LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY 5 AUGUST 2009

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

EDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL (BLUE SHEETS)
Application no: 7/2009/3022
Applicant: Mr Martin Robinson
Date of Application: 26 February 2009
Type of Application: Outline
Location: Henhow, Martindale, Pooley Bridge, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 2NF
Grid Reference: 343396 517748 See Plan
Proposal: Erection of agricultural workers dwelling on site of derelict house and barn

District Council:
Parish Council: Support
Highway Authority: Grant/approve with conditions

**RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVE with conditions

**REPORT:**

1 **BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS**

1.1 I am reporting this application to the committee because of the interesting nature of the application and the opportunity that it has presented to use the recently published Landscape Character Assessment for the National Park. Committee inspected the site on my recommendation on 8 July.

1.2 This outline application is for an agricultural worker’s dwelling in Martindale and involves the development of a new-build dwellinghouse with associated garden and access on the site of a ruined farmhouse known as Henhow.

1.3 The main farm is located at Thrang Crag, a traditional farm group comprising a Grade II listed farmhouse and a curtilage listed barn. On the opposite side of the road there is a substantial yard area on which there is a modern agricultural building which was granted permission in 2003 (7/2003/3079).

1.4 Approximately 150 metres back down the valley from Thrang Crag lies Henhow. Henhow is a ruined farmhouse with attached barn adjacent to the road. Immediately behind the house there is a substantial stone and slate barn which is still in agricultural use but outside the ownership of the applicant.

1.5 As the proposal is in outline form the plans are restricted to an indicative footprint and layout, scale parameters for the upper and lower limits of the proposed building and indicative access points. As an outline application, approval would be subject to the submission of an acceptable reserved matters application which would allow the consideration of a detailed design. The footprint shows a building following the approximate footprint of the

7/2009/3022
ruined farmhouse with an adjacent garden area which would follow the line of the original and still partially visible, walled garden.

1.6 The holding is part of the Dalemain Estate and extends to 991 hectares. The business is divided between traditional fell sheep farming, suckler cows and the management of the indigenous red deer herd. The applicant is the Farm manager and resides at Thrang Crag. His son is the intended occupant of the new dwelling.

2 REPRESENTATIONS

2.1 Martindale Parish Council have written in support of the proposal commenting that they have no objections in principle provided that the house is for permanent and full time occupation by a family to meet a local housing need and for agricultural purposes or other local employment.

2.2 Four letters of representation have been received from residents of Martindale. All support the principle of the development particularly on the grounds of encouraging young people to stay in farming, securing the future of hill farming in the valley and on the grounds of restoring the former farmhouse.

3 POLICY

3.1 The following policies for the development plan framework against which this proposal will be assessed:

North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy:

- RDF2 (Rural Areas)
- EM1 Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets (A) Landscape (B) Natural Environment (C) Historic Environment

Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan (extended policies):

- E37 (Landscape character)
- E38 (Historic environment)
- H20 (Housing in the Lake District National Park)

Lake District National Park Local Plan (saved policies):

- NE1 (Development in the Open Countryside)
- NE5 (Development in Quieter Areas)
- BE1 (Roof and Wall Materials)
- H5 (Housing in the Open Countryside)
- H6 (Occupancy of existing farmhouses)

Other planning guidance

- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- Landscape Character Assessment for the Lake District National Park
4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 Policy H5 of the Local Plan deals with housing development in the open countryside and provides a very useful framework for the assessment of this application. I intend to explore the various issues arising using the headings of this policy.

Is the development proposed designed to meet a proven and essential need for accommodation?

4.2 There is great pressure for housing development in the National Park and other rural areas and therefore a very particular set of instances where housing development in the open countryside will be permitted. Only where such housing has an essential requirement for an open countryside location will it be considered. In the National Park this will normally be for workers in agriculture but can also be for other rural based businesses which have an essential requirement for a rural location. In order to permit such housing for farm workers in the open countryside it must be demonstrated that there is an existing functional requirement for that worker.

4.3 The tests for establishing if the need for an agricultural worker are set out in national Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. I have set out those tests below followed by the assessment of each point.

- there is a clearly established existing functional need

The applicant has provided an agricultural appraisal with the application. As is common practice we have commissioned our own independent agricultural appraisal of the holding. It identifies an existing functional need arising from the care of livestock comprising 1728 breeding ewes, 22 suckler cows and the 600 strong red deer herd. This need will be at its height in the spring months when the suckler cows are calving and the breeding ewes are lambing. The deer management side of the business also creates its own need.

