



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 3 October 2023

by Mr R Walker BA HONS DIPTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 November 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/N4720/W/23/3324162

Acacia Farm, Woodlands Drive, Rawdon, Leeds BD10 0PT

- 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 Mrs Alison Roberts against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/07732/FU, dated 21 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 27 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of agricultural buildings to form three new dwellings; Demolition of existing barn, cattle shed and outbuilding; Associated alterations including new windows and doors, new roof lights, single storey extensions and new flat roof to stables building, new timber cladding and balcony with stairs to lower barn, erection of new detached garage outbuildings and lambing shed, alterations to re-instate access.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/N4720/Y/23/3324296

Acacia Farm, Woodlands Drive, Rawdon, Leeds BD10 0PT

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Alison Roberts against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/07733/LI, dated 21 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 28 April 2023.
 - The works proposed are the conversion of existing agricultural buildings to form three dwellings; Demolition of existing barn, cattle shed and outbuilding; Associated internal and external alterations including new windows and doors, new roof lights, single storey extensions and new flat roof to stables building, new timber cladding and balcony with stairs to lower barn, erection of new detached garage outbuildings and lambing shed.
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Decisions

1. **Appeal A:** The appeal is dismissed.
2. **Appeal B:** The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. These decisions address both planning and listed building consent appeals for the same site and for the same scheme. The remit of both regimes is different, and the main issues identified below relate to either the planning appeal (Appeal A), the listed building appeal (Appeal B), or both. To reduce repetition and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals together within a single decision letter, using the descriptions in the banner headings above from the decision notices, which succinctly describe the proposals.
4. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:

- Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) and any relevant development plan policies (Appeal A);
- Whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building or its setting, known as Acacia Farm, including farm buildings and farmhouse, and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Rawdon Cragg Wood Conservation Area (Both Appeals);
- The effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding Special Landscape Area (Appeal A); and
- Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal (Appeal A).

Reasons

The appeal site and the proposal

6. The appeal site includes a range of mostly vacant buildings situated in the Green Belt, within the countryside, in a locally designated Special Landscape Area (SLA), and within the Rawdon Cragg Wood Conservation Area (CA). Acacia Farm, including farm buildings and farmhouse are a grade II listed building and comprise of a former estate farm, estimated to date to 1784, which was altered and extended in 1847 with later extensions and alterations. The building group is positioned on a sloping site and laid out around two courtyards.
7. The proposal involves, amongst other things, the creation of three dwellings. One dwelling would be created from the stables and coach house buildings and would include two extensions. A second dwelling would be created from the southern courtyards northern and eastern farm building range (hereafter referred to as the 'mid barn'). A third dwelling would be created from the southern courtyards southern L-shaped range (hereafter referred to as the lower barn). The building on the western side of the southern courtyard would be replaced by a new garage building. The former hay barn and a dilapidated cattle shed would be demolished and a new 'lambing shed' erected toward the top of the field. The farmhouse building and its existing use would not be altered.

Inappropriate development (Appeal A)

8. Paragraph 147 of the Framework states that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt is inappropriate development. However, the Framework lists certain forms of development which are not regarded as inappropriate. The proposal does not fall entirely within one specific category from the list of exceptions in the Framework.
9. Paragraph 149 of the Framework states that buildings for agriculture and forestry are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt (149 a)). It also states that the extension or alteration of a building, provided that it does not

result in disproportionate additions to the original building, would not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt (149 c)). Moreover, the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces, would also not be regarded as inappropriate development (149 d)). In addition, paragraph 150 d) of the Framework states that the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction would also not be inappropriate development, provided that they preserve openness.

