

Parish: Crathorne
Ward: Hutton Rudby
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Committee date: 9 November 2017
Officer dealing: Mr K Ayrton
Target date: 10 November 2017

17/00878/FUL

**Conversion of farm buildings to commercial use, demolition of former agricultural buildings and construction of six dwellinghouses and associated parking
At Free House Farm, Land to the rear of Crathorne Arms, Crathorne
For The Crathorne Estate**

This application is referred to Planning Committee as the proposal is a departure from the Development Plan

1.0 SITE, CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application site is located at the northern end of Crathorne, which is a Secondary Village, located just off the A19. Stockton on Tees is a short distance to the north. Crathorne is an attractive and historic settlement, being very rural in character. This special character is demonstrated particularly within the village Conservation Area, which covers the majority of the village, including the front half of the application site.
- 1.2 The village is defined by two main linear forms of development. There is an arm which extends north to south along the main road, where the application site is located, and a second arm extending to the east. There are some exceptions to the linear form, most notably agricultural farmsteads, which extend back, intruding into the open countryside beyond. Other examples include the farmstead to the north and the church to the east of the village.
- 1.3 The site is just under 1 hectare in size, roughly rectangular in shape, located to the rear of the Crathorne Arms public house and the established line of residential development along the main road. The public house is grade II listed. This listing also covers the traditional farm buildings to the west (curtilage listed). More modern portal framed agricultural buildings are located to the rear. The supporting documents confirm that these buildings are vacant.
- 1.4 The proposed development comprises the following elements:
- Demolition of modern agricultural buildings and removal of hardstanding;
 - Construction of six dwellings: two two-bedroom, three three-bedroom and one four-bedroom;
 - Formation of a new car park with 60 spaces;
 - Conversion of traditional farm buildings to create seven letting bedrooms linked to the public house;
 - New kitchen and dining room linked to the public house;
 - Lettable studio/business space; and
 - Creation of a more formal pub garden and seating area.
- 1.5 The proposed houses are arranged in a courtyard arrangement, with a shared yard to the front of the properties and private gardens to the rear. A 'kink' has been incorporated into the layout, which will obscure the buildings to the rear of the site from view when entering the site and also creates a generous shared courtyard. The proposed layout extends to the west, slightly beyond the existing defined curtilage and the wooded area to the north of the site. The dwellings would take a traditional form, with a relatively contemporary use of materials and fenestration. The scale includes a mix of one and two storeys.

- 1.6 In order to facilitate the conversion of the traditional farm buildings, some alterations are proposed to the door and window openings. These are more closely considered under application 17/00879/LBC, also on this agenda.
- 1.7 Access to the site would use the existing access located between the public house and residential properties to the south.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

- 2.1 None.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 The relevant policies are:

Core Policy CP1 - Sustainable development
Core Policy CP2 - Access
Core Policy CP4 - Settlement hierarchy
Core Policy CP8 – Type, size and tenure of housing
Core Policy CP9 – Affordable housing
Core Policy CP16 – Protecting and enhancing natural and man-made assets
Core Policy CP17 – Promote high quality design
Core Policy CP21 – Safe response to natural and other forces
Development Policy DP1 - Protecting amenity
Development Policy DP3 – Site Accessibility
Development Policy DP4 - Access for all
Development Policy DP10 – Form and character of settlements
Development Policy DP13 – Achieving and maintaining the right mix of housing
Development Policy DP15 – Promoting and maintaining affordable housing
Development Policy DP28 - Conservation
Development Policy DP30 – Protecting the character and appearance of the countryside
Development Policy DP31 – Protecting natural resources: biodiversity/nature conservation
Development Policy DP32 – General Design
Interim Policy Guidance Note – adopted by Council on 7th April 2015
National Planning Policy Framework - published 27 March 2012

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Parish Council – Generally supportive; requests that the following points are considered:
- Care should be taken with the lighting in the car parking area to avoid adverse impacts; and
 - Surface water should be carefully considered considering the amount of development proposed.
- 4.2 Highway Authority – Advice awaited.
- 4.3 Northumbrian Water – Requests a condition relating to the management of foul and surface water from the development.
- 4.4 Environmental Health Officer - No objection to the conversion of farm buildings for commercial use but expresses concerns over the construction of six dwellings, which would be in close proximity to the public house (open 11:00 – 00:30 and Friday and Saturday 11:00-01:30) and associated car park. Noise from that enterprise may cause impact on the local amenity for the future occupiers of the proposed dwellings.

