

## Wood Farm Planning Application

### Design and Access Statement

Address; Wood Farm  
11 High St  
Collyweston  
Northamptonshire  
PE9 3PW



24 April 2022

Proposal. Conversion of outbuilding to form a one-bedroom single dwelling

## 1.0 Introduction

This application covers a proposed development at Wood Farm, 11 High St, Collyweston PE9 3PW.

The existing farmhouse and associated garaging would remain unchanged. The stable fronting onto the High St, already converted for ancillary domestic use, would not be altered. The largest barn, second back from the road, is partially converted for tourist accommodation and does not form part of this proposal.

The barn furthest from the High Street would be converted to form a one-bedroom house. It is presently available for use as an extra private garage, in addition to the four garage spaces already on site. There would be some modest changes to the external envelope of this building, but no increase to the footprint.

## 2.0 Location

Wood Farm is located at 11 High Street, Collyweston. It is within the conservation area that has been established in Collyweston since 1994. The property has not been used for agricultural activities since purchase by the present owner in 1993. The extensive space no longer contributes to usage of the site.

## 3.0 Site History

The oldest part of the farmhouse appears to be of Victorian construction, with later additions from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Within distant living memory the lean-to extension on the western elevation was a butcher's shop. Meat-hanging hooks remain installed in the external front elevation of the house.

The majority of the barns are also of Victorian heritage., although with more recent additions and changes.

Within the current ownership, an extension to the house has been re-roofed with genuine Collyweston slate in place of the previous asbestos-cement sheets. Also, the stable fronting the High St and the next barn have both had their original Collyweston slate roofs re-laid at considerable expense. The rear barn, subject of this application, had its corrugated steel roof replaced with reclaimed triple-roll pantiles to match adjoining outbuildings on this site and those of the close neighbours.

Previous alterations have demonstrated that the applicant has a positive attitude towards conservation of heritage and investing in maintaining the buildings.

## 4.0 Planning History Summary

The initial pre-application advice acknowledged that due to the changing usage of the site increasing its residential use was considered acceptable. Over a period of nearly four years, discussions have been held with the local planning team that resulted in numerous modifications to address the matters that had been raised at the time. This included two pre-applications, two subsequent full applications, an appeal and further planning consultant negotiations.

Application 19/01299/FUL was refused on three separate issues. These three issues were addressed in application 21/00450/FUL. However, this application was refused on two new grounds, neither of which had been raised in the earlier refusal.

Following this second refusal, instead of going to appeal, a planning consultant was engaged to initiate discussions with the senior team at North Northamptonshire, in line with national planning guidance. Unfortunately, eventually this just led to an email, from the latest planning officer which noted; “...*the applicant has the right to appeal.....*”.

In parallel to these attempted discussions, an approach was made via the MP. A video-meeting was arranged within 4 days, with senior manager Martyn Swann. Mr Swann commented that when approached with a site, the North Northamptonshire planning team should be clear if that site cannot be developed, otherwise they should guide applicants to achieve an acceptable design. This has not happened.

## 5.0 Recent Planning History.

The first pre-app was made for this site in 2018, for two barn conversions and one new build.

This feedback was incorporated in application 19/01299/FUL. This application was refused on the following grounds

1. The proposed conversions would not respect the character of the buildings and extensions would be out of scale.
2. No preliminary bat roost was submitted.
3. Access to the site does not meet the Local Highway Authority standards for the minimum width of shared accesses to be 4.5m

An appeal was refused, and a new pre-application submitted. Application NE/21/00450/FUL again proposed two barn conversions and one new build home. This design addressed the three reasons for refusal of application 19/01299/FUL.

Against a decision deadline of 8 weeks, five extension periods were requested by the planning team and agreed by the applicant. After 26 weeks, a sixth extension to the deadline was requested, but

declined by the applicant. Within 2 hours of that decision, the application had been refused. Two new issues were raised on the refusal.

1. The adjustments to the front barn and garden wall were felt to be damaging to the Conservation Area.
2. The proposed new build Plot 3 would be overbearing to the neighbouring garden.

During the planning process, four separate planning officers have been allocated to the two pre-apps and two full applications. During the first application, the Planning Officer and the Conservation Officer visited the site. Whilst on site and within written comments, no concerns were raised about the issues on which the second application was refused. For this second application, it is clear from the officer's report that this Planner had not visited the site. The Conservation Officer did not make any comment on the second application despite a statutory obligation to do so. Despite this lack of input from the Conservation Officer regarding the effect on the Conservation Area, this aspect was deemed to be the main reason for refusal.

This latest planning application is considerably scaled down, comprising of just one barn to be converted within its existing footprint.