10. Policy N33 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) also sets out exceptions for development in the Green Belt. This includes the construction of new buildings for purposes of agriculture and forestry and the re-use of buildings, where all the detailed criteria of Policy GB4 are satisfied. The detailed criteria within Policy GB4 are not fully consistent with the Framework but broadly align with its objectives.
11. The proposed 'lambing shed' would be used as a field shelter by sheep owned by a tenanted farmer that would graze the land. It would thus constitute a building used for agriculture and would therefore not conflict with paragraph 149 a) of the Framework. Having considered that the 'lambing shed' falls under paragraph 149 a) of the Framework, no other aspect of the scheme would fall to be assessed under paragraph 149 d) as other aspects of the proposal would involve a new use.
12. The appellant calculates that the proposal would result in a net volume reduction of 179m³ and a reduction in hardstanding of approximately 1800m² from the existing situation and I have no reason to dispute these figures. The proposal would therefore not conflict with paragraph 149 c) of the Framework in so far as it relates to this criterion.
13. The proposal would also involve the re-use of buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction. As such, in accordance with paragraph 150 (d), it is necessary to consider whether this would preserve the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The reduction in volume of built form and area of hardstanding would have a positive impact spatially on the Green Belt. However, visual impacts also form part of the concept of openness of the Green Belt, and the site and the existing buildings are highly visible from the nearby bridleway, and to a lesser degree, Woodlands Drive.
14. The main building group is positioned adjacent to the pasture field and the former hay barn and cattle shed to be demolished are both nearby, such that they do not encroach significantly into the countryside. Collectively, they appear of an agricultural type of use and appear to naturally spill into, and assimilate with, the pasture land.
15. The eastern track would be grassed over and assimilated into the gardens. However, the gardens and associated domestic paraphernalia would have an overtly domesticated appearance encroaching within the countryside even if appropriate boundary treatments were secured. This would be in stark contrast to the present arrangement which maintains an agricultural character. This would be exacerbated by the proposed extensions which would push out to the east and north, particularly the eastern extension which would be visible in public views. Light spill from the buildings would accentuate this contrast. As such, the nature of three residential properties, in comparison with the existing

arrangement, would have a more intense visual impact on the openness of the area. In these respects, it would not assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

16. The Council has raised concerns regarding the potential reinstatement of an access track to the north. However, the appellant has indicated that this would be maintained on a like for like basis. In the absence of any firm details to the contrary, I have no reason to consider the maintenance of the existing track to the north, on a like for like basis, would have an impact on the openness of the green belt. However, the absence of harm in relation to this matter does not alter or outweigh my findings above.
17. I therefore find that in visual terms the proposal would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt when assessed against Policies GB4 and N33 of the UDP and paragraph 150 of the Framework. These seek, amongst other things, to safeguard the Green Belt from encroachment.

Heritage Assets (Both Appeals)

Special interest and significance (heritage assets)

18. The listed building includes the farmhouse, stables and coach house buildings and the mid barn building. Other buildings within the group were specifically excluded from the listing.
19. The northern courtyard contains the earlier buildings and is entered underneath a decorative cast-iron arched overthrow with a central lantern with coach/cartwheel decorations to the spandrels. This connects the farmhouse to the attractive northern stable range. The former stables are designed in a classical style and have a striking entrance formed by a large arched opening with rusticated voussoirs and a keystone. Set within the recessed entrance are three doors leading into the different sections of the building. The high quality of detail within the entrance, and more generally in the stable range, is impressive.
20. Even though it is a classical inspired design in the main, the traditional proportional dominance of solid wall over openings of the former stables' elevations, and its unbroken roof slopes, reflects that of a rural farm building. The coach house/cart shed building does not share the same level of architectural interest as the stables range and it has been more heavily altered. Nonetheless, the dominance of solid wall over openings and largely unbroken roof slopes that characterise traditional rural farm buildings are also reflected in the coach house/cart shed building.
21. The building group has been much altered and extended over the years and includes more utilitarian structures of a more modern appearance to the south of the upper courtyard. In this regard, the appellant's Heritage Statement has sought to categorise the individual buildings and their relative levels of significance.
22. Buildings 1 and 2 (the stables range) were categorised as being of high significance, including for their high-quality design, internal fixtures and fittings. Building 3 refers to the former coach house/cart shed attached in the northern courtyard and is a later addition with part breezeblock walling and was categorised as being of low significance. Building 4 (the farmhouse) was

categorised as being of moderate significance due to the extent of alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries. Buildings 5 and 6 refer to the southern courtyards northern and eastern 19th century farm building range and were considered of moderate-high significance due to the historical and surviving architectural interest.