Advises that these concerns can be overcome by screening of the pub car park and proposed gardens to reduce noise levels (e.g. use of a close boarded timber fence) and positioning habitable rooms (e.g. living rooms and bedrooms) out of line of sight of the public house and the car park to reduce noise impact.

4.5 Public comments – One expression of support raising the following issues:

- Measures to restrict parking on the landscape area close to the shared boundary;
- The cycle/furniture storage shed should not exceed 6 feet high (the same as the existing boundary fence); and
- Sensitive consideration should be given to the lighting scheme.

5.0 OBSERVATIONS

5.1 The main issues to consider are: (i) the principle of residential development in this location; (ii) the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including heritage impact; (iii) the impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers; (iv) affordable housing; (v) highway safety; and (vi) biodiversity.

Principle of Development

5.2 The development can be broken down into two elements: residential; and commercial. The settlement of Crathorne does not have any Development Limits. Policy DP9 states that development will only be permitted beyond Development Limits "in exceptional circumstances". The applicant does not claim any of the exceptional circumstances identified in Policy CP4 and, as such, the proposal is a departure from the Development Plan. However, it is also necessary to consider more recent national policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states:

"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances".

5.3 To ensure consistent interpretation of the NPPF alongside Policies CP4 and DP9, the Council adopted Interim Policy Guidance (IPG) relating to Settlement Hierarchy and Housing Development in the Rural Areas. This guidance bridges the gap between CP4/DP9 and the NPPF and relates to residential development within villages.

5.4 The IPG states that the Council will support small-scale housing development in villages where it contributes towards achieving sustainable development by maintaining or enhancing the vitality of the local community and where it meets all of the following criteria:

- 1 Development should be located where it will support local services including services in a village nearby.
- 2 Development must be small in scale, reflecting the existing built form and character of the village.
- 3 Development must not have a detrimental impact on the natural, built and historic environment.
- 4 Development should have no detrimental impact on the open character and appearance of the surrounding countryside or lead to the coalescence of settlements.
- 5 Development must be capable of being accommodated within the capacity of existing or planned infrastructure.

6 Development must conform with all other relevant LDF policies.

- 5.5 In the Settlement Hierarchy reproduced in the IPG Crathorne is identified as a Secondary Village. This status recognises its range of services and facilities and confirms that it is considered a sustainable settlement capable of accommodating small scale residential development. The proposal would therefore meet criterion 1 of the IPG, in that it is located where it will support local services.
- 5.6 The commercial development proposed includes letting rooms; the extension to the public house facilities/ and introduction of a business/studio unit. These uses would be delivered through the conversion of the curtilage listed farm buildings.
- 5.7 Policy CP4 sets out exceptions for development beyond the development limits. Criterion (ii) is where the development is necessary to secure the conservation of a feature of acknowledged importance and criterion (iv) states that one of the exceptions for development beyond the development limits will be where development would re-use existing buildings without substantial alteration or reconstruction, and would help to support a sustainable rural economy. This is consistent with section 3 of the NPPF, which confirms that local plans should:
- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprises in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
 - Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside; and
 - Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops....and public houses.
- 5.8 It can therefore be concluded that the principle of both the residential and commercial development can be supported in this location.

