

Planning and Listed Buildings Applications for the Conversion of a Curtilage Listed Barn to a Single Residential Dwelling

**Barn at Rockylls Hall, Shelland Green,
Shelland Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 3JF**

Planning, Heritage, Design & Access Statement

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Opus House
Elm Farm Park
Thurston
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP31 3SH

T 01359 233663
E enquiries@evolution-planning.co.uk
W evolution-planning.co.uk

Conversion of a Curtilage Listed Barn to a Single Residential Dwelling

Client: Mr J Cunningham

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The application site comprises the vacant and under-used brick-built barn/cart lodge and surrounding curtilage, at Rockylls Hall, Shelland. The building comprises a two storey 'four-bay' farm building, used most recently for the storage of farm machinery. The building is not listed in its own right and appears to be a C19th or early C20th building. The building is constructed of red brick, with timber doors and openings.
- 1.2 The site is located to the east of Rockylls Hall at Shelland, approximately 2.5km to the south east of Woolpit and 1.5km to the north west of Harleston. Shelland is a small village, with a church 600m to the southeast of the application site.
- 1.3 It is proposed to convert the barn/cart lodge into a 3 bedroomed house, over two storeys. The conversion does not require any demolition or extensions and will allow the building to be retained in a more viable use for the long term.
- 1.4 The accompanying structural report states that the building is capable of conversion without any significant obstacles. Ecology and Land Contamination reports have also been completed and have presented no constraints to development. The drawings have been well considered by local architect Mike Driver. Great care has been taken to produce a high-quality design that respects the character and significance of the nearby listed building.

2.0 Description of the Site Surroundings, Site Description and Baseline Conditions

Site Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located in the countryside, to the east of Rockylls Hall at Shelland, approximately 2.5km to the south east of Woolpit and 1.5km to the north west of Harleston. The site is 600m to the south east Shelland, which is a small village with a church.
- 2.2 The barn (or cart lodge) is set within a cluster of farm buildings and farm yard buildings which surround the Grade II Listed house, Rockylls Hall. Beyond this are agricultural fields and farmland.
- 2.3 There are no Wildlife Trust Sites or SSSIs in the immediate vicinity of the site. Shelland Wood to the north is 'ancient woodland' but the application proposals are sufficiently distant from this for it to pose any constraint.



Figure 2.1 Rockylls Hall Barn, Shelland

- 2.4 To the west of the application site is Rockylls Hall, which is a Grade II listed farmhouse.
- 2.5 A listed building referenced 'Shelland Green Stable' was previously located adjacent to the application site. This was a 16th century stable and was listed in the 1980s. The building was in a 'derelict' condition and was unfortunately lost during the storm of 1987, it is still however included on Historic England's register of Listed Buildings. The loss of this building has been noted within previously approved planning applications. Appendix 1 relates to comments from the Heritage Officer when considering application 3659/14 in which the Heritage Officer notes the loss of this building. The loss of this building occurred prior to the current owner's occupation of the property and so should not need to be considered by the Heritage Officers.

Site Description

- 2.6 The application site forms part of the complex of buildings which have formed part of the farm yard associated with Rockylls Hall, albeit the application site sits apart from the main area of the farm yard.
- 2.7 The imagery below shows the existing layout of what remains of the farmyard (dated 2018). One of the barns at the farmyard has been converted for "use incidental to the dwelling house". In 2015, permission was also granted for the erection of an office building for the farm. In addition, tennis courts associated with the dwelling at Rockylls Hall have also been permitted.
- 2.8 As such, over the last 20 years, it is clear that the area has become more domesticated and less dominated by farm yard activities, as these two satellite images make clear.



Figure 2.2 Context of the Site (2018)



Figure 2.3 Context of the Site (2000)

The Application Barn

- 2.9 The barn to be converted is a red brick-built cart lodge, two storeys in height and four bays wide. The building is in reasonable condition, with an original slate roof present. There are no existing openings on the north east elevation, but on the south eastern elevation (the side) there is a high-level arched opening and on the north western elevation there is a high-level full height opening, with louvers to either side. On the south west elevation there are four double wooden cart lodge doors, with wooden fixed panelling above. Internally the cart lodge is divided with brick-built partitions between each of the four bays.
- 2.10 The accompanying structural reports confirm that the cart lodge is in a sound condition and is capable of being converted.
- 2.11 Recent photographs demonstrate that the cart lodge is in good condition and is capable of conversion.



Figure 2.4 South western and south eastern elevations



Figure 2.5 North western and north eastern elevations



Figure 2.6 Internal partitions

2.12 A structural survey of the barn confirms that it is suitable for conversion in its current condition. This report accompanies the application.