23. Buildings 7-10 were excluded from the listing but fall within its setting. Buildings 7 and 9 were both later additions to the east and west side of the southern courtyard and have no internal historical features and were considered of negligible significance. Buildings 8 (the southern farm building) and 10 (the former hay barn) are later additions, have a utilitarian agricultural character and were considered to be of neutral-detrimental significance.
24. I largely agree with these categorisations of the different buildings. However, I find that the former hay barn and the southern farm building have a neutral level of significance rather than neutral-detrimental. Whilst of a functional form, they are of a design, scale and location that sit comfortably in the setting of the listed building and the rural roots of the building group. Moreover, they provide a historical narrative to the site's former use.
25. The list description confirms that Acacia Farm, including the farm buildings and farmhouse is listed at Grade II for its historical interest as it "is a good example of a late-C18 estate farm with later phased development that reflects the rise of the C19 merchant class and their aspirations to emulate the estates of the landed gentry". It also confirms that it was listed for its architectural interest as "the buildings were designed to impress and incorporate a level of architectural detailing and aesthetic treatment well above the purely functional; the farm was altered and extended in the mid-C19 by the notable regional architect John Clark and is a good example of his work in adapting and remodelling earlier buildings; despite some later alteration the buildings survive well overall and retain a wealth of features".
26. The building group, its layout around two courtyards, the contrasting characteristics between the buildings, its position and setting adjacent to the access drive, bridleway, pasture fields and woodland, all make a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building in providing a historical narrative to the site's former use.
27. In so far as it relates to these appeals, the significance of the listed building, is largely derived from its architectural and historic qualities as a late 18th century estate farm with its preserved courtyard layout and the richness of detail of its northern courtyard buildings in particular the northern stables range. It also lies in its historical and architectural qualities from its later 19th century phases of development, which includes alterations and extensions by the architect John Clark.
28. The CA covers a broad rural suburb of Victorian villas, woodland areas, and fields. Its character and appearance, in so far as it relates to these appeals is largely derived from the surviving woodland and vernacular buildings of farmsteads and cottage terraces. These recall an earlier landscape in contrast to the Victorian villas. The appeal buildings have been identified within the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a Landmark Building. The heritage interest and value of the appeal buildings to the historic agricultural character of this part of the CA positively contribute to its character

and appearance as a whole, and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

Appeal proposal and effects

29. The proposed conversion of the stable and coach house buildings would involve an orangery style extension and an orangery feature within the internal courtyard. With their roof lantern features and large expanse of glazing they would have an overtly domestic appearance. This would be at odds with the agrarian and equine character, and solid to void ratio, of the host buildings. I accept that such orangery features are found elsewhere on existing and historical residential properties within the CA. However, they are not features associated with stable and coach house buildings, no matter their grandeur or historical occupation in part by workers. Moreover, the proposed extension to the north, with its wide double garage, covered porch and patio doors would have a somewhat suburban appearance that would not assimilate well with the agrarian and equine character of the existing building. This harm would be exacerbated by the layout of the extensions which would push the built form outward to the north and east away from the tightly knit courtyard layout.
30. The orangery within the northern courtyard would replace a building of low significance. As such, there would be some residual harm from the loss of this building. There would be some benefits from the proposed flat roof arrangement, which would better reveal the upper portions of the stable building range, including the oculus windows. It would also involve the restoration of two ground floor windows in the stable building. However, the extent that this would be a benefit is weakened by the contrived bisection of these two windows by the flat roof.
31. The proposal seeks to fill the impressive large arched opening within the stables range with glazing. The plans before me show multi-paned units. This would result in an overly fussy and prominent feature that would impede and detract from views of the architectural detailing within the arch. There have been discussions between the parties regarding 'frameless' glazing. However, I have no substantive details of such glazing before me and how it would be installed within the opening. Given the high degree of architectural and historical significance of this opening it is not appropriate for such details to be reserved by way of a condition were I minded to allow the scheme.
32. I also have concerns regarding the fenestration and roof lights within the stables and coach house and also the mid barn range. Even if I accept that all the timber windows and doors need replacing, the use of the proposed aluminium windows and doors, even from a range marketed as a 'Heritage Range', would not be an authentic replacement of the windows and doors on this particular listed building. In addition, the evidence before me does not include detailed cross sections of the existing and proposed windows within the openings on this listed building.
33. Moreover, from the evidence before me, the texture of the frame material would not have the same patina as traditionally painted wood and would not weather or bed down in the same way as timber. In this regard, it would not offer the important visual subtleties of texture that traditional timber carpentry, glazing methods and finishes offer. Consequently, they would be clearly identifiable as non-traditional modern fixtures, and the combination of these elements would result in fenestration that appears jarringly out of place on this