Character, appearance and heritage

- 5.9 IPG criterion 2 requires development to be small in scale. The guidance expands on this definition as being normally up to five dwellings. In this instance the proposal is for six dwellings. However, it is noted that the scheme includes several smaller properties and there is also a significant amount of built form on the site that would be replaced by the development. These factors allow the conclusion to be formed that the scale of development is acceptable in relation to the guidance and the size and form of Crathorne.
- 5.10 Along with the remainder of criterion 2, criteria 3 and 4 require consideration to be given to the impact of the development on the surrounding natural and built form.
- 5.11 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building affected by the proposal or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 5.12 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Crathorne Conservation Area.
- 5.13 One of Hambleton's strategic planning objectives, set out in The Core Strategy Local Development Document (2007), is "To protect and enhance the historic heritage and the unique character and identity of the towns and villages by ensuring that new

developments are appropriate in terms of scale and location in the context of settlement form and character.”

- 5.14 Policies CP17 and DP32 require the highest quality of creative, innovative and sustainable design for buildings and landscaping that take account of local character and settings, promote local identity and distinctiveness and are appropriate in terms of use, movement, form and space.
- 5.15 The application has been supported by a planning statement, heritage statement and design and access statement. The heritage statement has provided a thorough baseline assessment of the site and its context, including the historic evolution of the settlement.
- 5.16 The design and access statement has used the heritage statement to help inform the assessment section. The assessment of the village’s character is succinct and considered accurate. Key points include:
- The historic development of Crathorne village has been predominantly linear with single rows of buildings following two roads with buildings arranged either frontally or side-on. There are notable exceptions to this;
 - The entrance from the main road is narrow and inclined providing a glimpsed view. The traditional buildings are of good quality but substantial areas of roof have been replaced with asbestos;
 - It is stated that the proposed housing has been designed to avoid a typical cul de sac and instead developing the language of the shared yard previously on the site;
 - Developing the courtyard idea, and responding to noise from the A19, the houses are arranged to create private, sheltered courtyard gardens;
 - The design has been developed in response to the existing barns to form one and two storey buildings and a contemporary vernacular language;
 - The kink in the layout removes the back buildings from sight when entering the site and creates a generous shared courtyard; and
 - Spaces are left between buildings to create distance from existing houses and provide views of the landscape beyond.
- 5.17 Landscaping and materials are key to the project. The architect has provided an assessment of local materials and brickwork, which can be introduced into the scheme to provide local distinctiveness.
- 5.18 The approach to the existing barns has been to work with the existing structures and alter as little as possible.
- 5.19 The design approach is considered to be sensitive to the Conservation Area and historic use of the site and has responded well to the site constraints by proposing a high quality design as required by policy DP32. It is recognised that the removal of the more modern farm buildings offers an opportunity to reveal and improve the setting of the curtilage listed farm buildings. The uses proposed for these buildings would make a positive contribution to the rural economy and the use is consistent with their conservation, requiring limited alterations.
- 5.20 Whilst limited, it is noted that there are still some alterations proposed to the listed farm buildings. The submitted heritage statement focuses more on the principle and framework of development as opposed to the detail. It contains no assessment of the more detailed works proposed. Further information was sought under application 17/00879/LBC, also on this agenda, to allow proper assessment of these elements.

- 5.21 Whilst some of the openings would be altered, it is not considered that this would be harmful to the special character of the buildings. This view can be reached because it is evident that the buildings have been altered through their life. There is clear evidence of openings that have been introduced and others blocked up. Importantly the form, scale and appearance of the openings will remain consistent with the history of the buildings. The larger openings introduced to the northern elevation of the two-storey traditional building are well hidden by the woodland to the north. Their impact is therefore limited and not considered to be harmful. The proposed development will ensure the buildings longer term contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.22 The final matter to be considered in terms of character and appearance is the impact of the development on the surrounding countryside. The proposed layout extends to the west, slightly beyond the defined curtilage and the wooded area to the north of the site. This part of the site would accommodate part of the car park, the garden areas of houses 5 and 6, the footprint of house 5 and part of building 6.
- 5.23 In justifying this extension to the curtilage, the agent has advised that this was taken into consideration at an early stage, with the heritage statement stating that “this will have minimal impact on the setting” and “given the current screening of this by extant buildings, which reduces the contribution it makes to the experience and understanding of the historic village, impact is assessed as moderate, and is therefore less than substantial”.
- 5.24 The size of the car park was queried with the agent and whether there was scope to soften or break up this and improve the relationship with house 6. The architect has advised that it is proposed to use compacted gravel as a surfacing material. One of the reasons for choosing this material is due to its ability to create soft edges as light greenery naturally grows through the least used parts. A landscaping scheme would also introduce trees along the new south wall (within the car park), to help break up the perceived length of the wall and reduce oblique views across the car park from the upper floor of house 6.
- 5.25 The layout would have some impact on the natural environment, with the site projecting into the adjoining field and beyond the existing footprint of development. However the form of the proposed development is such that the buildings will sit within the backdrop of the woodland, with only the gardens and part of the car park extending beyond. The low lying nature of these parts of the development will mean the proposal would not appear unduly intrusive and would respect the open character and appearance of the countryside. This will be further assisted through the use of sensitive boundary treatments and landscaping, which can be secured through condition.

