



**DETAILED PLANNING APPLICATION PROPOSING THE ERECTION OF
A REPLACEMENT COUNTRY HOUSE INCORPORATING LEISURE AND
SERVICE BUILDINGS TOGETHER WITH GARAGE BLOCK, GATE BUILDING,
BAT BARN, OUTDOOR POOL, TENNIS COURT, PAVILIONS, GARDEN STORE,
AND FOUR COTTAGES AT RAVENSWICK HALL, YOUNG BANK LANE,
KIRKBYMOORSIDE, NORTH YORKSHIRE YO62 7LR**

PLANNING STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2015

Peacock & Smith Limited
Suite 9C
Joseph's Well
Hanover Walk
Leeds
LS3 1AB
T: 0113 2431919
F: 0113 242198
E: planning@peacockandsmith.co.uk
www.peacockandsmith.co.uk

	CONTENTS	PAGE
SECTION 1:	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
SECTION 2:	SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION	9
SECTION 3:	RELEVANT PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY	12
SECTION 4:	THE PROPOSED REPLACEMENT DWELLING	18
SECTION 5:	THE STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN	20
SECTION 6:	THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	26
SECTION 7:	KEY PLANNING ISSUES	30
SECTION 8:	THE POLICY POSITION: OVERVIEW AND APPRAISAL	44
SECTION 9:	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	48

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Planning Application

- 1.01 This statement has been prepared to accompany and support a full planning application which relates to Ravenswick Hall, a large country house located off Young Bank Lane, to the north east of Kirkbymoorside, North Yorkshire YO62 7LR.
- 1.02 The submitted application proposes the demolition of Ravenswick Hall together with the adjacent lodge and the majority of the associated outbuildings and former agricultural buildings, and the erection of a replacement country house incorporating leisure and service buildings, pavilions, gate building and bat barn, outdoor pool, tennis court, garden store, four cottages, garage building and parking/circulation areas.
- 1.03 Concurrently with this planning application, a second application has been submitted which proposes the reinstatement and alteration of a small 35m² derelict barn ('East Barn') which is located to the east of Ravenswick Hall on the opposite side of the River Dove, to form a 'Barn Folly'. This proposal is addressed in the documents which accompany the main application.

The Background to the Application

- 1.04 The Historical Site Appraisal which accompanies the planning application traces the history of Ravenswick, and indicates that the site has been occupied by a succession of dwellings since about the mid 18th Century. Following the acquisition of the property by Mr Harrison Holt in 1895, the main house was extensively remodelled, extended and partly rebuilt in the period to 1910, creating an imposing, large country house. The property subsequently remained in the ownership of the Holt family until 2006, during which period various additions were made, including outbuildings, an outdoor swimming pool, tennis court and squash court.
- 1.05 Following the sale of Ravenswick in 2006, the then (now former) owner obtained planning permissions for a number of modifications and additions to the property, including the conversion of former stable blocks to provide staff and guest accommodation; the erection of garages/stores; the erection of an extension to cover the swimming pool and create a gymnasium, orangery and leisure facilities, and further extensions and alterations to the house.

- 1.06 Details of the relevant planning application history are set out in Section 3 of this statement.
- 1.07 Works to implement these permissions, along with the refurbishment of the main house and the adjacent lodge house were commenced, but they ceased in 2009, at a point when the house had been stripped back to its shell. Since then, the property has been systematically vandalized, and its condition has deteriorated to the point at which the buildings are in a state of dereliction.
- 1.08 The property, which comprises the house and outbuildings described above together with about 76 hectares of arable land, pasture, parkland and woodland, was acquired by the present owner in May 2013, following consultations with Officers of Ryedale District Council. Those consultations included a formal pre-application consultation process, and were based on the owner's stated intention to demolish Ravenswick Hall and all (or the vast majority) of the outbuildings, and to build a new, replacement country house 'of exceptional quality' on land to the south of the existing hall with new staff accommodation on the site of the former agricultural buildings to the north of the lane.
- 1.09 The pre-application consultation process was undertaken in December 2012 and January 2013, and following a site meeting with planning and conservation officers, the owner's representatives were advised that subject to achieving 'the highest possible standards of architectural design' there would be no objection to the demolition of the hall and ancillary buildings and the development of a new, replacement country house on land to the south of the existing house.
- 1.10 Details of the pre-application consultation process are set out in Section 4 of this Statement, and are noted in the Statement of Community Engagement.
- 1.11 Ravenswick was acquired in the light of the outcome of the pre-application consultation process, and the acquisition was followed by a lengthy pre-application process of site investigations, surveys and evaluation. This work included measured surveys of all the buildings at the property, and topographical surveys of the areas that are the subject of the submitted planning application, along with adjacent areas of woodland and tree cover as necessary.

- 1.12 A bat survey of the existing buildings was conducted at an early stage, and this was followed by further bat surveys, and a wider ecological assessment of the site and adjacent areas, as detailed in the submitted Ecological Survey Report. A tree survey and arboricultural appraisal were also conducted.
- 1.13 The initial investigative work was followed by many months of highly detailed design work, the aim of which from the outset was to meet the Council's requirement for the highest possible standards of architectural design. Details of the design process, including the development of the design philosophy and detailed proposals, are set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement.
- 1.14 In addition, the owner commissioned a landscape appraisal of the estate, the first purpose of which was to ensure that the siting of the proposed replacement country house and the nature of the associated gardens and open areas within its curtilage would have regard to and respect important features in the existing landscape framework. However, the appraisal had a second aim, which was to provide a basis for a wider, long term landscape plan for the estate, thereby adopting the classical, inclusive approach of recognising that great design incorporates not only the new country house but also the landscape within which it sits. Details of the approach adopted towards landscape design are set out in the submitted landscape drawings, and the Design and Access Statement (of which the landscape statement forms part).
- 1.15 Other appraisals which form part of the application documentation, include a Highways Statement (including Construction Traffic Management Plan), Phase 1 Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Site Investigation, a Demolition Specification and a Note on Flood Risk.
- 1.16 The design process has therefore been highly detailed, fully informed and holistic. In particular, the proposals shown on the application drawings have been influenced by the content and findings of the Historical Site Appraisal, the ecological surveys and the landscape appraisals, and in Adam Architecture, the owner has employed the services of an architectural firm with the necessary vision and expertise to produce a design of the highest architectural quality.

- 1.17 In this latter regard, whilst the Council's officers emphasized the need for high quality design as part of their positive response to the pre-application consultation, in preparing the submitted proposals, particular regard has been had to the advice of paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). That guidance advises local planning authorities that they should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances, which include:

'the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should:

be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;

reflect the highest standards in architecture;

significantly enhance its immediate setting; and

be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area'

- 1.18 This and other relevant policy guidance is addressed in detail in the following sections of this Statement, but the most important point is that each of these requirements is satisfied in this case, and as a result the proposals are in accordance with this key guidance of the NPPF.

- 1.19 Prior to the submission of the planning application, and following further discussions with officers of Ryedale District Council, the local community was consulted in order to (a) make local people, groups, organizations and politicians aware of the proposals for Ravenswick Hall and (b) to obtain comments and feedback from the local community in respect of the principle of the development and the details of the design of the proposed country house.

- 1.20 The details of the consultation exercise are set out in the submitted Statement of Community Engagement, which indicates that a well-publicised exhibition was held in Kirkbymoorside in July 2015. The exhibition was visited by 286 people (about 10% of the local population, of whom 108 completed comment forms. In summary, 94% of those who commented supported the proposals, 4% were undecided and 2% opposed the scheme. There was therefore almost universal support for the proposed development, and the design of the new country house.

Scope of the Application

- 1.21 As indicated above, the submitted planning application relates to the proposed demolition and replacement of the existing Ravenswick Hall, and the demolition and replacement of ancillary buildings, including the lodge.
- 1.22 With regard to the proposed demolition, any building operation consisting of the demolition of a building is permitted development by virtue of Schedule 2 Part 31 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.
- 1.23 In this regard, demolition is not permitted by Class A where the building has been rendered unsafe or otherwise uninhabitable by the action or inaction of any person having an interest in the land on which the building stands, and it is practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair.
- 1.24 In this case, the buildings in question were rendered uninhabitable and potentially unsafe prior to the acquisition of the property by the present owner (who has taken all possible steps to improve security and reduce vandalism since his acquisition of the site). The permitted development right to demolish the building(s) therefore remains.
- 1.25 Class A.2 (b) provides where the demolition does not fall within Class A.2 (a) which relates to urgent demolition required in the interests of health and safety, and is not 'excluded demolition', an application is required to be made for a determination as to whether prior approval of the local planning authority is required with regard to the method of demolition and any proposed restoration of the site.
- 1.26 However, 'excluded demolition' is defined in Class A.3 as being demolition on land which is subject of a planning permission, for the redevelopment of the land, granted on application or deemed under Part III of the Act (control over development).
- 1.27 In such circumstances the issues surrounding prior notification are subsumed into the planning application, and no separate application for a determination is necessary.

