

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

At: Sproxton Hall Farm,
Sproxton

Cheryl **Ward**
Planning

For: A Wainwright and Son
At: Sproxton Hall Farm, Sproxton

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Table of revisions

Rev/version no.	Date	Amendment details	Revision prepared by
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Cheryl Ward Planning has been appointed to submit planning and listed building applications in relation to the area outlined in red on the attached location plan at Sproxton Hall Farm, Sproxton, Helmsley, York, YO62 5EQ.
- 1.2 The application is seeking full planning consent for the change of use and conversion of farm buildings by way of a farm diversification scheme to run alongside the existing farming enterprise to form a low key, mixed use events venue.
- 1.3 The application falls within Ryedale District Council's planning jurisdiction. The property known as Sproxton Hall is a Grade II listed building. As such Listed building consent is also sought under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and this application is a combined application seeking both planning and listed building consent. There is also a requirement to submit a heritage assessment as well as other supporting information (see accompanying documents).
- 1.4 This Statement is prepared by Cheryl Ward Planning who holds an MSc in Town Planning and is a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and associated ICN and PERN networks.

2.0 Purpose of Statement

- 2.1 The statement is to be read and fully considered as a supporting document in conjunction with the accompanying combined applications. Its aim is to assist those assessing the application to understand the rationale behind the proposal. In summary, it provides a structured way of describing the development proposals.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 A search of Ryedale District Council's online search facility identifies the site in question has the following planning history/consents (last 10 years).

12/00760/73A - Variation of 02 of approval 10/00463/FUL dated 18.06.2010 to state "The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan (s): Email confirmation from the agent dated 17 June 2010 in respect of materials/colour and Drawing Ref MFC064A:- 01 01 Location Plan, 02 02 Proposed Block Plan, 05 01 Proposed Revised Plans/Elevations and 06 01 Proposed Revised Elevations" - substitution of plans at Sproxton Hall Farm Sproxton – Approve.

12/00759/FUL – Erection of a general purpose agricultural building at Sproxton Hall, Sproxton – Approve.

4.0 Pre-application advice

- 4.1 Paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that early engagement has significant potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.
- 4.2 As required by Paragraph 41 of the NPPF the applicants have engaged with the LPA and have set out their brief to the proposals. The client’s main objective is to:
- Convert the traditional Grade II curtilage listed barns (Heritage Assets) and secure a future use for their long-term conservation.
 - Establish a scheme that is compatible with the existing farming activity taking place at the site and one the proposal will run alongside.
 - Create a rustic tourism venture which will be sustainability connected to other local services in the wider District.
 - Consider the wider implications for the site, including functionality to existing access arrangements, heritage, landscape, highway and amenity impacts.
- 4.3 By taking this front loading approach we hope to have resolved as many issues as possible and taken a proactive approach to the development management process.
- 4.4 The LPA have confirmed that in principle:

“The site is within the open countryside, however, the principle of the development aligns with policies SP1, SP6 and SP9 as the proposed business represents farm diversification and would contribute to the rural economy and create employment at the site. Policy SP6 supports small scale conversion of existing buildings or provision of new buildings to support appropriate rural economic activity in line with the provisions of SP9. Policy SP9 supports the conversion of existing buildings and provision of new buildings to support appropriate small-scale rural economic activity in line with Policy SP6. It is considered that the development would align with the principle aims of these policies”.

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Officers advice continued

“In principle, sensitive and sympathetic restoration and re use of the traditional farm buildings is supported. To accord with Policy SP16 (Design) and reinforce local distinctiveness, the location, siting, form, layout, scale and detailed design of new development should respect the context provided by its surroundings. Attention should be paid to the orientation of buildings, boundaries, spaces between buildings and the density, size and scale of buildings. Any alterations including the treatment of existing openings and insertions should be sensitively designed to retain the agricultural character”.

- 4.5 Essentially, the principle of the works described in the preceding sections of this report are in principle supported by Officers in terms of satisfying the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and local planning policies and guidance.

5.0 Site and Context

- 5.1 The application site falls on the east side of Sproxton village and is a fully functioning farm to the adjoining land which lies to the north, south and east of the main farm unit at Sproxton Hall as well as other parcels of agricultural land nearby. The agricultural holding equates to 300 acres.
- 5.2 Sproxton Hall is a Grade II listed building with adjacent curtilage listed farm buildings. As such, there is a statutory duty to have special regard for the preservation of the listed buildings and their settings.
- 5.3 The site is outside village development limits and is deemed to be in the open countryside. The site also lies within the protected landscape of the Howardian Hills AONB.
- 5.4 In a wider context the application site lies some 1.34 miles south of the nearest market town of Helmsley, 5.42 miles south west of Kirkbymoorside and 11 miles due west of Pickering and north west of Malton. The District's broader road network provides access to the A19 and A1 and local railway stations. Sproxton is classed as an 'Other Village' in the District of Ryedale. Essentially the site lies in the heart of the District in a location that is sustainably linked to a wide range of facilities.
- 5.5 Access to the site is via an unclassified road (no through road) that leads east from the B1257 through the village to the farm. The public road terminates at the village hall and the road where it approaches the entrance to the farm is owned by the applicant. It is also shared with bridleway number 25.90/2/4. There is a collection of cottages approximately 50 metres to the west of the site within separate ownership.
- 5.6 Beyond this, the road continues around the south side of the farm and provides access to two further farms (Low Parks and Throstle Nest) as well as land and fields also within the applicant's ownership.