The current labour requirement is calculated at around four full time workers, currently met by the applicant, his wife and son and their use of casual labour and contractors. Of the labour requirement for four workers it is concluded that two of these need to be present on the holding on a round the clock basis. Thrang Crag is the only dwelling available to meet this need currently. There is therefore a clearly established existing functional need for an additional worker to be present on the holding.

- the need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part-time requirement;

The need identified is for a full time worker in agriculture. Although the deer management side of the business is out of the ordinary, there is no question that it is part of the agricultural business and that it clearly contributes to the labour requirement at the farm.
• the unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so.

The applicant has farmed this holding for many years. Based on a standard calculation, both appraisals confirm that the unit is financially sound and has a good prospect of remaining so.

• the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned.

Policy H5 has a similar requirement and I have assessed the proposal against this criteria later in the report.

• other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside, are satisfied.

These general planning requirements constitute the central issue to this proposal and have been considered at length below.

Can the essential need for accommodation be met in any other way?

4.4 In any case like this it must be proven that the need established could not be met in any other way, either through available and suitable existing accommodation or through other available sites for new-build development. This is a requirement of both PPS7 and Policy H5 of the Local Plan. Ensuring that the need for accommodation cannot be met in other ways is particularly important in cases such as this where the proposed siting of the dwelling is so sensitive in its own right.

4.5 At an early pre-application stage alternative sites were discussed with the applicant and the submission includes a detailed account of each alternative site and why it is considered they are not suitable. Of these I considered two to be worthy of further investigation – a Grade II listed barn adjacent to the farmhouse and the farmyard area on the opposite side of the road to the farm.

Listed barn

4.6 Conversion of the existing barn would ensure the new dwelling was well related to the existing farmhouse, the survival of a traditional building and would remove the need for a new-build dwelling. However the barn is currently in full agricultural use. It has a purpose built feed hopper inside it and otherwise is used for implement and machinery storage. This is not necessarily a major issue as a small scale modern farm building could successfully be located on the farmyard and related to the existing modern building.

4.7 The barn has a distinctive character and is an example of a relatively undisturbed traditional agricultural building. Such examples are increasingly
rare. Converting the barn to residential use would have an undoubted impact on this character and our Built Environment and Conservation Adviser who has inspected the barn would not recommend such a conversion. Policy C7 of the Local Plan sets out the criteria against which the conversion of traditional buildings will be considered. The policy requires that such buildings must be capable of conversion without unacceptable changes to the character of the building or the necessity of alteration, extension or reconstruction.

4.8 Its current structural condition means that any conversion would involve substantially rebuilding the barn which is contrary to Policy C7 of the Local Plan. Neither would it be possible to achieve a successful conversion scheme which preserved the special character of the building and its relationship to the listed farmhouse and the group. It is the view of our Built Environment and Conservation Adviser that further development at the main farm should be limited in order to preserve the traditional agricultural character for which these buildings are listed.

4.9 For these reasons, it is likely that an application to convert the barn would be contrary to development plan policies for conversions because of the reconstruction necessary. In addition the alterations necessary to convert it to a functional dwelling, particularly in terms of new window openings, would be likely to lead to a significant change to the character and appearance of the building.

Farmyard

4.10 A new-build dwelling on the existing farmyard would also seem like a logical place to site a new worker’s house. Like converting the barn, it would be close to the existing farmhouse and to the main activity of the farm and would provide accommodation within site and sound of the farm. However, new build development would refocus the farm to the opposite side of the road and introduce an incongruous new building in a way inconsistent with the traditional pattern of development in the valley. It would create two farmhouses within close proximity and of differing characters and would focus attention away from the main listed farm group.

4.11 The applicant has also advanced an argument that it would be too costly to develop this site as the land lies on a peat mire which is wet, spongy and prone to flooding. I am not entirely convinced by this argument. Clearly more substantial foundations would be needed to erect a house than were required for the modern agricultural building currently on the site but I am far from convinced this would be impossible or of such a costly nature as to prohibit development. However, given the potential for impact on the listed buildings and the historical pattern of development of the valley there are clear reasons why this site is unsuitable to accommodate the development required.

4.12 Local Plan Policy and national guidance requires that in cases such as these the need for accommodation cannot be met in any other way. Of the options identified by ourselves and the applicant all have constraints on their potential for development.
Would the development be appropriately located within or adjacent to an existing farmstead or small group of houses or buildings and not in an isolated location?

