



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2025

by Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2750/W/25/3366232

Park Farm, Main Street, Womersley, Selby, North Yorkshire DN6 9BG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Park Farm Womersley Development Ltd against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref is ZG2024/0729/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Conversion of barn to a dwelling house'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Park Farm Womersley Development Ltd against North Yorkshire Council. This application is subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The description of development, as outlined within the application form, does not include one of the elements of the proposal, particularly the pole barn, as shown on the submitted plans.
4. The information submitted at the application stage regarding the pole barn is limited and the plans lack sufficient details, such as the elevations of the pole barn. Whilst additional information regarding the pole barn has been provided at the appeal stage, I am mindful that this was not before the Council at the time of its decision and thus third parties have not been consulted on it.
5. The appellant has submitted additional information at the appeal stage which seeks to address the Council's concerns, particularly with regard to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the effect on the tree. The Council has had the chance to comment on the additional documents. Although the appeal's process should not be used to evolve a scheme, I am satisfied that in this case, given my overall decision, accepting the landscaping plan and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement (AIA & AMS) would not prejudice other interested parties. Therefore, I have taken into account the appellant's latest submissions in my assessment below.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:

- Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
- The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the effect on the tree, and the Womersley Conservation Area (WCA);
- Whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants; and
- If the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

7. Paragraph 154 of the Framework lists the types of development that are not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt. These include, for the purposes of the appeal scheme, d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces, and h) iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.
8. Policies SP2 and SP3 of the Selby District Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 (CS) reflect the aims of the Framework with regard to Green Belt.
9. It is accepted by both the appellant and the Council that the conversion of the main barn, which comprises three interconnected buildings, to a dwelling, falls within paragraph 154 h) iv. exception of the Framework. Given the evidence before me, including the submitted structural report dated 10 July 2024, I am satisfied that the proposed conversion would re-use buildings of permanent and substantial construction, thus it would not be inappropriate development.
10. The Council's concerns relate to the re-siting of the existing pole barn. The pole barn is proposed to be re-sited further east, to allow space for the vehicle access and parking area. The appellant indicates that the appeal site has been sold off from the rest of the Park Farm complex and has been vacant for some time. The Appeal Statement confirms that the pole barn has an established agricultural use, and the proposal seeks to relocate the pole barn, which would remain in agricultural use.
11. Based on the submitted plans, the pole barn would retain a similar footprint. I observed the structure during my site visit, and I understand that the proposal is seeking to relocate the structure. However, in the absence of sufficient details regarding the pole barn, particularly its elevations, I am not satisfied that the pole barn meets the exception at paragraph 154 d), particularly it has not been demonstrated that the replacement building would not be materially larger than the one it replaces.
12. Accordingly, the absence of sufficient information means I cannot be satisfied that all the relevant elements of the proposal meet the exceptions of the Framework as

set out above. Consequently, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and it conflicts with CS Policies SP2 and SP3 and the provisions of the Framework.

Openness

13. The Framework indicates that openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. Due to the lack of details regarding the pole barn I cannot rule out potential harm, both in visual and spatial terms, to the openness of the Green Belt. Given the scale of the overall proposal and the extent of the Green Belt, the harm arising from the development in this respect would be limited. However, without substantive visual and spatial details or evidence to the contrary, I must take a precautionary approach and find the proposal would harm the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

14. The appeal site is located within the WCA. Therefore, I have had regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), which requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The significance of the WCA in the context of this appeal is derived from the historic buildings, their layout within the area, the stone walls, and the greenery provided by the trees.
15. The Council's concerns relate to the removal of the trees, which I understand were located to the south of the appeal site, outside the site itself and the WCA, the lack of landscaping details, and the effect of the proposal on the tree located in the north-eastern corner of the appeal site (identified as T1 tree within the submitted AIA & AMS dated 16/01/2025).
16. Whilst the prominence of the appeal site might have been accentuated by the removal of those trees, particularly when viewed from the south, where the Council indicates a Locally Important Landscape Area is located, I am mindful that those trees were outside the appeal site's boundary, and not part of the appeal scheme. A landscaping plan was submitted at the appeal stage. Based on my site visit observations and the evidence before me, I am satisfied that details of a landscaping scheme could be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition.
17. The AIA & AMS indicates that without protection, there is potential for the main stem, branches and crown of the T1 tree to become damaged during the relocation of the pole barn. Without protection, the root protection area of T1 tree is likely to be incurred by plant vehicles and foot traffic which would cause significant harm to the root system. In this regard, the report outlines several protection measures, and the Tree Retention and Protection Plan shows a line of protective barriers. Subject to a condition to ensure adherence to the measures outlined within the AIA & AMS, the proposal would protect T1 tree, and therefore its contribution to the character and appearance of the area would be retained.
18. Notwithstanding the above, in the absence of sufficient details regarding the pole barn, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the WCA. Given the scale of the proposal and the extent of the conservation area, any harm to the significance of the WCA would be low within the less than substantial category. Nevertheless, the identified harm should