Property demographics

- 5.7 Sproxton Hall is a well-established and well managed farm which lies on the eastern periphery of Sproxton village. The village lies just off the junctions with the A170 and the B1257 road and is well placed on the edge of the road network.
- 5.8 The property has an attractive frontage and a range of traditional cart sheds to the left of the main house and facade. The house and traditional outbuildings are set within an attractive courtyard accessed via a stone archway. It is the buildings on the east side of the courtyard that are subject to this proposal and not those at the property frontage.
- 5.9 Although the buildings are not listed in their own right the LPA's Building Conservation Officer has advised they are to be treated as curtilage listed buildings. An accompanying Heritage Assessment sets out an understanding of their significance and the proportionate level of protection which can be afforded to them.

Site Constraints

Geographic Information

5.10 A thorough check of Magic Map has revealed the surrounding land is noted for the following countryside stewardship targeted areas:

- Environmental Stewardship Agreements.
- High Level Stewardship and Target Areas (England).
- Species: Lapwing, curlew, farm wildlife and Willow Tit.

Flood Risk

5.11 The Governments long term flood risk information database shows the site to be at very low risk from flooding from the sea, surface water and reservoirs with a chances of flood risk being less than 0.1 per cent. A flood risk assessment is not deemed to be necessary in this instance.

Site location map



Fig 1. – Sproxton Hall, Sproxton – site and buildings. Source: Google maps for illustrative purposes only.

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Sproxton,+York+YO62+5EF/@54.2257927,-1.0456549,619m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x487ecfc40cec0543:0xeca50a6f99899ae7!8m2!3d54.22529114d-1.057865> as of 16 Jul 2020.

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5.12 The accompanying plans prepared by Design 4 Architecture Ltd seek to show how this is achievable without harming the special qualities of the area:

- OS Map extract (for site identification)
- Existing site layout – **D42004/01**
- Existing elevations – **D420004/03**
- Existing floor plans – **D420004/02**
- Proposed site layout – **D42004/04**
- Proposed elevations – **D420004/06 A**
- Proposed floor plans – **D420004/05 C**

Further information in support of the application includes:

- Noise management plan.
- Lighting assessment (incl in this document at Section 9.0).
- Transport Assessment – carried out by Sanderson.
- Ecological Assessment – carried out by MAB.
- Contamination report – deemed not needed at this stage as per email with Alan Goforth on **16 June 2020** due to the historical use of the buildings being only for livestock usage.

6.0 The Proposal

- 6.1 This Design and Access Statement is prepared by Cheryl Ward Planning and is submitted in support of the planning and listed building applications.
- 6.2 The aim of the proposal is to seek full consent for change of use and conversion of farm buildings to form a low impact, mixed use events venue/barn.

Use

- 6.3 The proposal is for a rural diversification project which will operate alongside the existing farming enterprise and seeks to make use of the traditional rural buildings to supplement the farms income.
- 6.4 The project would look to re-purpose the buildings for a low key, mixed use events barn i.e. wedding venue and cater for small conferences etc for tourism/economic purposes as well as some possible community use under policy SP9 and SP12 of the Local Plan strategy.
- 6.5 Use of the site is to be operational all round year however it is anticipated that there will be a natural drop off and quieter period throughout the winter months and hours of operation due to daylight hours will also shorten.

Re-use of farm buildings

- 6.6 The proposal seeks to utilise the traditional range of curtilage listed, stone and pantile buildings that make up a part of the courtyard close to the main house. Originally built around 1820, the buildings remain suitable for re-use today and by their scale, layout and general proximity to the main house they lend themselves to adaptation in a very simple manner without harm or undue impact to amenity.
- 6.7 The proposals are set across the whole of the ground floor of the foldyard and the buildings which immediately surrounding it. They are built to a solid traditional method and construction.

Moving through the space (north, east and south)

- 6.8 At the top of the yard (north) the buildings will be adapted to provide staff changing, wc and a disabled wc and a baby change facility.
- 6.9 The central building at the top of the foldyard will comprise:
- A utility/store and functional services area for staff.
 - Food preparation area – all catering for the events will be independent and no food preparation will take place on site.
 - The venue allows for catering facilities such as mobile vans i.e. moveable bar, ice cream van entertaining facilities to be brought onto the site.

