

Consultation Response from KC, Conservation and Design		
2021/93007 Yew Tree Farm, 63, The Village, Farnley Tyas, Huddersfield, HD4 6UQ		
Listed Building Consent for conversion of existing barn to form 8 dwellings, erection of 10 dwellings, demolition of redundant agricultural buildings and associated works (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)		
Date Responded: 7.10.21	Responding Officer: Sue Brooks	Responding Ref:

Yew Tree Farm is a historic courtyard farmstead situated in the centre of the Farnley Tyas Conservation Area and dating to 1671 and possibly earlier. This farm is a key element of the conservation area, contributing greatly to its significance and characterised by two large stone barns, a smaller former dairy and several cottages. Four of the buildings are Grade II listed, with a curtilage listed house which is believed to date to the late 18th or early 19th century. To the south and west ends of the site are several modern farm buildings, one of which is built around the remains of a historic structure.

The proposal is for the construction of 10 dwellings, the conversion of two listed barns and the former dairy into 8 dwellings, along with demolition and associated works. Planning Permission 2021/92969 for the demolition of buildings on the site has been submitted separately.

Pre-application advice was provided, with the development considered acceptable in principle. However, several comments were made including the request for detailed information and justification to support an application. Where relevant, these are outlined below.

Demolition

The application form refers to the demolition of redundant agricultural buildings, which includes a historic curtilage listed building. The Conservation and Design Team comments have been detailed in the separate application for demolition 2021/92969.

To summarise these comments, the demolition of the modern farm buildings is not of concern, but we do not support the demolition of the curtilage listed house which forms part of the historic farm group and contributes to its character and historic layout. The pre-application advice required clear justification to be set out in the heritage statement in relation to LP35 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF, showing why this demolition is necessary to facilitate the development of the site. No justification has been provided for the demolition and no alternative residential layouts have been explored to retain the house.

Plot 17 (house type 4) is proposed in the design pack as a replacement for this house 'to create a similar character to the existing building.' The proposed building is of a similar scale to the curtilage listed house; however, the context and fenestration are quite different, and the construction of this new house does not justify the loss of a historic building.

We would recommend that this proposal is revisited, with the restoration of the curtilage listed building included in a revised proposal. If access to the new development is an issue, perhaps the access road could be located along the west side of the site to retain this building, which would also reduce the impact of the development on the setting of the church and historic track.

Based on the information provided, the Conservation and Design Team are unable to support the demolition of the curtilage listed house.

Conversion of listed buildings

In the pre-application advice, the applicant was advised to provide full details of works proposed to facilitate the conversion of the listed buildings, both internally and externally, to allow a detailed assessment to be carried out.

The submitted drawings include some existing elevations and plans of the historic buildings. Elevations 1 to 6 are shown on two drawings but there are details missing, with no existing elevations or plans of the dairy (plots 6 to 8 conversions). Proposed elevations have been submitted, although

their orientations are unclear. The house types on the proposed site plan are unclear and difficult to cross reference to the proposed drawings.

The planning statement submitted with this application notes that 'any potential conversions should take account of the historic structures, particularly those that are statutorily designated, and should aim to preserve any particular architectural or aesthetic details or compositions which contribute to the site's current heritage value and that of the conservation area'.

It also states that 'the proposal will maintain and enhance the appearance and character of the Farnley Tyas Conservation Area as it will maintain the listed buildings, still read as a farm, and the use of sympathetic materials and a vernacular architectural style represents a modest infill typical of how the village has developed over time'. It refers to the 'retention and high-quality refurbishment and preservation of the listed buildings.'

It states that the scheme is sensitive and has considered the significance of the site, setting, listed buildings and conservation area, and concludes that 'there are no potential adverse impacts which would outweigh the benefits of the proposed development, let alone significantly or demonstrably so.'

We consider these statements to be incorrect. Extensive alterations are proposed to the listed buildings, with a high degree of subdivision, many new openings inserted into the historic building fabric, and some demolition. The level of detail requested in the pre-application advice has not been provided to allow us to clearly understand the level of impact, extent of alteration or proposed materials, and therefore we are unable to carry out a detailed assessment.

