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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2026

by **C Mayes CMLI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026

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**Appeal Ref: APP/U2750/W/25/3374727**

**Barn 5 Spring Lodge Farm, Northfield Lane, Cridling Stubbs, Knottingley WF11 0AW**

- 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 and Mrs Vic Rainford against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
  - The application reference is ZG2025/0313/FUL.
  - The development proposed is conversion of disused barn to dwelling.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of disused barn to dwelling at Barn 5 Spring Lodge Farm, Northfield Lane, Cridling Stubbs, Knottingley WF11 0AW in accordance with the terms of the application, reference ZG2025/0313/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

### Preliminary Matters

2. There is a minor discrepancy concerning the postcode of the appeal property between the application form and the appeal form. I have adopted the postcode as it appears on the appeal form in the banner heading, as this more accurately reflects the location of the appeal site and corresponds with the address used by the appellant in other submissions.
3. There is some disagreement between the parties regarding the documents before the Council at the time the application was determined. The appellant contends that certain plans, structural reports and appendices were submitted, whereas the Council states that these materials were not received and therefore could not be taken into account in its assessment. However, I am required to determine the appeal on the basis of the material before me and I have done so. Where there has been uncertainty as to whether particular documents were before the Council at the time of its decision, I am satisfied that my consideration of those documents does not result in any procedural or substantive unfairness, nor does it prejudice either party.

### Background and Main Issues

4. The reasons for refusal relate primarily to whether the proposed conversion falls within the Green Belt exceptions set out in paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), and to the sustainability of the site's location. The Council did not identify separate harm arising from the extension itself or additional conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. It therefore follows that the main issues are:

- Whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan policies, and its effects on the openness of the Green Belt.
- Whether the proposal would represent a suitable and sustainable location for a new dwelling.
- 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.

## Reasons

5. The site lies within the Green Belt. The appeal relates to a single-storey agricultural building constructed in red brick with a red pan-tile roof, positioned within a small group of former farm buildings that once comprised Spring Lodge Farm. The building is set back a short distance from Northfield Lane and is accessed via a shared drive that also serves other buildings in the group.
6. The appeal scheme would involve the change of use of the building to a dwelling and the erection of a single-storey extension on its south-eastern side, continuing the alignment and height of the existing structure. This addition would increase the overall volume of the building and would be constructed using materials to match those of the existing structure. The proposals also include the removal of a small outbuilding, the formation of a defined domestic curtilage, and the provision of boundary treatments comprising post-and-rail fencing and retained hedging along the site's frontage and side boundaries.

### *Whether inappropriate development and effect on openness*

7. The Framework establishes that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. However, paragraph 154 of the Framework identifies exceptions which may not be considered inappropriate development, including the re-use of existing buildings provided that they are of permanent and substantial construction, and the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In addition, effects on openness and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt are material considerations.
8. While the Framework does not prescribe a temporal baseline for assessing permanence and substantiality, planning decisions must be taken on the basis of the physical circumstances that exist at the time of determination, unless formal enforcement action requires an alternative baseline to be applied. In the absence of any enforcement notice or other action requiring the removal of the building or its elements, I must therefore assess the appeal building as it currently exists on the land. From my observations on site, the appeal building comprises solid masonry walls and a complete roof structure, and from the evidence before me sound foundations. Hence, as a matter of fact and degree, it is a permanent and substantial building.
9. It is common ground that roofing and associated works were undertaken prior to the determination of the application, and the Council argues these works amount to operational development. However, I must determine the appeal on the basis of

the proposal, not as a mechanism for retrospectively enforcing against pre-existing works. There is no compelling evidence before me that demonstrates the works carried out are unlawful and, as those works are not part of the scheme before me, I must consider the building as it is now. No enforcement notice has been issued requiring the building to be regarded in any other condition. In these circumstances, it would not be appropriate to disregard the physical form of the building presently on the land. On that basis, the proposal before me is for the re-use of, and limited extension to, an existing permanent and substantial building that would respect the proportions, materials and character of the host building.

