

6. FULL APPLICATION - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING FILTER HOUSE AND ERECTION OF NO.3 NEW DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND PARKING, FORMER FILTER HOUSE, LONG CAUSEWAY, SHEFFIELD (NP/S/0923/1021, JRS)

APPLICANT: MR HOLMES

Summary

1. This was considered by the Planning Committee in December 2023 and was deferred so that officers could discuss a revised scheme with the applicants and their architect. The discussions have resulted in the submission of amended plans for a revised layout and design.
2. The application is for the demolition of the former water treatment works and the erection of three new dwellings.
3. The existing building is a post-war brick building which has been heavily vandalised and is in a poor condition. It is not considered to be of sufficient merit to warrant conservation through conversion. The site is considered to be a brownfield site where an appropriate development would be in accordance with national and local policies.
4. The proposed scheme is now considered to be acceptable in terms of its scale, layout and design, subject to some amendments. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Introduction

5. The former Redmires Filter House is located west of Sheffield, located approximately half a mile inside the Peak District National Park boundary. The building is sat within mature woodland just north of the Redmires Lower Reservoir, within a site of approximately 1.1 acres. The site is accessed from Redmires Road, via a single lane tarmac road which also serves three houses which were once part of the reservoir operation. This road also serves the Redmires Water Works, an additional treatment plant constructed in 1988 to assist the original filter house with processing water.
6. A copy of the report to the December Planning Committee meeting is attached as an appendix to this report, so the details set out in that report are not repeated here, other than where the plans have changed. The minutes of that meeting are repeated here for ease of reference:

“It was noted that officers had given advice on this site on a number of occasions and a planning application for 9 holidays units had previously been refused. This proposed development is on a brownfield site beyond any other settlement and is not a traditional building in terms of the PDNPA planning policies.

Members discussed the development and on the site visit had noted a keystone above the door which needs to be retained in some way. The buildings do have heritage interest despite not being traditional. There is evidence of significant deterioration and it is not viable to conserve the existing building which is in a perilous condition. It was agreed that some elements of the design could be improved upon e.g. windows and doors and there was a discussion about the Dark Skies initiative. It was felt important that the buildings which are being demolished are documented (known as “preservation by record”).

Although Members were minded to accept in principle the demolition of the existing buildings and to accept in principle their replacement by housing, it was agreed that the application should be deferred back to a future committee to allow for further consultation

between the officers and applicant to ensure the best possible outcome for the site, to allow for full documentation of the existing site and to include the climate change initiative.

A motion to defer the application so that further discussions could take place and that it be brought back to committee was proposed, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

That the application be DEFERRED to allow for further discussion between the Officers and Applicant”.

RECOMMENDATION:

That subject to no contrary views being received before the expiry of the public consultation date, that the decision be delegated to the Head of Planning to issue and that the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard 3-year time limit for commencement.**
- 2. Adopt amended plans subject to detailed design conditions relating to materials, windows, doors, rainwater goods, etc including prior approval of sample materials and sample stone and brick panel.**
- 3. Adopt measures in the revised climate change mitigation statement and implement as part of the development and prior to first occupation.**
- 4. Withdraw permitted development rights for alterations, extensions and ancillary buildings together with boundary walls and fences.**
- 5. Carry out landscaping scheme, including replacement tree-planting, woodland enhancement and management, walling and hard surfacing.**
- 6. Site drainage conditions recommend by LLFA and the Environment Agency, including provision of a SUDs scheme.**
- 7. Implement recommendations from preliminary ecological assessment.**
- 8. Retain garages for garaging and storage.**
- 9. Agree means of waste disposal.**
- 10. Carry out and submit full record of existing building prior to demolition and submit details of an interpretation board, setting out the history of the site, to be erected in a location at the entrance to the site.**
- 11. Provide details of a scheme to incorporate the existing date stone into the development.**

Consultations

7. All consultees have been reconsulted and a new site notice erected. The re-consultation period expires in the week following the March Planning Committee so the recommendation above is subject to there being no significant adverse responses by that date. There were no objections to the original scheme and it is understood that the applicants have discussed the revised plans with neighbouring properties.

Assessment

Principle of proposed development

8. When considering the application at the December Planning Committee Members concluded that the principle of a residential redevelopment of the site was acceptable in principle. The application site is located in open countryside where our housing policies would not normally support the erection of new build open-market housing, other than in exceptional circumstances, as set out in policy HC1 of the Core Strategy and policy DMH6 of the development management Plan.
9. Members also considered whether the existing building is a non-designated heritage asset that should be conserved through an alternative use but concluded that whilst it had some local historic interest, it did not warrant conservation through. Consequently, it was considered that the principle of replacing the existing building is acceptable under policies GSP2, HC1 and DMH6, given the scale, design and condition of the building.
10. Having reached this conclusion on the principle of redevelopment, Members then considered that the design and layout of the scheme could be improved, as noted in the minutes above. Officers have therefore had a number of meetings and discussions with the applicants and their architects to produce a scheme which is more reflective of modern design whilst respecting the history of the site and its location in the National Park.