- 1.28 However, paragraph 29 of Circular 10/95 'Planning Controls over Demolition' provides that where demolition is required as part of a redevelopment for which planning permission is being sought, the developer should include details of the demolition in his application for planning permission. These details should be considered by the local planning authority along with other aspects of the redevelopment.
- 1.29 Together with the details of the proposed new dwelling, relevant details of the proposed demolition are included within the submitted application, in accordance with the above guidance.
- 1.30 The submitted planning application is supported by the following architectural plans, drawings and model:

5766/00	Site Location Plan	1:2500
5766/01	Proposed Site Plan	1:500
5766/02	Main Building Ground Floor Plan	1:100
5766/03	Main Building First Floor Plan	1:100
5766/04	Main Building Roof Plan	1:100
5766/05	Main Building North and South Elevations	1:100
5766/06	Main Building West and East Elevations	1:100
5766/07	Main Building Part Elevations	1:100
5766/08	Main Building Sections	1:100
5766/09	Site Sections	1:500
5766/10	Leisure Building Floor Plans	1:100
5766/11	Leisure Building Sections and Elevations 1	1:100
5766/12	Leisure Building Sections and Elevations 2	1:100
5766/13	Upper Courtyard Floor Plans	1:100
5766/14	Courtyards Sections and Elevations	1:100
5766/15	Gate Houses	1:100
5766/16	Garage	1:100
5766/17	Cottage A Large	1:100
5766/18	Cottage B Small	1:100
5766/19	Cottage C Small	1:100
5766/20	Cottage D Small	1:100
5766/21	Pool House	1:100
5766/22	Belvedere and Garden Store	1:100

5766/23	Garden Colonnade	1:100
5766/24	South Arcade	1:100
5766/25	Temple and Grotto	1:100
5766/30	Details - Main Building Part Front Elevation 1	1:20
5766/31	Details - Main Building Part Front Elevation 2	1:20
5766/32	Details – Main Building Part South Elevation 1	1:20
5766/33	Details – Main Building Part South Elevation 2	1:20
5766/34	Details – Leisure Building	1:20
5766/40	Existing Site Survey	1:500
5766/41	Demolition Site Plan	1:500
	Model of Proposed Development	1:500

1.31 The application is also supported by the following landscape plans and drawings:

5686-93-101 B	Northern Court and South Gardens Soft Works Masterplan Sheet 01	1:500
5686-93-102 B	Northern Court and South Gardens Soft Works Masterplan Sheet 02	
5686-94-101 B	Northern Court and South Gardens Hard Works Masterplan Sheet 01	1:500
5686-94-102 B	Northern Court and South Gardens Hard Works Masterplan Sheet 02	
5686-99-101 B	Northern Court and South Gardens Masterplan	1:500

1.32 In addition to this Supporting Statement, the application is also accompanied by the following documents:

Design & Access Statement
 Historical Site Appraisal
 Ecological Survey Report
 Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 Transport Statement (incorporating Draft Construction Traffic Management plan)
 Phase 1 Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Site Investigation
 Demolition Specification
 Note on Flood Risk
 Drainage Strategy
 Statement of Community Engagement

1.33 Relevant issues are addressed in the following Sections of this Statement:

- Section 2 provides a summary description of the application site and its environs;
- Section 3 summarises the planning application history of the site, including the pre-application consultation process;
- Section 4 highlights the key elements of the proposed development;
- Section 5 deals with relevant planning policies of the statutory Development plan;
- Section 6 summarises relevant National Planning Policy Framework Guidance
- Section 7 draws together and addresses the key planning issues;
- Section 8 provides an overview and appraisal of the policy position;
- Section 9 sets out a summary and conclusions.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.01 Ravenswick is located approximately 1 km to the north east of Kirkbymoorside, within Ryedale District and close to (but outside) the boundary of the North York Moors National Park. The estate comprises some 76 hectares of agricultural land, parkland and woodland to the west and north of the River Dove, and the characteristics and topography of the property are described in detail in the Historical Site Appraisal and in the Design and Access Statement.
- 2.02 As indicated on the planning application form, the application site area is 8.15 hectares. This area comprises the following:
- Ravenswick Hall, with its lodge and outbuildings, together with former garden, paddock and woodland areas, all situated to the south of Young Bank Lane (6.50 hectares); and
 - former agricultural buildings, associated circulation areas and the former kitchen garden situated to the north of Young Bank Lane (1.65 hectares).
- 2.03 The above areas are shown edged red on the submitted Site Location Plan, and are denoted as Areas 1 and 2 respectively.
- 2.04 Access to Ravenswick is achieved via Young Bank Lane and Swineherd Lane, the latter of which links the property with Kirkbymoorside, the A170 Thirsk to Scarborough road, and the wider highway network.
- 2.05 The lodge and the range of former stables and outbuildings are located immediately adjacent to the southern side of Young Bank Lane. To the east of these stone buildings is a brick boiler house and a high brick wall. The access to the property is situated immediately to the west of the lodge.
- 2.06 The main hall stands to the south of the former stables and outbuildings, but because of its location and the disposition of the buildings along the lane frontage, it is barely visible from the access or from the adjacent highway.

- 2.07 The former extensive gardens to the property extend to the south east of the main hall, and comprise two generally level areas of land separated by a ha ha (of about 1 metre in height). A hard surfaced tennis court is located in the south east part of the former gardens, beyond which is pasture land.
- 2.08 Ravenswick Hall, its former gardens and the pasture referred to above are set within a landscape framework provided by areas of woodland which extend along the high sided valley of the River Dove to the east and south, and also to the west along the route of the driveway which links the property with the Kirkbymoorside to Hutton le Hole road to the south east.
- 2.09 To the north of Young Bank Lane are (former) farm buildings associated with the property. These comprise a traditional, single storey stone building; a building clad in corrugated metal sheeting; a larger portal frame building with similar metal sheeting, and a range of Dutch barns. Further to the north is the concrete base of a further large building, which was removed relatively recently (Google Earth images indicate that a new building was constructed between 2007 and 2009 but it is no longer present on the site).
- 2.10 Immediately to the west of the former agricultural buildings is the former kitchen garden, with its traditional high brick walls and the remains of a large greenhouse and ornamental ironwork within it. Google Earth images indicate that the kitchen garden was in use and cultivated as recently as 2002, but cultivation appears to have ceased by 2007 and like the rest of the property the garden area is now unused, overgrown and derelict.
- 2.11 As indicated in Section 1 of this statement, Ravenswick Hall has now been unoccupied for over nine years, and the main house and outbuildings are now in a state of extreme disrepair and dereliction, having been subject to what has been described as 'systematic vandalism' over an extended period of time. The former agricultural buildings are now largely unused and are in a state of increasing dilapidation, although one is used from time to time for the storage of agricultural machinery. All of the external areas in the immediate vicinity of the property are unkempt, overgrown and strewn with rubbish and litter.

- 2.12 The lack of management and upkeep also applies to the wider areas of the estate. Whilst the agricultural and shooting tenants undertake such day to day works as are necessary, the estate is suffering from a lack of proper woodland management, and the driveway, paths, tracks and fences all now require significant repairs, renewal and investment.
- 2.13 Photographs of Ravenswick today are provided in the Design and Access Statement, the Historical Site Appraisal and the Ecological Survey Report.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

Introduction

3.01 The buildings at Ravenswick were the subject of a number of planning applications submitted in 2007 and 2008, mainly in connection with the programme of extensions and refurbishment works that was subsequently abandoned by the previous owner. Whilst the Council's decisions in respect of those applications have little direct bearing on the current planning application, they do serve to indicate that even before the property became derelict and vandalised, it was not regarded as having such heritage value that a significant level of alteration and change would be unacceptable. In such circumstances, it is appropriate to note the key details of relevant previous applications, as follows.

Application Ref. 07/00972/FUL: Erection of Garage Block with Storage Above

3.02 Planning application ref. 07/00972/FUL was submitted to Ryedale District Council on 25 October 2007. The application sought consent for the erection of a substantial two storey building to be located to the north east of the hall, and east of the stables and outbuildings. Whilst as submitted the application proposed the development of a building capable of accommodating four double garages, the plans were amended to provide for two triple garages. Planning permission was granted on 07 January 2008, but it was not implemented.

