

Parish: Thimbleby
Ward: Osmotherley & Swainby
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Committee date: 25 July 2019
Officer dealing: Mrs H Laws
Target date:

18/02648/FUL

Construction of two storey extension to dwelling; alterations to stables to form holiday accommodation; replacement of front boundary fence and gate

At: Woodlands Farm, Thimbleby

For: Mr & Mrs Paul and Amy Callin

This application is referred to Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Hugill.

1.0 SITE, CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The dwelling, which is a grade II listed building, lies on the northern side of the village street at the western end of the village of Thimbleby. The dwelling fronts onto the highway together with its annexe, which is a converted single storey outbuilding to the side. To the rear of the dwelling is a courtyard formed by stables along the northern and eastern sides, with units of holiday accommodation along the western side.
- 1.2 Vehicular access into the property is at the western end of the site leading into a parking area at the rear of the dwelling. Agricultural land, paddocks and an equestrian ménage lie beyond the curtilage of the buildings to the north and west; a neighbouring residential property lies to the east.
- 1.3 The existing two storey dwelling is a grade II listed building; the attached annexe is in use as a unit of holiday accommodation, separated from the main part of the dwelling by a dining room. The annexe is attached to the stable block but with no internal connection. There are currently several loose boxes along the eastern and northern boundaries of the central courtyard. There are three units of holiday accommodation within the shorter western and corner section of the courtyard.
- 1.4 The application includes several elements of development, which are listed as follows:
 - A two storey extension to the rear of the dwelling to replace an existing single storey extension. The extension would be finished in sandstone (reclaimed where possible) and interlocking pantiles
 - The creation of first floor accommodation within the roofspace above the existing single storey annexe for use as staff accommodation
 - The use of the roofspace above the stables in the east wing for use as a unit of holiday accommodation
 - The construction of a glazed extension to the east elevation of the stables to provide a fire escape for the above holiday unit
 - Replace the existing front boundary fence with an 1800mm high timber close boarded fence and trellis, with the existing low wall immediately to the front of the dwelling retained and repaired.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

- 2.1 02/01425/FUL – Ground floor extension to existing dwelling. Permission granted 28/10/2002.

- 2.2 06/00289/LBC – Application for listed building consent for internal alterations to existing dwelling. Consent granted 31/3/2006.
- 2.3 06/02229/FUL – Construction of a replacement domestic outbuilding. Permission granted 30/5/2007.
- 2.4 07/00767/CON – Application for conservation area consent to demolish existing outbuilding. Consent granted 15/5/2007.
- 2.5 13/02524/FUL - Alterations to existing annexe to form a holiday let and formation of a car parking area. Permission granted 4/2/2014.
- 2.6 13/02526/FUL & 13/02565/LBC - Alterations to existing garage and stable building to form 2 holiday units. Planning permission and listed building consent granted 23/5/2014.
- 2.7 15/00243/FUL & 15/00226/LBC - Demolition of garage/utility/toilet building and construction of stone built building to form a self-contained holiday unit and 2no bed and breakfast units. Planning permission and listed building consent granted 7/4/2015.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 The relevant policies are:

Core Strategy Policy CP1 - Sustainable development
 Core Strategy Policy CP2 - Access
 Core Strategy Policy CP4 - Settlement hierarchy
 Core Strategy Policy CP16 - Protecting and enhancing natural and man-made assets
 Core Strategy Policy CP17 - Promoting high quality design
 Development Policies DP1 - Protecting amenity
 Development Policies DP28 – Protecting the Natural and Built Environment
 Development Policies DP30 - Protecting the character and appearance of the countryside
 Development Policies DP32 - General design
 National Planning Policy Framework

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Parish Council – does not support the application for the following reasons:

The fire escape on the side of the conversion to self-catering is incorrectly positioned being to the side of the property with any escapees entering a dangerous area of the generator building

- 4.2 NYCC Highway Authority – no objections

- 4.3 HDC Environmental Health Officer – I have considered the above development and have some concerns with regards to the proposed staff accommodation which is to be located in an attic conversion.

The floor plans and elevations are unclear as to what area of the bedroom and living room for the member of staff will provide acceptable headroom for an occupier. Any part of the floor area of the room in relation to which the height of the ceiling is less than 1.5 metres will not be taken into account in determining the floor area of that room and is only suitable to be used for storage purposes. The bedroom needs to provide a minimum of 6.5 square metres but this does need to provide usable space

for furniture. Although the plans show a layout for furniture, this appears to be optimistic given the potential headroom.