The Revised Design

11. The proposal is still for three detached dwellings, but in a less rigid layout than previously proposed. The houses are in similar positions as the original scheme, as dictated by site constraints such as the need to retain access to the substation at the rear of the site and by trees. However, all three houses now have an articulated form and present a more modern arrangement rather than trying to reflect a traditional farm, with a farmhouse and “converted” barns forming a “farm group” design approach. Conversely, the layout also manages to avoid feeling like a suburban cul-de-sac, which was the concern of officers at the pre-application stage. The layout creates a sense of enclosure without being too cramped and it would give each house some private space, not overlooked by the other houses.
12. In terms of the detailed design, each house has a similar design approach, but is different from the others. Each has a two storey element, reflecting a traditional massing, but with a single storey element with a flat roof. The flat roof sections would have green roofs. The elevations would include more modern treatment to the door and window openings, rather than trying to be a pastiche of a farmhouse or converted barn. Consequently, there are some large openings with modern detailing, but these are in elevations which are at the rear of the dwelling, so a relatively solid appearance is achieved on the front elevations.
13. In terms of materials, the main walls would be coursed gritstone with recessed pointing, natural blue slate roofs on the two storey buildings, light buff brick on the single storey walls, weathered timber cladding in some locations, standing seam cladding to dormers to match the roof, aluminium windows and aluminium glazed doors, and aluminium rain water goods. The main walls would be built to give a drystone appearance, which has been successful in modern design elsewhere in the National Park. The applicants had considered reusing some of the buff brick from the existing building, in order to reflect and retain some of the history of the site, but they found that this was poor quality and would not perform well after being salvaged and cleaned. They have, however, proposed to use a similar buff brick on some of the single storey elevations to reflect the original brick

14. Overall, Officers consider that the approach now being taken will produce buildings which are more “of their time” whilst respecting the history of the site. The new dwellings would be of a more contemporary appearance, with some window detailing and dormers that may not be appropriate in other locations in the National Park, but are considered to be acceptable here, given the discreet nature of the site, its setting and its history.

Sustainable building and climate change

15. 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 provides a Climate Change Statement. The statement sets out how the proposed dwellings would meet the requirements of policy CC1 and our adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Climate Change and Sustainable Building’.
16. In the discussions that followed deferral of the application in December, Officers have emphasised the need for the development to incorporate climate changes measures as an integral part of the development, rather than being “add-ons”. The architect has responded to this by incorporating additional measures, such as green roofs, into the design. A more detailed climate change mitigation statement has now been submitted. This is a relatively detailed statement, but the key part explains that the proposal will incorporate a fabric first approach to achieve excellent thermal performance with heat loss mitigated through high levels of airtightness. Passive solar gain will support the fabric first approach to ensure a low space heating/cooling demand, whilst the surrounding trees and topography will reduce the risk of overheating in summer months. The dwellings’ low space heating/cooling demand will be met through a wet under floor heating system primarily run from a combination of an air source heat pump (ASHP) and solar thermal panels positioned on the south facing roof of each building. Rainwater harvesting will be provided through domestic water butts provided in each unit’s private amenity space. In addition to this, each dwelling will have an electric car charging point.
17. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policy CC1 in these respects.

Conclusion

18. The application proposes the erection of three new dwelling on the site of a former water treatment works. There is a presumption against development in this location unless there are exceptional circumstances which justify approval. Whilst the building is of some significance in terms of the water gathering and treatment history of the area, it is of a utilitarian design and appearance and is in a poor physical condition. As such it is considered to be a brownfield site, the redevelopment of which would be in accordance with local and national policies.
19. In response to Members’ request for a more contemporary approach that also reflects the history of the site, the applicants have worked with officers and have submitted a revised layout and design which meets these expectations.
20. The recommendation above also includes a requirement to record the building before demolition and to provide the authority with a copy of that record. The applicants have also agreed that an interpretation board should be erected near the entrance to the site (a public footpath passes the entrance) so that the public can understand the history of the site and its recent development. They have also agreed that the original date stone should be reused on the site.

21. For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP2, DS1, HC1, L1, LC3 and DMP policy DMH6.

Human Rights

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

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

23. Nil

24. Report Author: John Scott, Consultant Planner