Application Ref. 07/00975/FUL: Extension to Cover Outdoor Swimming Pool, Gymnasium, Orangery and Associated Leisure Facilities

3.03 Planning application ref. 07/00975/FUL was submitted on 25 October 2007, and proposed an extension to the hall to incorporate the pre-existing outdoor swimming pool and to provide an orangery, gymnasium and leisure areas. The proposal involved the erection of a substantial building to the east of the hall, with a roof height equivalent to the eaves height of the existing house. Planning permission was granted on 04 January 2008, and whilst preliminary works to implement the consent were started, the development was not completed.

Application Ref. 07/00976/FUL: Single Storey Garage Extension, Glazed Roof over Inner Courtyard and First Floor Balustrade on South Elevation

- 3.04 Planning application ref. 07/00976/FUL was submitted on 25 October 2007, and proposed an extension to the outbuildings to provide a single storey garage, the introduction of a glazed roof over the inner courtyard to provide a 'tropical area' and the addition of a balustrade at first floor level on the south elevation of the hall. Planning permission was granted on 04 January 2008.

Application Ref. 07/00977/FUL: Formation of Helipad and Provision of Associated Winsock

- 3.05 Planning application ref. 07/00977/FUL was submitted on 25 October 2007, and proposed the formation of a helipad and the provision of a windsock on land to the south of Ravenswick Hall (in the vicinity of the existing tennis court). Planning permission was granted on 09 January 2008, but the consent was not implemented.

Application Ref. 07/00974/FUL: Erection of Building to House Hay Burner

- 3.06 Application ref. 07/00974/FUL, which was submitted on 25 October 2007, proposed the erection of a building to accommodate a hay burner, which was intended to provide heating for the hall. The building was proposed to be sited immediately to the north of Young Bank Lane, and it was intended that it should replace the smaller of the metal clad buildings described in Section 2. The replacement building was agricultural in appearance, with walls of blockwork and Yorkshire boarding, and a profiled sheet roof. Planning permission was granted on 07 January 2008 but it was not implemented.

Application Ref. 08/00500/FUL: Change of Use and Alteration of Stable Block to form Staff Accommodation

- 3.07 Application ref. 08/00500/FUL was submitted on 23 May 2008, and proposed the change of use and alteration of the stable block north of Young Bank Lane (i.e. the traditional building referred to in Section 2) to form staff accommodation. Planning permission was granted on 25 July 2008 but the consent was not implemented.

Application Ref. 08/00501/FUL: Formation of Helipad and Provision of Associated Windsack

- 3.08 Application ref. 08/00501/FUL was submitted on 23 May 2008, and proposed the formation of a second helipad with wind sock, to the north of the agricultural buildings. The application indicated that this additional helipad was necessary to allow for helicopter movements in all wind conditions, and the Officer's report noted that it would be sited next to a new agricultural building then under construction (i.e. the building referred to in Section 2 as being erected between 2007 and 2009 before being subsequently removed). Planning permission for the helipad was granted on 18 July 2008.

Application Ref. 08/00627/FUL: Change of Use and Alteration of Stable Block to form Three Self-Contained Guest Accommodation Units

- 3.09 Application ref. 08/00627/FUL was submitted on 26 June 2008, and proposed the change of use of the stable block adjacent to the hall to provide three self-contained guest accommodation units. Planning permission was refused on 05 September 2008 on the grounds that insufficient information had been provided to demonstrate that the proposals 'will not have an adverse impact on the existing bat roost in the building, and adequate mitigation measures have not been submitted'.

Application Ref. 08/00943/FUL: Change of Use and Alteration of Stable Block to form Three Self-Contained Guest Accommodation Units

- 3.10 Application ref. 08/00943/FUL was submitted on 03 October 2008. Planning permission was granted on 23 December 2008, on the basis that the issue of bats had been satisfactorily addressed (although a condition attached to the permission required the provision of additional information prior to the commencement of the development). In common with all of the other permissions granted in 2007 and 2008, this consent was not implemented.

Proposed Replacement of Ravenswick Hall with a New Country House: Pre-Application Enquiry

- 3.11 Following an initial exchange of emails and informal discussions, a formal pre-application enquiry was submitted to Ryedale District Council on 10 January 2013. The enquiry form and the accompanying information set out the (then) prospective owner's intentions, subject to being successful in acquiring the property, as being the demolition of the vacant and unused Ravenswick Hall including outbuildings, and the erection of a new replacement country house.
- 3.12 The position was set out in an email to Officers of the Council dated 18 December 2012, which was resubmitted with the pre-application enquiry form. That email contained a brief review of the recent history of the property and a description of its condition, and indicated that the intention would be to demolish all the existing buildings, and to build the replacement house on a land just to the south of the existing hall. In this regard it was suggested that such an approach would be consistent with the (then) Policy H10 of the Ryedale Local Plan which allowed for the replacement of dwellings in the countryside provided that they are sited on or in close proximity to the site of the original dwelling.
- 3.13 The submitted enquiry also made it clear that the buildings to the north of Young Bank Lane would also be proposed for removal, and that any proposals could include staff accommodation in this area, in line with the earlier 2008 planning permission.
- 3.14 In these respects, the enquiry emphasized the intention that the scheme would be of exceptional design quality, and that the development would be sensitive to and enhance the setting of the property. The point was made that in addition to complying with (then) local plan policy, the proposal would represent a form of development that would be encouraged under paragraph 55 of NPPF.
- 3.15 Following a site meeting and inspection with officers (including the Conservation Officer) on 16 January 2013, the Council's response to the pre-application enquiry was set out in an email from dated 25 January from the Forward planning Officer.

- 3.16 With regard to the local policy position, the email of 25 January 2013 set out the terms of the (then) Local Plan Policy H10, and indicated that the proposal would be in compliance with the criteria contained within it. In particular, it was noted that the residential use of the existing dwelling had not been abandoned (a requirement of the policy) and it was agreed that the proposed site for the replacement house would be in close proximity to the original building. With regard to the requirement that the size and scale of the new building should not be significantly greater than the dwelling it replaces, the email suggested that this would be interpreted as meaning a size increase of no more than 15% over and above the size of the existing dwelling.
- 3.17 The Council's response made reference to the then emerging Local Plan Strategy, and indicated that its basic approach to replacement dwellings would be essentially the same as policy H10, although containing less detail.
- 3.18 The email made it clear that given the location of the site, its setting within the estate and its proximity to the North York Moors National Park, the Council would expect a very high quality development and a well-designed scheme, and would encourage ongoing discussions as part of the design process.
- 3.19 With regard to other matters, the email of 25 January 2013 highlighted conservation issues as being the most significant issue, and in this regard the views of the Conservation Officer were set out as follows:

'Ravenswick Hall should have some architectural and historic significance due to its design and association with the renowned architect Temple Moore. However, the condition of the building is such that the significance has been all but destroyed. What is left is no more than a façade and an incomplete one at that. There is very little of interest surviving internally with most original joinery, plasterwork and fittings having been removed. Even the original plan form is now difficult to define. The exterior has also suffered with the loss of many windows and doors and some damage to the masonry.

The traditional ancillary buildings reflect the local vernacular in terms of materials and style. Their position on the perimeter of the property adds some character of the area.

In conclusion, although the situation is regrettable, there would be no objection to the demolition of the house and its ancillary buildings providing that any replacement demonstrates the highest possible standards of architectural design'.

- 3.20 Following a request for clarification with regard to how the 15% size increase tolerance should be calculated, in a further email dated 25 January 2013, the Forward Planning Officer indicated that his informal officer view was the floorspace and volume of the outbuildings and lodge should be taken into account along with the hall in any calculation.
- 3.21 The guidance provided by officers of the Council in January 2013 informed the decision to press ahead with the purchase of Ravenswick in May 2013. Following the acquisition of the estate, the guidance was taken into account by the architect and landscape architect in defining design principles and developing the scheme for the proposed replacement country house.