There is no reference on the plan regarding the adequate provision of a kitchen for the member of staff to use.

Due to these concerns I am unable to make a decision in support of this application.

- 4.4 Public comments – the following comment has been received from the neighbouring residents:

The current application for the fire escape is totally unsuitable for the area. It is within 8 metres of our main entrance and in full view of the conservatory and back porch. We consider this to be a loss of amenity as we currently look out on plain stonework. The glass and timber structure will totally dominate our outlook and can only detract from the stonework in our yard.

We think the applicant has not researched the options of an internal fire escape on the other side of the building.

- 4.5 Letters of support have been received from Welcome to Yorkshire, Beaver Furniture, Green Tourism and guests of the business, which are summarised as follows:

- This business has the prestigious green tourism award and is working hard to help establish itself as a leading sustainable business and support the whole of Yorkshire in being a strong sustainable and high-quality green destination
- Woodlands farm is seeking to gain a higher green award to help put Yorkshire on the map as a forward thinking destination and would like to attract more of the growing green pound
- feel that the proposed changes would enhance the listed property; significant improvement to what's currently there
- the proposed addition of a guest lounge to Woodlands Farm would be an extremely positive enhancement and this seems to be a creative use of what is now seemingly just roof space above the stables
- provides support for local businesses

5.0 OBSERVATIONS

- 5.1 The main issues to consider are: i) the principle of providing the additional holiday unit and the provision of staff accommodation; ii) the impact on the historic fabric and significance of the heritage asset; iii) the economic impact of the proposed development; iv) the design of the proposed extensions and; v) the impact on residential amenity.

The principle of development

- 5.2 LDF Policy CP4 allows development of the type proposed in principle, where the site lies within the Development Limits of settlements that are defined in the Settlement Hierarchy, and which is of a scale and nature appropriate to secure the sustainability of each settlement. Thimbleby is not a settlement included within the hierarchy and the application site therefore lies well beyond the Development Limits of any settlement. To be acceptable, any development in Thimbleby needs to be justified as an exception to Policy CP4, criterion iv) states that an exception can be made if the development; "would re-use existing buildings without substantial alteration or reconstruction, and would help to support a sustainable rural economy...". Policy CP4 is more supportive of building conversions than new builds, allowing the re-use of redundant buildings to help support the local economy.

- 5.3 In conjunction with CP15 and in particular DP25 the proposal is a rural economic use which is relatively modest in scale, as an extension to an existing business operation, and which provides accommodation of a specific type that cannot be readily provided within a larger settlement.
- 5.4 The creation of the unit of staff accommodation effectively provides an independent unit of accommodation but in respect of the NPPF definition of sustainability the development would perform an economic role associated in this case with an existing business. Restricting the occupation of the accommodation to a staff member would address the sustainability aspect of LDF Policy CP1 to some degree. In addition, the unit is integral to the existing complex of buildings and its proximity to the existing dwelling and holiday use would give rise to some disturbance if occupied separately from the other uses at the site. Given the proposal is for accommodation to be occupied in association with the existing business and would be occupied by someone employed at the site there are no objections subject to the imposition of an occupancy condition.

Heritage Impact

- 5.5 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in determining a planning application for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 195 and 196 requires an assessment of the potential harm a proposed development would have upon the significance of a designated heritage asset and requires that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum viable use of the building.
- 5.7 The Heritage Statement submitted in support of the application outlines that the significance of the building lies within its example as a surviving 19th century farmhouse and associated farmstead. It goes on to define that the simple plan form and vernacular character provides the overall aesthetic appeal of the site.
- 5.8 The applicant's statement infers that previous developments on the site have served to detract from the building to such an extent that it would no longer meet the test of special architectural and historic interest for statutory designation. However, the statutory designation of the building is a matter for consideration by Historic England as the public body responsible for the protection of the historic environment and is not relevant to the consideration of this application as the buildings remain under the protection of the statutory listing. Further it is clear from the NPPF that earlier alterations to a building which impact on its significance should not be used to justify further erosion of the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.9 There are no objections to much of the proposed development including the removal and replacement of modern materials with more traditional materials, which would serve to preserve, and in places enhance, the special interest of the listed building and its setting.
- 5.10 As existing, the PVCu windows detract from the significance of the building and therefore, the principle of their replacement with timber alternatives is welcomed. Despite this, it is considered that the proposed '3 over 3' sash windows are inappropriate to the construction of the building and in themselves would result in a harmful impact.