listed building. Where timber doors are proposed to be replaced with timber doors on a like for like basis, this would be in keeping with the rural architectural and historical interest of the listed building.

34. The rooflights proposed are 'conservation style'. However, I do not have full details of the rooflights, including cross sections of how they would sit within the slopes with stone slate and whether they would sit flush or protrude above the roof slopes or the extent of exposed flashing. Even so, the number of roof lights proposed on the stables and coach house and mid barn would impart a more overtly residential and domestic character. In this regard, the erosion of their distinctive unbroken roofs and solid to void ratio would harm part of their special interest and agrarian and equine character.
35. The proposal would separate the lower barn from the mid barn by demolishing a section of the lower barn. This would better reveal the original gable end of the mid barn and its openings. Moreover, as a small gap is proposed, the overall layout of the buildings around two courtyards would be weakened but to a very small degree. Therefore, on balance I do not find harm from this design approach.
36. The lower barn is a large utilitarian former agricultural building and I have concerns regarding the overtly domestic design and pattern of the windows, and the size of the balcony with its external staircase. The appellant describes how the proposed roller system would work so that it would be invisible internally, and externally when closed. However, there are no detailed drawings of the system before me from which a detailed assessment can be made. Moreover, given that the windows would provide light, natural ventilation and views to the south they would be open regularly during the day. It is put to me that in such a scenario they would have the appearance of a sliding barn door being open. However, given the size, number, and position of the windows on the first floor this design ethos would not succeed, and they would appear contrived.
37. Even with an appropriate material finish, the overall design and treatment of the first floor south and east elevations in particular would therefore intrude into the setting of the listed building. The dominant and overly domestic appearance of the resulting dwelling from the design treatment would erode the contribution that the agricultural buildings make to the significance and special interest of the listed building as a historical narrative to the sites former use.
38. The appellant's Heritage Statement identifies further harm arising from the changes to the floor plan and circulation, including the formation of some smaller rooms such as bathrooms and bedrooms. Additional harm is identified from the new garaging range. I do not disagree with these findings, although I disagree with the categorisation of the changes to the floor plans as being reversible therefore having a limited impact. The proposals would result in the creation of a new use with new homes being created. As such, whilst the alterations may theoretically be reversible, there is no evidence that such a prospect is likely.
39. The existing and proposed floor plans and external elevations are drawn at 1:100 scale. However, there are no detailed drawings at a more in-depth scale comprehensively showing the full extent of the works/development proposed, such as the full details of how the building would be insulated, heated, cooled

and services added. It is my judgment, notwithstanding the other documents and information provided within the submissions, that there is not the appropriate level of detail before me to provide the clear and convincing justification for the changes proposed. This adds to my concerns regarding the final finish of any conversion.

