

PLANNING AND DESIGN STATEMENT

for

**The Conversion and Extension
of
West Fen Barn
To the West of Holme Farm House
West Fen
Stickney
PE22 8BH**

Clive Wicks Associates

December 2020

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The proposal is situated within the former farmyard to the west of Holme Farm House. It is part of a 22.5 acre U-shaped field as indicated on the site plan (dwg. No. 19-2408-P-04).
- 1.2 The structures consist of a single storey red brick barn set in parallel to West Fen Road and a dilapidated corrugated metal and timber cart hovel type structure set at right angles to the south of the barn. The existing L-shaped arrangement is clearly shown on the site and existing plan.
- 1.3 The front barn is approx. 12.5m wide and 4.6m deep. The dilapidated structure is approx. 8.6m wide and 3.2m deep.
- 1.4 The structures are visibly unsafe and unsecure and are wide open to theft/vandalism. The yard area has little use as was noted recently in the extension application at the adjacent Holme Farm House.
- 1.5 The barn is in different ownership to the Holme Farm House and has not been used as a store for many years. There is an access to the field to the south (the rear), in between the barn and Holme Farm House but this can be accommodated by the introduction of a new and improved field access to the west of the barns (see site plan).

2.0 Planning and Design Background

- 2.1 There have been no historical planning applications for this site.
- 2.2 The site is in Flood Zone 3 and in theory there is potential for surface water flooding. It is noted, however, that there are no recordings of flooding in this farmyard area.
- 2.3 Notwithstanding the above, however, we would advise that the floor levels be raised to 1m above existing ground level. It is noted the floor level of Holme Farm House, a recent new build, on the plot to the east appears to be set at 150mm above existing ground level.
- 2.4 Our intention is to retain the historical character of the red brick barn and recreate the rear former storage shed in the form of contrasting contemporary vertical timber cladding with full height metal windows.
- 2.5 A new and safer field access would be created as part of this application, and if required by the farmer a further hard standing area adjacent to the access for the temporary and seasonal storing of bales or farm produce (sugar beet, etc.). The access will have better visibility for slow moving farm equipment accessing the public highway.

- 2.6 The proposal, therefore, is part refurb and part rebuild. It will create a low-key architectural entrance into Stickney and could appeal to a wide market including potentially providing a young family with a well- designed character property.
- 2.7 The gateway entry into Stickney will be enhanced by a high quality, low impact, property instead of a ramshackled former farm building.
- 2.8 Barns are either being converted or demolished for the value of their reclaimed bricks. In this case they are part of the agricultural heritage of the area and everything should be done to retain their character.
- 2.9 The existing red brick element is in need of some maintenance, the roof tiles are uneven and the proposal will kill two birds with one stone.
- 2.10 The area is not an A.O.N.B. but is part of the flat fens and a straight road, so the proposal can be seen from some distance away. It is, therefore, an important site worthy of architectural input.
- 2.11 The site has an agricultural background, but the value of the characterful design far exceeds the removal of the small barn and the lands return to farmland.
- 2.12 West Fen is seen as part of Stickney, there is a seamless joining of the settlements, and this proposal, we believe, will provide a small architectural, contemporary dwelling to a characterful village.
- 2.13 The proposal will have no adverse impact at all on Holme Farm. The new build and quality can only enhance its setting.

3.0 Sustainability

- 3.1 The property will be heated by either an air or ground source heat pump and be highly insulated.
- 3.2 There will be an electric car charging point.
- 3.3 The reuse of the existing red brick barn is a sustainable element of building in any event, and the timber cladding is from renewable sources.
- 3.4 We will incorporate an owl box at the rear of the plot and an owl box in the brick gable together with integrated bat boxes in the barn element.
- 3.5 With the Covid-19 creating a need for home working, which is now relevant to all sectors of employment, we have moved every property into a sustainable location because of reduced car journeys.

4.0 National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 4.1 As noted the Framework was introduced in February 2019 so post-dates the East Lindsey Local Plan of 2018.
- 4.2 We believe we are supported in the Framework by the following paragraphs:
- 4.3 Para 10 states:
*“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**”.*
- 4.4 The re-use of an existing building is sustainable development.
- 4.5 Para 14 (c) states:
“The local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 73).”
- 4.6 Although only a single dwelling this can help maintain the Council’s five year Housing Supply figures which look increasingly like being put under pressure with non-completions of schemes because of both Covid-19 and Brexit.
- 4.7 Para 78 states:
“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.”
- 4.8 This proposal is adjacent to Holme Farm House and was originally within the curtilage of the original farmhouse. A new family will inevitably use Stickney’s amenities. West Fen abuts Stickney and falls within the catchment area for Stickney schools.
- 4.9 Para 79 refers to avoiding *“the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply”*.
- 4.10 It states at item 79(c) *“the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance the immediate setting”*.
- 4.11 In my opinion, that the work proposed by the applicant on the red brick barn and the replacement of the storage shed with a contemporary timber element will significantly *“enhance its immediate setting”*. It is as noted in part para 79(e) *“sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area”*.
- 4.12 Para 84 states:
“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.

In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related (i.e., not within) to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.”

