
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2025

by **J Hobbs MRTPI MCD BSc (hons)**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/U2750/W/25/3373823

Knabbs Ash, Skipton Road, Kettleasing, North Yorkshire HG3 2LT

- 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 Mr Jason Clay of Quarters Construction Ltd against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/02355/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the partial demolition and conversion of an agricultural storage unit to a dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner above is duplicated from the Application Form. However, I have removed the wording “Full planning application seeking ...” and “... at Knabbs Ash, Skipton Road in Harrogate” as these phrases do not refer to acts of development.
3. On 16 December 2025, the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst these proposals could be subject to further change, given the proposed development and the matters in dispute, I considered it necessary to consult the parties on the proposed changes. Neither party responded to the consultation.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to Nidderdale National Landscape (NNL).

Reasons

5. The appeal site is within NNL. Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, I have a statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of NNL.
6. The appeal building is a large L-shaped agricultural building sited at one end of a cluster of buildings. The building is accessed via a shared access track which leads from the A59. The pattern of development within and near to the appeal site creates a loose courtyard which is enclosed by the appeal building on two sides and an outbuilding on neighbouring land. The courtyard opens up towards the A59. The appeal site generally slopes downhill in a northerly direction, so the appeal site is lower than the A59, and the land behind it is further downhill. The

appeal building has five very large openings formed of rollers shutters and there is also one door. All of these openings are within the southern and eastern elevations and open on to the courtyard. There are no openings within the western or northern elevations.

7. The scale and massing of the appeal building is much larger than other nearby buildings. Nonetheless, its utilitarian appearance and agricultural use would be expected in a rural area. When viewed as part of a cluster of buildings with a largely open landscape behind, the appeal building and surrounding development appear similar to a scattered farmstead. This is identified as a key characteristic of both the Lower Nidderdale Valley, north west of Harrogate, and Menwith and Penny Pot Grassland Landscape areas. The appeal building and the nearby development make a positive contribution to the landscape and scenic beauty of NNL.
8. Although some of the proposed glazing would be partially screened by timber slats, the creation of several openings would result in the proposed dwelling having a domestic appearance. This would have an urbanising effect on the surrounding area. The proposed large section of glazing in the northern elevation would be particularly harmful, as it would be within an elevation where there is currently no glazing. The northern elevation is prominent in views across the largely undeveloped landscape to the rear of the appeal building, due to its position on the hill side. The large opening would appear incongruous. As such, attention would be drawn to this feature and would amplify the harm caused by it.
9. The partial demolition of the building would reduce its scale and massing such that it would be similar in size to nearby dwellings and increase the sense of openness across the site. The proposal also includes the creation of a gable end which would assimilate with the roof forms of nearby buildings. Nonetheless, the partial demolition would also result in a large section of the proposed dwelling having a flat roof. Large flat roofs are not a common feature on buildings within the area. As such, the proposed roof form would not be in keeping with the appearance of nearby buildings.
10. Some of the existing openings would be reduced in size. This would be a benefit of the proposal. Nonetheless, these openings are less visually prominent as they open on to the courtyard which is largely surrounded by development. Therefore, the reduction in size of these openings would not mitigate the identified harm.
11. The proposed external finishes would be similar to nearby dwellings. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would be sited near to the cluster of buildings, and its external amenity space would be largely restricted to the courtyard area. This external space would be viewed alongside existing development and would not extend much beyond the existing building envelope. Moreover, soft landscaping would screen some views of the lower sections of the proposed dwelling. This would partially mitigate the urbanising effect of the proposal.
12. On balance, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, including NNL. As such, the proposal would be contrary to policies GS6, HP3, HS6, and NE4 of the Harrogate District Local Plan 2014-2035 (LP). These policies indicate that proposals that protect, enhance or restore the landscape character of Harrogate district will be supported, and outside of settlements the conversion of existing buildings will be supported where

the form of the building and its proposed conversion are in keeping with its surroundings, amongst other matters. Moreover, the proposal would fail to further the purpose of conserving the natural beauty of NNL and it would be contrary to section 12 of the Framework.

Planning Balance

13. Within the Planning Statement, the appellant has referred to several LP policies which the proposal would comply with. Nonetheless, the compliance with these policies would not override the identified policy conflict. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the development plan when read as a whole.
14. The Landscape Officer did not object to a planning application¹ for four dwellings in Kettlesing. The most pertinent details of that proposal are not before me. Nonetheless, it is clear that there are material differences between that proposal and the one before me. That proposal is either within or very close to an identified settlement. Also, the assessments on the effect of the proposals on NNL are specific to individual sites and the proposed development. Accordingly, negligible weight is given to this as a material consideration in favour of the proposal.
15. For the purposes of the local plan, the appeal site is in the wider countryside. LP Policy GS2 advises that development would only be considered acceptable in the wider countryside where it is supported by other policies in the Local Plan. LP Policy HS6 supports the conversions of rural buildings to housing subject to criteria. The proposal only fails to comply with this policy on the basis that it would not be in keeping with its surroundings. Accordingly, the proposal would not be in strict accordance with the spatial strategy. However, to ascribe weight to the conflict with the spatial strategy would in effect double count the harm I have already identified. Furthermore, the appeal site is in proximity to Harrogate, as well as smaller villages, where there is a good provision of services and facilities to meet future occupier's everyday needs. I conclude that, subject to an acceptable design, the appeal proposal would be in an appropriate location.
16. The proposal would help meet the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it would also promote an effective use of land and the development of an under-utilised building. Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area. The proposal would provide a biodiversity net gain in excess of the statutory requirement, and the proposed dwelling would incorporate photovoltaic panels. There would also be economic benefits associated with the construction period and through an increased population living in the area. Having regard to the Council's supply of deliverable housing land and the scale of the proposal, I ascribe moderate weight to the benefits.
17. The proposal would not harm protected species or lead to the loss of important habitats. Moreover, it would have a negligible effect on the local highway network and would provide sufficient parking. Nonetheless, these are neutral factors which neither weigh in favour nor against the proposal.
18. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes. Consequently, I ascribe substantial weight

¹ Planning application Ref. ZC24/03855/FUL

to the harm caused by the proposal, which would not be outweighed by the benefits.

19. The Council contends that it can only demonstrate 2.2 years supply of deliverable housing land. The appellant does not dispute this. In this scenario, footnote 8 of the Framework establishes that the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date. The presumption in favour of sustainable development specifies planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development. Footnote 7 of the Framework specifies that these policies include National Landscapes.
20. The proposal would be harmful to NNL; therefore, the policies in the Framework provide a strong reason for refusing development. In this instance, planning permission should not be granted.

Other Matters

21. The appellant has revised the proposal following the refusal and withdrawal of previous planning applications. The parties also undertook pre-application consultation. I commend the approach taken by both the appellant and the Council. However, it has not altered my substantive assessment on the acceptability of the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

22. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

J Hobbs

INSPECTOR