

16. FULL APPLICATION: CONVERSION OF TRADITIONAL, CURTILAGE LISTED FARM BUILDINGS TO 6 NO. DWELLINGS, GREENCROFT FARM, MIDDLETON BY YOULGRAVE (NP/DDD/1122/1463, JRS)

APPLICANT: MR GUY BRAMMAR

Summary

1. The application relates to proposals to convert a range of traditional barns to six dwellings at Greencroft Farm, Middleton by Youlgrave. Greencroft Farm is a listed building and the barns are considered to be curtilage listed, so there is an associated application for listed building consent.
2. This report concludes that the proposals would be sympathetic conversions of the traditional buildings, which are important in the Middleton by Youlgrave Conservation Area. The conversions would be within the shell of the existing buildings and would retain their special character and interest. There would be some alterations to the external and internal appearance of the buildings, but subject to some amendments and to conditions, the scheme is considered to retain the special architectural and historic interest of the site. The report also concludes that the scheme would not be viable enough to support the provision of affordable housing.

Site and Surroundings

3. Greencroft Farm is located in the centre of the village of Middleton-by-Youlgrave. The farm group consists of an 18th century Grade II listed farmhouse with attached two storey shippon, an L-shaped range of mainly single storey stone-built barns, and a detached former cart shed/granary, abutting the Weaddow Lane boundary. To the north of the buildings there is a 0.3 hectare paddock. The farmhouse is set away from the yard and traditional buildings. The farmhouse is also attached to an agricultural range, the end of which is part of the current application.
4. The site is bounded to the north by Rake Lane and to the east by Weaddow Lane. There are three vehicular access points in total, one onto Rake Lane and two onto Weaddow Lane. The access drive to Middleton Hall forms the western site boundary. The southern boundary adjoins the residential curtilages of Church Cottage and The Garden House. The north eastern boundary abuts the village public toilets and a small play area fronting The Square. On the opposite side of Weaddow Lane lies Church Barn and a small chapel. The 1980s residential development along The Pinfold lies on the same side of Rake Road to the north.
5. All of the buildings in the building group at Greencroft Farm are considered to be curtilage listed and the site lies within the Middleton Conservation Area. Until recently a modern, portal framed agricultural building abutted the eastern elevation of the range of barns and extended across the former farmyard, infilling the area between the barns and the cart shed. This structure has now been removed and the historic pattern of the original farmyard is now visible.
6. Apart from the small paddock, there is now no other land associated with the former farm, this having been sold off separately.

Proposal

7. The application seeks full planning permission (and listed building consent, covered by a separate application) for the change of use of the traditional, stone built, agricultural buildings on the site to dwelling houses. This includes the shippon attached to the farmhouse but excludes any works to the farmhouse itself. The refurbishment of the

farmhouse is the subject of a separate application for listed building consent, but it would remain as a dwelling.

8. The scheme proposes the creation of six dwellings (in addition to the existing farmhouse). Four of these (units 1-4) would be in the L shaped range of barns and would consist of two 2-bedroomed units and two 3-bedroomed units. A further 2-bedroomed unit (unit 5) would be provided by conversion of the cart shed/granary, and a 3-bedroomed unit would be in the shippon (unit 6).
9. A detached garage block for four cars is proposed on the area of land at the northern edge of the site, to the west of the existing access off Rake Lane. The spaces in this garage would be allocated to the four units within the L shaped range of barns to reduce car parking around the listed buildings. The former farmyard would be kept free of subdivision and will not be incorporated into any curtilage. It would be used and maintained as communal amenity space without vehicular access.
10. A small strip of land immediately south of the public toilets adjoining the site would be gifted to the Parish Council to assist with access to and maintenance of the toilet facilities.
11. In addition to the detailed plans, the application is supported by a Planning Statement, a Heritage Statement, a protected species survey, a structural survey, and a viability assessment.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to conditions covering the following:

- 1 Statutory 3 year commencement.**
- 2 Compliance with amended plans and specifications, with use of buildings to be as described in the application, subject to the following:**
- 3 Submit and agree samples of any new materials (walling stone and roof slates/tiles) for all new and restored buildings.**
- 4 Submit and agree window and door details on all buildings, including materials, profiles, method of opening, external finish, recess, and any surrounds.**
- 5 Submit details of rainwater goods, and external flues and vents.**
- 6 Agree precise details of rooflights.**
- 7 Submit and agree detailed scheme for site layout, landscaping, and management, including any soft landscaping, hard surfacing and boundary treatment.**
- 8 Archaeology and building recording conditions:**
 - Archaeology: Scheme to be carried out in accordance with recommendations of site evaluation and WSI.**
 - Historic Building Recording: No development shall take place until a Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of Level 2/3 historic building recording has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the archaeological WSI.**

- 9 Development to be carried out within existing buildings, with no rebuilding other than where specifically agreed with Authority.
- 10 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification) no improvement or other alteration to the external appearance of the dwellings shall be carried out and no extensions, porches, ancillary buildings, satellite antenna, solar or photovoltaic panels, gates, fences, walls or other means of boundary enclosure (other than those specifically approved by this application) shall be erected on the site without an application for planning permission having first been made to and approved in writing by the National Park Authority
- 11 Submit details of any external lighting, scheme to be in accordance with approved details.
- 12 Any service lines associated with development should be placed underground.
- 13 Highway and parking conditions.
- 14 Bat and nesting boxes be provided as part of the scheme to provide opportunities for bats and birds to roost/nest on site.

Key Issues

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle and whether affordable housing is required as part of the scheme.
- Whether the development is required to conserve the designated and non-designated heritage assets and whether the proposed scheme does so.
- Impact on archaeological interest
- Highway issues, including impact on heritage assets

History

12. There is a no planning history relevant to these buildings but in 2021 pre-application advice was given on a draft scheme for the site The Planning Statement says that the current scheme aims to respond to the issues raised at pre-application stage.

Consultations

13. Parish Council: *“Middleton and Smerrill Parish Council supports this application which appears to meet architectural standards commensurate with its central village surroundings. It notes that the development is for private dwellings and this wholly meets the village aspirations to remain a rural community welcoming families and not second or holiday homes. It considers it vital that small peak district communities are protected from occasional use dwellers who stifle community life and welcomes new residents who keep the village alive. Our only concern is for the single access from the Rakes for 5 dwellings and trusts that DCC Highways will require an entrance splay that will retain the essential parking on the opposite side of the carriageway for the existing houses. It notes that the centre of the village will become busier but not impacted as parking for the new dwellings is off road. Should planners be minded to approve the garages then there is a desire for the block by the road to be at a lower level to minimise it’s visual impact”.*

14. Highway Authority: Initial response as follows:

“Drawing No. 2089-11 Rev C suggests the proposed site is served via three access points, with 4 dwellings from The Square and one each from Weaddow Lane. Nevertheless the Local Highway Authority (LHA) would request the applicant to clarify site access arrangements. The Applicant should provide detailed site access plans, demonstrating width, radii, gradient and visibility splays.

The applicant is advised for an access serving two to five dwellings, the effective width for a minimum of 5 metres back should be 4.25 metres and for an access serving a single dwelling a minimum access width of 2.75m is required. In all cases an addition of 0.5 metres should be added if bounded by a wall, fence hedge, line of trees or other similar construction on one side, 1m if bounded on both sides. Vehicular visibility splays should be from a 2.4 metres setback distance in both directions in accordance with Delivering Streets and Places Design Guide (DSPDG). Visibility splays should be located entirely within the applicant’s land, or within the public highway. Additionally the applicant may wish to undertake a speed survey in the vicinity of the site access in order to demonstrate that appropriate visibility, in line with the 85th percentile speeds of passing traffic can be achieved.