- 5.11 The Heritage Statement outlines that there are various examples of 3 over 3 sash windows in the locality of the site and they have been recommended by various specialist window manufactures. Despite this, it is still considered that a 2 over 2 sash window would be more appropriate due to the proportions of the window openings. There is no evidence to suggest that the original windows had 3 over 3 panes.
- 5.12 There are no objections to the removal of the existing single storey extension, which is positioned to the rear of the dwelling, the roof of which is at a very low pitch and is causing maintenance issues. The extension is a later addition and is of no historic or architectural merit. However, the single storey, low height nature of the existing extension results in a low key development that has limited overall impact on the dominant character of the dwelling. The fact that the extension is of single storey and of lean-to design allows it to be understood as subservient to the building and allows for the retention of an understanding of its predominant historic form. The proposed two-storey extension to the rear of the property would introduce a more complex, cross-gabled design that would detract from the overall simplicity of the building to an extent to which it would no longer be legible. As such, it is considered that this would result in less than substantial harm to the special interest of the listed building.
- 5.13 The applicant has outlined that they have had issues gaining buildings insurance due to the construction of the roof structure on the existing single storey extension to the rear of the property. However, this is not a material consideration for the Local Planning Authority; nor would this justify its replacement with a two storey structure. A replacement single storey structure could be considered in order to remedy any structural issues associated with the existing structure.
- 5.14 The proposed rear access staircase to the stables/holiday accommodation is located on the side elevation which, as existing, is a plain blank elevation. The Heritage Statement assesses that the elevation has been subject to previous alteration including the removal of a northward facing extension. Despite this, it is considered that it still provides a positive contribution to the overall interest of the listed building and site.
- 5.15 The proposed development introduces a fire escape at roof height with associated staircase to ground level. Concerns were raised about the impact that the proposed development would have upon what is otherwise a plain façade. The applicant was also asked to explore alternative options including the potential use of a compliant rooflight or provision of an internal staircase. The applicant subsequently revised the scheme to include a timber framed glazed covering around the stairs to a design inspired by a neighbouring property.
- 5.16 However, it is considered that this is not appropriate on a simple barn type structure, nor is a first floor access point reflective of historic stable blocks of this style and form. As such, it is considered that this would result in less than substantial harm to the special interest of the listed building.
- 5.17 Based on the above, it is considered that much of the proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the special interest of the listed building.
- 5.18 The National Planning Policy Framework at Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.19 The public benefits of the proposal include supporting the rural economy as well as the removal of modern rainwater goods and their replacement with materials considered to be more suitable. Despite these benefits, the construction of the two storey extension to the rear of the property would facilitate a large master bedroom

for the owners of the property. It is considered that this is an overtly private benefit. Furthermore, the applicant has also failed to demonstrate that the level of intervention into the stable block/holiday accommodation is necessary or that other alternative means of escape are not viable. It is appreciated that the intervention of a staircase into the courtyard area may also have an adverse impact on the significance of the heritage asset, but no information has been received to suggest that internal staircase would not be possible. Furthermore, although the replacement of the modern windows is welcomed, little weight can be afforded to this due to the inappropriate design of their proposed replacements.

- 5.20 It is considered that similar levels of public benefit could be achieved through a scheme which results in significantly less harm to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.21 The Local Development Framework Policies CP16 and DP28 require that developments preserve and enhance listed buildings, that requirement is not met in this case and the proposal is therefore also contrary to the policies of the LDF.
- 5.22 Overall therefore, it is considered that in that case, the public benefits of the proposal are not outweighed by a public benefit and therefore, the application is recommended for refusal on these grounds.

Economic Impact

- 5.23 Paragraphs 80 to 82 of the NPPF explain the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity and create conditions where businesses can invest, expand and adapt. The Government wants to ensure that the planning system does everything it can to support this objective. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF requires Local Plan policies to support economic growth in rural areas.
- 5.24 A part of the proposed development is for use in connection with the commercial use of the site and part is for the private, domestic use of the applicants. There are no objections in principle to the provision of the additional holiday accommodation, particularly as it is an expansion of the existing business use at the site.