Wide Area

- 2.13 The area is surrounded by open countryside, which is farmed.
- 2.14 The north west of the application site comprises the farm yard of Rockylls Hall and Rockylls Hall itself. Some recent changes of use have been permitted in the Rockylls Hall barns, such that they are not all in farm use today.
- 2.15 Immediately to the north west of the cart lodge proposed for conversion is a former grain store barn which has been recently converted to uses ancillary to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse at Rockylls Hall. Various planning permissions on the planning history relate to this proposal and photographic evidence confirms that this conversion and change of use has occurred, successfully.



Figure 2.7 Ancillary Accommodation Conversion

- 2.16 Beyond this are a number of barns which appear to have been converted into office/alternative uses.
- 2.17 The nearest barn, to the west, is a timber frame building with a red-clay tile roof. This building is still in agricultural / storage use.



Figure 2.8 Barn to the west

Listed Buildings

- 2.18 English Heritage identifies two listed buildings in the vicinity of the application site, although as mentioned previously, one of these was lost more than 30 years ago.
- 2.19 The main heritage asset at the site is Rockylls Hall and this building is 'curtilage listed' due to its proximity to that building. A Heritage Impact Assessment is provided at Section 6 of this report.

Access and Highways Conditions

- 2.20 Access to the application site is shared with the existing dwelling and wider uses on the farm. It is a private drive and will be suitable for the proposed dwelling.
- 2.21 The country road to the south of the farm yard, where the existing access joins the highway, is a narrow road with very low use. The existing access has excellent visibility splays in both directions and is considered suitable for the proposed use.



Figure 2.9 Existing Access

- 2.22 Data held by Crashmap.co.uk reveals there have been no road traffic incidents in the vicinity of the site over the last 10 years. This indicates that the highway is operating safely.

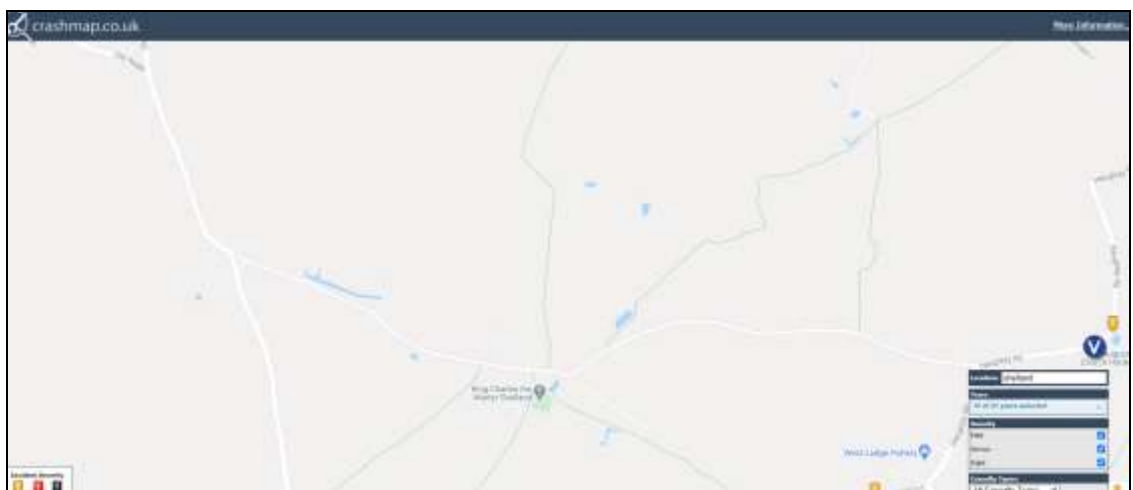


Figure 2.10 Crash Map data over previous 10 years at the site

Ecology

- 2.23 An ecology report, dated July/August 2020 is submitted with the application. This report is based on field data collected in 2020. This has assessed the site's ecological interest (including a dawn and dusk bat survey) and considered the potential for impact on ecological receptors at the site. This report is discussed at section 7.

Flood Risk

- 2.24 The Environment Agency's flood map reveals that the site is not at risk of flooding.