Finally, for completeness the LHA request the applicant to submit trip generation which compares the existing and proposed vehicular demand to the site during the network peak hours and over a day, to allow the LHA to fully assess the impact of the proposals on the existing highway network.

Consequently, until the above is addressed the LHA is unable to determine if the development proposal is acceptable in highway terms”.

15. District Council: No response.

16. Natural England: No comments to make on this application. Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts on protected species. Natural England has published Standing Advice which you can use to assess impacts on protected species or you may wish to consult your own ecology services for advice.

17. PDNPA Conservation Officer: Conclusion as follows, with full comments available on the website:

“Overall, the principal of conversion is supported, and there would be a public benefit in securing the optimum viable use of the buildings. There is much to be commended in the current application, particularly in the use of hopper windows and boarded doors to maintain the character of the buildings. However, as it stands, the scheme proposes an excessive amount of structural remodelling, large numbers of large rooflights and an excessive subdivision (and domestication) of formally open yard spaces. This would reduce the contribution that the curtilage listed buildings make to the significance of the listed building, as well as the significance to the farm buildings as non-designated heritage assets. As per paragraph 202 of the NPPF, and the Peak Park’s development management policies DMC5 and 7, this harm would need to be outweighed by the public benefit arising from the proposal. The proposal is also currently in conflict with the PDNPA’s policy on conversions DMC10, which states that the conversion of a heritage asset will be permitted provided that it can accommodate the new use without changes that adversely affect its character. At present, the application is also missing key details that are needed to inform any decision making. This includes details of insulation, structural repairs, rainwater goods, and soil vent pipes.

If the application is approved then the details that are missing from the application will need to be conditioned, as will a programme of building recording to HE level 2, prior to work starting.

18. PDNPA Archaeology: Response relates to the potential for buried archaeological remains to be located on the site and the potential for such remains to be impacted by the proposed development.

The below ground archaeological interest:

- *Parts of Greencroft Farm have high archaeological interest and potential for belowground remains.*
- *The heritage statement concludes that that the site has moderate potential for archaeological remains of Roman and Medieval date to survive, particularly in the paddock area.*
- *Whilst the area of the main building ranges and central farmyard area, with concrete flooring and previous disturbance have a lesser degree of archaeological interest and potential, the undisturbed areas such as the paddock and area along Rake Lane have much higher potential.*
- *A 2019 investigation by ARS at the adjacent orchard associated with Middleton Hall encountered remains dating to the Anglo-Saxon, Medieval and Post-medieval period were encountered, including the post pads of a medieval building and Anglo-Saxon pottery (ARS 2019, report still in draft). Such remains are of considerable significance.*
- *This points to the paddock and other undisturbed and undeveloped areas of the Greencroft Farm site having a high potential for archaeological remains of medieval date.*
- *Any such remains would be considered to be heritage assets of archaeological interest, and likely to be of at least regional significance. But, the nature, extent and level of their significance will need to be sufficiently well understood prior to the determination of any application and pre-determination evaluation will be required.*

In light of the original recommendations that pre-determination evaluation is required to assess the impact of the proposed development I would recommend that the application is not determined until such evaluations are undertaken. If the evaluations are not undertaken then the application should be rejected.

In response to this the applicant's heritage consultant has carried out additional work which is expected to be received before the date of the Committee meeting. Unless it raises significant issues, this will be used to inform the detailed design and conditions, including monitoring and recording of any features of archaeological interest.

