

Mr Richard Graham and Ms Katherine Wood (via email)

Planning, YDNPA

14 October 2020

Further comments on Planning Application: C/48/615B Langcliffe Quarry Settle

Full planning permission for proposed refurbishment of existing barn, part demolition of existing building and new development of B1, B2 and B8 uses together with ancillary car parking and landscaping

Dear Mr Graham and Ms Wood

As Friends of the Dales pointed out in our letter of 23 June 2020, we do support in principle the concept of developing this important site to improve the area and to create employment and economic opportunities. We also explained that, given the archaeological, ecological and cultural significance of this area, most of it scheduled as ancient monument, this would need to be done with great sensitivity, care and sympathy.

We note that, at the recent meeting of the Planning Committee, “authority to grant planning permission” was “delegated to the Head of Development Management, subject to approval (by officers)” of further details. Unfortunately, the minutes of that particular Planning Committee meeting do not list the full outstanding details but we hope that this letter will be helpful in resolving some of the issues that still need to be discussed with the applicant.

1. In our earlier letter we were particularly concerned that the ecological and archaeological assessment of the site and the likely impact of the proposed development had not been treated seriously enough.
 - Will your discussions with the applicant include the quarry area of this application which is one of the most botanically-rich sites in Ribblesdale? As you know, the unimproved neutral grassland is a most vulnerable habitats, a priority habitat within the Dales. We hope that you will be able to ensure that areas of existing unimproved grassland can be retained. These stretches of rare and vulnerable vegetation need to be properly identified and protected during works.
 - The open mosaic habitat is also very limited in its extent, and needs to be retained and managed.
 - Tree planting must not be carried out on these habitats.
 - We are still not convinced that any attempted creation of “species rich grassland” will work. This is not an acceptable mitigation as it does not replace the biota that have developed over decades in an existing grassland.



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- Has the applicant provided any further evidence that the wealth of information and data about the site, including historical sources and fully-researched published works has been accessed and considered by the applicant?
 - We hope you will ensure that the landscape assessment and the Section 106 agreement “to secure the conservation management plan” (both mentioned in the Planning Committee minutes) will take note of the very important aspects of flora and fauna in this area such as butterflies, or the multiple species of bats, bee orchids, etc. Much more serious assessment work needs to be undertaken before any development takes place. There is a need for further surveys as the one carried out in October is not acceptable; it would have missed important aspects of the flora and fauna in this area. A thorough ecological survey needs to be done at an appropriate time of year. Better surveys would also show the need for taking greater care with peregrines nesting nearby. The ecological report offers to keep “wild planting and wetland” for them to feed which is not what peregrines need.
 - Given the international importance of this industrial heritage site, we are pleased to note that the conditions will include an “archaeological evaluation and recording”, presumably based on a thorough archaeological assessment.
2. From the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting we cannot judge whether our concerns regarding the cramped and overdeveloped layout will be met. In our earlier letter we advocated that a smaller number of units be built with a higher space-to-building ratio. In particular, unit 12 so close to the Hoffmann Kiln should be omitted.
 3. In order to enhance the setting of the kiln and to improve visitor access we suggested that a dedicated visitor car park be created, in place of the “aggregate store” indicated on the plans and that it would be good to omit the cobbling in front of the Hoffmann Kiln, perhaps create an approach through a meadow or such like. Will that be considered?
 4. How many car park spaces for users of the units are being considered as the numbers in the Plans document were different from the ones in the Design and Access statement.
 5. Will the use of the site for aggregate storage or handling still be discussed with the applicant? Whilst we are supportive of light industrial activity in the units proposed but we do not believe aggregate movements in this area would be conducive to enabling a positive visitor experience to the kiln. There is already significant disturbance locally caused by the Fairhurst Stone operation opposite to the entrance to this site and more noise and vehicle movement would not be appropriate.

6. As the application will be subject to a Section 106 agreement that should secure a conservation management plan, will there be a firm commitment and a plan that “responds to the cultural and heritage significance of the site”? For such a plan to work in future there should be an endowment fund or similar funding to protect and maintain the kiln and its setting.

7. We note that the discussion details will include “further consideration of improvements to the footpath and cycle network in the area”. Does this mean that the alternative footpath around the site, by the railway line, and along the tarmac roadway will be made definitive? In our earlier submission we were sceptical about staff or visitors using public transport, something that needs addressing.

To sum up, we do support development at the site and hope that our comments will be helpful to the discussions with the applicant. The application could lead to a successful development of the site and fit in well with the national park’s purpose of conservations, enhancement and public enjoyment.

These aims could be achieved if the applicant will agree to reduce the number of units, reduce the number of vehicle movements/parking, keep parking out of the quarry or considerably reduce it, most importantly avoid loss of grassland habitats, carry out the relevant surveys at the right time of year, and include proposals for protecting and managing the Hoffmann Kiln.

Yours sincerely



Dr Bruce McLeod, Chair

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