4.13 Henhow is not within or adjacent to an existing farmstead, neither is it part of a small group of houses or buildings. Along with the existing substantial stone barn it clearly constitutes the site of a former farmstead consistent with other groups of buildings in the valley and the rebuilding of Henhow would form a new group of buildings in its own right. The question as to whether Henhow is isolated has been considered further in the landscape assessment.

Are the details submitted acceptable in terms of impact on the character and appearance of existing buildings, their landscape setting or the wider character of the landscape?

4.14 Martindale is arguably one of most sensitive landscapes in the National Park and Henhow sits in an extremely prominent location on the valley floor. It forms one of a number of ruined traditional buildings adjacent to the road through the valley and is visible from significant distances to the north and from the fells around. Development of any kind in this context could have a profound impact on the landscape. The central issue to this proposal as I see it is whether this impact would be a positive or negative one. The views of our Landscape Architect and our Built Environment and Conservation Adviser are appended in full to this report (APPENDICES 1 and 2).

4.15 RSS Policy EM1(A) requires that all proposals maintain and enhance natural, historic and other distinctive features that contribute to the character of landscapes and places in the North West. Policy E37 of the Structure Plan requires development and land use change to be compatible with the distinctive characteristics of the landscape, paying particular attention to visual intrusion, the character of the built environment and patterns of development. Policy H5 of the Local Plan requires proposals for housing in the open countryside to be acceptable in terms of impact on their landscape setting and the wider character of the landscape. In addition the Local Plan designates Martindale as a Quieter Area where development which leads to increased traffic or visual intrusion will not be permitted.

Landscape Character Assessment

4.16 The Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment highlights and describes the various distinctive landscape areas in the National Park and assesses their sensitivity and capacity for change. The Landscape Character Assessment provides a very useful measure by which to assess proposals such as this.

4.17 The assessment of Martindale categorises the valley along with a number of other areas as somewhere one is most likely to experience tranquillity – those areas are generally more remote upland areas but are also other areas served only by narrow minor roads where built development and infrastructure is generally unobtrusive. As well as Martindale such areas include Eskdale, the Duddon Valley and the northern fringes of the National Park north of Skiddaw and Blencathra. The tranquillity in Martindale is due to
the openess and perceived naturalness with a relative absence of dwellings, minimal sources of artificial noise and few obvious signs of human influence. Where there are obvious signs of human influence these are generally modern agricultural buildings. The other distinctive characteristics of Martindale are its intimate small scale landscape with no-through roads; the very strong sense of history and the distinctive scattered and isolated stone barns.

4.18 As well as categorising the landscape type the Landscape Character Assessment also outlines the sensitivities of the landscape to change and the types of development that should be avoided and encouraged. Encouragement and support should be given to the conservation or restoration of existing historical building fabric. On the one hand the proposal would restore some of the existing historical building fabric but on the other it would introduce a new dwelling into a landscape which is characterized in part by its distinct lack of dwellings and other buildings.

**Landscape and Conservation Advice**

4.19 Our Built Environment and Conservation Adviser recognises that there can be a difference of opinion about ruins such as Henhow. One view is of the romantic ruin as part of the landscape. The other is of such ruins as a sad sign of dereliction which should be removed or rebuilt. He states that the prominence of Henhow means that development will have an undoubted impact on the landscape but that this should not be seen as a negative thing. The surrounding landscape is partly man-made by the farming of the land and the farm buildings and structures are important components of this giving scale and punctuation to the landscape. Development of the site should not be ruled out on the grounds of its prominence alone he concludes.

4.20 Our Landscape Architect comments that the very distinctive characteristics of the landscape of Martindale offer little capacity for change before these key characteristics are changed. However, he goes on to conclude that because the history of the valley is rooted in agriculture and our current policies are geared towards supporting upland farming as the appropriate way of continuing to manage the uplands we should support an application which prolongs active farming of the valley and should not promote the idea that the landscape represents a museum of past farming practice.

4.21 Both are agreed, as am I, that the design of the proposed dwelling is key to the proposal. I have covered this at greater length later in the report.

**CONCLUSION**

4.22 Having assessed the planning merits of the proposal and taken the views of our landscape and built environment specialists it is my opinion that the potential for harm arising from the introduction of a new dwelling into a valley characterized by its tranquility and lack of dwellings is outweighed by the opportunity to restore some of the historical building fabric of the valley and reinforce the very strong sense of history. Without the agricultural need identified Henhow would be consigned to the history books. It is right and
proper that the only justification for its reconstruction should be that for which it was originally constructed.