be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal in accordance with paragraph 215 of the Framework.

19. The proposal would re-use a building, contribute to the housing stock, and there would also be some economic benefits, particularly during the conversion phase. However, these considerations attract limited weight as public benefits. As such, the public benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified, harm which, given the requirements of the Act, carries great weight.
20. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the WCA. Thus, it would not meet the statutory requirements of the Act. Furthermore, the proposal also conflicts with the aims of Policies ENV1 and ENV15 of the Selby District Local Plan 2005 (LP) and Policies SP15, SP18 and SP19 of the CS, and those of the Framework, which collectively require developments to protect the character and appearance of the area.

Living conditions

21. The Appeal Statement indicates that the pole barn would be located over 20 metres away from the proposed dwelling. The structure is said not to be suitable for housing livestock. I have not been provided with substantive evidence regarding the use of the pole barn, although I understand that it could be used for hay or equipment storage. Whilst the pole barn would be some distance away from the front elevation of the dwelling, it would be close to the outside amenity space. In the absence of detailed evidence regarding the use of the pole barn and its effects, particularly in terms of noise and pollution, I am not persuaded that the living conditions of the future occupiers would be adequate.
22. Whilst this living condition issue has not been previously highlighted by the Council for the previous application¹, it does not negate the need to demonstrate that a high amenity standard would be achieved for the future occupiers.
23. The neighbouring property, the Cobbles, is located next to the western boundary of the appeal site. This dwelling does not have any windows on the side elevation that faces the appeal site. A boundary treatment between the properties would ensure that any ground-floor future openings in the side elevation of the Cobbles would not affect the privacy of the future occupants of the proposed dwelling. Any first-floor future windows on the side elevation of the Cobbles would be subject to certain restrictions. Therefore, the proposal would not affect the living conditions of the future occupiers with particular regard to privacy.
24. Accordingly, the absence of sufficient information regarding the pole barn means I cannot rule out potentially significant harm to the living conditions of the future occupiers. Therefore, I must take a precautionary approach and find the proposal conflicts with Policy ENV1 of the LP, which seeks to protect the amenity of adjoining occupiers, and paragraph 135 of the Framework, which requires a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other considerations

25. The Framework states that 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.

¹ LPA ref: ZG2023/0648/FUL

26. I have found that the proposal would not affect the living conditions of the future occupiers with particular regard to privacy in relation to the Cobbles and would be acceptable in terms of its effect on the tree and with regard to the landscaping scheme details. However, these are neutral matters, rather than ones that carry positive weight for the development.

27. I have had regard to the third-party representations, which expressed support for the appeal scheme.

28. The proposal would re-use a building, contribute to the housing stock, and there would also be some economic benefits, particularly during the conversion phase. Given the small scale of the development, I attach limited weight to these benefits.

Whether very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal exist

29. The appeal proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which would, by definition, be harmful. It would also harm the openness of the Green Belt, fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the WCA, and would harm the living conditions of the future occupiers. The Framework requires that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

30. For the reasons I have set out, it is sufficiently clear that the combined weight that could be ascribed to the other considerations would be insufficient against that which must be attached to the harms to the Green Belt. Consequently, very special circumstances do not exist, and the proposal would conflict with the aims of the Framework and those of the aforementioned policies, as set out above.

Conclusion

31. I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations, including the approach of the Framework, that would indicate to the contrary. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

Andreea Spataru

INSPECTOR