Representations

19. We have received three representations, raising the following points:

- *A development of this sort clearly will only benefit second home owners and the "Air BNB" market, it brings no benefit to the local community. We are seeing an increasing number of holiday rental and second homes within the village all of which brings associated mess and disruption to the local community for example "wheelie bins" remaining out well after the weekly collection, increased traffic etc I would hope that the PDNPA ensure that the developers of the properties and / or future owners that there is some kind of recompense to the local community in the form of a Section 106 agreement. In this instance I would suggest that the developers and / or owners pay the entire Parish Council Tax precept for up to 20 years, this annually approximately £2,500 annually, on behalf of the local community, and that this payment is linked to future increases. This would compensate for future disruption and ensure that the village profits from a development of this kind.*
- *The planner's advice deals only 'with the preservation of the character and heritage significance of the buildings as a whole'. But the key issue is not just the preservation of these buildings but how they are used. This is an unrepeatable opportunity, in this village, to meet the critical local need for affordable rented homes. These are required for local people who need homes in Middleton and Smerrill, but who cannot afford either to buy or rent them. Such provision will meet urgent need and also strengthen local economy and life. One or more home should be let at an affordable rent. Alternatively, the Peak Park housing association can be consulted about buying these homes with the help of government subsidy. Any*

planning decision should be deferred to allow further consideration on the use of these four homes.

- I don't entirely object to the idea of renovating the farmhouse and potentially the conversion of the farm buildings, but I have reservations about what is being proposed. Firstly, I am concerned that this is just for the second home market and therefore will not add community to our village. Since we moved to the village in 2018 five properties have been sold and only one of them has 2 people permanently living in them, three of the empty/second homes had families living in them previously. In this time one family left the village as they could not afford to buy (they were in a rental here), and I know of another family who looked and could not buy here as they were also priced out. We do need homes in this area but it is no good if they go to people who only come a couple of times a year. We are a small community as it is and really it would be nice to have people living in the village. The next issue is the conversion of farm buildings. In the last few years the Peak Park rejected the erection of a barn (which subsequently went through appeal). To me it would seem at odds if the conversion of the farm buildings were approved. These buildings were used by farmers until the landlord decided to sell the property and they moved out. If they can be made good enough to live in then it seems likely that they can be made good enough for livestock. I feel the erection of a new build garage in the curtilage of a listed building seems unnecessary. A garage in this village is a rarity, we all manage with our cars outside, and the site is plenty big enough for parking. It is hard to build something new that is truly sympathetic to the site. After reading the bat survey I was surprised to read that there was no evidence of bats, but there was a lot of removal of hardcore from the barns last year so maybe the evidence was lost. The survey also suggests that the developers should take care when removing the roof. After our experience I would expect that the works would need to involve an ecologist, yet they have been removing and replacing the roof on the house already. I would have expected this to have come under requiring planning permission.*

Main Policies

20. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, GSP4, DS1, HC1, L1, L2, L3, and CC1.
21. Relevant Development Management policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMC7, DMC8, DMC10, DMC11, DMC13, DMT3.

National Planning Policy Framework

22. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises our Core Strategy 2011 and the Development Management Policies 2019. Policies in the development plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. There is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the development plan and the NPPF and our policies should be given full weight in the determination of this application.
23. Paragraph 178 states that "*great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.*"

Peak District National Park Core Strategy

24. Policy GSP1 sets out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives having regard to the Sandford Principle, (that is, where there are conflicting desired outcomes in achieving national park purposes, greater priority must be given to the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, even at the cost of socio-economic benefits). GSP1 also sets out the need for sustainable development and to avoid major development unless it is essential, and the need to mitigate localised harm where essential major development is allowed.
25. Policy GSP2: *Enhancing the National Park* states that:
- Opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon.
 - Proposals intended to enhance the National Park will need to demonstrate that they offer significant overall benefit to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
 - When development is permitted, a design will be sought that respects the character of the area.
 - Opportunities will be taken to enhance the National Park by the treatment or removal of undesirable features or buildings. Work must be undertaken in a manner which conserves the valued characteristics of the site and its surroundings.
 - Development in settlements necessary for the treatment, removal or relocation of nonconforming uses to an acceptable site, or which would enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park will be permitted.
26. Policy GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.
27. Policy GSP4 says that to aid the achievement of its spatial outcomes, the National Park Authority will consider the contribution that a development can make directly and/or to its setting, including, where consistent with government guidance, using planning conditions and planning obligations.
28. Policy DS1 sets out the Development Strategy for the National Park.
29. Policy HC1 says that exceptionally, new housing can be accepted where the proposals would address eligible local needs and would be for homes that remain affordable with occupation restricted to local people in perpetuity. The provisions of HC1 are supported by policy DH1, DH2 and DH3 of the Development Management Policies, which gives more detailed criteria to assess applications for affordable housing to meet local need.
30. Policy L1 states that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics.
31. Policy L2 states that development must conserve and enhance any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance and where appropriate their setting. Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to have an adverse impact on any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance or their setting that have statutory designation or are of international or national importance for their biodiversity.