## 6.0 Earlier Planning History

The site, previously part of the Burghley Estate, has an East Northamptonshire property reference number 100031040803 . It has been the subject of the following planning applications:-

1. 95/00172/FUL | Conversion of barns to tourist accommodation  
Status; The barn nearest the road has been converted, the second, larger barn has been partially converted. In both cases, the roofs have been relaid using the original Collyweston slate.
2. 04/01281/FUL | Reinstate double pitch roof to scullery and barn and reinstate front picket fence  
Status; The scullery roof was rebuilt, using genuine Collyweston slate on the roof slope facing Collyweston High St. The roof of the third barn in was rebuilt as drawn. The picket fence at the front of the property was not permitted.
3. 10/01264/FUL | Proposed rooflight on existing ground floor lean to plus three replacement windows to side/rear elevations  
Status; This permission was granted and enacted
4. 16/01436/TCA/ | 2 x Leylandii trees - Remove as their roots are disturbing adjoining historic dry-stone walls.  
Status; This permission was granted and enacted

5. 17/00601/FUL | Build a three bay garage between two existing barns  
Status; This application was withdrawn and the work not undertaken

Although Wood Farm is in the Collyweston Conservation Area, it is not a listed property.

## 7.0 Neighbours

The pattern of domestic dwellings to the immediate east and west of Wood Farm is one of additional houses being located back from the road in a yard-type arrangement.

To the eastern boundary, Bluebell Stables and Bluebell Barn have been converted from earlier agricultural buildings,

To the west, The Walks has three dwelling, 15, 17 and 19 High St, with the latter set further away from the High St than the subject barn of this application.. It is noticeable that there are long barns at The Walks and Park Farm stretching away from the High St along the property side boundaries.

## 8.0 Design

The earlier Planning Inspector's report noted that "in principle there would be no objection to small scale residential developments within the specified villages..... Policies 2 and 8 of the RNOTP seek a mix of houses to meet local need and on smaller sites (in villages) a mix which includes mainly one or two bedroom house types."

In response to this, this conversion is for a one-bedroom property.

## 9.0 Building Form and Massing

The external dimensions of the barn in question are not going to change. The long-established layout of buildings at Wood Farm will be preserved.

## 10. Car Parking

The scheme has been designed to provide car parking and turning area to meet the Northamptonshire's Local Highways Authority Standing Advice

Wood Farm House	3 Bedroom	4 garage spaces plus 6 external spaces
Barn for conversion	1 bedroom	1 space plus potential visitor space

It should be noted that the existing garages, which are to remain with Wood Farm House, measure 3300mm internally. They are substantially wider than normal suburban garages.

In her report on application 19/01299/FUL, the Inspector noted that “at the time of my visit there were a number of on street parking spaces available.”

The following photos illustrate Collyweston High St at 9.50am on a lockdown Sunday morning, looking up and down the street from 11 High St entrance. It can be seen that parking is plentiful on this road.



View along High St to the east, from outside the site



View along High St to the west, from outside the site

## 11.0 Access

Access to the site is directly from the High Street. In their response to application 19/01299/FUL, Northamptonshire Highways stated that the access should be 4.5m wide. During preparations for our application 21/01299/FUL, we engaged with a Development Management Engineer at Northamptonshire Highways. For that application, Highways demanded an access width of 5.5m

Access to this site will be a compromise between changes to the historic fabric of the buildings and creating sufficient length for two cars to pass each other and hence avoid reversing out of the site. For Northamptonshire, this passing area adjacent to the highway is specified to be 10m long by 5.5m wide. However, many other local authorities consider smaller passing areas to be perfectly safe. For example, Warwickshire detail 7.5m long by 5.5m wide. Cambridgeshire state 8.0m long for 5.0m wide and Nottinghamshire require 8.0m length by 4.8m.

As drawn, this proposal has an off-highway passing area 8.0m long by 5.5m wide. It would be considered perfectly safe and acceptable in the neighbouring counties shown above. It should also be noted that the narrow part of the access is just 5m long. Beyond this short narrow section, there is more than 5.5m passing width throughout the rest of the access route. Visibility is good along the route, such that the reality of two cars arriving at the narrow section simultaneously is unlikely.

Given the mixed history on access, we have engaged a specialist to produce a Traffic Statement report. The report concludes;-

*The TS will demonstrate that the site can be considered a sustainable location and that safe and suitable access can be provided for all users with no adverse impact on the existing highway network. As such there are no transport reasons why the proposed residential development should not be granted planning permission*

The alignment of the pavement in front of the property is proposed to be altered such that the tarmacked path is next to the carriageway rather than close to the front of the house. This change is to improve pedestrian safety by giving walkers and the drivers of emerging vehicles greater visibility of each other. Full pedestrian visibility splays are included in the design layout.

## 12.0 Historic England

We have retained the access entrance at its present 3.3m width. In Historic England's 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings' it is noted that highways guides should not be applied too rigorously. Section 4.1 states that "**design standards intended primarily for suburban housing schemes are often inappropriate...**" There will be relatively low usage. Given the very many precedents elsewhere within Collyweston discussed below, many directly on to A43, we would request that in this case requiring a double width entryway is not justified.