Based on the level of detail provided, the alterations to the listed buildings would lead to less than substantial harm to their significance and harm to the character of the conservation area and this important farm group. The restoration and repair of the listed buildings would clearly be a public benefit if carried out sensitively but there is no justification for the extensive interventions to the buildings and no details to indicate that the refurbishments are of a high quality and not harmful. We consider that the restoration and conversion of the buildings could be carried out in a more sensitive way than proposed and a summary on each listed building conversion has been outlined below:

Barn (house type 11 conversion)

Four separate dwellings are proposed within this barn, which is towards the northern end of the site, with first floors inserted and extensive subdivision. This will result in a loss of openness which is characteristic of this type of farm building and will lead to harm to its significance. We would suggest that the design of the conversion is revisited to retain this character, perhaps with a reduction in the number of units and mezzanines inserted to retain the sense of space.

No assessment has been made to show the impact of the subdivision on the significance of the barn, the level of harm caused and public benefits to outweigh the harm. No details have been submitted to show how the proposed interventions will interact with historic internal details such as trusses and how historic internal features will be retained and incorporated into the proposals.

The removal of the round timber window shutters and timber barn doors on the north-east elevation is proposed, with the insertion of windows within these openings, along with the insertion of new window openings in this elevation. Little consideration has been given to the agricultural character of the building, with these interventions resulting in the loss of the characteristic details of this barn, particularly on this prominent and significant elevation. No justification, materials or details have been submitted.

The alterations to the west elevation also cause harm to the significance of the building. The significance of the mono-pitch stone extensions has not been assessed and their demolition has not

been justified. In addition, the insertion of new doorways with porches and new window openings creates an overly domestic appearance with no consideration given to the agricultural character of the building, and again these have not been justified. No details or materials have been submitted.

The number of proposed roof lights is excessive and is not supported. As above, they do not consider the significance of the building, they have not been justified, and alternative less harmful layouts have not been proposed.

63 and 55 The Village

No alterations appear to be proposed for these cottages. However, work to reinstate historic details and replace uPVC windows with timber windows would be welcomed.

65 The Village and adjoining barn (house type 10 conversion)

The proposal is assumed to retain the house with no restoration or alteration. However, work to reinstate historic details and replace uPVC windows with timber windows would be welcomed.

Proposed plans and elevations have been submitted for the conversion of the adjoining barn, although no existing rear elevation drawing has been submitted so an assessment of the proposed alterations cannot be undertaken adequately, and details on the proposed plans and elevations do not correspond.

Again, the number and position of the proposed new openings and roof lights have not been justified, and in some cases the harm could be reduced by using existing openings which are not shown on the proposed drawings. No details or materials have been submitted and limited consideration has been given to the agricultural character of the building.

The level of subdivision within this building is less than the other barn, however, we have concerns about the insertion of a full first floor, how this will interact with the arched entrance and how it will affect historic internal details such as the timber roof structure.

Former dairy (house type 12 conversion)

No existing elevation drawings have been submitted so an assessment of the proposed alterations cannot be undertaken.

However, the photographs (not annotated) submitted with the application show historic openings which are assumed to be in the rear south-west wall of the former dairy, shown as the front elevation on the proposed drawings. These include a set of mullioned windows with chamfered surrounds and profiled mullions which are likely to date to the 17th or 18th century and have a high level of significance, but are not shown on the proposed drawing.

The external walls of the north-east elevation show architectural detailing and historic openings which add considerable interest to the character and significance of this building. The proposed new openings on this elevation, including fully glazed double doors, do not follow the historic layout or position of former openings, and are inserted without any consideration given to the character and significance of this listed building.

Three small arched windows with chamfered stone surrounds are located on the west elevation and are likely to date to the 17th or 18th century. The insertion of a glazed double door is proposed to replace one of these openings without any assessment of significance or justification for its loss.

As above, the number and position of the proposed new openings and roof lights have not been justified and no consideration has been given to the agricultural character of the building or the historic significance. No details or materials have been submitted, including for the roof covering which at

present is a corrugated sheet roof.

The level of subdivision needs to be assessed and existing drawings submitted, with details of how the internal layout and interventions will affect the surviving historic internal details.