32. Policy L3 'Cultural heritage assets of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance' states that:
- A. *'Development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal the significance of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic assets and their settings, including statutory designations and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;*
 - B. *Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause harm to the significance of any cultural heritage asset of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance or its setting, including statutory designations or other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;*
 - C. *Proposals for development will be expected to meet the objectives of any strategy, wholly or partly covering the National Park, that has, as an objective, the conservation and where possible the enhancement of cultural heritage assets. This includes, but is not exclusive to, the Cultural Heritage Strategy for the Peak District National Park and any successor strategy.*
33. Policy CC1 states that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources, taking into account the energy hierarchy and achieving the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency.

Development Management Policies

34. The most relevant development management policies are DMC3, DMC5, DMC7, DMC8, DMC10, DMC11, DMT3.
35. Policy DMC3A says where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is of a high standard that respects, protects and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place.
36. Policy DMC3B sets out various aspects that particular attention will be paid to including: siting, scale, form, mass, levels, height and orientation, settlement form and character, landscape, details, materials and finishes landscaping, access, utilities and parking, amenity, accessibility and the principles embedded in the design related SPD and the technical guide.
37. Policy DMC5 provides detailed advice relating to proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, requiring new development to demonstrate how valued features will be conserved, as well as detailing the types and levels of information required to support such proposals. It also requires development to avoid harm to the significance, character, and appearance of heritage assets and details the exceptional circumstances in which development resulting in such harm may be supported.
38. Policy DMC7 relates to listed buildings. It states that planning applications for development affecting a Listed Building and/or its setting should be determined in accordance with policy DMC5 and clearly demonstrate: (i) how their significance will be preserved; and (ii) why the proposed development and related works are desirable or necessary. Applications will not be considered if they do not contain sufficient information to assess impact on significance. Proposals that adversely affect the listed building will not be permitted, particularly if they lead to a loss of original fabric or seek unnecessary alterations to key features. DMC7 also resists the loss of curtilage features which complement the character and appearance of the building. Consistent with the NPPF, the policy allows for properly justified impacts that are less than substantial or that have a public benefit. Where change to a Listed Building is acceptable, an appropriate record of the building will be required.

39. DMC8 requires that applications for development in a Conservation Area, or for development that affects its setting or important views into, out of, across or through the area, should assess and clearly demonstrate how the character or appearance and significance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced.
40. Policy DMC10 addresses conversion of heritage assets, permitting this where the new use would conserve its character and significance, and where the new use and associated infrastructure conserve the asset, its setting, and valued landscape character. It also notes that new uses or curtilages should not be visually intrusive in the landscape or have an adverse impact on tranquility, dark skies, or other valued characteristics.
41. Policy DMC11 Safeguarding, recording and enhancing nature conservation interests. Proposals should aim to achieve net gains to biodiversity or geodiversity as a result of development and that details of appropriate safeguards and enhancement measures for a site, feature or species of nature conservation importance must be provided in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan. For all sites, features and species development proposals must consider amongst other things, the setting of the development in relation to other features of importance, historical and cultural.
42. DMT3 Access and design criteria, states amongst other things, that a safe access should be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it.
43. Peak District National Park Authority Design Guide:
The Design Guide states that, when considering a conversion, the building in question should be of sufficient historic or architectural merit to warrant its conversion. Factors such as location, size and character of the building and its means of access will all be assessed. The guiding principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting should be respected and retained.
44. Peak District National Park Conversion of Traditional Buildings SPD (2022): The SPD provides detailed guidance on the principles to be considered when proposing the conversion of traditional buildings. This is set out as 6 key principles:
1. Understanding the building and its setting
 2. Working with the existing form and character
 3. Following a conservation approach
 4. Creating responsive new design
 5. Using appropriate materials and detailing
 6. Conserving and enhancing the setting.