4. THE PROPOSED REPLACEMENT DWELLING

- 4.01 The proposed replacement property is a two storey house designed in a manner that has taken traditional country house design as a major influence. In this regard, Duncombe Park near Helmsley has been a particular influence in determining the size and style of the building and its detailed features, not least because as indicated in the Historic Site Appraisal, Ravenswick was once part of the Duncombe Park estate.
- 4.02 As indicated in Section 2 above, it is proposed that the replacement house will occupy a location within the existing residential curtilage of Ravenswick Hall, slightly to the south east of the site of the existing dwelling. By moving the house further away from Young Bank Lane and demolishing most of the intervening buildings, the opportunity is provided to create a meaningful setting for the new house when viewed from public areas, and to introduce an entrance court designed to complement the symmetry of the building. In this regard, the proposed house will have a discernible character and presence when viewed from both public and private areas, something that the existing hall fails to achieve.
- 4.03 Elsewhere, the leisure building extends to the south east as a 'wing' of the house, and linked via courtyards, with formal gardens to the west and south. Adjacent to the lane, one element of the existing buildings will be refurbished and retained, in order to preserve the most important bat roosts within the buildings, and to serve as a 'bat barn' in the long term. This latter proposal is made along with the provision of a further bat barn in the guard house, in the light of recommendations contained in the submitted Ecological Survey Report.
- 4.04 To the north of Young Bank Lane, it is proposed to demolish all the agricultural buildings, and to introduce four staff cottages, which will be of a modest size and of a design that will complement that of the house and its new associated outbuildings.
- 4.05 To the west, the kitchen garden walls will be repaired, refurbished and retained, and the area will contain an outdoor swimming pool, tennis court and pavilion.

- 4.06 Details in respect of the design philosophy and proposed design features, materials and landscape details are set out in the Design and Access Statement, which indicates (in summary) that the intention is to create a new country house of superb design quality which combines the best features of traditional architecture with the use of modern insulation materials, and sustainable heating and power sources.

5. THE STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Introduction

5.01 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of an application for planning permission or an appeal must be made in accordance with the relevant development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.02 In this case the statutory development plan comprises the Ryedale Plan Local Plan Strategy which was adopted in September 2013 together with certain saved policies of the earlier Ryedale Local Plan 2002. In this latter regard, none of the saved policies are relevant in terms of the submitted planning application, but the 2002 Local Plan Proposals Map remains as part of the development plan and must therefore be taken into account as necessary.

Ryedale Local Plan 2002 Proposals Map

5.03 On the Ryedale Local Plan 2002 Proposals Map, Ravenswick is shown on Inset No.2 (Kirkbymoorside) as being within the Area of High Landscape Value, as designated under former Policy ENV3.

5.04 There are no other (former) policy designations in respect of the application site, but it may be noted that to the east and south, areas of land at a much lower level along the course of the River Dove are shown as being liable to flood (former Policy ENV25).

5.05 For reference, it is relevant to note that former Local Plan Policy H10 (i.e. as referred to in Section 3 of this statement) ceased to have effect following the adoption of the Ryedale Plan Local Plan Strategy in September 2013.

The Ryedale Plan Local Plan Strategy 2013

5.06 The following policies of the Local Plan Strategy 2013 are of relevance in terms of the proposed development.

- 5.07 Section 2 of the Local Plan Strategy sets out the context within which its policies were developed, and in describing the environmental context reference is made in paragraph 2.18 to the fact that much of the District including the Fringe of the Moors (within which Ravenswick is located) is valued for its scenic and historic landscape character. Paragraph 2.19 goes on to address heritage assets, and notes (inter alia) that Ryedale is home to some of the most exceptional examples of Country Houses, including Castle Howard, Duncombe Park and Nunnington Hall.
- 5.08 Policy SP1 of the Strategy sets out the approach to be adopted towards the General Location of Development and Settlement Hierarchy, and indicates that in the open countryside development will be restricted to three categories, one of which is *'that which is necessary to support a sustainable, vibrant and healthy rural economy and communities'*.
- 5.09 Within the context provided by Policy SP1, Policy SP2 deals with the delivery and distribution of new housing, and provides that within the Wider Open Countryside, the development of new houses will be restricted to four defined categories, one of which is *'replacement dwellings'*.
- 5.10 Bearing in mind the inclusion within the Ravenswick scheme of four staff cottages (i.e. one being a replacement for the existing Lodge with three new proposed dwellings), it is relevant to note that the Plan highlights the fact that Ryedale has an acute need for affordable housing and is one of the least affordable areas in Yorkshire in which to live. Increasing the supply of new affordable homes is identified as being a priority in Ryedale in order to address the acute affordable housing need. On this basis, Policy SP3 provides that where local need exists, the Local Planning Authority will seek the provision of new affordable homes by several means, including by supporting in principle, the release of 'Rural Exception Sites'.
- 5.11 Policy SP9 seeks to support the District's land-based and rural economy, and provides that these will be sustained and diversified with support for various aspects of rural economic activity, including (inter alia) the following:
- New buildings that are necessary to support land-based activity and a working countryside, including for farming, forestry and equine purposes;
 - Replacement dwellings for land management activity if no other existing available buildings suitable or capable of conversion;

- Conversion of traditional buildings for tourism or residential uses (subject to the occupancy conditions set out in Policy SP21);
 - Proposals or actions that would assist in utilising and retaining traditional rural skills including land and woodland management, farming, conservation, local traditional building techniques.
- 5.12 Policy SP12 is concerned with the District's heritage, and provides that distinctive elements of Ryedale's historic environment will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced. The policy sets out a number of ways in which the Council will seek to assist in protecting historic assets and features, and these include working with and supporting local estates to identify appropriate ways in which to manage their historic landscapes, features and buildings.
- 5.13 Policy SP12 goes on to indicate that designated historic assets and their settings, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens will be conserved and where appropriate, enhanced. For the avoidance of doubt, Ravenswick Hall is not such a designated heritage asset.
- 5.14 Policy SP13 is concerned with protecting and enhancing Ryedale's diverse landscapes by encouraging new development and land management practises which reinforce the distinctive elements of landscape character within the District's broad landscape character areas, which include the Vale of Pickering. In addition, the policy seeks to protect the setting of the North York Moors National Park.
- 5.15 Policy SP13 goes on to deal with landscape character, and provides that development proposals should contribute to the protection and enhancement of distinctive elements of landscape character that are the result of historical and cultural influences, natural features and aesthetic qualities including (inter alia) the pattern and presence of distinctive landscape features and natural elements; visually sensitive skylines, hill and valley sides, and the ambience of the area, including nocturnal character, level and type of activity and tranquillity, sense of enclosure and exposure. In these respects, the Council will work with landowners and statutory agencies to encourage land management practises that will protect and reinforce landscape character across the District and proposals which seek to restore areas of degraded landscape or individual landscape elements will be supported.

- 5.16 Policy SP13 sets out the approach to be adopted towards those areas that are not subject to national landscape designations (which include the area in which Ravenswick is situated). In this regard, the policy indicates that the Council will carefully consider the impact of development proposals in The Fringe of the Moors Area of High Landscape Value which is amongst the areas that are said to be valued locally for their natural beauty and scenic qualities. As well as protecting the distinctive elements of landscape character, the policy suggests that there are particular visual sensitivities that may need to be addressed in terms of topography and resulting long distance skyline views.
- 5.17 Policy SP14 is concerned with biodiversity, and provides that within Ryedale, this will be conserved, restored and enhanced by a range of means, including by (inter alia) requiring a net gain in biodiversity to be provided as part of new development schemes; resisting development proposals that would result in significant loss or harm to biodiversity in Ryedale, and encouraging the use of native and locally characteristic species in landscaping schemes.
- 5.18 Policy SP14 indicates that development proposals that would have an adverse effect on any site or species protected under international or national legislation will be considered in the context of the statutory protection which is afforded to them. Any loss or harm to other nature conservation features should be avoided or mitigated. Compensation will be sought for the loss or damage to other nature conservation features which would result from the development proposed.
- 5.19 Policy SP16 encourages high quality design, and indicates that development proposals will be expected to create high quality durable places that are accessible, well integrated with their surroundings and which (inter alia) reinforce local distinctiveness. In this regard, there is a need to ensure that the location, siting, form, layout, scale and detailed design of new development respects the context provided by its surroundings including topography and landform that shape the form and structure of settlements in the landscape. In addition, views, vistas and skylines are among the matters to be taken into account in the design process.

