

Katherine Wood (via email)

Planning

YDNPA

23 June 2020

Objection to 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 Ms Wood

Friends of the Dales support in principle the concept of developing this important site to improve the area and to create employment and economic opportunities. 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 do not believe the current proposal would achieve this and therefore **object** to the application **C/48/615** in its current form, as it would seriously impact on the local environment and severely compromise the ecological, archaeological and cultural integrity of the Hoffmann Kiln and its surrounding area.

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These are our particular concerns:

1. Much of this site is a scheduled ancient monument of national importance and of great ecological significance. The application is cavalier regarding the ecological and archaeological assessment of the site and the likely impacts of the proposed development.
- The quarry area of this application is one of the most botanically-rich sites in Ribblesdale. In particular, the unimproved neutral grassland is a most vulnerable habitat and a priority habitat within the Dales. It is therefore unacceptable for the proposal to result in “no areas of existing unimproved grassland being retained”. These stretches of rare and vulnerable vegetation need to be properly identified and protected during works.

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- 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.
 - The creation of “species rich grassland” rarely works and is not an acceptable mitigation as it does not replace the biota that have developed over decades in an existing grassland.
 - There is a wealth of information and data about the site, including historical sources and fully-researched published works; it is not evident that these have been accessed and considered by the applicant.
 - The application does not mention 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.
 - A survey carried out in October is not acceptable as 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.
 - A proper survey 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. A more careful ecological survey would put this into its proper perspective.
 - Given the international importance of this industrial heritage site, the application lacks a proper archaeological appraisal which therefore needs to be undertaken.
 - Given the lack of a proper archaeological assessment and an ecological survey carried out at the wrong time of the year, we feel that the application is not complete and does not give the Planning Committee adequate information to reach a decision.
2. The proposed extent of building is higher than would be appropriate in the space available. It would result in a cramped and overdeveloped layout in an important approach zone to the iconic Hoffmann Kiln. We would advocate 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. A great opportunity to enhance the setting of the kiln and to improve visitor access is missed in this application. We would advocate that a dedicated visitor car park be created, in place of the “aggregate store” indicated on the plans. It would also be appropriate to omit the cobbling in front of the Hoffmann Kiln and create an approach through something more like a meadow.

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4. Car park spaces for users of the units should be kept to a minimum with as little take of the biodiversity-rich quarry bottom as possible. The documents provided are inconsistent with regard to the number of parking spaces proposed: different numbers are mentioned in different documents. We suggest that they should be no higher than that indicated in the Plans document, and not as in the Design and Access statement.
5. We do not support use of the site for aggregate storage or handling. 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 of 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. The application claims it “responds to the cultural and heritage significance of the site”, but it appears to do nothing to improve the situation of the cultural heritage features. For an application to be successful there should be a firm commitment and a plan to do this, e.g. through an endowment fund to protect and maintain the kiln and its setting.
7. The development would block a footpath right of way. The alternative footpath around the site, by the railway line, and along the tarmac roadway should therefore be made definitive.
8. From local knowledge and existing recent photographs we know that parts of the old quarry face are an active underground flood zone in the limestone bedrock. It is, therefore, important that a hydrological survey of this zone is carried out.
9. The “Framework Travel Plan” suggests that employees could cycle to work but does not include any proposals to make cycling safer along the busy B6479 with its awkward traffic mix.
10. It also claims “there are regular bus services available from the site, providing services during the day Monday to Saturday” and “Settle Railway Station is located approximately a 36-minute walk from the site access and provides regular services between Carlisle, Lancaster and Leeds”. Given the very limited bus timetable, the current service will not fit the working hours of employees at the site. Employees or visitors are unlikely to walk the distance from Settle or even further from Giggleswick. Provision for bicycles on trains serving Settle or Giggleswick is extremely limited, with no facility to reserve a cycle space. The vast majority of journeys will thus be in single-occupancy vehicles.

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To sum up, we consider that this application proposes an overdevelopment of this site and, because of the lack of proper consideration of its ecological, archaeological and cultural importance, will do serious harm to the local environment and the integrity of the Hoffmann Kiln and its surrounding area. It should be **refused** in its current form.

A revised application could well be acceptable if the applicant were to reduce the number of units, reduce the number of vehicle movements and parking spaces, keep parking out of the quarry or considerably reduce it, and 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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.M. Petyt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr Malcolm Petyt, Chair of Policy Committee

Friends of the Dales is a working name of the Yorkshire Dales Society which was founded in 1981 and is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Friends of the Dales is free of political and financial affiliations. We work to ensure that the Government, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and other relevant agencies deliver their obligations to care for the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales, an internationally important area. We do this by considering major planning applications and policy development affecting the Yorkshire Dales and adjacent areas. We offer a year round programme of walks and talks so that everyone can enjoy and learn more about this beautiful area and why it needs protection. We have a membership of around 1,300 individuals, families, businesses and organisations.