Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Application Code: R/56/502
Committee Date: 12/02/2019
Location: Halfway House, Hawes

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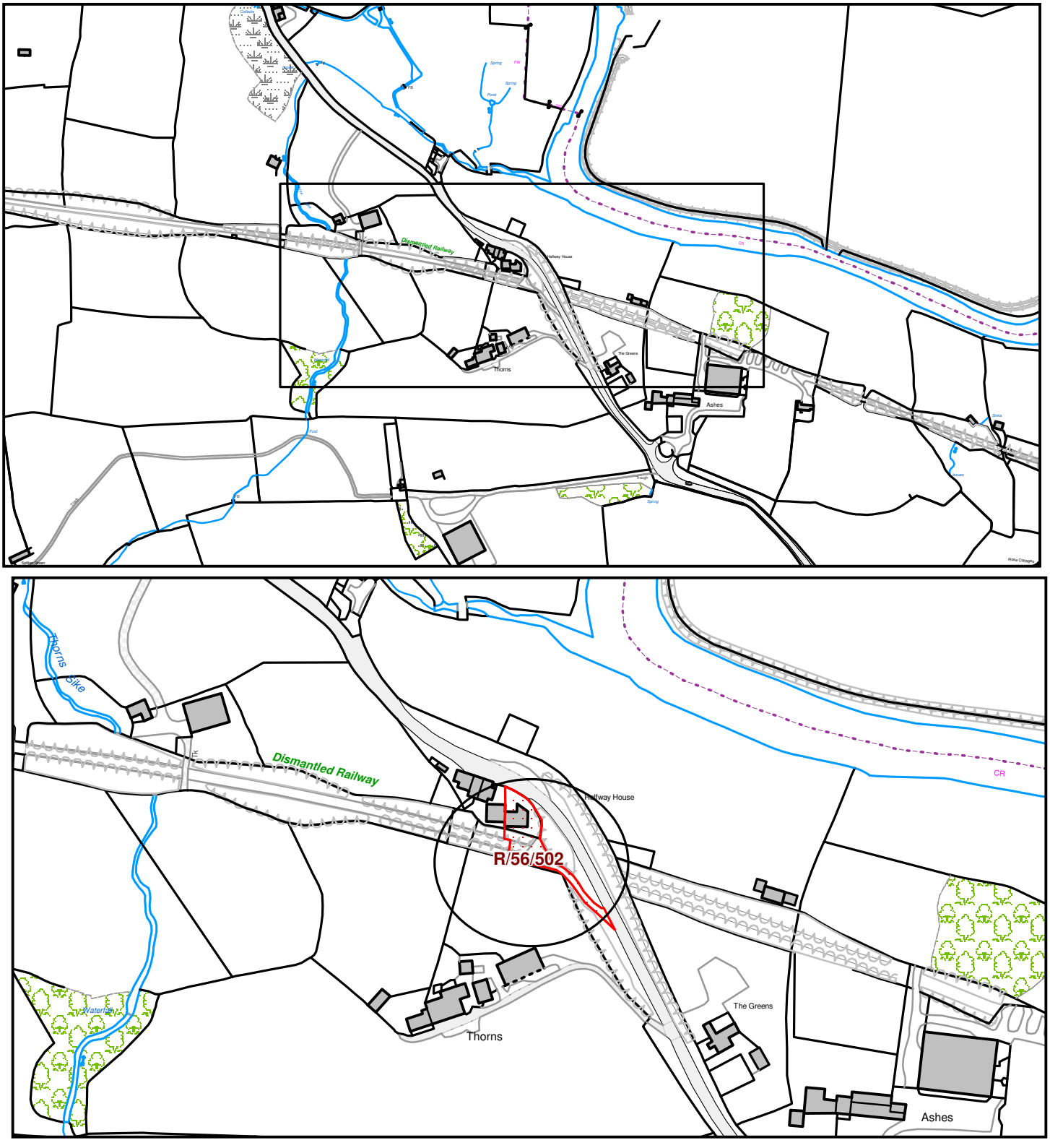

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Schedule No:13

Application No:	R/56/502		
District:	Richmondshire		
Parish:	Hawes		
Applicant's Name:	Mr A Powell,		
Grid Ref:	SD86559020		
Received by YDNP:	01/11/2018	**Officer:**	Andrew Bishop

PROPOSAL: **full planning permission for conversion of attached barn to form a separate local occupancy dwelling**