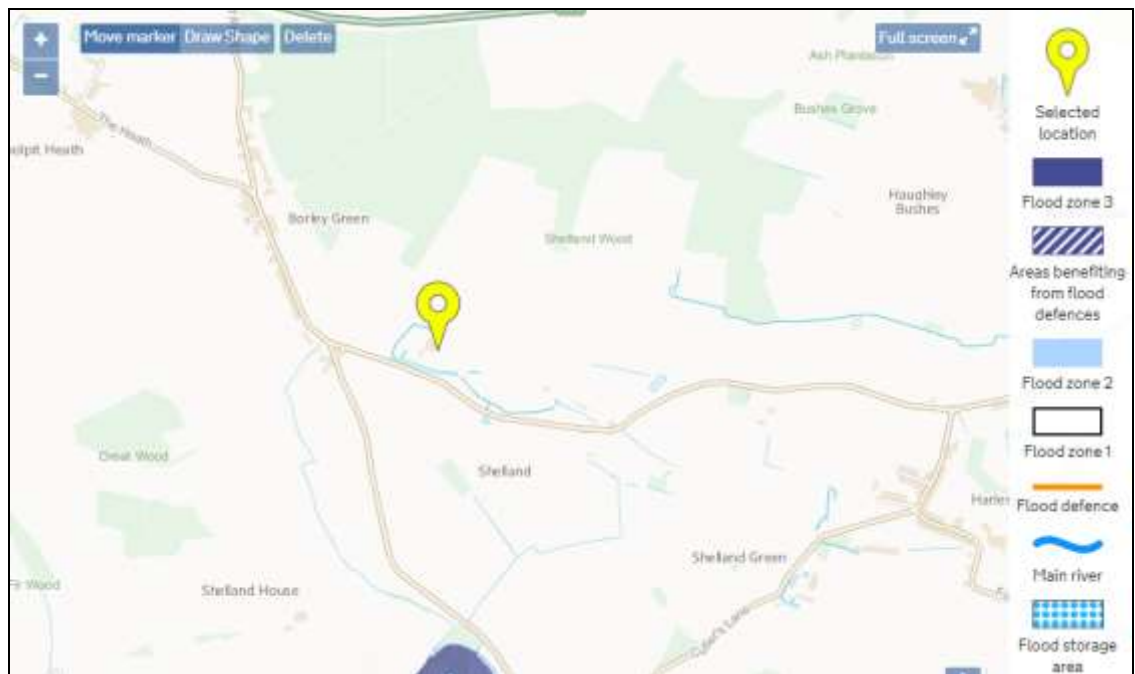


Figure 2.11 Environment Agency flood map

3.0 Planning History

Planning History

3.1 Relevant planning history relating to conversions of buildings within the farm yard includes the following:

Reference	Description of Development	Decision	Date
DC/18/01029	Change of Use of a grainstore into a function room and associated works.	Withdrawn	NA
DC/18/00317	Application for Listed Building Consent - Removal of metal roller door and replace with a "glass wall". Reinststate the opening on the north wall and install a "glass wall". Create opening in the west wall which allows access between the 2 buildings.	Granted	23 May 2018
DC/19/03448	Change of use of agricultural building and alterations to form a use for the enjoyment of the host dwelling.	Granted	04 Sep 2019
3659/14 & 3660/14	Erection of Office (B1a) Building.	Granted	23 Jan 2015
2833/08	Construction of Tarmacadam tennis court painted green with black chainlink fencing surround.	Granted	31 Dec 2008

Figure 3.1 Farm Yard Planning History at Rockylls Hall

3.2 Various planning permissions which have been granted in the farm yard include the change of use (and building works) to create an ancillary room at the former grain store. In addition, planning permission was granted for the development of a farm office building. Furthermore, planning permission was granted for the development of tennis courts at the farmyard.

3.3 A variety of uses have been granted consent over the years, which demonstrate that the LPA has taken a relaxed approach to the conversion of agricultural buildings to non-agricultural uses. Indeed, the LPA has even permitted new operational development within the farm yard for non-farm related uses. It is in this context which the applicants put forward the proposal for the development of one dwelling at the former cart lodge.

4.0 Planning Policy Analysis

4.1 This section sets out the relevant national and local Planning Policies. Planning Policy is contained in the following documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 (the NPPF)
- Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998)
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted September 2008)
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Review (2012)

Principle of Development

4.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF puts forward that there should be *'a presumption in favour of sustainable development'*.

4.3 This proposal is supported by National Planning Policy. The NPPF states in paragraph 77, Rural Housing, that Planning Policies should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local need. This development proposal is a result of a local farming family seeking a viable use for a curtilage listed heritage asset. It seeks to respond to local housing need by providing an additional dwelling.

4.4 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that Planning Policy should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless: *'the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.'* The development of the site for a new home is the most viable long-term use of the barn, which is a heritage asset. Therefore, these proposals present the best way to protect a listed building and to secure its future and should be supported by paragraph 79 of the NPPF.