Would the development cause demonstrable harm to nature conservation interests or cultural heritage?

4.23 The original farmhouse at Henhow is clearly of important local, cultural and historical significance. It is part of the character of the valley and its historical pattern of development. I do not consider that rebuilding part of this character would cause harm to cultural heritage.

4.24 An archaeological survey was commissioned prior to the submission of the application in order to identify if the site had been home to any previous farmhouses or development. The survey revealed no additional archaeological interest other than that connected with Henhow itself. Our Archaeology and Heritage Adviser has no objection to the proposal.

4.25 The ecology of the site has been considered in a bat survey, a tree survey and a method statement detailing how the development will avoid pollution of nearby watercourses.

4.26 The bat survey concluded that the area was used by Soprano Pipistrelles but no roost sites were identified. There is potential for harm to bats during construction. It is considered that with sufficient conditions relating to the demolition and construction phases and conditions relating to additional habitat creation there will be no overall impact on the bat population and no conflict with development plan policy related to protected species.

4.27 There is one existing tree within the development site, a sycamore. The tree is characteristic of trees planted at farmsteads like Henhow and would have been planted to offer shelter and firewood. The tree is healthy with a good life expectancy and is located 22m from the proposed building works. Subject to a protection zone with a radius of 14 metres for the duration of the development no harm would be caused to the tree.

4.28 The site is within the River Eden and Tributaries Special Area of Conservation. The submitted method statement details how the development will avoid pollution of the river system. Subject to conditions requiring conformity with this method statement I do not consider that there would be any adverse impact from the development and no conflict with policy protecting nature conservation interests.

Are there any other relevant planning issues?

Occupancy

4.29 It is a requirement that all new dwellings for workers in agriculture, forestry or other rural based enterprises are restricted in terms of occupancy to those workers primarily employed in such areas. As a minimum the new dwelling would be conditioned in occupancy to a worker in agriculture in perpetuity. Where appropriate and possible, Policy H8 also requires that the occupancy of an existing farmhouse on the holding is secured for agricultural occupancy.
This is to guard against possible abuse of the system. In this instance the main farmhouse at Thrang Crag is outside of the ownership of the applicant. As such we cannot control the occupancy of the main farmhouse by a planning condition.

4.30 The applicant resides at Thrang Crag as a tenant and his son who lives with him is the intended occupant of the new house at Henhow. Although the house at Thrang Crag is, to an extent, within the control of the applicant, because he is not the freehold owner he is unable to enter into a binding planning obligation (Section 106 Agreement). The farm and house at Thrang Crag are owned by Dalemain Estate and the applicant’s agent has indicated the owner is not prepared to enter into an agreement.

4.31 Given the particular circumstances and the flexibility afforded by Policy H6 I am not persuaded that failure to secure occupancy control over the farmhouse at Thrang Crag would warrant refusal of this application. However, I am continuing my discussions with the applicant’s agent to see if this can be achieved.

Design

4.32 As this application is in outline format we have no information about the proposed design. I think there can be little question that this site requires the highest quality of development and that development should reflect the form, scale, details and materials of the ruined house in the most accurate way possible. I understand that because Henhow has been abandoned for so long there are no photographs in existence of the original house. However it should be possible, using the remains of Henhow as well as the clues that can be gained from other farmhouses in the valley, to create an accurate facsimile of the original farmhouse. Anything less would not do justice to this site. The reserved matters application which is required to follow up any outline permission allows us complete control over the detail of the design. The applicant is aware of our desire for the highest quality of design and is actively searching for photographic evidence of the appearance of the original house.

4.33 I am recommending that conditions relating to the design and materials be attached to any outline permission as there are certain aspects of the design and materials for which we would only accept one solution, for example local slate roof and local stone walls. Following discussions with the applicant’s agent I will report these conditions in more detail at the meeting.

Highways and Access

4.34 The Local Highway Authority has no objections to the proposal. They have recommended three standard conditions which I am recommending be included with any permission. The access will be taken from the valley road and the proposed plan indicates that this would be in a similar position to the existing access. As an outline application however the site of the access is only indicative at this stage.

5 CONCLUSION
5.1 Our independent appraisal has corroborated the findings of the applicant's appraisal, that there is an existing functional need for an additional dwelling to support the farm business based at Thrang Crag. We have also assessed the suitability of other sites in line with local and national policy and concluded that in principle, Henhow is the most appropriate place in which to meet the need.