Assessment

Principle of proposed development

45. In terms of the principle of the development, the Authority's adopted policies do not allow new housing in the National Park unless there are exceptional circumstances. With regards to the principle of residential use, policy HC1(C)I of the Core Strategy states that exceptionally new housing can be accepted where, in accordance with core policies GSP1 and GSP2, it is required in order to achieve conservation and/or enhancement of valued vernacular or listed buildings. The main justification for the proposed development is that it will provide the buildings on site, which are considered to be curtilage listed, to have a beneficial use, together with consequential works of enhancement and restoration. These works would also support the restoration of the house. The conversion of farm buildings to dwellings may be acceptable in principle, on the basis that these developments would enhance the setting of the listed buildings and their setting in the Conservation area. However, as set out above, these developments would only be acceptable if they can be shown that they are required to conserve or enhance the listed buildings and their setting

and are shown to do so. The following sections conclude that they would do so, subject to amended plans and conditions.

Affordable Housing:

46. Core Strategy policy HC1C requires that any scheme that is capable of providing more than one dwelling will be required to restrict occupation of additional units to those with a local qualification and housing need unless viability prevents this. Development Management policies set out the maximum floorspace standards for local needs dwellings.
47. The submitted Planning Statement says that the application is supported by a detailed Viability Assessment undertaken by Milner Commercial. This concludes that, given the costs involved in the conversion of the building compared to likely returns, it is not financially viable to offer any of the dwellings as local needs affordable units: *“Despite Benchmark Land Value being less than Residual Land Value the project cannot support the provision of either on site or off site affordable housing and at the same time return an acceptable level of return to a developer”*.
48. Officers accept that there are significant costs involved with the refurbishment of the main house as well as the conversion of the curtilage listed farm buildings and that it is unlikely that local needs affordable housing would be capable of cross-subsidising the level of investment required to enhance this site to an appropriate standard. Officers note the concerns raised in some representations regarding the provision of open market housing that could potentially be occupied as holiday accommodation. However, we agree with the findings of the viability assessment that the amount of specialist work needed to be undertaken to a standard commensurate with a designated heritage asset it is likely to mean that requiring a contribution to affordable housing provision would make the scheme unviable. Overall, officers therefore consider that the focus must be on the conservation and enhancement of the heritage assets.

Whether the development is required to conserve a heritage asset

49. This section of the report considers whether the proposed development is required to conserve a heritage asset and if it is, whether the development would actually achieve this.
50. The conversion of the farm buildings to open market dwellings could, in principle, be in accordance with policies HC1C and DMC10, provided they conserve and enhance the buildings, which are designated heritage assets within the curtilage of the main listed building. The application is supported by a Heritage Statement which says that the remains of the site and buildings have historic and archaeological significance. The Heritage Statement sets out the principles that have guided the design approach to scheme and assesses the impact on the heritage assets (these are also summarised in the Planning Statement). It concludes:

“The proposed conversion of the outbuildings and renovation of the farmhouse will provide a viable use for the buildings thus preventing them from becoming at risk. Furthermore, the proposed re-development provides the opportunity to enhance the historically significant parts of the property by the removal of modern structures and the repair of historic fabric damaged in recent years”.
51. The heritage assessment has been considered by the Authority’s Senior Archaeologist and Conservation Officer (see detailed comments above). Development plan policy DMC5 requires an assessment of significance to be with an application which relates to a heritage asset and reflects paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