## 13.0 Narrow Access Precedents

It is notable that within the village of Collyweston, there are many shared accesses on to the public highway that do not have the 4.5m width for 10m as demanded for new suburban roads in the Highways Design Guide. As recent precedents, two of these accesses, at Manor Farm and Bluebell Yard, have been approved by East Northamptonshire Council within recent years. Details and photographs of these highway accesses are contained in Appendix 1. Throughout my 28 years living in Collyweston, I am aware of no accidents being caused by these private shared accesses, despite them not meeting Highways Guidelines for new suburban roads.

#### 14.0 Conservation Area

The whole of this proposal is situated within the Collyweston Conservation Area. The proposed barn conversion cannot be seen from the High Street.

The only public view of the site from within the Conservation Area is the frontage on to the High Street. The majority of this view is filled by Wood Farm House, which it is not planned to change. The other significant element is the stable, which is set back from the general building alignment on High St. This building is presently used as ancillary domestic accommodation and is also not proposed to be changed. The Collyweston slate roof of the north elevation of this building, facing the High St, was re-laid by the applicant in 1997 and so is in good condition.

During recent years, the applicant has made considerable investment in maintaining the appearance of the Conservation Area in Collyweston. Under application 04/01281/FUL, an asbestos roof to the house scullery was replaced with genuine Collyweston slate. Despite there being no compulsion for this no-longer-available historic material to be specified, the applicant was keen not to set a precedent of using modern materials directly facing the High Street. More recently, the Collyweston slate roof of the second barn in, was re-laid using genuine Collyweston slate, despite cheaper alternatives being available.

The only other view of this site, from the Main Road (A43) close to Bluebell Barn, has been obscured by the recently constructed new build house.

It should be noted that the existing garden wall would be shortened in this proposal to provide greater safety for pedestrians and drivers. The length of wall in question was demolished by a delivery lorry to the then butcher's shop (now village community shop) in 1995 and subsequently rebuilt. This length of wall is less than 30 years old.

The appeal Inspector for 19/01299/FUL noted in reference to that proposal,

*“18. The character and appearance of Buildings 1a and 2 in particular would be significantly altered. The simple buildings with traditional proportions would be harmed by the raising of the walls and ridge heights, to allow for living accommodation at first floor level, and the resultant discordant proportion of walls to depth of roof slopes. Further harm would be caused to Building 1a, as its side wall would be demolished and rebuilt some 1200mm further away from the farmhouse, and to Building 2, as the scale and position the*



*proposed extensions would overwhelm it, and compromise its current character and setting notwithstanding the actual date of construction or additional works that have taken place.”*

It is noted that the Inspector did not reference the changes proposed to the garden wall. For this latest application, only the garden wall is to be changed.

#### 15.0 Trees

This proposal will involve the loss no trees. The owner has recently planted a number of new trees in the back garden area to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. In time, these will provide further screening of the property.

#### 16.0 Sustainability

This proposal utilises the embedded energy of the existing building. It enables the creation of a new dwelling with minimal energy usage. This procedure is the most sustainable way to create a house.

Although only a small dwelling, extra residents in Collyweston will support the Community Shop, the church and local businesses such as the Slaters Arms pub. As the Transport Statement notes, only minimal extra traffic movements will result. With the coming of electric vehicles, and the installation of a charging point, even this small increase will not necessarily raise the usage of fossil fuels.

The barn conversion will have an Electric Vehicle charge point provided at its parking spaces.

#### 17.0 Protected Species

Please see separate Protected Species report. The Preliminary Bat Roost specialist report remains within its period of validity.

#### 18.0 Overlooking/shading/views

Being the conversion of an existing building, this proposal will create no shading issues. Given the location of the barn and its single storey nature, no overlooking issues are created.

## 19.0 Summary

This proposal reuses a historic but under-utilised ex-agricultural building within the village envelope of Collyweston to provide an extra dwelling in a windfall, infill site. Privacy for neighbours and within the site has been a top consideration. Provision for protected species has been incorporated into the design.

At the frontage, no changes are proposed to the first barn building. The garden wall is to be moved to create an access-width in line with modern safety guidelines. A traffic consultant's report concludes that highway safety is maintained.

Appendix 1 Examples of Narrow Accesses within the village of Collyweston



Bluebell Yard

Bluebell Yard accessway is only wide enough for one car. It serves seven dwellings, at least two of which were conversions approved within the last few years. It enters directly on to the A43 trunk road on a blind bend. There is zero visibility for pedestrians and a very poor view of the A43 for drivers.



Manor Farm

This development of barn conversions has three large dwellings sharing a single-track road for 80m. Together with Manor Farmhouse, they share an access on to Back Lane, which is unsighted and has no pavement.



### The Drift

This single-track road serves 4 houses and the village playing field/park. It is approximately 180m long. Passing is only possible at one point. It enters directly on to A43, with no space for cars turning off the A43 to pass any cars that might be coming towards them.



### Hall Yard

Six houses here share a single private drive on to the High St



26 High St  
Three houses share this driveway.



27 High St  
Two houses share a drive on to the High St. There is no visibility splay at the back of the narrow pavement



The Walks. 15, 17 and 19 High St

Three dwellings share this access on to the High Street with no visibility of approaching pedestrians. It is also noteworthy that the village shop door opens into this narrow entryway