

NED/20/01137/FL – Holmesfield

Speech Provided by Mel Morris - Consultant

Demolition of existing buildings, and conversion of existing buildings, to form single dwelling, restoration and retention of ancillary buildings, erection of four new dwellings with associated landscaping, parking and access, all formerly used for livery business (resubmission of 19/00786/FL) (conservation area/affecting the setting of a listed building/affecting a public right of way) at Cartledge Hall Farm, Holmesfield.

Cartledge Hall Farm – NEDDC Committee Representation
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With this site it is important that we don't forget what the baseline position is: the baseline is that we have 20th century development on the west side of the farmstead, part of the C20 farm, as well as the livery buildings to the south-east. The proposed development lies almost entirely within the Conservation Area, and the area has been historically developed as part of the farmstead. The Dutch barn is part of the farm. I do not agree, therefore, that the principle of development in this part of the site is inherently harmful to the character of the Conservation Area.

The existing development around the buildings is harmful to the conservation area in a number of ways, including the fact that it is inappropriate in terms of its use of alien materials (rustic brick and render, concrete blockwork, timber cladding), its sprawling development, and the fact that it obscures the original form and appearance of the threshing barn, both to the north and south of it.

I have looked at this site holistically and ways to reduce that harm in accordance with paragraph 200 of the Framework, "to enhance or better reveal significance."

Following the refusal of the previous application, I looked at the design of the proposed development in conjunction with the architect to address many of the concerns of the committee:

- Location of development – the alignment of the 4-bed houses has been set further back on the site. The revised scheme for the westernmost dwelling is 2.5 metres further back within the site than the previous scheme;
- Scale of development – by changing the largest 5-bed dwelling to a 4-bed dwelling and by removing the garage we have made a major reduction in the scale of the dwelling on the western perimeter of the site at the highest point; we also reduced the scale and eaves height of this and the other dwellings;
- Form of development - we also were also able to reduce the scale of the adjoining 4-bed dwelling, by lowering the eaves, ridges, and floor to ceiling heights at first floor level, whilst maintaining the traditional roof pitch;

- Relationship to the existing historic buildings - we created a step in the development, with a single-storey element, revealing more of the southern stable in the principal view and creating more penetrative views through the western part of the development;
- Materials – we are now using local sandstone for all of the walls, which will be laid in narrow courses, not large blocks, in conjunction with stone lintels and cills;

The public benefits are that the existing buildings are very important historically and make a major contribution to the character of the conservation area. They are extremely vulnerable and in a deteriorating condition. Our scheme will cross-subsidise the repair and conversion of the threshing barn and the stables. The removal of the obtrusive and harmful development and the changes to the scheme taken as a whole significantly reduces the scale of the development to ensure it is a better fit with the existing buildings, better revealing the historic farm cluster, with suppressed heights and more steps within the buildings, and a reduction in volume of about 25%.