Neighbour Amenity

- 5.26 The nearest residential properties are located to the south east of the application site. Proposed ‘House 1’ would be located to the rear of the existing dwellings. The facing (east) elevation would be single storey and sited approximately 21 metres from the rear of the existing property. The relationship would be acceptable and as such accords with Policy DP1.
- 5.27 A letter has been received from the occupant of a neighbouring property in relation to the proposed storage/bike building located to the north of their property, adjacent to the access to the site. They have no objection to this but would wish to see it restricted to 6 foot in height. Restricting the height of the nearest parts of the storage/bike buildings to 6 foot is considered reasonable, given the relationship with their rear garden. A condition can be used to secure full details of these structures.

- 5.28 The environmental health officer has asked that consideration is given to screening the pub car park and proposed gardens to reduce noise levels and positioning habitable rooms (e.g. living rooms and bedrooms) out of line of sight of the public house and the car park to reduce noise impact. This requirement needs to be balanced against other planning considerations such as setting of the listed building and Conservation Area; and relationship with the surrounding built form.
- 5.29 The submitted layout plan shows how the majority of the houses do not have a line of sight to the public house. The majority of bedrooms are located to the rear of the dwellings, away from the principal frontages. There are a small number of bedrooms at first floor level to the front of the houses 2 and 6. However, they are sited over 45 and 98 metres from the public house respectively and do not have a line of sight. The majority of living rooms are sited to the front of houses and these do have a line of sight to the car park, as do bedrooms in houses 2 and 6 (oblique angle). However the proposed layout plan identifies the siting of a high wall (planted) along the southern boundary of the car park, which accords with the environmental health officer's recommendation to screen it.
- 5.30 Overall it is considered that the development will deliver an acceptable level of amenity for the future occupants of the houses as required by Policy DP1; and would not be harmful to the operation of the public house.

Affordable Housing

- 5.31 A development of six to ten dwellings in a designated rural area such as this, would normally trigger a requirement for a commuted sum to be made towards the delivery of affordable housing. This requirement is set out in the national Planning Practice Guidance. However national planning policy also provides an incentive for development on sites containing vacant buildings. This is referred to as the 'vacant building credit'.
- 5.32 Where buildings are to be demolished and replaced by new buildings, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floor space of relevant vacant buildings then the Local Planning Authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought.
- 5.33 In this instance the proposed development includes the demolition and conversion of vacant buildings. The existing floor space exceeds the proposed residential floor space and therefore no affordable housing contribution can be sought.

Highways

- 5.34 The Highway Authority's formal advice is awaited although no issues of principle are anticipated.

Biodiversity

- 5.35 The NPPF and Development Policy DP31 relate to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Planning permission should not be granted for development which would cause significant harm to sites and habitat for nature conservation, together with species that are protected or under threat.
- 5.36 The application has been accompanied by a bat survey prepared by John Drewett Ecology. At the time of the survey, bat roosts were identified in one of the portal framed agricultural buildings to be demolished. It is therefore recommended that any works would need to be informed by an ecologist and the necessary licenses.

