

2022/0067

Ms Diane Lawson – Northern College

Change of use of Home Farm buildings from C2 'Residential Institution' to short term residential letting units (24no bedrooms)

Wentworth Castle, Northern College, Lowe Lane, Stainborough, Barnsley, S75 3ET

2no. neighbour objections and an objection from Stainborough Parish Council have been received.

Site Description

The application relates to Home Farm Complex which forms part of Northern College located at Wentworth Castle. Wentworth Castle is a Grade I listed country house, the former seat of the Earls of Strafford. The house sits within over 500 acres of gardens and parklands run by the National Trust. Northern College utilises parts of the main house and associated outbuildings to provide educational and residential facilities to students aged 19 and over. Most of the courses are residential and can involve one night on a short course, a week's intensive course or a longer course over 9 months. The gardens and parklands are available to the students.

Home farm sits to the North East of the main house and consists of a 2 storey farmhouse containing 4no. en-suite bedrooms, Home Farm cottages which is an 'L' shaped building which is predominantly single storey with a small 2 storey element containing 14no. en-suite bedrooms and a 2 storey arched barn containing 4no. en-suite bedrooms on the first floor with storage below.



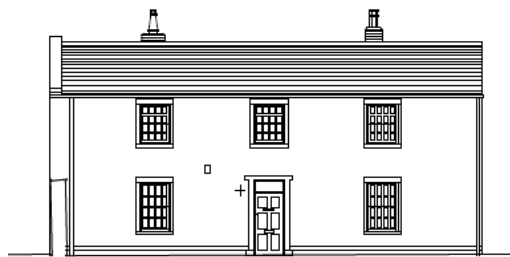
Proposed Development

The applicant seeks permission to change the use of the area is known as Home Farm Complex which contains 24 en-suite bedrooms spread over three separate areas (shown on drawing: 22-006-006) known as cottages 1-6, cottages 7-15, Arched Barn and Home Farm House from C2 residential institution, used by students, to short term residential lets (sui

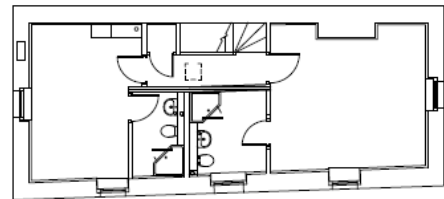
Generis). Short term in this instance means the rooms will be let for no more than 2 weeks and no less than 2 nights.

There will be no physical changes to any of the external or internal wall structures, roof, or timbers (including windows, doors, or access arrangements). Vehicle parking arrangements will continue to be met via the College carpark to the Northwest of the complex. The application does not require any adjustments, losses or change of use to non-residential external spaces.