5.2 The assessment then requires a detailed landscape assessment. As well as the policy framework set out at local, regional and national level I have been able to use the Landscape Character Assessment for the National Park to demonstrate that Martindale has the capacity for the type of change proposed. Although the landscape is very sensitive to change, change which reinforces the characters which define it should be viewed positively.

5.3 I consider that with an appropriately high quality design, the reconstruction of Henhow would offer the best solution to the agricultural need identified and would reinforce the traditional agricultural pattern of development and would accord with development plan policies for such development and conform with all other planning requirements for an outline application.

5.4 I will update Committee on appropriate planning conditions at the meeting.

Committee is recommended to:

APPROVE with conditions

Summary of Reasons for Approval

This application for housing development in the open countryside is to meet an essential need for a worker in agriculture and proposes the rebuilding of a ruined farmhouse known as Henhow in Martindale. An independent appraisal has confirmed that there is an existing functional need for an additional dwelling to support the existing farm business based at Thrang Crag. A landscape assessment has demonstrated that Martindale has the capacity for the type of change proposed. Although the landscape is very sensitive to change, change which reinforces the character which defines it should be viewed positively.

With an appropriately high quality design, the reconstruction of Henhow would offer the most obvious solution to the agricultural need identified and would reinforce the traditional agricultural pattern of development and would accord with development plan policies for such development, in particular Policies RDF2 and EM1 of the North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy, E37 of the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan and NE1, NE5 and H5 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan as well as national planning guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and local guidance contained in the Landscape Character Assessment for the Lake District National Park. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable subject to the conditions imposed.
Having regard to the relevant development plan policies, in particular [insert Cumbria & Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016 and/or Lake District National Park Local Plan Policies as appropriate] and all other material planning considerations, the proposal is considered to be acceptable subject to the conditions imposed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Background papers are available for inspection on the planning application file unless otherwise specified on that file as confidential by reasons of financial/personal circumstances in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.
Comments of the Landscape Architect

7/2009/3022 Proposed agricultural workers dwelling, Henhow, Martindale

Following my site visit and our recent meeting about redeveloping Hen Howe I would summarise my comments as follows:

This is an exceptional valley in terms of its qualities of remoteness and tranquillity. The openness and perceived naturalness due to the relative absence of dwellings, minimal sources of artificial noise and few obvious signs of human influence create and reinforce these qualities. Though an open landscape in terms of simplicity and lack of physical features, these qualities are also reinforced by the lack of inter-visibility with other landscape character types and areas, the visual containment created by the surrounding ridges and the lack of through roads. This reduces the scale of the landscape and creates an intimate character. There is a strong sense of history in the valley which is added to by the lack of contemporary buildings and the number of abandoned and derelict barns and dwellings. These characteristics make the valley extremely sensitive to, and have little capacity for change before key characteristics are compromised.

The valley has an undeniable attraction to lovers of the romantic elements of the traditional Lake District landscape. In assessing our reaction to a proposal for a new dwelling and the increased activity which this entails we need to think hard about how we see the future of the quieter areas of the National Park. The history of the valley is rooted in agriculture and given that our current policies are geared towards supporting upland farming as the appropriate way of continuing to manage the uplands I am uncomfortable about supporting an argument that suppresses the concept that landscape evolves. Whilst our history and heritage are extremely important we should never promote the idea that the landscape represents a museum of past farming practice. This leads me to think that we should be supporting an application for development which prolongs active farming of the valley but that conserving the defining landscape characteristics above are the key drivers in the design of the development.

Local building style and materials are the key to good design in this circumstance. The site is highly visible but consistent with the settlement pattern of the valley but the scale of building needs to be small and intimate and the domestic cartilage well defined with traditional boundary treatments (stone walls) if it is to succeed. The planting of a single sycamore associated with the development will in time root the building in the valley floor landscape.
Conservation and Design Comments

7/2009/3022 Propose agricultural workers dwelling, Henhow, Martindale

Martindale is characterised by a number of derelict structures and this no doubt reflects the remote location of the valley and the more marginal agriculture economics that this presents. There is little doubt that this is a very special valley from a landscape point of view and that the population here is particularly scarce compared to other more accessible areas of the Lakes. This means that the impact of any proposed new development is always likely to be very sensitive.