We have concerns about the insensitive alterations to this 19th century building and would recommend that the proposed design is reconsidered.

Based on the information provided, the Conservation and Design Team is unable to assess this part of the application and is therefore unable to support the proposed conversions of the listed buildings.

New dwellings

No elevations or floor plans were submitted in the pre-app, and it was recommended that a traditional farm style dwelling approach is adopted, with scope to incorporate some contemporary design.

The design concept included in the design pack refers to a number of rural and agricultural design characteristics integrated into the house types so that they appear sympathetic to Farnley Tyas Conservation Area. It is unclear how it has been established that the dwellings and layout are appropriate for this location and setting, and how they reflect the historic character of the farm and the wider conservation area. The historic farm group has a high level of significance both within the conservation area and nationally as listed buildings, and the proposed detached houses appears quite suburban in layout and out of character with their setting.

The proposed dwellings include traditional references in terms of the use of natural stone and stone slates, traditional pitched roofs, mullioned windows and gutter corbels. However, design features such as the expanses of glass, large oak framed gables and oak porches, particularly on the south elevations where the new dwellings will be seen from afar, are out of character with the existing farm group and create the impression of an exclusive development in what is and should be a simple vernacular setting.

Our main concerns are the impact of this development on the significance and setting of the historic farmstead itself, the setting of the adjacent church and the historic track to the west of the site, and the character and setting of the conservation area which can be seen from quite a distance from the south.

As previously suggested, the roadway through the site could be repositioned towards the west of the site to reduce the impact of the development on the track and church, with the retention and restoration of the curtilage listed building. Further consideration could also be given in the design of the new dwellings, particularly those on the southern boundary, to reference the existing farm buildings, perhaps with the use of vertical timber cladding. Timber cladding is referred to in the design statement but it is not shown on the proposal drawings.

We understand that there may be a need for enabling development to restore the listed buildings if this is justified, but not at the detriment to their setting and the character of the conservation area.

We would recommend that this element of the proposal is revisited, with more consideration given to the character and setting of this important farm group and the church, including the wider views of the development from within the village and further afield. The farm complex should be redeveloped to retain the legibility of the site as a former agricultural holding.

The Conservation and Design Team is unable to support this proposal based on the designs

and layouts submitted.

Assumed precedents

The Beech Farm and Manor Farm developments are assumed to have been used as precedents to inform the design of this development as they are both in the same conservation area. However, the only listed building at Beech Farm is an early 19th century farmhouse, with the majority of the buildings on this site before redevelopment being modern farm sheds. At Manor Farm only the 1693 barn is listed and most other buildings on site were modern sheds, with some unlisted stone farm buildings. Both farms are set away from the core of the village.

Yew Tree Farm is quite different as it is situated in the heart of the historic village and includes a compact group of listed farm buildings and cottages: barn 1691, cottages late C17/ early C18, barn 1672, barn and weaver's house early to mid C19, perhaps earlier, and an early C19 curtilage listed house with the remains of attached barn. This group is far more significant than the other two farms and is adjacent to other listed buildings at 51/53 The Village (1678) and St Lucius's Church. Due to the much higher level of significance these potential precedents are considered to have limited relevance in this instance.

Landscaping

The pre-application advice recommended that a full hard and soft landscaping scheme is submitted, including full details of boundary treatments. A low stone boundary was recommended on the rear boundary, with soft planting on the rural edges.

The proposed boundary treatments are dry stone walling, fencing and estate railing. Dry stone walling is suitable here as this is the typical vernacular boundary feature found within the village.

The use of solid vertical boarded 1.8m high fencing is of great concern, particularly around the north-east facing gardens of the barn (house type 11), the former dairy (house type 12) and the garden of 65 The Village. The historic yard in the north-east corner of the site is in prominent position within the village and is characterised by its openness and stone boundary wall. The subdivision of this space with domestic fencing would cause a high level of harm to the setting of the barn by altering the character of the space and its historic relationship to the farm buildings. No justification has been submitted for this and the fencing should be omitted in this area so that this historic space is retained. In other areas, the high fencing should be omitted and replaced with more appropriate boundary treatments such as low stone walls.