- 6.10 It is proposed that an existing gap between the single storey range and the two storey barn is to be infilled by roofing over the void area (gap) albeit that there is a requirement for it to be high enough for a vehicle to pull under for drop-off/parking purposes.
- 6.11 Moving up through the eastern range of buildings - starting at the bottom end (south to north) the facilities will provide:
- A simple open sided oak entrance porch and the main entrance to the venue from the paddock to the south and parking area to the south east.
 - Within the buildings, an entrance lobby.
 - A pre-drinks rooms/coffee lounges and small conference suites in a series of rooms.
 - The ceremony barn/workshop space.
 - Mezzanine to the ceremony barn – to be accessed internally from the lounge prior to entering the barn and will allow a high level seating area.
- 6.12 Moving through the southern range of single storey outbuildings and retention of a compartmental style arrangement to provide:
- From the entrance area there will be a guest area for cloaks/secure guest storage.
 - Separate male and female wcs.
 - Bridal lounge and shower facility.
 - Retention of stores to the end of range close to Sproxton Hall.
 - Lean-to buildings on the south side of the buildings to be retained as stores.

Foldyard

- 6.13 The fold yard will remain a rustic and open plan space defined by the existing brick pillars which are a key feature of the space. They help to break up the massing as well as serving as a constructional support. The brick pillars are to be carefully taken down and re-built on a like for like basis to reinforce the roof structure.
- 6.14 The southern edge of the foldyard is defined by a concrete wall separating the livestock area from the traditional stores to the south of the yard. It provides an important visual break between spaces and will be retained as part of the development as an oak/timber screen separating the open area (dance reception area/dance floor/workshop area) and the toilet and cloak facilities.

Foldyard roof

- 6.15 The roof of the foldyard is to be replaced with a triple pitch roofscape similar to the existing to fit within the yard area. The roof will tie into the single storey barns with pitched roofs and ridges running in a north/south orientation with tin sheet roofs with oak boarding to the triangular end sections of the part of the roof that will be visible.
- 6.16 The roofs to the traditional buildings and inward facing courtyard to the main house will remain pantile.

Re-use of traditional buildings and visionary imagery for the site



Fig 1. polished concrete and traditional sliding doors.



Fig 2. - exposed timbers and agricultural/industrial/rustic style appearance.



Fig 3. – retention of large internal open space within foldyard.



Fig 4. – rustic charm and appearance.

External areas

- 6.17 It is planned that there will be no use of Sproxton Halls private yard area and this is to be kept free and separate to the venue despite the west elevations facing onto the courtyard – see **Elevation D**. The existing openings are to be furnished with fixed oak frames and glass with painted timber sliding doors to be used as a means to control the level of privacy/sunlight etc.
- 6.18 Other than the new entrance which is to be direct from the paddock (south) and use of the farm access to bring in and shield the catering facilities there is to be no other use of outside areas.
- 6.19 Throughout the development there are to be glazed elements which will allow subtle glimpses of the working farm and the animals available to view demonstrating that this remains a fully functioning farm. It is reiterated that the development is a low key venture and is secondary to the main farming enterprise in operation at the site.
- 6.20 Not all of the traditional buildings are to be re-purposed as they are required for their original purpose. Those physically adjoining the main house and returning along the north side of the courtyard would remain in agricultural/domestic use.
- 6.21 Visitors to the venue will access the site from the south via the main village and road where the safety and suitability of the site access road and Sproxton Village Street to accommodate the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposed development has been fully taking into consideration (discussed later in this document and the accompanying Transport Assessment).
- 6.22 Sproxton Hall is characterised by its high-quality buildings and when this is combined with the local and pastoral environment it creates a location that is steeped in rich history and is one that should not be lost from the local landscape. The curtilage listed buildings in the setting have capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Openings and other features

- 6.23 All of the existing openings are to be re-used and are to be glazed where possible together with the re-use of any blocked up openings.
- 6.24 A total of 4 no. new openings are to be formed. They are predominantly around the entrance area and one to serve the staff changing facilities as an internal opening inside the venue and where the majority of new openings are to be internal.
- 6.25 A few of the existing openings are to be enlarged due to the function that they will provide such as that to the food preparation area where a wider opening is needed for those carrying food and those which will provide a valuable visually connection to the working farm. A total of 2 no. openings will be enlarged.

- 6.26 1 no. window is to be unblocked to serve the food/prep store and 4 no. windows serving the wc facilities are to be walled up albeit sensitively with an acknowledgement of the former opening i.e. set-back in a reveal.
- 6.27 As a nod to the buildings former agricultural use and where they exist a series of old stone troughs throughout the southern range of buildings are to be retained in situ as features that are intrinsic to the development.

Windows

- 6.28 In so far as possible all windows are to be set back to the back edge of the walling to provide a deep reveal and are therefore characteristic in appearance and will be painted in a traditional heritage colour to compliment the joinery work around Sproxton Hall. Openings are to be simply glazed with no glazing bars or fenestration detail to replicate an agricultural style and appearance.

Doors

- 6.29 All external doors are to be traditional, fully boarded, timber ledged and braced, side hung doors. Internal doors and those serving the entrance area will take on a more transparent appearance to aid light to penetrate the buildings. Where double doors exist, they will be sliding doors.
- 6.30 All joinery work is to be painted in a colour sympathetic to the stonework and materials around Sproxton Hall.
- 6.31 A total of 12 no. metal conservation style rooflights are proposed throughout the development and are shown at **Elevations A, B and E**.

Glazed link

- 6.32 On the east wing there is currently a section of roof that has been lost. It is proposed to infill this section of the building with an oak framed link thereby knitting the buildings back together in a way that shows the buildings evolution. The glazed walls will also provide a visual connection to an adjacent part of the working farm for visitors to see and feel part of.