- 5.20 Policy SP18 relates to renewable and low carbon energy, and states that new development is expected to play a key role in reducing carbon emissions and improving building sustainability. In this regard, the policy requires all new development to demonstrate that all levels of the Energy Hierarchy have been considered, taking into account the nature, scale and location of the development. The Local Planning Authority will take into account the feasibility and viability issues associated with the delivery of decentralised renewable and low carbon energy. Where it is not feasible or viable to provide on-site renewable/low carbon energy, or within the locality, consideration will be given to Allowable Solutions in line with agreed national definitions. For all new build residential development, proposals must demonstrate that they meet the highest 'Code for Sustainable Homes' standard (or its successor) that is feasible and viable on the site.
- 5.21 Policy SP19 links the policies of the Strategy to NPPF guidance, by indicating that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.22 Policy SP20 deals with 'Generic Development Management Issues' and requires (inter alia) that new development should respect the character and context of the immediate locality and the wider landscape/townscape character in terms of physical features and the type and variety of existing uses. Proposed uses and activity should be compatible with the existing ambience of the immediate locality and the surrounding area and with neighbouring land uses, and should not prejudice the continued operation of existing neighbouring land uses. The design of new development will follow the principles established in Policy SP16, and new development should not have a material adverse impact on the amenity of present or future occupants, the users or occupants of neighbouring land and buildings or the wider community by virtue of its design, use, location and proximity to neighbouring land uses.
- 5.23 Finally, and again having regard to the proposed staff cottages, it is relevant to note that Policy SP21 provides that occupancy conditions will be used to ensure that developments are occupied for the purpose for which they are intended and justified. This policy will be applied in several circumstances, including (inter alia) in the case of (a) affordable housing provision where local eligibility criteria will be applied and (b) where new residential development is proposed in association with agricultural/forestry/land based activity.

- 5.24 In this latter regard, Policy SP21 provides that proposals for new residential development in the open countryside (outside Development Limits) to support land-based activity, will be required to demonstrate an essential need for the dwelling that cannot be met elsewhere. Where planning permission is granted, a condition will be applied requiring that the dwelling remains available in perpetuity for use by a person or persons employed full-time in agriculture or forestry, or in another enterprise for which a dwelling in the particular location is considered essential.

6. THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

- 6.01 The relevant guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework represents a material consideration of significant weight, to be taken into account as appropriate alongside development plan policies in the determination of planning applications and appeals. In this case, the following elements of national policy guidance are relevant to the determination of the application.

Relevant National Policy Guidance

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 6.02 Paragraph 6 of NPPF indicates that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and paragraph 7 advises that this concept incorporates three dimensions, i.e. economic, social and environmental roles. Paragraph 8 notes that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation, whilst paragraph 9 indicates that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, including (inter alia) improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure.

The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 6.03 Paragraphs 11 and 12 deal with the continuing role of development plans, the statutory status of which remain unchanged. Planning decisions should continue to be made in accordance with development plan policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 13 makes it clear that NPPF is a material consideration.
- 6.04 Paragraph 14 sets out the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', which is described as a 'golden thread' running through both plan making and decision taking. In terms of decision making, this means approving development that accords with the development plan without delay. It is the guidance in this paragraph that is effectively replicated in Policy SP19 of the Ryedale Local Plan Local Strategy.

Core Planning Principles

- 6.05 Paragraph 17 of NPPF sets out a series of core planning principles, which include the objective of seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 6.06 Paragraph 17 also advises that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

Housing Development in Rural Areas

- 6.07 Paragraph 55 promotes sustainable development in rural areas, and indicates that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Local planning authorities are advised that they should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances which fall into four defined categories. In the context of the submitted planning application, the fourth category is directly relevant, i.e.

the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should:

- *be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;*
- *reflect the highest standards in architecture;*
- *significantly enhance its immediate setting; and*
- *be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area'.*

Requiring Good Design

- 6.08 Paragraphs 56 to 68 of NPPF provide guidance in respect of good design, and paragraph 56 makes it clear that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 57 advises that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings.

- 6.09 Paragraph 60 of NPPF indicates that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.
- 6.10 Paragraph 63 goes on to make it clear that in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 6.11 In the context of the need to conserve and enhance the natural environment, paragraph 113 advises that local authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.
- 6.12 Paragraph 118 sets out the approach that should be adopted in the determination of planning applications, and sets out key principles that should be applied. These include:
- (a) if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - (b) opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged; and
 - (c) planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 6.13 Paragraph 128 of NPPF sets out the approach to be adopted where proposals have the potential to affect heritage assets. Authorities are advised that in determining applications, they should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.
- 6.14 Paragraph 129 indicates that authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset.
- 6.15 Paragraph 130 advises that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.
- 6.16 Paragraph 135 indicates that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 6.17 Paragraph 136 advises local planning authorities that they should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
- 6.18 Additional references to NPPF guidance in respect of the historic environment are contained within the Heritage Statement.

7. PROPOSED NEW COUNTRY HOUSE AT RAVENSWICK: KEY PLANNING ISSUES

Introduction

7.01 In the light of the preceding appraisal of relevant planning policies and site-specific factors, this Section draws together the main issues, and sets out the position in each case. Where appropriate, reference is made to other statements and technical documentation submitted in support of the planning application.

7.02 Key issues are considered in turn, as follows.

The Principle of a New Country House at Ravenswick

7.03 As indicated in the preceding sections, there are two key elements of policy that must be taken particularly into account in considering the acceptability or otherwise of the proposal for a new country house at Ravenswick. These are Policy SP2 of the Local Plan Strategy and paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Development Plan Policy

7.04 At the local level, Policy SP2 of the Local Plan Strategy defines four categories of new houses that are acceptable in countryside locations, one of which is 'replacement dwellings'. It is a matter of fact that the proposed house will replace the existing Ravenswick Hall, and the Council's response to the January 2013 pre-application enquiry (a) recognized that this would be the case and (b) confirmed that the existing residential use has not been abandoned.

7.05 The Local Plan Strategy contains no further provisions in relation to either the siting of a replacement dwelling in relation to that of the original dwelling, or the size of the replacement in comparison with the original, and there is no supplementary guidance in respect of these issues.

- 7.06 With regard to the question of relative siting, a reasonable judgement would be that a replacement house should normally be located on or close to the site of the original dwelling, and indeed that was the approach adopted by former Ryedale Local Plan Policy H10. The Council's response to the pre-application enquiry was based on that (now superseded) policy, and the authority's conclusion was that a replacement house on the proposed site would be acceptable in principle, and policy compliant.
- 7.07 Turning to the question of size and scale, as indicated in paragraph 3.16 of this statement, the former Local Plan Policy H10 included a requirement that the size and scale of a new building should not be significantly greater than the dwelling that it replaces. In this regard, the Council's 'rule of thumb' was that this should be interpreted as meaning no more than a 15% increase in size.
- 7.08 The new house proposed in this instance is significantly larger than the existing hall, and certainly above the 15% limit previously applied by the Council. However, in considering the implications of the approach adopted in terms of current development plan policy, the following must be borne in mind.
- 7.09 Following the adoption of the Local Plan Strategy, the former Policy H10 was superseded and ceased to have effect. In such circumstances, the development plan now contains no provisions which govern the size of a replacement dwelling in terms of its relationship with its predecessor. There might be other factors such as siting or amenity that could influence the judgement of what size of building might be acceptable in any given case, but there is now no policy requirement relating to size or scale per se.
- 7.10 In such circumstances, in terms of principle, the development of a new country house on the proposed site to replace the existing Ravenswick Hall is in accordance with the Policy SP2 of the Local Plan Strategy.

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 55

- 7.11 The second (and arguably most important) strand of policy in terms of the principle of the development is the guidance provided by paragraph 55 of NPPF which permits isolated new homes in the countryside (inter alia) where special circumstances can be identified relating to exceptional quality, truly outstanding or innovative design which reflects the highest standards in architecture; a significant enhancement to the setting of the building, and sensitivity in terms of the defining characteristics of the local area.

Exceptional, Truly Outstanding and Innovative Design

- 7.12 In these respects, and as indicated in Section 4 of this statement and in the Design and Access Statement, the owner's objective is the creation of a new country house of the highest design quality which combines the best features of traditional architecture with modern technological innovation.
- 7.13 In this regard, it is considered that the aspirations in terms of attaining the highest possible standard of design have been achieved, to the extent that it can legitimately be claimed that the proposed house will in all probability be the most significant country house to have been developed in Yorkshire in two hundred years. At the same time, the building rightly recognizes its place in the 21st century, and will have the potential to be an exemplar of what can be achieved by successfully combining exceptional design with technological innovation.