LOCATION: **Halfway House, Hawes**

CONSULTEES

Hawes & High Abbotside PC	Strongly supported as proposed for use solely as a local occupancy residential dwelling
Hawes and High Abbotside Ward	No comments received.
Wildlife Conservation Officer	No objections.
NYCC - Area 1 Richmond Highway Depot	Recommendation of refusal due to lack of visibility at access.
North Yorkshire Building Control	No comments received.
Senior Listed Building Officer	No objections subject to changes.
CEHO Richmondshire DC	No objections.
Minerals Officer	No concerns in respect of a mineral safeguarding area.
Senior Historic Environment Officer	No comments received to date.

PUBLIC RESPONSES

Objections have been received from 3 sources on the grounds that the development does not protect and would prejudice the reinstatement of the Wensleydale Railway line contrary to the Authority's Local Plan and Management Plan.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

L1(15) - Heritage assets

L2(15) - Conversion of traditional building - acceptable uses

L3(15) - Conversion of traditional buildings - building treatment

W1(15) - Wildlife sites, species and networks

W2(15) - Biodiversity enhancement

BE6(15) - Railway-related development

SP1(15) - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

SP2(15) - National Park Purposes

SP4(15) - Development Quality

OFFICER OBSERVATIONS

REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION
This application is reported to the Planning Committee for the following reason: in the opinion of the Head of Development Management it is in the best interests of the National Park Authority that the application is considered by the Committee.

APPLICATION SITE
The application site is located beside the A684 some 0.5Km to the west of Hawes. It relates to a traditional stone barn attached to the eastern gable end of the Halfway House and a proportion of its curtilage, parking area and the access from the highway. The site area extends to the highway boundaries to the north and east and to a boundary with open fields to the south. Halfway House, the barn and most of the site area are at a higher ground level than the A684 road. The track bed of the former Wensleydale Railway line crosses the site to the south of the house and barn and used to cross the removed Thorn's Bridge over the A684 immediately to the east of the site.

PROPOSAL
The application is to convert the barn into a separate local occupancy dwelling.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY
There is no recorded planning history for this site.

KEY ISSUES
-principle of the development
-impact on character and appearance of the countryside
-impact on former Wensleydale Railway line
-residential amenity and privacy
-highway safety
-protected wildlife species
-parish council comments

PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018) sets out the purpose of the planning system: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It directs planning authorities to avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless certain circumstances apply. The circumstances listed include - "the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets" and "the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting."

The Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (2015-30) aims to deliver sustainable development in the National Park context. It aims to achieve the conservation and enhancement of traditional buildings (heritage assets) by allowing them to be adapted or converted to new uses,

providing the building and its landscape have the capacity to absorb them.

Policy L1 considers development affecting heritage assets. Traditional buildings may be designated as Listed Buildings or are considered to be 'heritage assets' despite not being designated. Proposals affecting undesignated heritage assets that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to designated heritage assets will be treated as though they were designated for the purposes of the policy.

Policy L2 is a strategic spatial planning policy (ie. it governs where development 'should go'). It allows traditional buildings to be changed to residential and employment uses in certain locations (in existing settlements, building groups, or suitable roadside locations). Intensive uses will not be appropriate in buildings that are isolated in the landscape and a change of use only allowed in isolated buildings where there would be no material alteration to the exterior of the building or its surroundings.

Policy L3 considers the details of the conversion works. Proposals will not be allowed where they undermine the architectural and historic character of the traditional building and its landscape setting. The building must have the physical capacity to accommodate the new use without significant extension or alteration or requiring new ancillary buildings.

A proposal to convert a traditional building to a new use must satisfy the requirements of all three policies.

The existing curtilage of Halfway House and the barn adjoin the public highway and both share an existing access, which it is not proposed to alter. The barn is also situated within a group of buildings facing th A684 which includes Halfway House and the residential neighbours Nos 1 and 3 Halfway Houses. The application barn therefore meets the locational criteria under Policy L2 for a conversion to a local occupancy dwelling.

According to historical map evidence the barn was built before Halfway House some time during the latter half of the 19th Century. The house was possibly built at the same time as the Wensleydale Railway but it is not known if there was any direct association with the railway. The barn is not a listed building but its age, stone construction and appearance give it the status of a non-designated heritage asset. The former railway line is also a heritage asset. Policy L1 would permit the development if it conserves the heritage significance of the barn and the former railway line in accordance with the criteria in policy L3.

IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE
The proposed conversion scheme would see the existing window and door openings on two of the three exposed elevations of the barn re-used in the conversion scheme. No new openings would be inserted into these two elevations. The existing frames would be replaced with those either matching or improving on the glazing pattern for a barn conversion.

A new small window would be inserted at ground floor level into the north elevation of the barn. This would light the end of the proposed living area. A lean-to extension measuring 3.5m long by 1.55m deep would be added into the angle of walls formed by the barn and the gable of Halfway House which extends forwards. This lean-to would provide an external door lobby and wc. The existing four large light panels in the slate roof facing the road would be replaced by four smaller conservation rooflights.

The north elevation of the barn faces the road but is set back further from it more than the roadside elevation of Halfway House. The triangular outshot referred to by the Senior Listed Building Officer (SLBO) has already been removed. The SLBO considers that the construction of the new entrance/WC porch is unjustified as it is not in association with traditional Dales farm buildings. However its lean-to form is found on barns. The barn is only of moderate heritage value and the proposed extension and new window would cause less than substantial harm to the barns heritage significance. The character of the barn would essentially be conserved.

Externally a dry stone wall would be erected to divide the existing garden. The only other change would be a small extension to the existing parking area so that both the existing and new dwelling would have two designated parking spaces. Halfway House and the other roadside houses are served by existing supply poles on the roadside. The barn conversion is not expected to require more than one additional line connection.

Although in a raised position above the road the barn is not overly prominent in the landscape. It is noticeably smaller than the adjoining house and set back from it. The barn is partly screened by mature trees growing on the bankside above the road, in the garden and beside the former railway line. The barn is already in ancillary residential use as an outbuilding for the existing dwelling and it is in a domestic curtilage setting with landscaped gardens to front and rear. The proposals would therefore have a neutral impact on the landscape setting of the barn. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of policy L3.

IMPACT ON FORMER WENSLEYDALE RAILWAY LINE

The former railway line is of landscape, archaeological, historical and cultural significance and therefore considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Halfway House and its attached barn stand very close to the alignment of the former Wensleydale Railway. The rear elevations of these buildings are only some 1 – 4m from the former boundary of the railway and 5 – 8m from its former track bed. The former railway line came through a cutting to the west of Halfway House and crossed the A684 to the east over Thorns Bridge, which has since been removed. There are no fences or walls separating those buildings from the former railway line as it forms part of its domestic curtilage. The access to Halfway House rises from the road on the Hawes side of the site of the bridge and terminates at a parking area occupying part of its track bed.

Local Plan policy BE6 states: “Development that would prejudice the reinstatement of the Wensleydale Railway, including operational land and station facilities, will not be permitted.” The local plan supports the full reinstatement of the Wensleydale Railway for the range of benefits it would bring to local communities, businesses and visitors. In accordance with a purpose of the National Park it would bring opportunities for greater understanding and enjoyment by the public.

Objectors note that the boundary of the dwelling extends over the former railway line along with the access and parking areas. They are concerned that the proposals would therefore prejudice the reinstatement of the railway line contrary to the Authority’s Local Plan and Management Plan.

The proposed conversion works to form a separate dwelling in the barn would not bring it within or closer to the course of the former railway line. It is proposed to erect a dry stone wall to make a separate curtilage for the barn and this would cross the former track bed. The car parking surfacing would also be increased, without changing levels, so that each dwelling would have two parking spaces. The new dwelling would share the existing

access to Halfway House and this would remain unaltered. The operational development within the boundaries of the former railway line is therefore minimal and reversible in the event of its reinstatement although an alternative location would have to be found for the car parking.

There are many places where the former railway is within the curtilage of residential properties. The proposed sub-division of the existing curtilage would therefore not introduce a different use. It is considered that the proposed scheme for the conversion of the barn would add a further complication to the reinstatement of the railway but is not in itself so prejudicial as to warrant a refusal of planning permission as being contrary to policy BE6.

Because of its impact on the former railway the application has been advertised as a Departure to the Local Plan for a period expiring on 22nd February 2019. Should Members be minded to approve it is recommended that the decision be deferred to the Head of Development Management to allow any further representations to be taken into consideration before granting an approval.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The curtilage of Halfway House would be divided approximately equally with the converted barn. Each would have garden to front and rear with separate car parking from a shared access to the highway. The curtilages would be more than adequate for amenity needs. The barn stands to the east of Halfway House and its conversion would not produce a situation of overlooking of one another or of the other dwellings in the roadside building group to the west.