52. The assessment of the impact of the scheme on the heritage assets sets out each part of the proposed development and concludes that the impacts range from minor impact to moderate beneficial impact. The Authority's Conservation Officer had some concerns about aspects of the proposed scheme and has been involved, with the Planning Officer, in detailed discussions with the applicant to address these. As a result, amended plans have been received which largely overcome the concerns, although some more minor amendments are required and conditions will need to be imposed to achieve a satisfactory scheme. Overall, however, the conversion of the buildings will conserve their character and their setting. It will also give an opportunity for some aspects of the original buildings to be restored, particularly on the front elevation of units 1-4, the single storey buildings facing into the farmyard, which were until recently covered by a modern structure and where original openings had been removed. The amended scheme will provide for the restoration of these openings.
53. In other parts of the scheme, the proposal makes use of existing openings where possible and removes later additions. With regard to the more recent cart shed (unit 5), this is an open-fronted, more recent limestone building. The original scheme proposed raising this by 600mm and infilling the open gable with stone and large glazed openings. Amended plans have been discussed and agreed which infill with timber and glass and do not raise the roof. This is considered to be a more sympathetic approach. The applicant had been asked to consider using this building for garaging or storage but he considers that its conversion is necessary for the viability of the scheme and also wishes to avoid introducing cars into this part of the site.
54. One concern that was raised by officers was the relatively recent and large excavation to the rear of units 1-4 and the insertion of a second floor in this relatively low range of buildings. The applicant explained that this excavation was the result of works to establish where the foundations of the buildings were. The revised plans show this ground being reinstated, other than a small area to give access to the rear of the building, via steps. The mezzanine level in the building has been retained, but with the number of rooflights on the front elevation reduced. Subject to conditions to control the detailing and size of the rooflights this is now acceptable.
55. The proposed new garage block, adjacent to Rake Lane is a relatively large building, but it will provide parking and storage away from the main building group. Subject to being slightly relocated to push it further into the ground, closer to the road, this is considered to be acceptable. This will also address the Parish Council's concerns.
56. The layout of the site is an important consideration as the setting of the barns must be protected from unnecessary suburbanisation. The scheme was initially unclear on this, with some plans showing subdivision whilst others did not. The Planning Statement explains that the central yard area will be kept free of walling and car parking and will be used as a communal amenity space. Units 1-4 will have gardens within the wider walled area shown on the historic 1890 plan. These dividing walls will be constructed of natural limestone and can be made slightly lower than the main boundary wall to give the line of the 1890s enclosure greater emphasis. The applicant has been advised that the scheme must retain the open character of the main farmyard areas; this can be controlled by a condition and approving a plan which shows this.
57. The site plan shows a double garage to the rear of unit 1; this is the subject of a separate application and is considered to be unacceptable. The applicant is currently considering an alternative siting.

Impact on Archaeology

58. The initial response from the Authority's Archaeologist is set out above. He considered that parts of Greencroft Farm have high archaeological interest and potential for belowground remains. The submitted heritage statement concludes that the site has moderate potential for archaeological remains of Roman and Medieval date to survive, particularly in the paddock area; this area is largely unaffected by the proposal, other than possibly the access road which would pass through the eastern edge of it. Our Archaeologist considers that any such remains would be considered to be heritage assets of archaeological interest, and likely to be of at least regional significance and advises that prior to the determination of any application and pre-determination evaluation will be required. The applicant's Heritage Consultant has been asked to carry out this work; at the time of writing this report his assessment is awaited, but expected to be received before the date of the Committee. Unless this raises significant issues, the conclusions can be used to inform the final detailed design and any conditions relating to archaeological monitoring and recording.

Impact on setting, including the Conservation Area

59. The proposed conversions would retain the farm building group, which is important in the centre of this small village and the designated Conservation Area. The new garage building adjacent to Rake Lane would be of traditional massing and design and would be set at a lower level than the road. Overall, the scheme would not have a significant landscape impact and would retain the character of the farm group and its setting in the Conservation Area, as required by policies L1 and L3 of the Core Strategy and policy DMC8 of the Development Management plan.