Materials

Externally

- 6.33 The proposal aims to retain the rustic appearance agricultural appearance of the buildings both from in internal and external aspect.
- 6.34 All external walls will be re-pointed (where necessary) with a mortar mix made up to match the existing buildings.

- 6.35 Roofs will be replaced on a like for like basis re-using the existing pantiles where possible otherwise new tiles will match the existing.

Internally

- 6.36 Inside the buildings there is a fundamental objective to create a minimal and rustic feel. Therefore, the majority of walls are to be left with exposed stonework, existing lime washed walls will have a new application applied.

Visitor numbers

- 6.37 The venue is designed to cater for a maximum of 180 guests per day and a maximum of 220 guests on an evening for wedding event although it is unlikely that this number will be met. On days when weddings are to be held, guests will arrive from noon on the day of the event and those not staying for the evening will depart by 6pm.

Employment (direct and in-direct)

- 6.38 It is forecasted that the project will create up to 8 jobs on larger event days, including managers, chefs, bar staff, waiters, cleaners and maintenance personnel. The overall management of the site including future bookings and management oversight will be maintained by the clients/owners of Sproxton Hall.
- 6.39 It is anticipated that future users of the site will be made up of a range of local businesses and local people required to assist in making the events successful.
- 6.40 Future guests who will come from further afield will bring financial benefits to the District/local area, including those needing accommodation of which is catered for nearby, food and hospitality businesses catering for the events.
- 6.41 Other local businesses will benefit from the proposal including hotels, guest houses, B&Bs providing local accommodation, wine shop/suppliers, beauticians, hairdressers, florists, self-catering specialists and those offering taxi/carriage services, the majority of which can be found in the local towns of Helmsley, Malton and Pickering.

7.0 Access

- 7.1 The main access for guests and staff is proposed on the south side of the farm via an existing farm gate serving the paddock. It is purposely designed to be away from the main Hall's access and private courtyard to the domestic side of the buildings. A separate point of access and egress for the farm is to be maintained at the sites western side.
- 7.2 It is vital that the farm access will remain independent and would be separate to the events entrance (excluding those catering for events) – see OS Map Extract plan attached.
- 7.3 With visitors and guests arriving to the venue via the existing field entrance serving the paddock the adjacent field to the east provides a safe place to park and from there to access the buildings. Taking vehicles to the south side of the farm means that they will not be visible and parked vehicles will not unduly impact on the setting of the historic buildings.
- 7.4 The main access route can only be taken from the A170 to the west of Sproxton Village. Sproxton Village Street is a no through-road that serves approximately 45 residential dwellings as well as some agricultural buildings (including Throstle Nest, Low Parks and Sproxton Hall), Sproxton Village Hall and Sproxton Hall Cottages (x4).
- 7.5 The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is without road markings or footway provisions on either side of the road. No street lighting is present with exception to a section of the road approximately 250m – 300m from the junction with Low Street (B1257).
- 7.6 From the information available on North Yorkshire County Council's interactive map, it is understood that Sproxton Village Street is adopted highway up to the point at which the road enters the applicant's ownership. The adopted section of Sproxton Village Street has a varying carriageway width of 4.0m – 5.4m.
- 7.7 A full transport assessment carried out by Sanderson Associates accompanies the planning application. The aim of the assessment has been to take critical highway measurements and record the prevailing highway conditions.
- 7.8 Based on the survey results taken it is concluded that for the majority of the week the site will not be in use, therefore, during these times the impact of the site on the local highway network will be negligible. On event days, the vast majority of vehicle movements in / out of the site will occur outside of typical network peak periods. Given the relatively light traffic flows along Sproxton Village Street throughout the day, the development is unlikely to affect the operation of the local highway network in terms of capacity.
- 7.9 As part of the development, improvements to the existing private lane are proposed in the form of passing places, which will allow two-way traffic flow to be maintained. The improvements will also be of benefit to existing traffic flows travelling to / from Throstle Nest, Low Parks and Sproxton Hall.
- 7.10 It is considered that the residual cumulative impacts of the development are not severe and as such should be considered acceptable on transport grounds.

8.0 Signage

- 8.1 In line with Ryedale District Councils site licensing conditions a site name will be displayed at the site entrance for easy identification by emergency services.
- 8.2 Any signage associated with the proposed use of the venue would be located on the applicant's land and it is likely that it will be put up and down as it is needed therefore it is of a low degree of permanency.