- 4.13 Stickney itself is only a short walk or bike ride away and the proposal is physically and historically linked to the original farm complex of Holme Farm House. Whilst not officially ‘brownfield’ land, it is ‘previously developed’ land, and is very ‘sensitive to its surroundings’.
- 4.14 Para 117 states:
“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously -developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”
- 4.15 Please note that it says “‘previously developed’ or “‘brownfield land” i.e., it is previously developed.
- 4.16 Para 184 states:
“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites, which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”
- 4.17 As noted earlier in this statement the barn and storage structures have ‘local historic value’ and in the form we propose will be enjoyed by other residents for their contribution to the quality of life – for future generations.
- 4.18 Para 185 a) states:
“The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.”
- 4.19 We believe that the refurbishment of the site as it stands would create a clear heritage asset. By creating our proposal in a dwelling format, we will enhance the gateway to Stickney.
- 4.20 Para 185 b) states:
“The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.”

- 4.21 The contribution that this small development can give to the entrance of Stickney/West Fen, being on a regularly trafficked and walked route makes the application worthy of being supported. It is only a short walk to the joined up Stickney and West Fen boundaries.

5.0 Local Plan Policies

- 5.1 It is noted that NPPF (2019) post-dates the Local Plan and, therefore, should override the Local Plan if that becomes necessary.

5.2 Policy SP2 ó Sustainable Development states:

1. *“When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area”.*
2. *“Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise; and*
 - *Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless,*
 - *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

- 5.3 We are pleased that the Local Plan takes a positive approach in favour of sustainable development. NPPF (2019) supercedes NPPF (2018) but reflects the support for sustainability. Our proposal with particular reference to economic, social, and environmental conditions satisfies these criteria, by providing a local builder with economic activity, a small but exciting family dwelling and perhaps, most importantly, a dwelling of character which retains the history of the area whilst enhancing the entrance to the village.

- 5.4 We can see no adverse impacts through granting permission and certainly none that would demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against NPPF 2019.

5.5 Policy SP3 ó Housing Growth and the Location of Inland Growth

1. The proposal retains the farming character of West Fen and the Stickney area or indeed the surrounding countryside, is a short walk/bike ride to the centre of Stickney and the village hall in particular.
2. With the Covid-19 factors introducing home working we believe that this increases the proposal's sustainability criteria.

6.0 Flood Risk

- 6.1 The location is in Flood Zone 3. We have, therefore, set the floors of the proposal at 1m above ground level.
- 6.2 There are no historical records of flooding in the area, and, indeed when the adjacent house was built (as a replacement dwelling) the floor levels were only raised minimally. We do not believe a Full Flood Risk Assessment is necessary (as seen by other recent proposals along the road) but if required, perhaps a Full Report could be a condition of any Planning Permission?

7.0 Heritage Statement

- 7.1 There are no historic architectural elements in the area which could be affected by this proposal, which is only single storey.
- 7.2 There is no long distance adverse impact on any structure in Stickney/West Fen.

8.0 Highways

- 8.1 A narrow existing access exists (see para 1.5) between the barn and Holme Farm House. There is ample room to provide sufficient parking and turning head to allow entry and egress in forward gear.
- 8.2 The new farm access will improve safety from the current arrangement, as the egress will be vastly enhanced with improved visibility splays.

9.0 Landscaping

- 9.1 The site is currently open on two sides (the west and south) with the brick barn facing West Fen Road.
- 9.2 We will enclose the plot with a mixed hawthorn, blackthorn hedgerow and a mix of trees along and within the new hedgerow boundary.
- 9.3 The trees are a mix of trees that provide berries and cherries for local wildlife, and traditional fruit trees that will provide food not only for the residents of the proposal but at the end of the season further sustenance for birds (as recommended in recent Government guidelines).

10.0 Minerals Assessment

- 10.1 There are no records of potential minerals underground.
- 10.2 Should any sand/gravel be found on the site this will be used to form driveways, footpaths, cover for drainage or patio areas and therefore will be retained on site.
- 10.3 In any event the site would be too small to be economically viable as a business and even if it were, it would impact adversely on the residents at Holme Farm House.

11.0 Conclusion

- 11.1 The proposal is single storey and retains a traditional red brick barn, to which we aim to add a slightly enlarged replacement timber structure to create a new dwelling..
- 11.2 Whilst of limited historic character the buildings were part of the original Holme Farm, so part of the history of the area.
- 11.3 We believe it is important to make the most of historic opportunities in the District so that the history of the area can be seen, albeit in a domestic use rather than a rundown agricultural format.
- 11.4 The existing timber and rusting corrugated metal elements adversely affects the environment of the area, and, as can be seen from our proposed drawings and the attached photograph, there is an opportunity to create something characterful that will enhance the gateway to Stickney/West Fen.
- 11.5 We believe this modest application is one of minimal impact but will bring an underutilised asset to life. Now is a good time to convert the barns before further decay occurs. There will be clear enhancement, to the area and a characterful contribution to the housing numbers in the District.
- 11.6 Should officers or members have any concerns whatsoever, can they be forwarded to us so that we can address them?

**Clive Wicks B.A.(Hons.), Dip.Arch.(Sheffield), R.I.B.A. Chartered Architect
Clive Wicks Associates**

December 2020