A car park is proposed on the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to the proposed site access and in an open space between the two large, listed barns. The creation of parking for 13 cars in this prominent location will harm the setting of the farm group and we would suggest that alternatives are considered where the impact is lower, perhaps to the rear of the listed farm group.

Policies

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021), requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

A heritage assessment has been included within the application as an appendix and describes the significance of the heritage assets, but the Planning Statement states that it does not form part of the planning submission and it does not appear to have been used to inform the design of the conversions and proposed development.

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State 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.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. In this case the designated heritage assets are the listed buildings, curtilage listed building and conservation area.

This proposal, in particular the extensive alterations to the listed buildings, demolition of the curtilage listed building and landscaping proposals, does not appear to consider the requirements of Section 66 (1) and Section 72 (1). Although the listed buildings are retained (other than the curtilage listed house), the level of subdivision and alterations to the historic fabric of these buildings does not preserve many of the architectural features of interest. The landscaping and car parking alters and detracts from the setting of the farm group, and the proposal overall does not enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area as discussed in the sections above.

Paragraph 200 requires any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), to require clear and convincing justification.

The application has not adequately considered the impact the proposal will have on the listed buildings and conservation area and where justification has been provided it is limited. The proposed alterations to the listed buildings are particularly harmful and this harm has not been acknowledged.

Paragraph 202 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 benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The extensive alterations to the listed buildings, landscaping proposals including high fencing around small gardens, the demolition of the curtilage listed house and the suburban style development all lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the historic farm group and character of the conservation area, with substantial harm caused to the curtilage listed building.

The Planning Statement states that the proposal is a sensitive scheme which will maintain and enhance the appearance and character of the conservation area, preserving, retaining, and enhancing the listed buildings, and it considers these to be benefits to the village. It concludes that there are no potential adverse impacts which would outweigh the benefits of the proposed development. It has not acknowledged or assessed the harm which has been summarised in the comments above or demonstrated public benefits which would outweigh the harm.

Policy LP24 of the Kirklees Local Plan requires the form, scale, layout and details of all development to respect and enhance the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape.

Although the proposed new buildings make some reference to the local vernacular, the application does not respect the character of the farm group and wider setting. Details are summarised in the comments above within this response.

Finally, Policy LP35 requires development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) to preserve or enhance the significance of the asset. Proposals should retain those elements of the historic environment which contribute to the distinct identity of the Kirklees area and ensure they are appropriately conserved and conserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Based on the information provided, the proposal is not considered to preserve or enhance the significance of the listed buildings or conservation area, and details of this are summarised in the sections above.

Summary

In summary, the Conservation and Design Team are likely to support the conversion of the listed buildings in principle, along with a well-designed residential development that respects and enhances the character of the conservation area, wider landscape, and setting of the listed buildings both within and around the site.

However, the information provided for the conversion of the listed buildings, including existing and proposed details, is limited, and the proposals clearly cause harm to the significance of these buildings. The designs need to be revisited to minimise the harm or ideally enhance the buildings, any harm should be justified and mitigated as far as possible. More detail needs to be provided on the drawings and in a supporting statement, including construction details, sections, window designs and materials, and how the proposals will affect the significance of the interior and exterior of the listed buildings. Based on the current submission, we are unable to support this proposal.

The demolition of the curtilage listed house has not been justified and no alternatives have been considered to allow its restoration and incorporation into the wider development. and therefore we are also unable to support this.

The layout of the new dwellings and landscaping is quite suburban in nature, and we feel that this development does not complement the character of this significant farm group or respect the setting of the adjacent church or wider conservation area.

The planning statement quotes planning policies but does not assess the harm or provide public benefits to outweigh this harm.

We would recommend that the applicant revisits the proposal, with a proper assessment of the development against the relevant historic environment planning policies. The Historic Environment Appraisal (August 2016) which has been submitted as Appendix 3 of the Planning Statement, should be used as a reference to inform the design of the new buildings as well as the restoration and conversion of the historic structures on the site.

In its current form, the Conservation and Design Team are unable to support this application and we would request that the application is revisited with consideration given to the comments above.

We would also suggest that the applicants refer to the following guidance documents:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/adapting-traditional-farm-buildings/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/>