9.0 Lighting Assessment

- 9.1 It is acknowledged that the site is within an area of high sensitivity including the Howardian Hills AONB and that ill-considered lighting has the potential to create unacceptable light pollution.
- 9.2 The buildings are situated within a rural setting on land that forms part of the nationally designated landscape. Darkness at night is one of the key characteristics of the rural area.
- 9.3 Dark night skies are also one of the areas special qualities. The ability to experience dark skies comes from the large areas of open countryside where there are low levels of light pollution.
- 9.4 The natural and open characteristics of the application site make it a perfect viewing point for experiencing the dark and starry skies in dramatic surroundings, from the open aspect on the south side of the farm and the paddock area and also from within the buildings through the glazed elements (including the roof) on the east side of the buildings.
- 9.5 Minimal lighting will therefore be used in the development on account of:
- Neighbouring properties (although given the distance between them and the site they are unlikely to be unaffected).
 - Birds and animals - affected by light stray intruding into their night world and confusing their natural patterns.
 - Lighting aimed at illuminating only the immediate area around the building and entrance area where required.
 - Where lighting is necessary it is low level or lights angled in a downwards position.
 - Simple low wattage lighting over the entrance sign for emergency purposes.
 - Motion sensor lighting for wc. facilities etc.
- 9.6 The buildings are themselves to a certain degree shielded by Sproxton Hall (the main house) and the attached outbuildings which sit at the forefront of the proposed events barn. As such it is not envisaged that light spill from the buildings from use of the barns will cause an amenity issue to adjacent occupiers.

10.0 Business plan and site management

- 10.1 The project will create a series of new employment opportunities within the local hospitality industry and like others will rely heavily upon a dynamic workforce so that each event can be tailored to the future users of the site albeit in a relatively low-key manner.
- 10.2 Increased productivity and profit from the proposed project will provide the farm with a sustainable business model and allow it to succeed in the future. Any profit will be channelled back into the farm. It will provide the unit with some certainty and a long-term plan within the uncertain times of BREXIT and will tie in appropriately with the end of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- 10.3 Market research carried out by the applicant has shown there is a significant demand for this type of low key, rustic use in the local area and that there is limited competition for the proposed project.
- 10.4 The nearest farm-based operational wedding venue is located 25 miles away in Bilborough, York. This venue is currently hosting two weddings per week for 40 weeks per annum. Weekend bookings are fully reserved for the next two years thereby demonstrating this is a viable commodity which can supplement the farms income. Equally, there is a considerable need for such unique projects to be delivered.
- 10.5 The proposed facility at Sproxton Hall would be situated in an ideal location, within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and within close proximity of the market town of Helmsley which is a thriving tourist destination and one that can assist in catering and the offer of products for the needs of a wedding/conference.
- 10.6 Within the local area there is a mix of traditional venues such as hotels and stately homes which offer marquees within their grounds, however none are authentic farm venues that offer rustic charm and or have the ability to offer the distinctively unique experience of a living/working farm.
- 10.7 The proposed project will offer an alternative to those traditional venues and provide the future user with a simple base from which to tailor their own occasion, enabling it to be suitable for various events. The project will offer the complete wedding package, including a place for the bride/bridal party to get ready, offer a building (room) for the ceremony to take place together with other linked buildings which will be used to host the reception including wc's, food prep facility and generally provide a bespoke service which can cater for individual customer needs.
- 10.8 In summary, DIY style weddings and events would be delivered through the project and in our opinion would appeal to a small-medium market, which is currently not catered for in the local area.
- 10.9 It is hoped that the project will be eligible for grant assistance (currently being sought), and that this money will be used to assist in the delivery of the project on a proportionate scale and to a higher standard.

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- 10.10 Following the receipt of the necessary planning/LB consents the grant will mean the project could be delivered sooner and as a result, job opportunities within the local area will also be created quickly. The grant will provide an income stream that would be used towards converting the buildings and their preservation and enhancement for future generations to enjoy together with safeguarding the longevity of the farm business.

11.0 Landscape Impact Assessment

- 11.1 Although the site is not within a locally valued landscape (AHLV designation) it is in close proximity to the local landscape type referred to as 'Fringe of the Moors' and is within the Howardian Hills AONB a sensitive and nationally valued landscape. It is therefore appropriate to include a brief assessment of the development and how it is a suitable response to the local area.

Landscape evaluation

- 11.2 A brief site evaluation has been carried out to understand the landscape setting and assist in forming the overall development plan concept. This forms the basis for which an appropriate landscape plan and/or conditions and safeguarding measures will evolve.

Key points considered:

- Which landscape features and characteristics should be retained and protected.
 - Which (if any) features can be removed.
 - Whether new planting could enhance the proposal.
 - Whether existing vegetation contributes to the scheme and;
 - Views into the site from public highways and public rights of way.
- 11.3 The outcome of the evaluation is that the application will promote and encourage good landscape design as an integral part of the development.
- 11.4 Existing boundary features such as fences, trees and hedges are considered to significantly contribute to the character of the site and the wider landscape and will be maintained.
- 11.5 It has already been demonstrated that little visual intrusion would arise from the development on grounds that the site is well screened by existing buildings at Sproxton Hall.
- 11.6 Notwithstanding this, the application includes safeguarding measures to protect the local landscape and the applicant's commitment to ensure that the development responds positively to the landscape character and AONB landscape to conserve the highly valued landscape.

A well designed, sustainable landscape scheme will be achieved by:

- Retaining all existing landscaping including trees and hedges which includes good quality mature native species.
- Introducing grass create or other reinforced grass to the park field so as not to damage the surface of the field.
- Keeping all of the levels throughout the site and grass parking field.