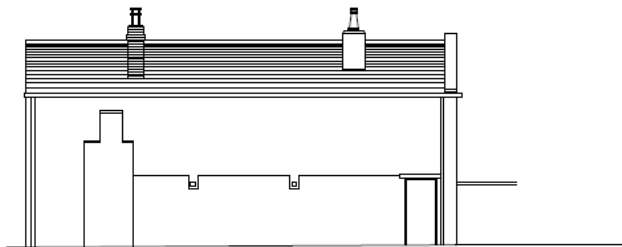
Home Farmhouse



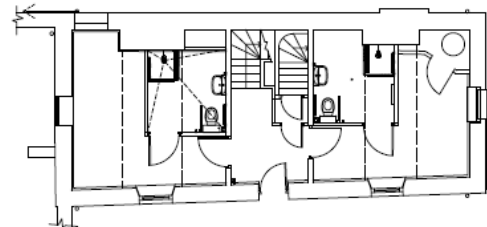
West (Front) Elevation



First Floor Plan

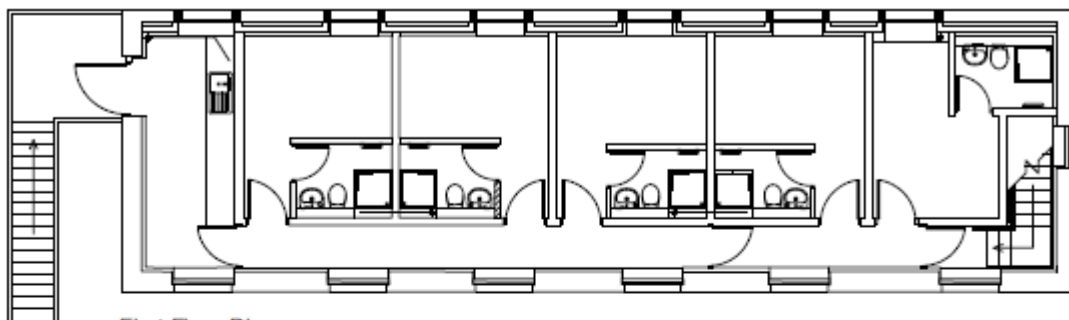


East (Rear) Elevation

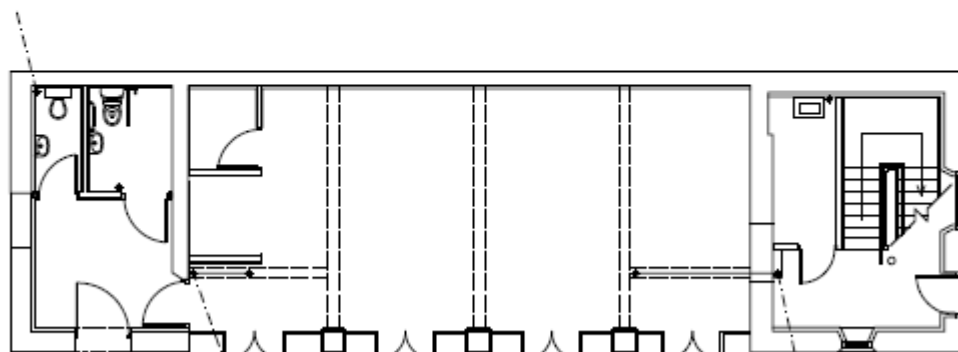


Ground Floor Plan

Arched Barn

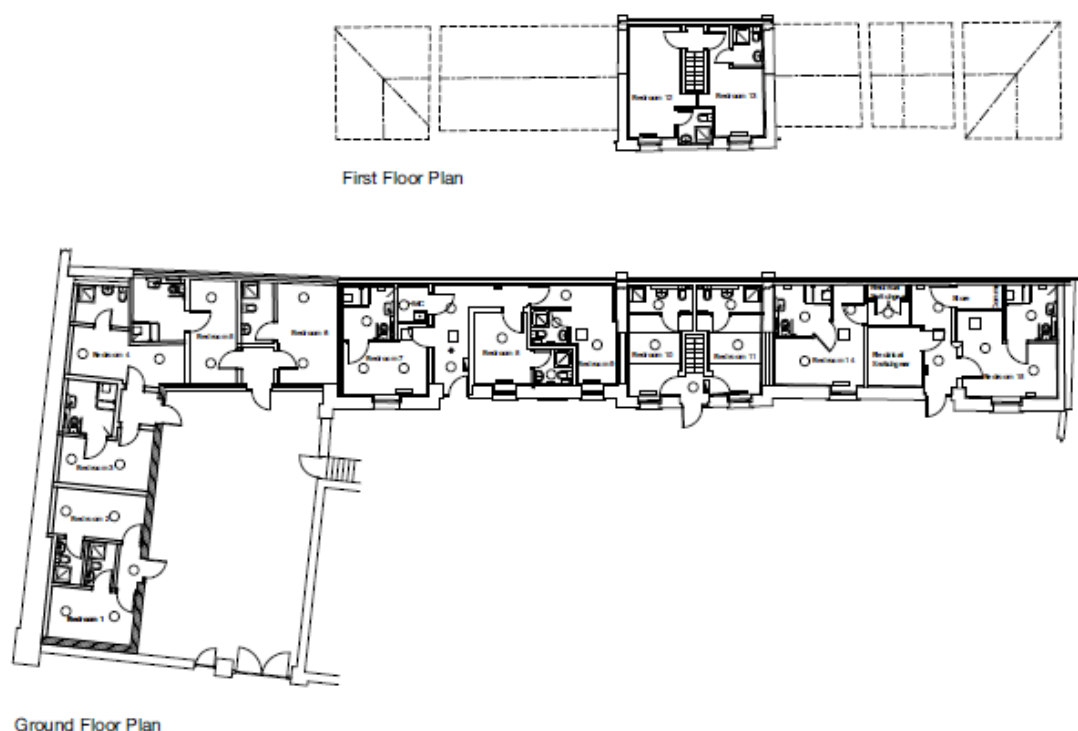


First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

Cottages



Policy Context

To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission the decision on the application must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Local Plan was adopted by the Council in January 2019 and the Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents which are other material considerations.