Design

- 5.25 There are no objections to the removal of the existing single storey extension to the rear of the dwelling, the roof of which is of a very low pitch and is causing maintenance issues. The extension is a later addition and is of no historic or architectural merit. However, the single storey, low height nature of the existing extension results in a low key development that has limited overall impact on the dominant longhouse character of the dwelling. The fact that the extension is of single storey and of lean-to design allows it to be understood as subservient to the building and allows for the retention of the understanding of its predominant historic form. The proposed replacement two-storey extension to the rear of the property would introduce a more complex, cross-gabled design that would serve to detract from the overall simplicity of the building, creating a dominant extended form, to an extent in which it would no longer be legible. As such, it is considered that this would not respect the existing form and design of the dwelling or its context, contrary to LDF Policy CP17.
- 5.26 The proposed rear access staircase to the stables/holiday accommodation is located on the side elevation which, as existing, is a plain blank elevation. The proposed development introduces a fire escape at roof height with associated staircase to ground level. Concerns were raised about the impact that the proposed would have upon what is otherwise a plain façade. The applicant was also asked to explore alternative options including the potential use of a compliant rooflight or provision of

an internal staircase. The applicant subsequently revised the scheme to include a timber framed glazed covering around the stairs to a design inspired by a neighbouring property (a timber framed conservatory).

- 5.27 However, it is considered that this is not appropriate on a simple barn type structure, in particular given its listed status, nor is a first floor access point reflective of historic stable blocks of this type. As such, it is considered that this would detract from the appearance of the existing building contrary to LDF Policy CP17.
- 5.28 There are no objections to the proposed replacement walling and fencing at the front of the site, which would improve the appearance of the streetscene.

Residential Amenity

- 5.29 LDF Policy DP1 requires all development to adequately protect amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, security, noise and disturbance, pollution (including light pollution, odours and daylight). The closest neighbour to the application site is the adjacent property at Orchard House. The outer wall of the stable block lies in close proximity to the fenced northern boundary with Orchard House, providing a solid walled outlook for that property. Although the southern side of Orchard House has limited openings, other than a conservatory extension, and there is a gap between the boundary and dwelling occupied by the driveway and parking area, the construction of the timber glazed extension to provide the fire escape, would be a prominent addition to the existing simple stone wall and clearly visible from the neighbouring property.
- 5.30 The visibility of the extension from the neighbouring property is not in itself a reason to refuse planning permission. It is likely that the glazing could be obscured so that there would be no practical overlooking and subsequent loss of privacy. The relevant issue of concern is in respect of the large scale and dominance of the extension, which would be imposing in such close proximity to the shared boundary. The use of contrasting materials and such a large amount of glazing is incongruous in an otherwise simple stone elevation, and would have an overbearing and adverse effect on the amenity of the neighbouring residents, contrary to Policy DP1.
- 5.31 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has concerns regarding the standard of accommodation proposed for the staff member due to the absence of a kitchen facility and the lack of headroom for much of the floorspace, as it lies within the roof of the building. In addition there is a limited outlook due to the rooms being served only by rooflights. The floorspace provided would comply with the requirements of the Environmental Health Officer and there could be space for kitchen provision but it is still considered that the proposed unit does not provide a high standard of accommodation.

Planning Balance

- 5.32 It is considered that the scheme would result in modest economic gains through the works to convert the building to provide an additional unit of holiday accommodation. However, the development would cause harm to the environment by failing to respect the existing building, resulting in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset and harm to neighbouring amenity. It is considered that the less than substantial harm is not off-set by the public benefits and that in the planning balance the benefits of the proposed development do not outweigh the harm caused. The proposal fails to meet the tests of the LDF Policies and the tests set out in the NPPF and on balance the proposals are recommended for refusal.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 That subject to any outstanding consultations permission is **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development is contrary to LDF Policies CP17 and DP32. Development should be of a scale and design appropriate to the size and form of its surroundings. It is considered that the proposed extensions by reason of their scale and design would detract from the form and character of the original dwelling to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area and would fail to make a positive contribution as required by Development Policy DP32. The proposed development is considered to fail to accord with the requirements of LDF Policies CP17 and DP32 in terms of the provision of high quality development for the reasons set out above.
2. The proposed development would cause a substantial loss of amenity to the neighbouring residential property at Orchard House by reason of an overbearing impact due to the scale and materials of the proposed fire escape extension. As such the proposed development is considered to fail to comply with the requirements of Local Development Framework Policy DP1.
3. The proposed development is not consistent with the character and significance of the heritage asset and would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset. This harm would not be outweighed by a public benefit. The proposed development is considered to fail to accord with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and those of Core Policy CP16 and Development Policy DP28 of the adopted Hambleton Local Development Framework.