40. Change to a heritage asset does not automatically result in harm to its significance. It can also be positive or neutral and it only becomes harmful if the identified special interest is eroded. Also, conservation is an active process of managing change to heritage assets in ways that sustain, reveal, or reinforce their heritage interests. I am mindful that any change of use of the buildings to a residential use will result in change. Moreover, there are positive heritage impacts from the repair of the listed building and securing a long-term future use of the building group. Such matters are supported by national and local planning policies and guidance.
41. I recognise that the buildings are redundant and, in parts, in a perilous state and must be made good and found a use as soon as possible. The structural reports outline that this could be undertaken without significant rebuilding works. It is therefore understandable that there is support locally for the scheme. There are also clearly well thought out and sensitive aspects of the design, such as the retention of the cast iron structures to form the study and snug in the stables range and restoring historical openings. However, the proposals taken as a whole would recast the buildings in an overtly residential guise and an extended format that would greatly diminish its authentic agrarian and equestrian character.
42. The proposed gardens to the eastern side would result in the subdivision of part of the field. There would be a continued agricultural use of the remaining part of the field and from the proposed 'lambing shed'. However, the gardens would likely introduce domestic paraphernalia into the hitherto open field, further eroding the contribution that the agrarian setting makes to the significance of the building group.
43. I therefore find that, even with its positive elements, the proposal would have a harmfully erosive effect on the architectural and historic special interest of the listed building and its setting. As such, the proposal would not conserve this designated heritage asset in a manner appropriate to its significance.
44. Part of the character and significance of the CA is the high quality of the historic buildings it contains. This includes the appeal buildings, which can be seen from the public bridleway and to a lesser extent Woodlands Drive, along with private views. In this regard, given my findings above in relation to the listed building, I also consider that the proposal would, in turn, harm the character and significance of the CA. Consequently, whilst the magnitude of the harm may be concluded to be minor adverse in the context of the CA as a whole, it would nevertheless fail to preserve it.
45. Drawing the above together, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building and its setting, and would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the CA. As a result, the expectations of the Act have not been met and the proposal would harm the significance of these designated heritage assets.

Public benefits and heritage balance

46. Paragraph 199 of the Framework advises that great weight be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
47. With reference to paragraphs 201 and 202 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. In this instance, the harm to the listed building and the CA would be 'less than substantial'. Nevertheless, any harm is of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.
48. The main heritage benefit would be the conservation of the buildings following the extensive repairs, including some of the sensitive adaptation work to accommodate the change of use of the buildings. The buildings are mostly redundant and decaying but the structural reports indicates that the buildings are sufficiently structurally sound that they can be converted. As such, the new residential uses would secure their long-term conservation with an efficient use of the buildings.
49. There is support from many local residents for the proposals. The scheme would provide social benefits from three additional dwellings boosting the supply of housing, including from a self-build home for the appellant's family. Moreover, the future occupiers would bolster the demand for local services and facilities. The occupation of the buildings would bring economic benefits too from the spending of future occupiers in the local area, as well as from the conversion of the buildings. This would stimulate employment, the commissioning of services, and the retention of building craft skills. There would also be social and economic benefits from the retention of sheep on the land and its ongoing agricultural use, even on a small scale.
50. The local environment would be uplifted by the conservation of the buildings, as well as their new use, removal of concrete hardstanding and increased soft landscaping. The appellant intends to plant a significant number of trees and hedging plants and install bird boxes. However, I am mindful that the redundant nature of the existing buildings will have a biodiversity value. In this regard, the introduction of a more intensive and active use, and the associated artificial light spill, will influence the extent of any biodiversity benefits. Accordingly, the absence of full details to quantify the extent of any biodiversity net gain that the proposal aspires to, moderates the weight I afford this matter.
51. The proposal would also result in private benefits to the occupiers of the properties in providing high quality accommodation, with scenic views in an idyllic rural location not far from services and facilities. The stables and coach house building are intended to be occupied by the appellant's family and the extensions and alterations would meet their needs. I afford these personal benefits limited weight.

52. The online Planning Practice Guidance advises¹ that harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused, and provided the harm is minimised. I accept that residential uses are likely to be the optimal viable use for the listed building. I'm told that the proposed extensions would mitigate the need for modern day subdivisions and partitions within the listed building. However, there is no substantive evidence of this, and I am not persuaded that the design, size and location of extensions are necessary given the size of the existing buildings.
53. The viability evidence provided as part of the appeals does not include detailed financial evidence. I note the sensitivity of financial information and the appellant's reasons for not providing such information. However, from the evidence before me I cannot conclude that the proposed scheme, its density, complete with extensions and its alterations proposed, are necessary to make the scheme viable. In this regard, there is no substantive evidence that a more sensitive scheme could not maintain any assumed returns or make the proposals unviable. In this regard, clear and convincing justification for the harm that would occur to the significance of the designated heritage asset because of the proposal, has not been provided.
54. Overall, even though the heritage and public benefits weigh strongly in favour of the proposal, they would not outweigh the great weight that I attach to the harm I have found. As such, the proposal would not comply with paragraph 202 of the Framework. It follows that it would also be contrary to the requirements of Policies GP5, N15, N17, N19, N23, N24, N36, and N37A of the UDP, Policies P10, P11 and P12 of the CS, and the guidance in the CA Appraisal and Management Plan in so far as they relate to this main issue. These are broadly consistent with the Framework and say, amongst other things, where the original use of a listed building is no longer required, proposals for a change of use will be favourably considered providing that the new and adapted use does not diminish the special architectural or historic value of the building and its setting.
55. The Council have also referred to Policy N25 of the UDP in its second reason for refusal of the planning permission. However, this relates specifically to the design of boundaries of sites. In this regard, I have no reason to find that the boundaries would not be designed in a positive manner, despite my concerns regarding the effects on the character and appearance of the surrounding area from the proposed gardens. This policy has not subsequently been determinative in my assessment.

