south elevation and the plinth to this is existing. It seems likely also from the aerial photograph that the walled garden to the south of Hornbeam was traditionally used as an orchard and kitchen garden and therefore the greenhouse would clearly be appropriate. It is therefore proposed that the greenhouse is reinstated in engineered timber which is then opened up into the barn to provide an attractive and sunny aspect to the cottage. It is then proposed that the greenhouse concept is developed into a link between the barns and a simple glass entrance achieved without significantly affecting the appearance of the courtyard. It is again envisaged throughout Hornbeam that ceilings will be left open to reflect the traditional barn and expose any appropriate structure.

The approach to Mulberry Cottage is generally similar with the asbestos roof being replaced with a matching terracotta pantile, the existing masonry would be repointed and the existing openings retained, it is proposed that one matching opening is formed to bedroom 2 which maintains the natural rhythm of the existing structure. The lean-to on the west elevation has an open gable providing the opportunity for a south facing glazed timber screen to provide strong natural lighting to the dining / reception area, it is envisaged that this will be further enhanced with conservation roof windows facing west. Again it is envisaged that the roof spaces will generally be left open to reflect the historical use of the building.

It is envisaged that the three proposed additional cottages will be heated by underfloor heating using an air source heat pump arrangement which generally works well on the other barn conversions and proves to be reasonably cost effective.

All the cottages will be brought up to a standard of insulation in excess of the current Building Regulations to make them as efficient as possible; this will be achieved by lining the external walls, introducing underslab insulation, insulating the roofs and by the use of energy efficient glazing taking advantage of solar gain. Cottages will be provided with wood burning stoves which will be run using recycled, reconstituted bricketts which maximise efficiency. In reality these stoves tend to be used very occasionally.

Access

All three cottages have level access from the car parking area throughout the cottage and including terrace areas. Cottages will have internal doors appropriate for wheelchair use and one bathroom or shower room in each cottage will be suitable for wheelchair access. Each cottage will have two designated parking spaces allowing appropriate disabled / wheelchair access.

As referred to above, two designated parking spaces are indicated for each cottage.

Close to the entrance to the development is a large refuse store with a close boarded fence and gates. Cottages are to take refuse to this common storage facility where it is collected by Contractors.

Thirley Cotes Farm is accessed off a public highway with parking and internal access within the development generally to modern standards.

Landscape

The recent Listed Building and Planning Approval upgraded the parking facilities and site to provide six additional parking spaces for the proposed cottages, in addition it indicated re-landscaping to the access areas and the courtyard.

The proposed landscaping to Rowan Cottage is very straight forward as there are only some modest planting beds adjoining the terrace area. It would clearly be sensible to incorporate a rowan tree within the new planting area.

Hornbeam Cottage is more directly associated with the Listed Building than the other cottages. As referred to previously the Google earth photograph of 2009 indicates that the Farmhouse had a very simple modest lawned garden with a substantial mature hedge which presumably enclosed an orchard and kitchen garden with a greenhouse. It would seem fairly obvious that it would be appropriate to put back a semi-mature beech hedge to provide a division between the Farmhouse garden and a garden for Hornbeam Cottage, it would also seem sensible to locate this hedge closer to Hornbeam Cottage to provide a larger garden area to the Farmhouse as the more dominant building. It is envisaged that the garden for Hornbeam Cottage would be kept very simple with a central lawned area and shrub border with a terrace area immediately adjoining the rebuilt greenhouse structure, this would then be semi enclosed with a boxed hedge. It would also be appropriate to put in a pathway and gate through the existing stone garden wall to provide access to the paddock area beyond which is envisaged as an amenity space for the development, the gate would save about an 140m walk through the courtyard and round the access drive and would keep children away from vehicles. Again it would be appropriate to include a hornbeam tree into the garden area.

Some private garden area is important for any holiday cottage and it is proposed that a similar garden arrangement is formed to Mulberry Cottage to reflect the approved gardens to the existing cottages which would have a 1200mm high dry stone wall enclosing principally a terrace area for sitting out with some shrub borders. It is proposed that this is returned to the gable of Willow Cottage creating small lawned areas to both cottages. Again it would be appropriate to incorporate a mulberry tree into the garden design.

The existing courtyard is intended as a quiet simple heart to the development and the owners are keen to discourage noisy games in this location as they could have a detrimental effect to the amenity of the cottages. Guests will therefore be encouraged to use the paddock to the west of the development for amenity space. It is therefore envisaged that the centre of the courtyard will be largely lawned with gravel perimeters adjoining the cottages with planting in old stone troughs and a stone paved pathway round to provide access.

Drainage

The existing buildings are currently drained to a soakaway system which will generally be cleaned out and developed where appropriate.

In terms of foul drainage a new biological treatment system has been installed for the four existing cottages. It is thought however that this does not have significant extra capacity. It is therefore proposed that the existing septic tank arrangement for the Farmhouse is replaced with a full treatment system to pick up the proposed cottages and the Farmhouse and the outfall would then be extended through to a soakaway or through to a watercourse on site if required.

Thirley Cotes Farm is generally not in a flood zone.

Mains Services

The existing electric main into the site (which was installed in 2010) has been investigated and is of sufficient capacity for the extended development.

The mains water service into the site (which was installed in 2010) has been investigated and is of sufficient capacity for the extended development.

Ecology

A historic bat survey prepared for the previous holiday cottage conversion by Wold Ecology is attached with an updated survey to assess the current situation. It is proposed that the recommendations put forward by Wolds Ecology are implemented as part of the development together with an appropriate license from Natural England.