10. The proposal includes a single-storey extension but for the reasons identified above it does not form part of my consideration in this main issue. The other aspects of the proposal would be closely related to the appeal building and those within the wider grouping of the former farmstead, so would not alter how the spatial dimension of openness is perceived in this part of the Green Belt. As such, in spatial terms, the proposal would not lead to a material increase in the overall spread or massing of development, nor would it result in encroachment into the open countryside beyond the established group of buildings. In visual terms, the scheme would be experienced as part of that existing group and would not appear intrusive or expansive in views from the surrounding area. Having regard to both the spatial and visual dimensions of openness, I am satisfied that the proposal would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
11. The development therefore falls within the exceptions described in paragraph 154 of the Framework and, as such, I conclude does not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The fact that roofing works have been undertaken does not alter my conclusion on this point, as those works do not form part of the development permitted by this appeal and do not constitute its commencement. As I have found that the proposal falls within the exceptions in paragraph 154 of the Framework and would preserve the openness of the Green Belt, it is not necessary for me to consider the third main issue.
12. The Council's second reason for refusal refers to Footnote 7 of the Framework and asserts that, because the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt, the provisions of paragraph 11(d)(i) are engaged, thereby providing a strong reason for refusal. However, for the reasons I have set out above, I have found that the appeal scheme does not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore does not fall within a policy category identified in Footnote 7 as triggering paragraph 11(d)(i). As a result, the protective provisions of paragraph 11(d)(i) are not engaged in this case and therefore carries no weight in my deliberations.
13. Policy SP3 of the Selby District Core Strategy (October 2013) (the CS) restricts planning permission only where development is inappropriate unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. As the proposal is not inappropriate, the requirement for very special circumstances does not arise. Moreover, Policy SP2 of the CS, insofar as it relates to development in the Green Belt, operates alongside SP3 and does not impose any additional restrictions in these circumstances. As such, I conclude that the proposal accords with the relevant Green Belt provisions of Policies SP2 and SP3 of the CS.

### *Location*

14. The site lies outside the defined development limits of Cridling Stubbs. Policy SP2 of the CS directs new housing towards the most sustainable settlements. However, the proposal relates to the conversion of an existing rural building, the location of which is fixed and cannot be altered. In such circumstances, the accessibility considerations that apply to proposals for new-build housing in the open countryside do not apply with equal force. Moreover, the proposal would secure the re-use of a redundant agricultural building within an established group of former farm buildings. The removal of the existing outbuilding, together with the proposed boundary treatments and landscaping, would rationalise the appearance of the site and enhance the immediate setting of the building.
15. Taking these matters into account, I conclude that the proposal would not conflict with the spatial strategy set out in Policy SP2. As the appeal development accords with the development plan in this respect, there is no conflict that would engage the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Policy SP1 of the CS.

### **Conditions**

16. The Council has provided a list of suggested conditions, which I have considered against paragraph 57 of the Framework, and advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Where appropriate, I have amended the wording of the suggested conditions for clarity and reasonableness.
17. Although some works have previously been carried out to the building, those works do not form part of the development permitted by this decision. There is no evidence before me that they constitute commencement of the development for the purposes of s.56 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Accordingly, a standard commencement condition is both necessary and appropriate. For the reasons of certainty and clarity, I have imposed a condition that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted drawings.
18. I have imposed a condition relating to materials to safeguard the character and appearance of the building and the area. Several suggested conditions related to hard and soft landscaping works have been combined. A comprehensive landscape condition is necessary to ensure the development reflects the rural character of the area and openness of the Green Belt when completed and in the future. It is necessary to impose a condition to ensure the development adequately manages foul and surface water runoff on site.
19. I have amalgamated the Council's suggested conditions relating to ground conditions and contaminated land, due to the scale of the development. This condition is considered necessary to evaluate, remediate and reduce risk to future occupants.
20. The Council has suggested a condition requiring the appellant to implement access, parking and manoeuvring areas for "all users" at Spring Lodge Farm. I have no evidence before me of any mechanism that would compel the appellant to deliver works associated with other developments within the wider group, nor would it be reasonable to impose such an obligation. However, in the interests of ensuring safe and suitable access for the dwelling permitted by this appeal, it is

appropriate to impose a condition limited to the provision of the access, parking and turning arrangements necessary for the occupation of the appeal site.