There is a school of thought that ruins are part of the cycle of rural life and that this is the character of this valley. Some have a romantic view of ruins and it is true that within scenic locations they can be important historic and visual components in the landscape. Conversely it could be argued that dereliction and decay is unsightly and that renewal should also be seen positively. The dereliction in the valley is not something seen widely in the Lake District and because the ruins relate to farm buildings and houses, buildings of a human scale which we can all relate to, these remnants of former life and activity within the valley are actually very sad and poignant. It is not easy to disentangle an emotional response in the consideration of the site but it is necessary from a planning point of view.

If it is established that there is a demonstrable need for the building for agriculture then the question arises as to where best this should be sited. The valley has a very intimate character and, visually, the proposed site is undoubtedly prominent. But so too are a number of other sites of traditional buildings in these parts and those cannot be said to harm the character of the area but instead are part of the fabric of the area. The surrounding landscape is partly man-made by (inter alia) the farming of the land (at least in its surface appearance) and the farm buildings and structures are important components within this and visually give scale and punctuation to the landscape. I would not therefore say that the prominence of the site rules outs its re-development.

Ideally the new building should be sited near to other buildings and the proposed site is well related to a very fine barn to the immediate south and not too distant from the listed main farm complex at Thrang Crag. It is located on the same side of the valley and well related to the road. The fact that it has been used for human occupation before suggests the site is suitable for the use. Other sites such as the conversion of the barn at Thrang Crag and development in the yard opposite have been considered. I am opposed to both of these options. Developing the barn, which is still very much in use, will result in its effective loss as an unaltered barn and would result in two farmhouses side by side. I think this would be harmful to the traditional character of this listed farm group. There may also be displacement of the uses in the barn and this may result in the need for a new farm building elsewhere and I think this would be undesirable. Developing on the land opposite the listed farmhouse and barn would also affect the character of the group in an undesirable way, consolidating the amount of development which has already been greatly increased by the more recent agricultural building. The remote character of the valley would be better protected by limiting the amount of development at the existing farm complex and repeating the low key scale of development characterised by the proposed site, a scale we find elsewhere in the valley.
From a closer perspective the dereliction of the proposed site is arguably unsightly and a negative feature within the valley. It would certainly be better if the remains of the building were either removed entirely or brought back to life. What is essential is that if this application is permitted that the replacement building is a faithful reconstruction of what was there before. (There would have to be some allowances here for building regulations which may influence the form). We do not have an image of what the building previously looked like and I think more research ought to be carried out and enquiries made of the estate to see if a photo exist. It would also be worthwhile getting an architectural historian (such as Peter Ryder) to look at what remains to draw some conclusions as to where window and door openings were. To some extent this is possible looking at what remains of the building. Certainly the height and proportions should be not greater than existing. A full measured survey should be undertaken and verified at a site meeting and this should be conditioned as a basis for the new development.

The remaining structure at the site consists of the classic linear arrangement of farmhouse and barn/byre with outshot extensions to the rear. Less remains of the farmhouse but the barn seems reasonably in tact and I think this part of the building (including the intermediate gable) should be retained, if structurally possible, and not used as part of the house but for storage etc and conditioned appropriately. It is important that we do not see a plethora of outbuildings so an existing storage facility for the house should be designated within this part of the building.

The stone rubble construction for the farmhouse should be reproduced using stone from the site and the surrounding area and not stone imported from elsewhere. It would be good if what remains of the former building could be retained where it is structurally sound and we need clarification from an engineer. However it may be that the farmhouse building will need to be re-constructed entirely with a modern cavity wall construction and so allowances should be made to ensure the outer leaf is the full width to accommodate the re-used stone. The location of significant quoin and base stones should be recorded, numbered and set aside and securely stored for re-use on a like for like basis. The west side of the farmhouse (but not the barn or any other elevations of the farmhouse) should be limewashed (not masonry painted). The roof will need to be in local slate (to match the slate which was previously on the building) laid with traditional random courses and widths. Windows openings should be in stone or timber heads or sills and windows should be painted timber with agreed details and method of opening. Rooflights would have to be strictly limited and of conservation style.

A landscaping condition should be imposed to deal with walls, garden and hardstanding. The extent of the curtilage should be more restricted than currently proposed and limited on the east side as far as possible. It is important that the site is not used for farm activity/storage of any kind and this should be conditioned (although this is a former farmhouse, modern agriculture is no longer at a domestic scale and so could have a significant impact at this site).

David James
Conservation and Design Adviser