Significant Enhancement of the Immediate Setting

- 7.14 The dilapidated and semi-derelict condition of Ravenswick Hall, together with the associated outbuildings and the grounds generally, is such that the appearance of the property currently detracts significantly from the character, appearance and amenity of the immediate area. The development of a new country house in the manner proposed, will result in:
- the removal of semi-derelict buildings and structures located both to the north and south of Young Bank Lane;
 - the introduction of a new country house and associated buildings of exceptional design and appearance;

- the introduction of well landscaped gardens and grounds in the immediate vicinity of the proposed house, to the south of Young Bank Lane;
- the refurbishment of the former kitchen garden, and the creation of further landscaped grounds to the north of the lane;
- the management and where necessary the improvement or reinstatement of woodland and other landscape features, together with improved management generally, in the wider Ravenswick Estate.

7.15 In such circumstances, it is apparent that that as required by paragraph 55 of NPPF, the proposals contained in the submitted planning application will undoubtedly bring about the significant, long term enhancement of the immediate setting.

Sensitivity to the Defining Characteristics of the Local Area

7.16 In addition to enhancing the immediate setting of the proposed house, the above measures will bring about a significant improvement in the character and appearance of the area generally, and to the quality of the landscape in this part of the designated Area of High landscape Value.

7.17 In these respects, the environmental, amenity and landscape benefits of the proposed development and associated works will be particularly significant, bearing in mind the location of Ravenswick within the Fringe of the Moors Area, close to the boundary of the North York Moors National Park. In addition to enhancing the local area within Ryedale, the proposals will enhance and improve the setting and appearance of the National Park, and assist in maintaining its statutory purposes, as established by the Environment Act 1995, i.e. the conservation and enhancement of the Park's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public

- 7.18 When considering the appropriateness of the proposed development in the context of the defining characteristics of the area, it is also appropriate to take into account the point that is recognised in the Local Plan Strategy, i.e. that the District contains some most exceptional examples of country houses, including Castle Howard, Nunnington Hall and in the local area, Duncombe Park. Ryedale is therefore an area within which large country houses are established features within the rural landscape, and the existence of such properties forms part of its defining characteristics. The addition of a new country house of exceptional design quality and appearance will represent a continuation of the tradition of building large country houses in North Yorkshire in a manner which respects and underpins those defining characteristics.
- 7.19 In addition, Duncombe Park in particular has been a major influence in developing the design philosophy for the proposed new house, an approach that was adopted in part because historically, Ravenswick formed part of the Duncombe Park Estate (see Historical Site Appraisal for details). This approach reflects the fact that from the outset, the design process had as its roots an understanding that the proposed house should not merely recognise and reflect the area's defining characteristics, but that its design and appearance should flow from them.

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 55: Conclusion

- 7.20 In such circumstances, and having regard to the detailed, specific response to the requirements of NPPF paragraph 55 as set out in the Design and Access Statement, it may be concluded that the proposed new country house is of truly exceptional design quality which reflects the very highest standards of architecture. The proposed development will bring about the significant enhancement of the building's setting, and of the local area generally, and will improve the character and appearance of the area of High Landscape Value and the setting of the North York Moors National Park. In so doing, the proposals display absolute sensitivity to the defining characteristics of the area.
- 7.21 On this basis, it can be demonstrated that special circumstances exist to justify the development of the proposed house in an 'isolated' location in the countryside, and as a result, that the development is in accordance with the guidance of paragraph 55 of NPPF.

The Proposed Staff Cottages: Policy and the Principle of Development

- 7.22 The above appraisal relates to the proposed erection of a new country house, but in addition it is necessary to consider the position in relation to the proposed development of 4 no. cottages on the site of the (former) farm buildings on the northern side of Young Bank Lane.
- 7.23 Bearing in mind that the property currently comprises two dwellings (the main hall and the lodge, both of which will be demolished) the proposals will result in a net gain of three dwellings.
- 7.24 If the cottages were to be occupied as open market dwellings separately and independently from the main house there would be an element of conflict with policy in respect of three of the units, i.e. because whilst one could be regarded as replacing the lodge, the remaining cottages would be new dwellings which would not normally be acceptable in such an 'isolated' location under local or national policies.
- 7.25 However, the cottages are proposed to be used as staff accommodation, in association with the occupancy of the proposed new country house. They will remain in the ownership of the estate, and their use will be ancillary to that of the main house.
- 7.26 The provision of staff accommodation in the form of cottages closely related to the main residence is a feature of country houses throughout the UK, and this is certainly the case elsewhere in North Yorkshire. Whilst the relationship between large country houses and staff cottages is a traditional one, it is a link which can be seen as appropriate, beneficial and sustainable in today's planning terms, i.e. through reducing the need to travel and providing affordable rural housing in circumstances where the provision of such housing is perhaps the single most important issue in rural areas, including in Ryedale.
- 7.27 The provision of ancillary staff cottages would represent a form of rural affordable housing, and this element of the development would enable a meaningful contribution to be made in terms of the objectives of Policy SP3 of the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy. In this regard, the site of the proposed cottages is akin to a Rural Exception Site, of a type which the Local Planning Authority supports in principle, under the terms of Policy SP3.

- 7.28 In addition, it is considered that the provision of staff cottages in the manner proposed would support the District's land-based and rural economy in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of Policy SP9 of the Local Plan Strategy. In particular, such provision would accord with two of the requirements of the policy, i.e. it would (a) introduce new buildings that are necessary to support land-based activity and a working countryside, through the provision of houses for staff engaged in the upkeep of the property including estate management, farming, and forestry aspects, and (b) contribute to the utilisation and retention of traditional rural skills including land and woodland management, farming and conservation.
- 7.29 In these respects, the proposed cottages are an integral element of the scheme, and are essential in terms of the future occupancy of the country house and the management of the estate. In this regard, it is anticipated that any planning permission would be granted subject to appropriate conditions relating to the use and occupancy of the cottages, i.e. as required by Policy SP21.
- 7.30 Subject to putting in place such appropriate restrictions, the cottages would be ancillary to the main house and would therefore form part of a single planning unit. In such circumstances, the policy position as set out in paragraphs 7.03 to 7.21 above applies to the proposed cottages as well as the proposed house.
- 7.31 In this regard, it may be noted that in granting planning permission for the conversion of the former stable block to provide staff accommodation in July 2008 (planning permission ref. 08/00500/FUL, see Section 3) the Council imposed a condition as follows:
- 'The accommodation hereby permitted shall be and shall remain ancillary to the dwelling currently known as Ravenswick Hall and shall not be sold or let off separately and shall be used only by members of staff employed in the day to day running of Ravenswick Hall or Ravenswick Hall Estate, unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the local planning authority'.*
- 7.32 In this case, the imposition of a similar condition in respect of the proposed cottages would be acceptable to the owner. It would of course be possible to argue that such an occupation restriction should be applied to only three of the four cottages, because one will be a replacement for the lodge which is currently not subject to such a restriction. However, the owner would be content for an occupancy condition to be applied to all four cottages, as a demonstration of his sincerity in terms of the need for the dwellings and the use to which they will be put.

Design Policies

- 7.33 As indicated above, and in the Design and Access Statement, the proposed development incorporates the highest standards of architectural design based on a thorough analysis of the site and its surroundings; the careful use of materials and floorscape treatment; sensitive landscaping, and a design philosophy based firmly on the need to reflect and reinforce local influences in terms of country house design. Full account is taken both of the characteristics of the site and the sensitivity of the site in terms of landscape quality and the character and appearance of the area generally.
- 7.34 In such circumstances, and taking into account the summary appraisal of design issues set out in the preceding sub sections, it is apparent that the proposed development incorporates the high quality of design advocated by paragraphs 56 to 68 of NPPF, and as encouraged by Local Plan Strategy Policies SP16 and SP20.
- 7.35 The outstanding nature of the design is such that it has the clear potential to help to raise design standards generally, and this is a factor to which great weight should be accorded, as required by paragraph 63 of NPPF.

Landscape Policies

- 7.36 For essentially the reasons set out in paragraphs 7.14 to 7.19 above, and taking into account the content and conclusions of the submitted Landscape Statement, the proposals are in accordance with Policy SP13 of the Local Plan Strategy.
- 7.37 In this regard, the removal of unsightly, semi-derelict buildings and their replacement with sensitively designed new buildings; the introduction of landscaping to the highest standards; the repair and renovation of the surrounding landscape, and the introduction of improved long term estate management will all combine to protect and enhance local landscape character, as required by Policy SP13. No harm will be caused to distinctive landscape features within the estate (including the wooded hillsides that are a feature of the area) and bearing in mind that the site has accommodated residential uses for centuries, there will be no harm in respect of the ambience of the area.