The National Planning Policy Framework represents up-to-date government planning policy and is a material consideration that must be taken into account where it is relevant to a planning application.

Local Plan Allocation – Conservation Area, Green Belt & Park & Garden of Historic Interest

Relevant policies include:-

Policy HE1 The Historic Environment

Policy HE3 Development Affecting Historic Buildings

Policy GB2 Replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings in the Green Belt.

Policy T4 New development and Transport Safety

Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Policy LG2 The Location of Growth

Policy GD1 General Development

Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making.

Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection

Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy CC1 Climate Change

Policy CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

National – National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The relevant paragraphs of the NPPF reading this proposal are:

- Paragraph 81 - 'planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity'.
- Paragraph 92 - Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places
- Paragraph 111 - Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- Paragraph 147: Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- Paragraph 150 sets out certain other forms of development which are not inappropriate.
- Paragraph 195: Identify and assess heritage significance including the setting and the effect of a proposal
- Paragraph 199: Great weight given to an asset's conservation, irrespective of the degree of harm
- Paragraph 200: Any harm to or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification

- Paragraph 206: LPA's should look for opportunities for development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets that enhance or reveal significance

Consultations

Conservation Officer – No objections given no external alterations are proposed

Highways – No objections following submission of additional information

Historic England – Not necessary to pass comment and suggest the Council's Conservation Officer should comment.

The National Trust – broadly supportive of the proposal to find a sustainable solution for the Home Farm Complex. They did raise some questions regarding residential amenity, security and parking which the applicants have addressed.

Regulatory Services – No objections

Yorkshire Garden Trust – raised questions regarding parking areas and heritage information.

Stainborough Parish Council – raised a number of questions regarding the terminology used within the planning application and also provided comments/concerns as follows;

- Inappropriate development of a heritage site
- Impact on the village from group bookings i.e. parties/weddings
- Concerns over the monitoring of the bookings if problems arise
- Noise and disorderly behaviour in a village setting
- Would the guests have access to the national trust property?
- Increased numbers of vehicles using the property leading to highways issues
- Inadequate visibility on Lowe Lane
- Current parking arrangements may not be adequate

Representations

8no. neighbouring residents have been consulted, a site notice erected within the immediate area and a press notice was displayed in the Barnsley Chronicle. As a result 2no. representations have been received. The main points of concern are;

- Commercial use is not compatible with education use
- Impact on local tourism businesses
- Concerns regarding large groups i.e. hen and stag parties
- Increased traffic and pressure on parking
- Guests will not observe speed limit
- Loss of privacy for local residents
- Potential impact on listed buildings
- Existing access road will deteriorate further
- Access to the units by the fire service

Assessment

Principle of Development

Proposals involving historic buildings should conserve and where appropriate enhance, respect historic precedents, and capitalise on opportunities to reveal significance. The change of use of the buildings subject to this application does not require any external alterations or

any significant internal changes, as such, the proposals would conserve the historic assets in accordance with Local Policies HE1 and HE3.

The application site is located within the Green Belt. The NPPF states the government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The NPPF goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 150 states there are certain forms of development which are not inappropriate within the Green Belt including the re-use of buildings. Local Plan Policy GB2 also states alterations are acceptable where they would not have a harmful impact on the appearance, or character and will preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal utilises existing buildings and no extensions or external alterations are proposed, as such, the change of use would be in accordance with Green Belt Policy and maintain openness.

NPPF paragraph 81 states that 'planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity'. The proposal is to aid the college to expand and adapt their offer.

Local Plan Policy GD1 states development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing residents. Residential amenity will be assessed fully in the section below, however, the proposal utilises buildings currently used for residential accommodation which are over 150m away from neighbouring residential properties. As such, in principle, the proposed residential use within the existing residential buildings is acceptable.

Residential Amenity

The closest neighbouring residential properties to the application buildings are over 150m away. It is acknowledged that the guests of the proposed short term lets would share an access with some of those residential properties, as such, there is potential for noise and disturbance through pedestrian and vehicular movements. However, the buildings are already used for residential purposes associated with adult learning, utilising the same access and parking facilities, therefore, the proposed pedestrian and vehicular movements would arguably not be significantly different to those created by the residential course on offer.