- Maintain exiting soft landscape but not plant anymore as this could appear too contrived and lose the landscape views to the south.
- Full enclosure of the site has been discounted as it could have a catastrophic impact on the local landscape.
- It is important to the applicant that views through, into and out of the site are fully maintained.

Hard landscaping

- 11.7 Where possible the development seeks to minimise areas of hard surfacing for visual impact reasons and to reduce the rate of water run-off and the consequent need for alternative drainage systems.
- 11.8 A paved area is to be created close to the buildings main entrance due in part if wet weather persists and will provide a clean drop off point. The type of surfacing is tbc.
- 11.9 It is confirmed that no new access tracks/roads are to be laid out within the site to safeguard the key visual character and quality of the site.
- 11.10 Once the site becomes established this part of the site will become a simple yet functional characteristic part of the site.

12.0 Landscape and Biodiversity Assessment

- 12.1 The UK Government and devolved administrations have placed regulations on LPAs to take a lead in responding to biodiversity losses through the adoption of clear environmental and planning policy requirements that encourage developers to take account of biodiversity impacts.
- 12.2 In England, the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) states that planning should contribute to conserving nature and securing 'net gains' for biodiversity (ch. 15).
- 12.3 The Royal Town Planning Institute in collaboration with Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning have recently prepared an advice note to promote biodiversity through the UK planning system (Nov 19).
- 12.4 In accordance with national planning and biodiversity policies and legislation this development takes account of the potential biodiversity impact and provides useful information about promoting biodiverse developments through planning.
- 12.5 This assessment uses the most up to date information to inform the proposal and seeks to minimise impacts, and to maximise benefits for biodiversity, as a result of the development.
- 12.6 An accompanying Ecological report forms part of the submission and deals with the local wildlife network.

Summary of site opportunities for biodiversity through planning

- To maintain and enhance biodiversity – bat and bird boxes will be erected on the site and provides a net benefit to biodiversity.
 - Not to cause significant loss of habitats.
 - Maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure – dry stone walls, hedges and traditional boundaries will be maintained as will the grass field to the south and east of the traditional buildings.
 - The site will promote a real sense of natural health and well-being both to the applicants and future users of the site as they will be exposed to natural views in a rustic open countryside location.
 - The local environment may encourage classes/courses/workshops that promote general improvements to physical and mental health – due to exposure to the open countryside and the opportunities to live a healthy lifestyle.
 - Nature in this case will act as a catalyst to future users' enjoyment – i.e. clear, clean, fresh farm air.
- 12.7 It is concluded that the proposal will not result in a net loss of biodiversity. Rather it will provide an enhancement and promote opportunities for wider biodiversity enhancement.

13.0 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 13.1 This section outlines the principal planning policies that pertain to the proposed scheme.
- 13.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 came into force in September 2004. It carries forward the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, giving statutory force to a plan-led system of development control.
- 13.3 Under Section 70 of the 1990 Act and section 38 (6) of the 2004 Act, the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy (NPPF) (2019)

- 13.4 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published in January 2019 and is a contributing material consideration. It provides a framework within which regional and local policy is set. The publication of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in March 2014 gives further guidance.
- 13.5 Paragraph 7 of the recently published NPPF states that ‘at a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.
- 13.6 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that ‘achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) an economic objective
 - b) a social objective
 - c) an environmental objective’
- 13.7 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or where there are no development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

13.8 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF advises that 'local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area'.

'Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.

13.9 Paragraphs 40-42 of the NPPF advise that 'Local Planning Authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, the greater the benefits. The participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle'.

13.10 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF advises that 'decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing'.

13.11 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that 'planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship'.

13.12 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that 'in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.

13.13 In addition to the above, paragraph 172 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

The Ryedale Plan — Local Plan Strategy (2013)

- 13.14 The Ryedale District Council Local Plan Strategy covers the whole of the administrative area of Ryedale District (excl. the NYM National Park). Ryedale District Council adopted its Core Strategy with modifications in September 2013 and together with the saved policies of the Ryedale Local Plan (2002) and the 2002 proposals maps form the Development Plan in force for the application.
- 13.15 An overall summary of National and local planning policies considered relevant to the case are summarised in the table below:

DOCUMENT	POLICIES AND DENOTATION
The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	
National Planning Policy	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)	Paragraphs 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 38, 39, 83, 84, 170, 171, 172, 174, 175, 189, 192, 193, 196, 200
Local Development Plan in force	
Ryedale Local Plan Strategy (2013)	SP1 - General Location of Development and Settlement Hierarchy SP6 - Delivery and Distribution of Employment/Industrial Land and Premises SP8 - Tourism SP9 – The Land-Based and Rural Economy SP12 - Heritage SP13 - Landscapes SP14 - Biodiversity SP16 - Design SP17 - Managing Air Quality, Land and Water Resources SP19 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development SP20 - Generic Development Management Issues

- 13.16 Paragraph 3.37 of the Local Plan Strategy (2013) states that a multi-functional countryside is an important way in which the rural economy can be diversified and sustained in the longer term.
- 13.17 The Council recognises that in a rural area such as Ryedale, new tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation cannot be restricted to the more sustainable locations in the District. This could stifle opportunities to develop the District tourism base and diversify the wider rural economy.