4.5 Furthermore, the NPPF states in paragraph 192, 'Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets', that Local Planning Authorities should consider the need to sustain and enhance heritage assets and put them to viable uses. This proposal is the best way to achieve this. Local Planning Policy also supports this proposal.

4.6 Local Plan Policy **CS02 Development in the Countryside and Countryside villages**, allows rural buildings to be converted where it will preserve listed buildings. In this instance, it would preserve a curtilage listed building which contributes to the setting

of a listed building.

- 4.7 This development of a new home will also support the Government's objective of boosting the supply of homes (NPPF, chapter 5, Delivering a sufficient supply of homes). Mid Suffolk Council can currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and this proposal will assist in maintaining a good supply of readily available housing sites. We therefore consider that the principle of the conversion of this dwelling is fully supported by Planning Policy.

Design and Heritage

- 4.8 Local Plan Policy **CS05 Mid Suffolk's Environment**, emphasizes the requirement for high quality design and to protect and conserve the built historic environment. Policy **GP1 Design and Layout of Development** states that development should maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area and traditional or matching materials should be used where appropriate. This proposal seeks to preserve a heritage asset by respecting the building and its heritage. The supporting structural report states that the barn is capable of conversion. The barn is superfluous to the needs of the farm and is currently only used for the storage of farm equipment which could be stored elsewhere. Since non-farming related uses have already been granted on the farm yard, it is not considered that retaining the building in farming use will provide a viable use for the building for the long term. It is considered that now would be the right time to find a long-term viable use for this building. If a viable use is not found for the barn, the building could spiral into decline and could eventually be lost. It is hoped that this proposal will prevent decline in the condition of this barn. The loss of the original farm buildings at Rockylls Hall would have a detrimental effect on the setting of that farmhouse, the wider landscape, its history and character.

- 4.9 Section 2.2 of the Local Plan provides details on the policies and proposals for heritage and listed buildings. **HB1- Protection of Historic Buildings**, places a high priority on protecting the character, appearance and setting of heritage assets. **HB3- Conversions and Alterations to Historic Buildings**, requires that the proposal does not detract from the architectural or historic character of the building. This development complies with both of these Policies. The external appearance of the barn will remain largely unaltered where possible, the internal layout respects the existing partitions as much as possible, with new openings which have been kept to a

minimum.

- 4.10 **Policy H9 Conversion of Rural Buildings to Dwellings**, reiterates these requirements and the need for the design, scale and character of the conversion to respect the original building and its setting.
- 4.11 **HB5** provides criteria for preserving historic buildings through alternative uses. It states that the LPA will support the change of use of a listed building where the conversion respects the character, structure, form and materials of the building and its setting. Great care has been taken by the applicant to achieve this and to ensure that the character of the building is preserved, so that the setting of Rockylls Hall is respected.

5.0 Proposed Development

The Proposal

- 5.1 The proposals subject to these applications is for the conversion of the former cart lodge at the application site from agricultural use to residential use. This use would be covered by permitted development rights under Class Q of the GDPO, were it not for the fact that Rockylls Hall is listed, making the application site 'curtilage listed'. As such, formal planning permission and listed building consent is sought. The building makes a contribution to the setting of Rockylls Hall and should therefore be retained, with priority given to finding a viable long-term use of the building, to enable the building to be suitably maintained and invested in.
- 5.2 The proposal seeks permission for the conversion of the barn to a three-bedroom house and we describe this proposed development below.

Use

- 5.3 The barn is no longer suitable for its original use, as farm machinery is typically too big to be stored in buildings of this size. As such, it now only accommodates infrequently accessed equipment. Moreover, the wider farmyard has undergone a number of changes of use and it is more domesticated and less farming-dominated. As such, a change of use to residential is considered to be more compatible with the existing wider uses on the farmyard. As such, this proposal seeks permission and listed building consent for a change of use and the alterations required to convert the barn into a single dwellinghouse.

Layout

- 5.4 The interior of the application building provides an ideal space for a dwellinghouse. It is proposed that the ground floor would be accessed via an entrance hall (leading to a utility room and WC). This will lead into a living area (with staircase to the first floor) and a kitchen/diner leading off this. The barn previously had a first floor and this will be reinstated. At first floor level the proposal is to deliver three bedrooms (two with an ensuite) and a family bathroom.