- 7.38 The proposed development will therefore be appropriate within the Fringe of the Moors AHLV, and as noted above, it will deliver an additional benefit by improving and enhancing the setting of the National Park, which is a specific requirement of Policy SP13.
- 7.39 Policy SP13 of the Local Plan Strategy is therefore complied with, and it follows that the proposals are also in accordance with the Government's objective of conserving and enhancing landscapes, as set out in paragraph 113 of NPPF.

Heritage Policies

- 7.40 Whilst Ravenswick Hall is not a 'designated heritage asset' (i.e. for example it is not a Listed Building nor is it located within a Conservation Area) nevertheless, it has or had the status of a 'heritage asset' by virtue of its age, design and architectural provenance. As a result, it is necessary to consider the acceptability of the proposed development, having regard to the relevant policy guidance.
- 7.41 Whilst Local Plan Strategy Policy SP12 provides specific protection to designated heritage assets and their settings, the status of Ravenswick is such that there is no conflict with that part of the policy.
- 7.42 In order to assist in protecting the District's historic assets and features, Policy SP12 also 'encourages' the sensitive re-use and adaptation of historic buildings, and looks to support flexible solutions to the re-use of historic buildings identified as being at risk.
- 7.43 In this case, as indicated in paragraph 3.19 of this statement, whilst in considering the pre-application enquiry conservation (heritage) issues were identified as being the most significant issue to be addressed, the Council's Officers concluded that the significance of the building has been all but destroyed, and indicated that they would not object to demolition on heritage grounds. Accordingly, it follows that the condition of the property (which did not occur as a result of any actions by the present owner) is such that re-use options would have no benefit in heritage terms. The position is one that is beyond 'risk', and therefore is beyond the type of options that Policy SP12 seeks to encourage.

- 7.44 In such circumstances, there is no conflict with Policy SP12, nor will its objectives be harmed by the sensitive replacement of Ravenswick Hall with a new country house.
- 7.45 For the same reasons, there is no conflict with NPPF guidance in respect of the Historic Environment. As required by paragraph 128 of NPPF, the application includes a description (in the Historic Site Appraisal) of the significance of Ravenswick as a heritage asset, and the Council undertook a similar approach in responding to the pre-application enquiry.
- 7.46 In concluding that the significance of the house has been all but destroyed, and in advising that demolition would not be opposed, the Council has taken a balanced, informed judgement as required by paragraph 135 of NPPF. In taking that judgement, Officers accepted (indeed they were aware in advance) that the condition of the property had not deteriorated through deliberate neglect or damage, and that the situation had not been caused by any actions of the present owner, who at that time had yet to acquire Ravenswick.
- 7.47 In such circumstances, the proposed development will not result in conflict with the NPPF's guidance in respect of the Historic Environment. Having regard to paragraph 136 of NPPF, before any planning permission is granted, the owner will be pleased to co-operate with the Council to put in place any reasonable steps that may be required to ensure that the development will proceed.

Biodiversity Policies

- 7.48 The application site is not located within or in close proximity to any designated area that is subject to national, regional or local nature conservation policies.
- 7.49 Bearing in mind that the proposal involves the demolition of the existing property and new development in close proximity to areas of woodland, a series of field surveys were undertaken at various times between June 2013 and May 2015. As indicated in the Ecological Survey Report, this work included ten bat surveys together with amphibian, woodland and river surveys.
- 7.50 The results of these assessments are set out in detail the Ecological Survey Report which indicates in particular that bats were found to be roosting in several of the former stables and outbuildings, with the most significant roost occurring in the former stable building adjacent to the lodge.

- 7.51 The report includes recommendations in respect of mitigation, which centre on the retention of the most important part (in bat habitat terms) of the stable building referred to above, and its enhancement for bat roosting purposes in the long term. In addition, the report recommends the provision of additional alternative roosting opportunities, as a result of which a second bat barn area will be provided in the roof above the proposed garage block along with temporary roosting provision in the form of a bat hibernation box. The recommendations of the Ecological Survey Report in respect of bats have therefore been taken on board, and the appropriate details are contained in the application proposals.
- 7.52 The proposals therefore include appropriate mitigation measures in respect of the bat roosts that are present on the site, such measures having been assessed and designed in the context of the protection accorded to bats under national legislation. In addition, it is anticipated that the recommendations of the Ecological Survey Report in respect of demolition methods and timing can be incorporated into conditions to be attached to a grant of planning permission.
- 7.53 The Ecological Survey Report indicates that no other species or features of biodiversity interest will be adversely affected by the development, again subject to recommended mitigation measures which include restrictions on the strength and direction of exterior lighting in locations close to trees and woodland, nesting provision for barn owls and sensitive felling methods where trees are to be removed.
- 7.54 In such circumstances, Local Plan Strategy SP14 is complied with, as is the guidance on conserving and enhancing the natural environment (as set out in paragraph 118 of NPPF).

Other Issues

- 7.55 With regard to other relevant issues, the position is as follows.

Access and Accessibility

- 7.56 The proposed house will be accessed from Young Bank Lane, as will the proposed cottages to the north. In such circumstances the existing access arrangements will remain fundamentally unchanged, although the precise points of access will be varied. There are therefore no adverse implications in terms of traffic or highway safety.

- 7.57 Despite its countryside location, the proposed dwelling is well related to Kirkbymoorside, which given the relatively short distance involved, is accessible by walking or cycling via Young Bank Lane and Swineherd Lane. As is the case in most areas of rural North Yorkshire, there are no immediately accessible bus services (i.e. on the lanes referred to) but a range of services are available in Kirkbymoorside, linking the town with Helmsley, Thirsk, Pickering, Scarborough, Malton and York.
- 7.58 As indicated in Section 1, the application is supported by a Transport Statement, which incorporates a draft Construction Traffic Management Plan. Not surprisingly, the Transport Statement indicates that post the completion of the demolition and construction works the proposed country house and its ancillary staff cottages will not give rise to any issues in either highway capacity or road safety terms. However, the statement recognizes that a careful approach will be needed during the construction period.
- 7.59 In this latter regard, the Transport Statement estimates that during the anticipated 23 month demolition/construction period, some 15 heavy goods vehicle deliveries (30 two-way) movements will be generated per working day assuming a 5 day week. Over a typical 8 hour working this equates on average to 3 to 4 HGV movements per hour.
- 7.60 Whilst the Transport Statement suggests that at these levels of HGV movements it is highly unlikely two HGVs travelling in opposite directions will meet on Young Bank Lane or Swineherd Lane, it recognizes that there are sections of Swineherd Lane and Young Bank Road where the narrow carriageway width can cause problems for passing vehicles. In such circumstances, the statement recommends that two temporary passing places are introduced for the length of the contract, and that the existing passing place on Swineherd Lane be improved. These proposed temporary passing places can be provided on land within the extent of highway land and/or on land which forms part of the estate. It is anticipated that this proposed provision can be dealt with either by condition, or through a S106 obligation.
- 7.61 In addition, the Transport Statement notes that the delivery of materials should only occur on weekdays, with no deliveries on Saturdays or Sundays (it is proposed that construction work will only occur during a 5-day week with no weekend working). All deliveries would be made using rigid vehicles, rather than larger articulated HGVs.

- 7.62 Again, it is anticipated that these restrictions, along with other mitigation measures identified in the draft Construction Traffic Management Plan can be the subject of conditions or a S106 obligation, as appropriate.

Drainage

- 7.63 As indicated on the planning application form, and as confirmed by the submitted Drainage Strategy, it is proposed that foul drainage will be dealt with via a package treatment plant (or plants) whilst surface water will be discharged to soakaways, with provision for grey water recycling, irrigation and SuDS storage facilities as appropriate. The nature and location of SuDS storage areas will be determined following further detailed investigative work, and it is anticipated that the submission of a detailed drainage scheme for approval will be the subject of an appropriate condition attached to any grant of planning permission.

Flood Risk

- 7.64 As indicated in the Note on Flood Risk, the application site is located in Flood Zone 1, and as such is not at risk of flooding.

Building Sustainability and Energy Minimisation

- 7.65 As required by Policy SP18 of the Local Plan Strategy, the development will aim to meet the highest Code for Sustainable Homes Standard (or that of any regulatory successor) that is feasible and viable for the development. In addition, it is envisaged that renewable energy solutions that do not impact on the architectural quality of the building(s) and the setting (such as ground source heating) will be incorporated into the scheme. Details of the sustainability measures to be incorporated into the design are provided in the Design and Access Statement.

Community Involvement

- 7.66 As indicated in Section 1 of this statement, and as explained in detail in the Statement of Community Engagement, following a pre-application consultation process with Ryedale District Council and subsequent discussions with Officers, a public consultation exercise was undertaken in Kirkbymoorside in July 2015.