A reinstatement of the Wensleydale Railway line would mean that a further dwelling would be sited in very close proximity to it. The operation of the line could produce a corresponding degree of noise and disturbance from passing trains for the occupants of the converted barn. The Richmondshire Environmental Health Officer (REHO) has considered the potential noise impact from future passing trains. They have based their comments on the existing usage of the open section of the Wensleydale Railway. They note that this is a volunteer run tourist line operating on less than 50% of days annually with between 2 to 4 return journeys per day of diesel and occasional steam trains. These trains do not run at night and it is unlikely that the current service levels would significantly intensify. The REHO considers that there would be some impact on amenity but the potential noise impact would be relatively low and they do not require a full detailed noise assessment to be submitted. The development is therefore acceptable in terms of residential amenity in accordance with policy SP4.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

The proposal would bring about an intensification of use of the existing vehicular access to Halfway House. The Highway Authority recommendation is for refusal on the basis that the visibility splay when looking to the north is severely sub-standard and does not meet the 2 metres x 120 metres requirements for the speed limit of 40 Mph. The existing access has a visibility of some 70 – 80 metres depending on how much vegetation growth there is on the bank to the north of the access point.

The rising bank side and existing houses to the north prevent sight lines of 120 metres from ever being achieved from the existing access point. The applicant does not own the field to the south and therefore cannot move the access further from the corner. The bank side is not in the applicant's ownership and is likely to be highway verge. The removal of all

the trees and vegetation would have an adverse landscape impact.

The Highway Authority have suggested directly to the applicant that they undertake a speed survey in the hope that the actual speed of traffic on the road on the approaches to the proposed access may be slower than the prevailing speed limit. The visibility required would then be reassessed and if appropriate the requirements adjusted downwards. The Highway Authority expressed doubt that it would make any difference and no such speed survey results have been provided by the applicant.

Whilst it is appreciated that visibility does not meet the standards required by the Highway Authority the access is not totally blind and the road has a speed restriction meaning that the use of the existing access by one additional dwelling is unlikely to be so prejudicial to highway safety as to warrant refusal of planning permission under policy SP4.

IMPACT ON PROTECTED WILDLIFE SPECIES
Bats are a Protected Species by virtue of the EU Habitats Directive and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Regulation 9 of the Regulations provides that the local planning authority in the exercise of their functions, shall have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

The application has been supported by a report following scoping and emergence surveys for bats, breeding birds and Barn Owls. No evidence of bat or Barn Owl activity was found within any part of the barn. The report concludes that there is no evidence to suggest that the conversion would impact on these species. At the time of the survey there was vegetation growth up the walls of the barn. This has since been removed reducing the opportunities for bird nesting. The Authority's Wildlife and Conservation Officer has been consulted and has no objection to the proposals. They suggest that more than one bat tube and bird boxes be required by condition on an approval. Subject to these measures of biodiversity enhancement the scheme would comply with policies W1 and W2.

PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS
Hawes and High Abbotside Parish Council have expressed strong support on the basis that it is for use solely as a local occupancy residential dwelling.

ANALYSIS AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS
The proposal would represent a reasonably sensitive conversion of the existing barn to create a local occupancy dwelling. The proposal would not unduly prejudice the reinstatement of the Wensleydale Railway or be detrimental to the character or appearance of the surrounding landscape, be harmful to residential amenity, highway safety or protected wildlife species. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with all relevant criteria of Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (2015-2030) policies SP2, SP4, BE6, L1, L2, L3, W1 and W2 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2018. This application is therefore recommended for approval accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

That Full Planning Permission be delegated to the Head of Development Management to allow consideration of any representations received before the expiry of the advertisment period for the Departure from the Local Plan on 22nd February 2019 and completion of a S106 agreement restricting occupation to those meeting local needs criteria and the following conditions:
-time
-plans

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-no rebuilding
-detailing of conversion work including roofing slates, stonework, pointing, cills and lintels, rooflights, windows and doors, rainwater goods, vents and flues
-no sand or shot blasting of stonework
-external lighting
-boundary walls
-bin storage
-car parking and turning area to be created and retained
-erection of bat tubes and bird boxes
-removal of permitted development rights for alterations, extensions and curtilage buildings