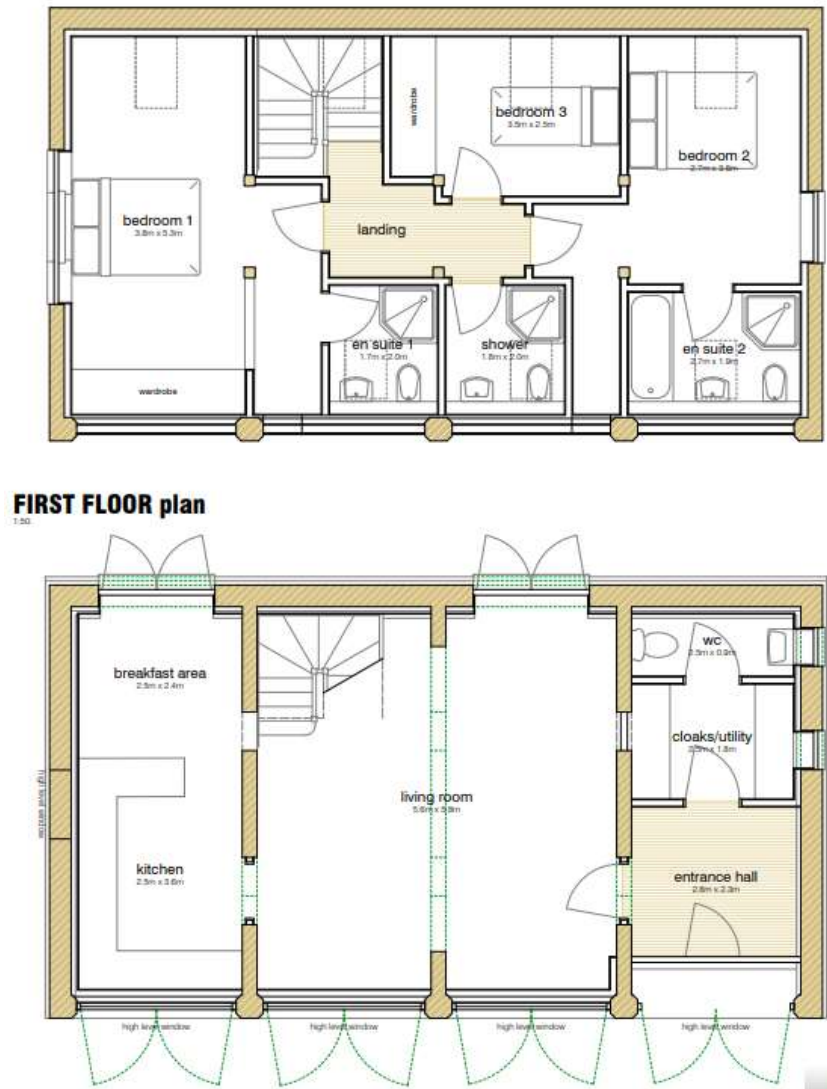


Figure 5.1 Internal Layout of Proposed Dwelling

5.5 Externally, the layout will accommodate parking for two cars and residential amenity space to the north and west of the property.

Scale

5.6 There is no change to the envelope of the barn. It measures approximately 12m by 6.75m and is 7m in height. The scale of the building will be unaltered.

Appearance

5.7 The external appearance of the application building will be subject to only minor alteration. Three of the existing cart lodge doors will be retained and the openings will be glazed with a purpose-built glazed screen which will reflect the original opening. The fourth cart lodge door will be replaced with a domestic door and glazed

panels either site. Additional glazing is proposed in the form of 7 Velux windows (to provide daylight at the first floor) and additional openings proposed on the south east elevation and the north east elevation. Where possible, existing openings will be retained and glazed. Newly proposed openings have been kept to a minimum.

5.8 The only other external change is the removal of the louvres on the south east elevation and the north west elevation, and the provision of glazing in these openings.

5.9 The external appearance of the building will respect the character of the existing building and the rural nature of the building. The existing external materials and finishes will be retained or reproduced where necessary. The existing materials comprise a slate roof above red brick walls with timber joinery.

Landscaping

5.10 A garden will be created to the north and west, but it is anticipated that no significant planting will be proposed and a 1.2m picket fence will be installed to retain views of the surrounding countryside and to be in keeping with the rural area.

Vehicular Access

5.11 The dwelling will be accessed via the existing domestic/farm yard driveway and a parking area will be formed adjacent to the south east bay.

6.0 Heritage Impact

6.1 NPPF requires the heritage impact to be considered where proposals could potentially impact the setting of a listed building.

6.2 Historic England identify two listed buildings within the vicinity of the application site, although only one of these survives today.

Rockylls Hall

6.3 This dwelling is a grade II Listed Building and is located to the west of the application site, as shown:



Figure 6.1 Location of Rockylls Hall and Application Site

6.4 The listing for Rockylls Hall states:

'Farmhouse, early or mid C17. 2 storeys and attics. 4 windows. Timber-framed and plastered. Hipped plaintiled roof with two C18 gabled dormers, one having an original casement. Two good axial C17 chimneys of pink/orange brick, each with 6 square shafts linked at the head. 3-light casements, those at ground storey with transomes; two at 1st storey have C17/C18 wrought iron casements with original ironmongery. Late C18 or early C19 6-panelled

entrance door, the upper pair of panels glazed. Fretted console brackets supporting a flat canopy. Principal framing members are exposed internally; ovolo-moulded main beams and lambstongue chamfer stops, butt-purlin roof. At the right hand end, two rooms have reused 1st floor members from a house of c.1550; the heavy joists and main beams have scotia and ogee mouldings.'

- 6.5 Rockylls Hall is still in use as a farmhouse for the farm, as it has been historically. This building is listed due to its architectural interest, rather than any significant history associated with the building.



Figure 6.2 View of Rockylls Hall from the Application Site

- 6.6 As shown in the image above, Rockylls Hall is some distance from the application site, and views of the building are curtailed by the hedge. The setting of the Hall is more significantly formed by the closer agricultural buildings and the cart lodge only forms part of the distant setting of the farmhouse. However, it is clear from the image above that the cart lodge does form part of the setting of this listed building.

- 6.7 Given the distance between the application site and Rockylls Hall itself, there is no direct impact on the fabric of the listed building. Therefore, the only potential impact relates to the setting of the listed building.

Impact Assessment on the Setting of the Listed Building

- 6.8 The farmyard and collection of farm buildings in the vicinity of the house form the

setting for the listed building, which is a farmhouse. The cart lodge barn forms only part of the setting of this listed building, with the closer farm yard buildings contributing a greater amount to the setting of the Listed Building.

6.9 We note that in protecting and preserving the setting of this Listed Building, the LPA has previously accepted the appropriateness of changes of use of the farm buildings (including to ancillary domestic use) of much closer barns than this one. Indeed, we note that the LPA has even allowed new operational development in the form of the provision of a tennis court and a new farm office building closer to the Listed Building than this cart lodge is. As such, the LPA appears to have accepted that providing long term financially viable uses for the farm yard buildings is an important aspect of preserving the historic setting of Rockylls Hall. It is important to the setting of the listed building that the collection of buildings is retained, *albeit* the uses of these buildings may change over time.

6.10 Material to the consideration of the impact on Rockylls Hall are the following factors:

1. The material changes to the fabric of the former cart shed are minimal. The only external changes are the introduction of roof lights, the installation of glazed openings on the north eastern elevation and the south eastern elevation and the alterations to the barn opening on one of the bays.
2. The cart lodge building is not listed in its own right, we consider that the minimal alterations to the building should therefore be found to be acceptable.
3. Views from Rockylls Hall to the cart lodge are curtailed by the existing hedgerow and alterations to the south western elevation are minimal. Closer buildings play a more important role in the direct setting of the listed building.
4. The LPA has already accepted more significant development closer to the farm house – including the development of a tennis court, the conversion of a closer barn to ancillary domestic use and the development of a farm office building. These proposals are considered to be less significant in terms of potential impact on the listed building, because they are (a) further away from the listed building and (b) will require less operational development.

- 6.11 Overall, we consider that these proposals will have a **positive impact** on the heritage interest of Rockylls Hall, as it will preserve the existing former cart shed for the long-term and will reduce the risk of this building being lost, as the adjacent stable has been lost. The proposals provide a viable use and thereby secure the setting of the listed building, Rockylls Hall.
- 6.12 We therefore consider that the impact of these proposals on the heritage interest of Rockylls Hall will be **negligible to minor beneficial**.

Stable Aligned Northwest/Sout east 100 metres east of Rockylls Hall, Shelland Green

- 6.13 Historic England identifies that there was a grade II Listed Building adjacent to the application site, but the location is shown as being situated in a position where there is no building, as shown:



Figure 6.3 Location of C16th Stable and Application Site (Historic England)

- 6.14 It is clear that the listing does not relate to the barn subject to this application, since the listing description does not relate or correspond to the cart lodge in anyway. The Local Authority's mapping system indicates that this building previously existed adjacent to the application site, to the east.



