



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2022

by Mark Caine BSc (Hons) MTPL MRTPI LSRA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W9500/W/22/3296865

Faceby Lodge Farm, Faceby Lodge Track, Faceby, Middlesbrough TS9 7DP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr S.J and Mrs J Monk against the decision of North York Moors National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NYM/2021/0549/FL, dated 12 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Change of use of farm buildings (including selective demolition of redundant structures) to create 10No units, comprising 9No holiday units and 1No manager's unit'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing buildings and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a group of unused farm buildings that sit within a prominent position on gently rising agricultural land. They are accessed via a long private track off the A172 highway. The farm complex is surrounded by open fields, with Faceby Manor, a Grade II listed building situated to the south-west. The surrounding area is therefore predominantly open countryside, characterised by grassed fields and an expansive rolling landscape. The site is also located within the North York Moors National Park (National Park).
4. The Authority has identified the appeal buildings as a non-designated heritage asset. The appellants' heritage statement agrees with this view, and I have no substantive reason to question this. Although other buildings have been added to the site over the years, the farm buildings are generally 19th Century. Insofar as this appeal is concerned, I therefore consider that the significance of the heritage asset derives in a large part from its traditional construction, materials, form and detailing, honestly reflecting in the present its historic origins as a complex of agricultural farm buildings within the National Park landscape.
5. The principle of development for the conversion of this range of buildings to provide holiday and managers accommodation has already been accepted by the Authority under the previous planning permission on the site (Ref: NYM/2018/0843/FL). It has also been put to me that the massing of the buildings would be retained, and that the link across the courtyard and

additional built elements, along with the design of the proposed external spaces, landscaping and car parking are the same as in the previously approved scheme. Furthermore, there is little firm evidence before me to demonstrate that an additional 2 holiday units, from what was previously granted permission, would be overly intensive due to associated activity levels and an increase in traffic movements.

6. Nonetheless, the proposal would include alterations to a number of the existing openings and the insertion of new ones. I appreciate that the current scheme seeks to subdivide some sections of the buildings that benefit from planning permission, and omits previously approved demolition works, thereby maintaining the shape and form of the granary buildings. There is also some additional building work proposed to enable a third unit within the 'L' shaped stable block. As such there is a need to provide additional openings to serve the increased number of rooms.
7. However, in doing so, this would result in a proliferation of openings and glazing, including an increased number of new roof lights, which would fail to respect the existing solid to void ratio throughout the buildings. As the Authority point out, there are also parts of the proposal, including the northern elevation of unit 8, where existing window openings are proposed to be increased in height and altered to doors, or totally bricked up and replaced by repositioned doorways.
8. The submitted plans also show a private patio area and a recessed 2 storey height wall within the south-west elevation of the Granary Building. This would result in part of its eaves level not aligning with that of the remainder of this building and being at a significantly raised height, with 2 large windows and a mass of brickwork extending up to a high level. This would sharply contrast with the slate roof materials and create an awkward juxtaposition that would appear conspicuous in its context.
9. Furthermore, the first-floor balcony to the south-east elevation of the Granary Building and the associated expanses of first floor glazing, including the patio doors and glass feature wall, when combined with the ground floor windows and doors in this elevation would harmfully alter the character of this simple agricultural-like building.
10. I recognise that there would be little further encroachment into the countryside from what was previously approved. However, given the proposed and previously approved removal of existing redundant structures, such as the storage shed, open storage barns and agricultural sheds, the numerous additional window and roof openings would be apparent, and prominently lit up at night. Given its prominent location, surrounded by open land, its discordant effect on the rural character of the area would be plainly visible from long range views along the private access track, from the A172 highway and from a number of neighbouring properties.
11. The design reasons for the additional windows and balcony and resubmitting the planning application are acknowledged. These include the improved daylighting of the rooms and taking advantage of the views from the site. On balance, however, and taking into account all of the evidence before me, I consider that the proposed alterations would provide an insensitive scheme of conversion, and a group of buildings that would be domestic in their appearance. This would erode its historic agricultural significance, causing an

unacceptable scale of harm to the character and appearance of the existing buildings and the surrounding area. As a consequence, the proposal would also fail to conserve and enhance the landscape, cultural heritage and scenic beauty of the National Park.

12. It would therefore conflict with Policies CO12 and Local Plan Strategic Policy C and Strategic Policy J of the North York Moors National Park Authority Local Plan 2020 (Local Plan). These only permit the conversion of buildings in the open countryside where, amongst other things, the building is appropriately sized for its intended use without the need for significant alterations, extensions or other new buildings. They also require proposals to be of a high-quality design that reflect and complement the architectural character and form of the original building, and do not lead to unacceptable harm to the local landscape character.
13. In addition, the proposal would not accord with the design objectives within Paragraphs 134 and 135 of the Framework. These seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme.

Other Matters

14. Neither main party has raised any objections to the effect of the proposed development on the setting of Faceby Manor, a Grade II listed building. In reaching my decision I have had special regard to the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the setting of these listed buildings. In these respects, and based on the evidence before me, I agree that the proposal would not harm the significance and setting of these heritage assets. On this basis, I am satisfied that it preserves those interests.
15. I have been made aware that there is no record of flooding at the farm buildings, and that there is an existing mains electrical service and water supply and septic tank for sewerage. However, these matters were not contentious within the appeal, and the lack of harm in these respects does not weigh in favour of the proposal. It has also not been demonstrated that conversion of the buildings to form 7 no. holiday units and 1 no. managers unit would be financially unviable, and that the design and amount of units proposed is the only way to bring the site forward to provide such accommodation. As such, these factors do not overcome or outweigh the harm that I have identified above.
16. The credentials and experience of the appellants' architect, and examples of other schemes that he has worked on are noted. I have also had regard to the Authority's pre-application enquiry response. However, these matters have had no bearing on my decision as I have only had regard to the planning merits of the proposal that is before me.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, having taken account of the development plan as a whole, along with all other relevant material considerations, the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Mark Caine INSPECTOR