

Application No. 22/02594/FUL Retrospective planning permission for conversion of 2no. barns to 2no. dwellings

Carham Parish Council objects to this retrospective planning application, on the basis that it leaves a number of questions unanswered.

We have no objection to the conversion of old farm buildings to residential use per se. That kind of development, constructed to a high quality of design and in line with the Local Plan, and taking into account local housing need, is to be welcomed if it brings redundant buildings back into use. However, we have some concerns about this retrospective application:

Quality of Place

The location and site plans and the photographs suggest that there is no demarcation between the barn conversions and what is a working farmyard. If this is the case, then this is a matter of safety as well as of amenity (Policy QOP 2). Furthermore, access to and from the barn conversions appears to be through the working farmyard. This, too, is unsafe for residents, whether they are driving, cycling or on foot.

Pollution and Land Quality

The application states that the site is not known to be contaminated. However, as former agricultural buildings located in a working farmyard, it is possible that the site, or part of it, is contaminated. For the safety of residents and for the protection of the environment (see Water Environment below) we think this statement should be verified (Policy POL 1). The site's location in a working farmyard may also mean that there are other risks to residents of which we are not aware (Policy POL 2).

Water Environment

We do not know how many residential units are within the farm's boundaries, but we are concerned about the ability of the farm's infrastructure to support an additional two domestic units with five bedrooms between them. We are particularly concerned about the destination of the outgoing foul drainage, which the applicant's agent cannot account for (Policy WAT 2), and about the Sustainable Drainage System (Policy WAT 3). If this system drains towards the C20 road, the section of this road to the north-west of the site is liable to flooding. Occasionally the flooding is so deep that the road is impassable.

Environment

The ecology checklist submitted by the applicant's agent is effectively redundant, as it accompanies a retrospective planning application. The work has already been carried out and any damage to protected species will have been done.

The photographs that have been submitted show that the buildings that have been converted are old, stone-built barns and it is quite likely that there were protected species roosting or nesting in them, particularly if the barns were out of use before being converted. While the previous presence of protected species cannot be proved, we hope that Policy ENV 2 can be invoked, to mitigate any impacts that may have occurred.

Carham Parish Council
24 October 2022