Figure 6.4 Location of C16th Stable (MSDC)

- 6.15 The listing describes a three-bay stable, with hayloft above, which is timber framed and weatherboarded. The application site is brick built and is a four-bay structure. The listing for this listed stable states:

*'Former stable, mid or late C16. 3 bays. Formerly with hay loft above. Timber-framed and weatherboarded. Asbestos sheeted roof, once thatched. Full-height close-studding. Coupled-rafter, from which most of the collars have been removed; struts and purlins introduced in C18/C19. At the centre bay (south side) is an original window with evidence for diamond mullions, and a blocked doorway, and above is another window without its cill or mullions. The easternmost bay was originally partitioned off. **Included despite depleted condition as a rare example of a C16 stable.***

- 6.16 It should be noted from the listing that when the building was first listed in the 1980s, the building was noted as being in a 'depleted condition' and the building was Listed despite the concern about the condition of the building and questions at the time about the long-term viability of the building.
- 6.17 The applicant informs us that this derelict and depleted building was lost during the 1987 storms and prior to his ownership of the site. This image from c.2000 confirms that the listed barn was lost prior to the year 2000.



Figure 6.5 Satellite imagery from 2000

- 6.18 Given that the previous listed 16th century stable has been lost from the application site for more than 30 years, it is confirmed that this proposal will not impact this heritage asset in any way and only serves to further reiterate the importance of finding viable uses for heritage assets, so that no additional buildings are lost from the site.
- 6.19 As per Appendix 1, Heritage Officers have noted the loss of this barn during previous planning applications.

Conclusions

- 6.20 The only heritage asset which this proposal has the potential to impact is the wider setting of the grade II listed Rockylls Hall. We have concluded that these proposals will have a **positive impact** on the heritage interest of Rockylls Hall, as it will preserve the existing former cart shed for the long-term and will reduce the risk of this building being lost, as was the case with a 16th century stable previously located on the site. The proposals provide a viable use and will secure the wider setting of the Listed Building, Rockylls Hall. These proposals have been assessed as having a **negligible to minor beneficial positive impact** on the setting of Rockylls Hall and should therefore be supported.

7.0 Principle of Development

7.1 Having established that there are no negative heritage impacts on which to object to this proposal, we now consider the principle of the development in relation to all other considerations.

Location of Development for Residential Development

7.2 The NPPF states that *'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'* (paragraph 78) and goes on to state that this will mean only supporting *'isolated'* dwellings in certain circumstances as allowed by paragraph 79.

7.3 The allowances for *'isolated'* dwellings at paragraph 79 include instances where:

'the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset'.

7.4 Since this proposal secures the *'optimal viable use'* of a building which forms part of the wider setting of a heritage asset, we consider that paragraph 79 supports the proposal: The building subject to this application is not a new building but forms part of an existing farmstead and it is adjacent to another dwelling. However, given that the site is less than 1 km from Shelland and is adjacent to an existing dwelling and farmstead, we do not consider that the site can be considered truly *'isolated'* for the purposes of NPPF, paragraph 79 in any case.

7.5 The meaning of *'isolated'* was clarified following a Court of Appeal case brought by Braintree District Council, against the Secretary of State, Greyread Ltd and Granville Developments dated 28th March 2018, Case No: C1/2017/3292. (This case dealt with the predecessor to paragraph 79, paragraph 55 of the 2012 edition of the National Planning Policy Framework). This Court of Appeal case considered the word *'isolated'* in the phrase *'isolated homes in the countryside.'* It concluded that the term *'isolated'* should be given its ordinary meaning of *'far away from other places, buildings or people; remote'*. The judge in the case stated that homes could not be considered isolated just because they did not have services and facilities close by. If a home was physically part of a settlement, however big, it should not be regarded as isolated and so paragraph 79 (or paragraph 55 as it was in the Braintree case) did not prevent their development. As such, the degree to which these buildings can be considered *'isolated'* would be questionable.

7.6 As such, since these are conversion proposals and not new-build proposals, the issue of the degree to which they are to be considered *'isolated'* is considered immaterial to this application: NPPF clearly supports the conversion of buildings in the countryside when the proposals would *'would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.'* In this instance, this proposed dwelling will secure the future of a heritage asset which forms part of the wider setting of Rockylls Hall. As such, there is NPPF support for the development and it should be considered as appropriate development according to paragraph 79. **Policy CS02 Development in the Countryside and Countryside villages**, also allows rural buildings to be converted where it will preserve listed buildings. In this instance, the proposals preserve a curtilage listed building and should therefore be supported.