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13.18 **Policy SP9** is of relevance to the proposal and considers the land based and rural economy and is supportive of (amongst others):

- Conversion of traditional buildings for tourism or residential uses (subject to the occupancy conditions set out in Policy SP21).
- Conversion of existing buildings and provision of new buildings to support appropriate small-scale rural economic activity in line with Policy SP6.
- Appropriate farm and rural diversification activity including innovative approaches.

14.0 Planning Assessment

- 14.1 The proposal draws on the positive contribution that the development will make to the area quality, the longevity of the buildings and improvements to be made the overall visual appearance and the desirability of the development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 14.2 Heritage assets change over time. Protection of heritage assets need not prevent change; indeed, that change may be positive. The low key impact of the changes outlined in this proposal are considered to be positive.

Principle of the Development

- 14.3 The site is within the open countryside and the principle of the development aligns with **Policies SP1, SP6 and SP9** as the proposed business represents farm diversification and would contribute to the rural economy and create employment at the site.
- 14.4 **Policy SP6** supports the small scale conversion of existing buildings or provision of new buildings to support appropriate rural economic activity in line with the provisions of SP9. **Policy SP9** is the overarching policy and supports the conversion of existing buildings to support appropriate small-scale rural economic activity in line with **Policy SP6**. It is considered that the development would align with the principle aims of these policies working hand in hand.

Design, character and form

- 14.5 The design character and form of the buildings is guided by the original structures, buildings and materials for the buildings rather than the use. A balance is struck between facilitating the practical requirements of the new use and maintaining the special character of the curtilage listed buildings. These two things are reconciled in a mutually acceptable way throughout the design process whereby the individual elements, compartmental zones of the buildings remain in-tact including openness of the foldyard. As such the design proposes an innovative solution to the re-use of the buildings.
- 14.6 Put simply, the design is simplistic which involves little intervention and allows the buildings to 'speak for themselves' which means the key and defining characteristics of the buildings can be retained. In this regard the proposal aligns with **Policy SP16**.
- 14.7 The general characteristics of the buildings at Sproxton Hall are:
- The original fabric of the wall, floors and roof structure – which is to be maintained.
 - The uncluttered exterior with extensive walling.
 - The massing of the roofscape which is to be retained.
 - A robust build with simply joinery.

14.8 A sensitive scheme of conversion is achievable due to the following general principles being followed:

- Respect for the basic shape and traditional design of the original buildings.
- As referenced above in S6 (para. 6.19 – 6.22) the scheme makes as few alterations as possible to external walls.
- Maintaining the character of the roofscape by limiting the number of alterations.
- Incorporating purposes made timber joinery to openings.
- Retaining the foldyard as a single open space.
- Integrating car parking and access arrangements and services into the proposal as a whole.
- Using adjoining buildings for uses associated with the conversion for example, storage, wcs, cloaks and prep areas thereby reducing the need for new buildings.
- Designing a simple internal layout around existing features.
- Retaining the sites setting and approach to the buildings from the land to the south.
- Simply letting the existing buildings dictate the nature of the conversion.

Impact on local amenity

14.9 As required by **Policy SP20** (Generic Development Management Issues) the development should respect the character of the area without having 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.

14.10 The proposed development site is on the edge of the settlement in a rural setting adjacent to agricultural land and woodland. **Policy SP20** requires that the proposed development would need to be compatible with the existing ambience of the immediate locality and the surrounding area and with neighbouring land uses and would not prejudice the continued operation of existing neighbouring land uses. Beyond the main house there are residential receptors within 100 metres of the application site. It is considered that the proposal aligns with **Policy SP20**.

14.11 Another special quality of the area is the strong feeling of remoteness something the applicant wishes to share with visitors to come to the site in the form of:

Stillness

Rustling of the trees in the breeze

A sense of calm from busy day to day lives

Serenity

Peacefulness

Quietness except for wildlife

Flow of a nearby stream

Restfulness

- 14.12 During pre-application discussions the LPA noted that the development has the potential to have impacts in terms of noise disturbance and light pollution and these matters should be considered in the forthcoming application.
- 14.13 The application is complete with a noise management plan and lighting assessment (Section 9.0 above) and due to the low key nature of the development it has been confirmed that the outdoor area to the south of the buildings will not be unduly impacted upon nor would neighbouring residents/residential amenity.