- 5.37 The National Planning Practice Guidance confirms that assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity. Planning conditions may be appropriate in order to provide for biodiversity management plans where these are needed. In this instance it is considered reasonable to secure the recommendations in the bat survey report and other biodiversity enhancements through a condition requiring the submission and approval of an Ecological Management Plan in order that the site delivers biodiversity enhancements in line with the policy requirements.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That subject to any outstanding consultations permission is **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.
2. The permission hereby granted shall not be undertaken other than in complete accordance with the drawing(s) numbered 2011, 2012, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2045, 2046, and 2047 received by Hambleton District Council on 20 April 2017 unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
3. No above ground construction work shall be undertaken until details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development have been made available on the application site for inspection (and the Local Planning Authority have been advised that the materials are on site) and the materials have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be constructed of the approved materials in accordance with the approved method.
4. Notwithstanding the submitted details and prior to the development commencing, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted scheme shall provide details of the species, numbers and locations of planting, all hard surface materials, timescales for implementation and a maintenance schedule. No part of the development shall be used after the end of the first planting and seeding seasons following the approval of the landscaping scheme, unless the approved scheme has been completed. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years of planting die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced with others of similar size and species unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
5. The development hereby approved shall not be commenced until details of the foul sewage and surface water disposal facilities have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall demonstrate that the surface water can be managed, including surface water as a result of the development, managing the risk associated with surface water from elsewhere and all without increasing the flood risk to existing premises.
6. The use of the development hereby approved shall not be commenced until the foul sewage and surface water disposal facilities have been constructed and brought into use in accordance with the details approved under condition 5 above.
7. The development shall not be commenced until details relating to boundary walls, fences and other means of enclosure for all parts of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

8. The development shall not be commenced until an Ecological Management Plan (EMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The EMP shall include the recommendations set out in the Bat Survey Report, prepared by John Drewett Ecology (dated 14 October 2015), and received by Hambleton District Council on 20 April 2017.
9. No external lighting shall be installed other than in complete accordance with a scheme that has previously been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The reasons for the above conditions are:

1. To ensure compliance with Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and where appropriate as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. In order that the development is undertaken in a form that is appropriate to the character and appearance of its surroundings and in accordance with the Development Plan Policy(ies) DP32.
3. To ensure that the external appearance of the development is compatible with the immediate surroundings of the site and the area as a whole in accordance with Hambleton Local Development Framework Policy CP17.
4. In order to soften the visual appearance of the development and provide any appropriate screening to adjoining properties in accordance with Local Development Framework Policy DP32.
5. In order to avoid the pollution of watercourses and land in accordance with Local Development Framework CP21 and DP43.
6. In order to avoid the pollution of watercourses and land in accordance with Local Development Framework CP21 and DP43.
7. To protect the amenity of the neighbouring residents and to ensure that the development is appropriate to the character and appearance of its surroundings in accordance with the Local Development Framework Policies CP1, DP1, CP17 and DP32.
8. To ensure that the proposed development will not significantly impact on protected species in accordance with Local Development Framework Policies CP16 and DP31.
9. In order that the Local Planning Authority can consider the impact of the proposed lighting scheme and avoid environmental pollution in accordance with Local Development Framework Policies CP1 and DP1.

Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that prior to the initial occupation of any individual dwelling hereby permitted, the following bins and recycling box conforming to European Standard EN840 should be provided by the developer for the exclusive use of the occupants of that dwelling:

1 x 240 litre black wheeled bin for general waste
1 x 240 litre black wheeled bin with a blue lid for mixed household recycling; and
1 x 55 litre blue recycling box for glass bottles and jars.

In order to guarantee EN840 compliance the Council will only collect from bins and boxes sourced from Hambleton District Council - Waste and Streetscene.

If the developer does not pay for bins and boxes, each new resident will be required to pay for them. In the event that no payment is made, the Council will not collect waste and recycling from the dwelling concerned.

Further details of the Council's Waste and Recycling Collection Policy and the charges for bins and boxes is available at www.hambleton.gov.uk or by telephoning 01609 779977.

2. This planning permission is liable to the Community Infrastructure Levy adopted by Hambleton District Council on 7th April 2015.