Special Landscape Area (Appeal A)

56. The CA is located within the wider locally designated SLA. As such, this part of the SLA is also characterised by the distinctly rural qualities of its fields, woodland, vernacular buildings of farmsteads and cottage terraces and Victorian villas that form part of the CA's character. Accordingly, given my findings in relation to the listed building and the CA, it follows that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the rural qualities of the surrounding SLA. In the context of the SLA as a whole, the degree of harm would be minor.

¹ Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 18a-015-20190723

57. I therefore find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding SLA. I therefore find conflict with the requirements of Policies GP5, N23, N24, N36, N37 and N37A of the UDP, Policies P10 and P12 of the CS, and paragraph 174 of the Framework in so far as they relate to this main issue. These say, amongst other things, that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Other considerations (Appeal A)

58. I have had regard to all the public and private benefits previously outlined in my public benefits and heritage balance as 'other considerations' in relation to Appeal A. These weigh strongly in favour of the scheme. The absence of harm in relation to any other considerations, such as highways safety, weighs neither for nor against the proposal.

59. The Council has raised concerns regarding whether there is a need for the proposed 'lambing shed'. Policy N36 of the UDP says, amongst other things, that proposals for the change of use of rural buildings will be supported if replacement farm buildings will not be required. However, I am mindful that the proposal would involve the demolition of existing buildings, including the former hay barn, which is used by the sheep that graze the field as a shelter. In this regard similar provision would be maintained but in a new position. In the context of the site's redevelopment, and its objectives to find an alternative use for the listed building, whether the lower barn could also be theoretically used for agricultural purposes, does not weigh against the proposal.

Planning balance and very special circumstances (Appeal A)

60. The Framework states, at paragraph 147, that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 of the Framework advises that substantial weight should be given to that harm and very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Although the wording is different Policy N33 of the UDP is broadly consistent with these provisions of the Framework and also refers to very special circumstances.

61. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In addition, the proposal would not preserve the listed building or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Moreover, the heritage and public benefits would not outweigh the great weight that I attach to the harm to these heritage assets. Furthermore, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding SLA.

62. The 'other considerations', which include all the public and private benefits previously outlined in my public benefits and heritage balance, weigh strongly in favour of the proposal. However, these would not be enough to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and the other harms identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development do not exist. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with Policy N33 of the UDP or paragraphs 147 or 148 of the Framework. Moreover, although I do not afford it full weight, the proposal

would also conflict with Policy GB4 of the UDP which says, amongst other things, that planning permission for change of use of a building in the green belt will not be granted unless any physical changes to the building and its curtilage would maintain or enhance the openness, character and appearance of the green belt.

Other Matters

63. Concerns regarding the processing of the applications, including matters relating to the assessment in the officer's report or communication are not issues that I can assess as part of these appeals. The appellant has made changes to the initial scheme with a view to finding a solution. However, I have considered the proposal before me on its own merits and the validity or not of any concerns regarding the processing of the applications do not alter the effects of the proposal before me.

Conclusions

64. **Appeal A:** Although there would be benefits associated with the proposal, I consider that there are no material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, of such weight to lead me to the conclusion that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
65. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, Appeal B is dismissed.

Mr R Walker

INSPECTOR