Impact on highway safety

- 14.14 **Policy SP20** advises that "Access to and movement within the site by vehicles, cycles and pedestrians would not have a detrimental impact on road safety, traffic movement or the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- 14.15 The proposed site layout at **Dwg. D420004/04** shows that a separate access is to be formed to the south of the site to serve the proposed events venue with the existing access on the western side of the site remaining for use for farm traffic and the occupants of the dwelling.
- 14.16 Full consideration has been given to the impact of traffic travelling through the village late at night and general disturbance from departing visitors/guests. The accompanying Transport Assessment gives a brief overview of a 'typical day' for a wedding event using the maximum projected figures. Given the relatively light traffic flows along Sproxton Village Street throughout the day, it is concluded that the development is unlikely to affect the operation of the local highway network in terms of capacity. Furthermore, trip generated by the development will largely be tidal (i.e. large proportions of arrivals or departures), as such, conflict between arriving and departing vehicles will be low.
- 14.17 It should be acknowledged that the above figures are based upon the robust assumption that the development will be operating at maximum capacity. In reality, the majority of wedding parties will involve a smaller number of people and as such, the resulting traffic generations will be less.
- 14.18 With regard to sustainable transport the applicant notes that the site is in a rural location. The transport assessment also confirms is acknowledged that the applicant has a responsibility to be mindful of the environmental impact of the proposed development and should implement reasonable measures to reduce the need for both staff and guests to travel by car.
- 14.19 To encourage staff and guests to travel to and from the site using sustainable travel modes other than single occupancy car journeys, it is particularly important that they are made aware of the sustainable transport alternatives that are available. To this end, the site management will inform staff and guests on the following:
- Car Sharing - The site management will develop an informal car sharing database for the site's staff and identify where practicable car sharing opportunities exist. If possible, staff shift patterns will be reviewed and tailored so that staff living in
 -

- proximity to each other can start / finish at the same time. The benefits of car sharing will also be relayed to guests during the booking stage.
- Organised Transport - The site management will contact local taxi firms and minibus operators to negotiate potential discount for staff guests. Details of the service providers and any such discounts will be highlighted to staff and passed on to the lead guests for circulation amongst their party.

Protected species

- 14.20 **Policy SP14** aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the prevention of loss of habitat or species and the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity features. The application is supported by a full Ecological Assessment and the results of an emergence survey for bats and birds carried out by a qualified ecologist prior to any works for the conversion or demolition of existing agricultural outbuildings.

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 14.21 It is acknowledged that the site is in the open countryside and **Policy SP1** seeks to restrict development to that which is necessary to support a sustainable, vibrant and healthy rural economy and communities.
- 14.22 Tourism makes a significant contribution to the local Ryedale economy and local planning **Policy SP8** seeks to develop tourism in a sustainable way which does not undermine some of the special qualities of the area and is one we feel can be met.
- 14.23 Attractions and facilities are located in places where the scale, nature of activity and visual intrusion can be accommodated, for example, in terms of the character and sensitivities of the locality, wider landscape and the road network.
- 14.25 The application site is located in the heart of the District where the three objectives of sustainable development are achievable.
- 14.26 The proposed development will deliver clear economic, social and environmental benefits. These benefits will be delivered jointly and simultaneously to reflect that the three overarching objectives of the planning system are interlinked:

The economic benefits of the proposed development include:

- Provision of a locally distinctive and rustic, mixed use events venue which will drive up and maintain the standard of design and sustainability for the rural economy both locally and nationally.
- Secure a rural diversification project which will operate alongside the exiting farming enterprise which will continue to operate.

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- Seeks to re-use traditional rural buildings which are suitable for re-use as demonstrated by their scale and general proximity to the main house for appropriate management and overseeing the business which they own locally.
- The applicants are active members of the local community and strongly supportive of local business and living closely will mean they are able to continue to be supportive to local business and use local services.

The social benefits of the proposed development include:

- Providing a well-designed scheme with the creation of high quality usable buildings – a well-designed place is seen to be fundamental to the planning process.
- The proposal creates a better place for the applicants to live and work with one that is mutually acceptable to everyone including the local community.

The environmental benefits of the proposed development include:

- High levels of sustainability in the development balanced with the building's conservation.
- Plans to conserve and enhance the special qualities of a designated landscape and features of the wider site for this and future generations to enjoy.

14.27 The development as submitted would therefore deliver clear economic, social and environmental benefits to the local area; is not only delivering a sustainable development that is of good quality but one which would raise the standard of design and quality and design expectations in a rural area.

15.0 Conclusion

- 15.1 This section brings together the information presented within this planning statement and provides a reasoned conclusion for the approval of this application.
- 15.2 This statement demonstrates that the proposed development accords with the relevant national and local planning policies. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF (2019) states that at a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 15.3 It is concluded that the site is in a highly sustainable location and will form a unique mixed use events barn which can be operated alongside the existing farming enterprise as rural diversification project and one that would be compatible with the significance of heritage assets to create rustic appeal and charm.
- 15.4 The proposed change of use and farm diversification aligns with the principle aims of policies SP6 and SP9 through the creation of employment opportunities and has the potential to make a positive contribution to the rural economy whilst enabling the restoration and reuse of traditional, listed buildings. The design and layout preserve and enhances the listed buildings and their setting and not detract from the nationally designated landscape.
- 15.5 With the site ready for development and one which can make an important contribution to supporting the sustainable growth of a small-medium rural business it will allow the local economy to prosper in the long term.
- 15.6 The Ryedale Plan acknowledges the integral and valuable contribution that Tourism makes to the Districts economy and is supportive of the site being used more widely for visitors and is considered necessary to support a prosperous rural economy.
- 15.7 Supporting sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside is key contributory factor of the NPPF (para. 83).
- 15.8 Taking account of the above, the development is considered to accord with the policies of the Development Plan in force it is requested that planning permission should be granted without further delay.

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