Ecological Considerations

7.7 The ecological report submitted with the application assesses the ecological impacts.

7.8 In terms of baseline ecological conditions at the site an assessment was carried out, which included a dawn and dusk emergence survey to assess the presence of bats. The presence of nesting birds was also considered. The report found:

- **Bats:** No bats were seen to enter or exit the building, indicating that it is unlikely to operate as a roost. Some lone bats were noted to be in the area, but none of these were using the building.
- **Birds:** There was no evidence that birds have used the interior of the barn for either nesting or roosting as there is no easy access. There is a thriving house martin colony on the Hall, 200 metres away, but no sign that martins have ever attempted to nest on the building.

7.9 Given the lack of any ecological interest at the site, no mitigation measures are needed. However, the applicant is willing to install ecological enhancement measures, as put forward by the applicant's ecologist:

'There is a strong chance that provision of a bat box on the outside of the building after conversion would attract roosting or breeding bats. A bat access panel could be neatly installed in the brickwork It is recommended that a box such as this is installed if and when conversion takes place.'

- 7.10 The accompanying report concludes there will be no significant impacts on ecological receptors at the site. The applicant is willing for the proposed enhancement measure of a bat box and a bat access panel to be conditioned on the decision notice as an ecological enhancement measure.

Residential Amenity

- 7.11 The farmyard has already proven to be a suitable location for residential uses and there is no conflict between residential uses and the retained farm yard activities.
- 7.12 Externally, private residential amenity space can be created to ensure that the needs of residents are provided for.
- 7.13 It is considered that the proposal will comply with Planning Policy requiring suitable residential amenity standards be achieved.

Access

- 7.14 No constraints have been identified in respect of the access to this site. The access already operates as a residential and farm access and it is anticipated that this proposal will lead to use of the access by smaller vehicles at a similar level of use. As such, there are considered to be no negative impacts arising from this change in use.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 This report has put forward the case in favour of granting planning permission for the conversion of barn at Rockylls Hall to provide one new dwelling.
- 8.2 This report has set out that there are no ecological or highways reasons for objection to this scheme. The road is a quiet road and has the benefit of an existing access. There have been no accidents in the last 10 years.
- 8.3 There is Policy support for the conversion of barns where *'the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets'* (NPPF). This Policy is up-to-date national Planning Policy and on the basis that the cart lodge forms part of the setting of Rockylls Hall, we consider that this benefit be given significant weight.
- 8.4 Internally, the proposed design has been careful to present an acceptable solution in design terms. Ecological enhancement measures are put forward.
- 8.5 We trust that the LPA will be fully supportive of these proposals since there are considered to be no valid reasons for refusal.

Appendix 1 – Heritage Comments on Planning Application 3659/14

HERITAGE COMMENTS



Application No.: 3659/14 and 3660/14
Proposal: Erect office buildings using surviving wall.
Address: Rockylls Hall, Shelland

Date: 21.1.15

SUMMARY

1. The Heritage Team considers that the proposal would cause
 - no harm to a designated heritage asset because there is little impact on historic fabric and setting; the proposal will support the business at the site. **No objection.**
2. The Heritage Team recommends that details be secured by condition as below.

DISCUSSION

I have visited site to discuss the proposal at pre-application stage. I have expressed support for the scheme at pre-application stage.

In 2008 I visited the site to consider an application to remove the remains of the roof of the outbuildings in this position. The remains were considered not to warrant retention and following grant of consent were removed, leaving the outer wall.

There is an extensive farmstead at the site, although the oldest building is understood to have been lost in storms just prior to listing. The remaining buildings date from the 1800s and later, and include good quality brick walls separating farming activity from the residential areas. Bricks in the wall opposite the proposed building are carved with initials and the date 1844.

Broadly the current proposal is to reinstate buildings in this position, which will be little different from a conversion if the previous buildings had remained standing. There is little adverse impact on the curtilage buildings or on the setting of the listed building, and there is positive impact in supporting a viable business at the site.

The brick proposed is not familiar to Heritage. In the context of the existing buildings, a new soft red with clean, consistent colour and texture would be more appropriate than a rustic and sooty brick; I would suggest Bovingdon orange or similar. The mortar and pointing finish to all walls should match the existing, which will be lime without cement gauging. Slates will need to be British natural slates; the quarry should be specified.

The windows seem ok in principle but we would not normally support applied glazing bars even in new build. Window details should also show clearly the treatment of the brickwork

around and above the window openings, which should not simply be cut in mechanically but neatly finished.

Detail section drawings, existing and proposed, at 1:5 or similar, are needed to show the treatment of the existing wall head in construction.

Name: Paul Harrison
Position: Heritage Enabling Officer