- 7.67 The consultation exercise involved an 8 hour exhibition that was widely publicised in advance (through a press release, letters to local members and the Town Council and the delivery of 'flyers' to all addresses in Kirkbymoorside and nearby villages).
- 7.68 The exhibition was visited by 286 people (about 10% of the local population, who were able to view plans, drawings and models of the proposed development, and who had the opportunity to discuss the proposals with members of the owner's professional team.
- 7.69 Of those people who visited the exhibition, 108 completed comment forms. In summary, 94% of those who commented supported the proposals, 4% were undecided and 2% opposed the scheme. There was therefore almost universal local support for the proposed development, and for the design of the new country house.
- 7.70 In such circumstances, the approach adopted has been entirely consistent with that recommended in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and comments received from members of the public were carefully considered and were taken into account as necessary in the formulation of the final application proposals.

8. THE PLANNING POLICY POSITION: OVERVIEW AND APPRAISAL

Introduction

8.01 In the light of the assessment set out in the preceding section, this section provides an overall appraisal of the planning policy position. The relevant issues are drawn together and summarized, and paragraph 14 of NPPF (the presumption in favour of sustainable development) is addressed.

The Statutory Development Plan

8.02 For the reasons set out in paragraphs 7.03 to 7.10 of this statement, the development of a new country house on the application site to replace the existing Ravenswick Hall is in accordance with Policy SP2 of the Local Plan Strategy.

8.03 The development of the proposed house together with its ancillary cottages and other buildings will initially provide a considerable level of employment in the construction and allied trades (estimated at between 90 and 100 jobs during the demolition and construction phases), and will involve a very significant financial investment, much of which will flow into the local economy, benefiting sub-contractors, suppliers and their employees.

8.04 Thereafter, following its completion, the development will provide long term employment opportunities for local people on the Ravenswick Estate.

8.05 The proposed development will therefore make a significant contribution to supporting a sustainable, vibrant and healthy rural economy and communities, and in such circumstances represents a category of development that is acceptable in the countryside under Local Plan Strategy Policy SP1. This policy is therefore complied with.

8.06 As indicated in Section 7, and for the reasons set out therein, the following policies of the Local Plan Strategy are all complied with:

- Policy SP2 (Housing Development in Rural Areas)
- Policy SP3 (Affordable Housing)
- Policy SP9 (The Land Based Rural Economy)
- Policy SP12 (Heritage)

- Policy SP13 (Landscape)
- Policy SP14 (Biodiversity)
- Policy SP16 (Design)
- Policy SP18 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy)
- Policy SP20 (Generic Development Management Issues)
- Policy SP21 (Occupancy Conditions)

8.07 In such circumstances, the appropriate conclusion is that the proposed development is generally in accordance with the relevant policies of the statutory development plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework

8.08 With regard to the guidance provided by NPPF, the key conclusion is that which is set out in paragraph 7.21 of this statement, i.e. that for the reasons stated, it can be demonstrated that special circumstances exist to justify the development of the proposed new country house in an 'isolated' location in the countryside. As a result, the proposed development is in accordance with the guidance provided by paragraph 55 of NPPF.

8.09 In addition, it is demonstrably the case that (as with the development plan) the proposals accord with relevant NPPF guidance, particularly in respect of design, landscape, heritage and biodiversity.

8.10 As a result, the proposed development is consistent with the core planning principles that are set out in paragraph 17 of NPPF, notably (a) the need to secure high standards of design and amenity and (b) the need to support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

8.11 In this latter respect, it is readily apparent that the proposals for the replacement of Ravenswick Hall with a new country house of truly exceptional design quality represents a highly sustainable form of development, having regard to the three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) that are defined by paragraph 6 of NPPF.

- 8.12 With regard to the economic dimension, the benefits to the building industry, to the rural economy and to local people (as summarized in paragraphs 8.03 and 8.04 above) are very significant, and will continue not only during the construction phase but in the longer term.
- 8.13 The considerable economic benefits will include employment opportunities both initially and in the future, and these will result in social benefits for local people.
- 8.14 In addition, there is a direct social benefit in that the proposals will result in the improvement of the living conditions of near neighbours, i.e. as a result of the removal of derelict and semi-derelict buildings that have encouraged trespass and vandalism, and which have clearly had adverse effects on amenity. The potential for crime, and indeed perhaps the fear of crime, will be reduced.
- 8.15 There are further direct social benefits, in that as indicated in Section 7 of this statement, the proposed staff cottages will reduce the need for travel and reliance on the private car. In addition, the cottages will provide high quality affordable rural housing as part of the land based economy in circumstances where the provision of such housing is one of the most important issues in rural areas, including in Ryedale.
- 8.16 There is also a wider social outcome, in that the development will facilitate the continuation of a rural residential land use that has endured at Ravenswick for almost 300 years.
- 8.17 The third facet of sustainable development is the environmental dimension, and in this respect there are clearly very significant benefits that will flow from a grant of planning permission and the implementation of the proposals. The details are set out in Section 7 of this statement, but in summary the environmental gains will arise as a result of the following:
- the removal of derelict and semi-derelict buildings and structures;
 - the repair and refurbishment of buildings and structures where appropriate;
 - the erection of a new, replacement country house of exceptional design quality and appearance;
 - the potential that will exist for the development to help to raise design standards generally
 - the major improvement in terms of visual amenity and the appearance of the area that will occur as a result of the development;

- the amenity and environmental benefits that will result from landscaping works, landscape repair and improved management of the estate;
- the improvement and future maintenance of landscape quality within the Fringe of the Moors AHLV; and
- the improvement to the setting of the nearby North York Moors National Park.

8.18 Taking these economic, social and environmental factors together, it is clearly the case that the proposals represent 'sustainable development'.

8.19 In such circumstances, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 14 of NPPF (and effectively replicated in Policy SP19 of the Local Plan Strategy) should be applied in this case.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.01 The submitted planning application proposes the demolition of Ravenswick Hall together with the adjacent lodge and the majority of the associated outbuildings and former agricultural buildings, and the erection of a replacement country house incorporating leisure and service buildings, pavilions, gate building and bat barn, outdoor pool, tennis court, garden store, four cottages and parking/circulation areas.
- 9.02 The proposed development generally accords with the policies and provisions of the statutory development plan. In this regard, the relevant policies of the Ryedale Plan Local Plan Strategy, including those in respect of replacement dwellings, affordable housing, the land based rural economy, design, heritage, biodiversity and landscape are all complied with. In addition, the proposed development raises no issues in relation to local policies for transport, drainage, flood risk or energy.
- 9.03 Similarly, the proposals are in accord with the relevant guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework, and in particular with paragraph 55 which relates to the development of isolated new dwellings in the countryside. In this regard, the proposed new country house is of truly exceptional design quality which reflects the very highest standards of architecture. The proposed development will bring about the significant enhancement of the building's setting, and of the local area generally, and will improve the character and appearance of the area of High Landscape Value and the setting of the North York Moors National Park. In so doing, the proposals display absolute sensitivity to the defining characteristics of the area.
- 9.04 The proposed house together with its ancillary cottages and outbuildings incorporates an exceptionally high standard of design based on a pre-determined design philosophy and a thorough analysis of the site and its surroundings. The scheme includes the careful use of high quality materials, and full account is taken of the characteristics of the site. As a result, the development will not cause harm in terms of local views; the character, appearance and amenity of the area or landscape quality.

- 9.05 In such circumstances, it is demonstrably the case that special circumstances exist to justify the proposed development, in accordance with the guidance of paragraph 55 of NPPF.
- 9.06 All other site-specific and technical issues can be satisfactorily addressed, in a manner that ensures that no conflict will arise in respect of the requirements of local or national policy guidance.
- 9.07 In addition, the pre-application public consultation exercise undertaken in accordance with the guidance contained with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement identified an unprecedented level of local support, both for the principle of the proposed development and for the design and landscaping of the buildings and their environs.
- 9.08 Having regard to all relevant circumstances, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 14 of NPPF, and as replicated in Policy SP19 of the Local Plan Strategy, should be applied.
- 9.09 When all relevant issues are taken into account, it may be concluded that the proposed development accords with the requirements and objectives of all relevant national and local policy guidance, and there are no material considerations that would lead to the conclusion that planning permission should be refused. The proposals will deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits without causing harm.
- 9.10 In such circumstances, Ryedale District Council is asked to give favourable consideration to the submitted planning application.