Design, sustainable building and climate change

60. Policy CC1 and the NPPF require development to make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources, take account of the energy hierarchy and achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions and water efficiency. The application does not set out how the scheme would meet the requirements of policy CC1 and our adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Climate Change and Sustainable Building, but this has been discussed with the applicant. The heritage and physical constraints on the site make it difficult to include energy options such as solar panels, a ground source heat system or air source heat pumps, so the focus is on making best use of existing buildings, using local and recycled materials, and making the dwellings as thermally efficient as possible.

61. In these circumstances, the proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of policy CC1 and CC2.

Impact on amenity

62. The site is in the small village of Middleton-by-Youlgrave. There are other properties around the site, with the closest being the relatively modern development of flats to the north (The Pinfold), which overlook the paddock immediately to the north of the farm buildings. These are at a higher level and are sufficiently far away from the proposed conversions that there would be no impact on the privacy and amenity of any neighbouring dwellings. The proposed garage building adjacent to Rake Lane would be a relatively low single storey building, set into the ground so it would not have an adverse impact on the outlook or amenity of the dwellings to the north. The proposal therefore accords with policies GSP3 and DMC3 in these respects.

Trees and protected species

63. Protected Species surveys were undertaken by Dunelm Ecology in accordance with Development Plan policy DMC11. These did not identify any priority or other protected species using the site. Although no evidence of bats was recorded, the farm buildings were assessed as having moderate roost potential owing to the presence of several features and the proximity of valuable foraging habitat in the form of semi-natural broadleaved woodland. None of the trees were found to support potential roosting features. There is therefore very low risk to biodiversity as a result of these proposals and accord with NPPF paragraph 180 and Core Strategy L2. Four trees previously existed on the site – three self-set sycamores and a Norway Spruce. All were found to be in poor condition or were compromising the listed structures. They were removed with the consent of the Authority in January 2022. There are no significant trees on the site, so there is no conflict with policy DMC13.
64. It is recommended that bat and nesting boxes be provided as part of the scheme to provide opportunities for bats and birds to roost/nest on site.

Highway issues

65. There are currently three accesses into the site, one off Rake Lane and two off Weaddow Lane. Each of these has been an agricultural access, with the southernmost one off Weaddow Lane also serving the farmhouse. The proposal would result in the majority of the dwellings being served by an improved access off Rake Lane, and the two accesses off Weaddow Lane being used by one dwelling each. The Highway Authority has recommended improvements to all three accesses, but these works would have an adverse impact on the character of the boundary walls, which are important in the setting of the listed buildings and the conservation Area. Consequently, officers have agreed that the southern access off Weaddow Lane should be retained as it is, given that this would see a reduction in usage and is on a lightly trafficked section of road. The northern access, to the rear of the roadside barn (building 6) would be repositioned slightly so that it moves away from the rear of the building, to improve visibility, but this is not thought to be an original access. The access to the site from Rake Lane would be improved and repositioned slightly as this would be the main access to the site.
66. Parking would be provided within the site, in either designated parking spaces or garaging.
67. As requested by the Highway Authority when the application was first submitted, the applicant carried out an assessment of traffic movements from the proposed development. Subject to the alterations set out above, the proposal is now considered to achieve an appropriate balance between conservation of the heritage assets and highway safety. As the proposals raise no significant highways issues, the proposed access arrangements are acceptable and conform with NPPF paragraph 111 and Development Management policies DMT3 and DMT8.

Conclusion

68. This application proposes the conversion of the existing range of traditional farm buildings to six open market dwellings. It is considered that the scheme conserves and enhances the designated heritage assets and their setting in the Conservation Area, giving the redundant buildings a beneficial use. Subject to amended plans and conditions, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the the Authority's adopted policies and with the NPPF.
69. Having taken into account all material considerations and the issues raised in representations, we conclude that the proposed development is acceptable for the reasons set out above. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Human Rights

70. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

71. Nil

72. Report Author: John Scott, Consultant Planner.