21. The appeal building has been assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats and no bats were recorded during the most recent survey. While bat-safe roofing materials are recommended where roof works are proposed, the appeal building has already been reroofed and the development permitted by this decision does not include further roof works. In these circumstances, it would not be reasonable to require the retrofitting of a bat-safe membrane to the existing structure. However, the proposal includes the construction of a new extension with associated roof works, and the bat report also identifies the need to control external lighting and to provide integrated bat boxes to enhance roosting opportunities and to avoid impacts on nearby roosts. I have, therefore, attached conditions to secure appropriate mitigation and enhancement for bats in a manner proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.
22. The Council has suggested a condition removing permitted development rights. However, I have not identified any harm to openness, character or any other planning interest that would arise in the absence of such a restriction. Accordingly, the necessity for this condition has not been demonstrated, and it would not meet the tests for conditions set out in the Framework and the PPG.
23. The Council has also suggested a condition restricting hours of construction. Given the limited scale of the works proposed, the distance to the nearest dwellings and the generally isolated nature of the site, I am not persuaded that such a restriction is necessary to make the development acceptable. The condition has therefore not been imposed.

## **Conclusion**

24. As the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and as I have identified no other harms, it has not been necessary for me to undertake an assessment of very special circumstances. In light of the above reasoning, and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

*C Mayes*

INSPECTOR

## **Schedule of Conditions**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers: 100A – Location Plan; 101H – General Arrangement Drawing; 24-0008-20 – Concept Sketch.
- 3) No development above ground level shall take place until details of all external facing materials, including the materials, finish and colour of the windows, doors, eaves and verge, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 4) No development above ground level shall take place until a scheme of both hard and soft landscape works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include:
- a) indications of all existing planting on the site, details of any to be retained, and measures for their protection during the course of the development;
  - b) details of proposed trees, shrubs and hedgerows, including species, planting sizes and planting densities;
  - c) the retention and reinforcement of hedging along site boundaries;
  - d) details of all boundary treatments;
  - e) details of proposed hard surfacing materials; and
  - f) an implementation programme.

The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the implementation programme.

Any trees or plants (existing retained or proposed) which within a period of 5 years after planting (or replanting if previously failed), die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved.

- 5) No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until full details of the foul and surface water drainage arrangements, including the siting and specification of any septic tank, drainage fields, and points of discharge, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 6) No development shall take place until an assessment of the risks posed by any contamination, carried out in accordance with British Standard BS 10175: Investigation of potentially contaminated sites - Code of Practice and the Environment Agency, Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) (or equivalent British Standard and Model Procedures if replaced), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. If any contamination is found, no development shall take place until:
- i) a report specifying the measures to be taken, including the timescale, to remediate the site to render it suitable for the development hereby permitted has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority;
  - ii) the site has been remediated in accordance with the approved measures and timescale; and
  - iii) a verification report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

If, during the course of development, any contamination is found which has not been previously identified, work shall be suspended until:

- iv) additional measures for the remediation of the site have been carried out in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; and
  - v) a verification report for all the remediation works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- 7) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the access, parking and turning areas shown on the approved plans have been constructed.

These areas shall thereafter be retained for their intended purpose for the lifetime of the development.

- 8) Prior to the installation of external lighting, full details including height, design, location and intensity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The lighting installation shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained as such thereafter.
- 9) No roof covering of the proposed extension shall be installed until details of the roof membrane to be used for the extension have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The roof of the extension shall thereafter be constructed in accordance with the approved details and maintained as such thereafter.
- 10) No development above ground level shall take place until details of two integrated bat boxes to be built into the brickwork of the proposed extension shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include the type, specification and precise location of the bat boxes. The bat boxes shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and shall thereafter be retained.

**ENDS**