Some of the neighbouring residents and the Parish Council have raised concerns with the proposed use, potential clientele and the management of the units. The applicants have stated they do not intend the units to be used for large groups, this will be made clear on the booking website, and due diligence has been completed in terms of the intended letting company. There will be an Estate Technician on site out of college hours if any issues arise with guests. The applicants state;

The College has staff within the Estates Team, Estates Technicians, who work over 24/7 rota shift to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all students and residents of the Home Farm Complex. This will continue should 'Change of Use' be granted. Any anti- social behaviours would be dealt with, in the same way we would deal with our student behaviour; it would be addressed immediately or where serious concerns are envisaged/displayed the Police may be contacted. We do not, however, envisage disruptive behaviour as Airbnb have hosting standards, alongside a code of conduct for behaviour which includes reporting portals for members to report any noise or disturbances. The College will also conduct a risk assessment prior to the start of Airbnb lettings. The College will be placing restrictions on all male/female group lettings for Hen/Stag parties and guests will also be verified before booking. Occupancy will depend on room; however, most rooms are single occupancy with 4 rooms in Home Farm House having double bed

It should also be noted that the college would keep operating on the site and Wentworth Castle and its associated grounds host events and operate as a visitor attraction, as such, there is already a level of noise and activity generated within the immediate area. The short term lets would operate 24 hours a day where the majority of neighbouring uses would operate during sociable hours, however, as outlined above there would be a presence on site if any issues or disturbance did arise. The majority of guests would purely be tourists to the area looking for overnight accommodation.

Given the comments above, residential amenity would be maintained to a reasonable degree in accordance with Local Plan Policy GD1.

Visual Amenity and Heritage Appraisal

No physical alterations, either externally or internally, are proposed to accommodate the use. The existing rooms used for residential adult learning would simply be used for short term lets.

As such, there would be no material impact on visual amenity or the heritage assets, in accordance with Local Plan Policies D1, HE1 and HE3.

As outlined above, the site is located within the Green Belt, but as the proposal utilises existing buildings and no extensions or external alterations are proposed the change of use would be in accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan Policy GB2 and maintain openness.

The Listed Building and Conservation Officer has raised no objection.

Highways

The guests would utilise an existing access and driveway which is currently used by college students and staff and National Trust staff/volunteers. A total of 24 parking spaces are to be allocated for the proposed residential letting use and these are to be provided within the existing large college car park.

The proposals will involve guests using a designated path from the parking area to the Home Farm Complex. The route is somewhat lengthy at a distance of around 200m but the route is also used by college staff and students as well as National Trust staff/volunteers so it would be difficult to argue that the route is unsuitable to be used by guests staying at the proposed holiday lets. There would appear to be little opportunity to park elsewhere within the grounds so even with guests having to carry luggage and arriving during times of inclement weather they would most likely have to park as intended.

The applicants intend to clearly advertise the access and parking arrangements to potential guests.

Given the comments above, Highways have raised no objections to the proposal.

Summary

In Summary, the proposed change of use from residential institution to short term lets is acceptable. The site is within the green belt, but as outlined above, the development utilises existing buildings and does not require any extensions and additions in accordance with Local Plan Policy GD2 and the NPPF.

Wentworth Castle is a Grade 1 listed building but no external alterations, or significant internal amendments, are required to accommodate the use within the Home Farm Complex within the curtilage of Wentworth Castle. As such, the proposals would conserve the historic assets in accordance with Local Policies HE1 and HE3.

The future occupants of the short term lets would utilise the same access points as neighbouring residential properties, however, the vehicular movements would not be

significantly different to the current residential institution use and the application buildings are located over 150m from the existing residential properties, as such, residential amenity would be maintained to a reasonable degree, in accordance with Local Plan Policies GD1 and Poll1.

As such, the scheme is considered to accord with the relevant policies and guidelines and is recommended for approval.

Taking into account the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations the application is in accordance with the development plan (most notably policies HE1, HE3, D1, GD1, GB2 & Poll1). The presumption in favour of sustainable development is considered to apply (NPPF para 11) which is that proposals that accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay. The recommendation is one of approval therefore subject to the conditions listed below.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions