

MJ PLANNING CONSULTANCY

HERITAGE STATEMENT rev B

Project: Conversion of existing outbuilding to annex
Site Address: Orchard House, High Street, Stretham, Ely, CB6 3JQ.
Client: Mr C & Mrs L Roberts
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Heritage Statement has been written in light of a proposal to convert an outbuilding in the grounds of Orchard House, a Grade II listed property in Stretham.
- 1.2. **Paragraph 194** of the 2021 NPPF requires that *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'*
- 1.3. **Paragraph 202** of the NPPF (2021) states that *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'*
- 1.4. **Paragraph 197** of the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework states that when considering the impact of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 1.5. **Policy ENV12** of the East Cambs Local Plan 2015 makes clear that *'Proposals that affect a Listed Building will not be permitted where it would have a detrimental impact on the visual, architectural or historic significance of the asset'*. It also states that development affecting the setting of a listed building will only be granted where it would preserve the positive contribution of the heritage asset, not materially harm the setting of the listed building and facilitates its long-term preservation.
- 1.6. **Policy ENV2** of the East Cambs Local Plan 2015 states *'All development will be designed to a high quality, enhancing and complementing local distinctiveness and public amenity by relating well to existing features and introducing appropriate new designs'*
- 1.7. **Page 36** of the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide SPD states *'Any development that affects the historic environment should make a positive contribution to the area and have sufficient regard for the surrounding buildings and features. Development that does not respect the character, detracts from, or has a negative impact on the area, will not be supported'*.
- 1.8. **Page 37** states that *'Most historic buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. The extent to which they can accommodate change without loss/damage to the special interest varies in each individual case.'*

1.9. The following assessment is written in accordance with *'The Settings of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)'* Dec 2017.

1.10. The Statement assesses the proposal proportionately in accordance with the advice set out by following steps 1-4 with the LPA responsible for undertaking step 5:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

2. STEP 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

- 2.1. Orchard House is a Grade II listed building. Its listing reads as follows:
- 2.2. *'House. Circa 1823 extended late C19 on the north. Gault brick, Flemish bond on the front and English to side and rear walls. Parapetted gable roof. End stacks. Double pile plan. Basement, two storeys and attic. Symmetrical facade of three first floor later four pane hung sashes in segmental arches. Central doorway approached by four stone steps. Round headed arch has pilastered doorcase and fanlight with radial glazing bars. Rear wall to two storey porch with hipped roof. Round headed arch to first floor window. Interior: Basement kitchen with original pantry and storage rooms. Reused in partition walls of a secure room in the basement is early C17 run through panelling with strapwork frieze and a grill formed of splat balusters. The doorway to this room has similar panelling and coxhead hinges.'* (List Entry 1178620).
- 2.3. The listing does not mention the outbuilding, but its presence within the curtilage of Orchard House means that the outbuilding is curtilage listed.
- 2.4. There are a number of listed buildings within the locality. The outbuilding intended for renovation lies immediately adjacent to Barn, rear of Number 12 and Number 15 which is Grade II listed in its own right and the only other listed building that has the potential to be affected by the proposal. The listing for the property reads as follows:
- 2.5. *'Barn. Late C18. Red and gault brick. Steeply pitched roof now covered with corrugated iron and tumbled parapet gable ends. Three bays with gabled porch to the centre bay on the west side. Iron ties in gable ends, those at the north end in form of initials T.A.'* (List entry 1331486)
- 2.6. Over and above this, the site lies within the Stretham Conservation Area. Stretham benefits from a Conservation Area Appraisal which highlights important features within the Conservation Area. Orchard House is referenced a number of times within the CAA. The following are the relevant references:
- 2.7. *'Brick piers surmounted by carved stone pineapples are situated at the entrance drive to Orchard House, the villa set within and behind the canopy of mature trees located in the garden or grounds of Orchard House'* (paragraph 8.2.7)
- 2.8. *'Read Street descends as a lane to the south, towards the dominant mature trees of Orchard House's garden, which had a wall at the edge of the road screening the garden.'* (paragraph 8.5.1)

2.9. *'There are now two new houses in the grounds of Orchard House. Much of the wall to the original gardens remains but a few of the attractive trees have been removed.'* (paragraph 8.5.2)

2.10. *'This village has a particular character, which is not found often within the fen communities. The trees are dominant as a swath across the middle of the village from the edge of Back Lane behind Juniper House across the main central space to the other side of Orchard House.'* (paragraph 9.5.1)

3. STEP 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated

3.1. The location, scale and style of the outbuilding all function to reinforce its ancillary role to the principle dwelling on site, Orchard House. The ridge height and eaves are significantly lower, the roof does not benefit from parapet features, the scale is significantly smaller, the design much more simplistic etc.

3.2. The use of some materials such as gault brick links the two buildings (and surrounding buildings) and features such as symmetrical window openings further reinforces the link, but the primary contribution Orchard House makes is to highlight the outbuilding's ancillary role.



Photograph 1 – Photograph of Orchard House

- 3.3. The Barn, rear of Number 12 and Number 15 can be viewed from the setting of the outbuilding intended for conversion and the prominent parapet gable ends belonging to The Barn dominates over the outbuilding. The presence of The Barn therefore functions to reinforce the outbuilding's ancillary role.



Photograph 2 - Photograph of the garage of the outbuilding with the parapet gable end of the barn adjacent Number 12 and 15 visible dominating over the outbuilding.

- 3.4. Orchard House is referenced numerous times within the Conservation Area Appraisal. Its presence (including the presence of the outbuildings) is therefore clearly important to the Conservation status of the village. However, it is notable that the references within the CAA relates to the elements that are visible from the roadside, namely the trees, walling and brick piers.
- 3.5. The nature of Orchard House is that views into the site and the property are extremely limited. The main house and the outbuilding are not visible from the roadside. The outbuilding is not referenced in the CAA. Therefore, the contribution that the property as a whole makes to the conservation area is primarily created by its setting rather than the individual buildings themselves.

- 3.6. Over and above the setting's contribution to the Conservation Area status, the presence of a cluster of listed buildings within the locality cumulatively function to highlight the historic importance of the area and the location of the historic core of the village of which Orchard House forms a part.
- 3.7. The contribution of the site to the Conservation Area is considered to be high, although this is primarily through the wider setting rather than through views of the individual buildings on site.

4. STEP 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it

- 4.1. The proposed scheme intends on retaining the external appearance of the outbuilding and making no new openings. The only change to the external appearance of the building is to change the colour of the external joinery to Dulux Gardenia Cream to match that on Orchard House. Providing that the colour scheme of the joinery is sympathetic to its setting, the external appearance and scale will not alter. The proposals are therefore considered to be beneficial to the identified heritage assets by protecting their settings and continuing to contribute positively to these by retaining design features, a scale and materials which are sympathetic to or reflective of the nearby heritage assets.
- 4.2. There will be no impact on the wider setting, including trees, and this is considered to protect and benefit the heritage assets, in particular the conservation area where the wider setting and landscape features are of more significance.
- 4.3. The scale of the existing property and its curtilage is sufficient to accommodate an annex without impacting on the main heritage asset in terms of curtilage space or parking. As such, this is considered to have no affect on the heritage asset and its significance.
- 4.4. Returning a disused outbuilding to functional use is considered to be beneficial to the significance of the heritage asset as it increases the value and viability of the property as a whole, and encourages further generations to invest in its future.
- 4.5. In terms of impact on the outbuilding itself, the DAS sets out the extent of works as follows:
 - i. Insertion of a staircase within the 1980s timber first-floor boarding.
 - ii. Reinstatement of a section of partition wall on the ground floor
 - iii. Insertion of a door opening on the ground floor through the existing partition wall
 - iv. Insertion of a door opening on the first floor through the existing gault partition wall
 - v. Insertion of a partition wall to the first floor to create a home working office and bedroom.

- vi. Removal of the 1980s modern window frames and replacement with traditional frames set back within the reveal.
- vii. Replacement of existing plywood timber doors with more traditional vertically boarded, framed doors in durable hardwood.
- viii. Handing of some doors to create a more functional space.

4.6. The staircase is proposed within a 1980s, regularised timber first floor. As such the opening for the staircase will not result in the loss of any historic fabric and is therefore not considered to be harmful.



Photograph 3 - Modern timber first floor structure in which the staircase opening will be cut.

4.7. The insertion of two new openings and reinstatement of one section of the existing internal partitions is considered to generate harm to the listed building by virtue of loss of and alteration to historic building fabric, however, this has been minimised as far as is practically possible to allow the future use of the property. Planning policy and guidance is clear that some minor alternations to listed buildings to allow them to be functionally used and to protect the future of the heritage asset is permissible. Furthermore, the two internal partitions will primarily remain intact follow insertion of the openings and therefore the features will not be lost entirely. The introduction of openings within the partition walls and reinstatement of one section of partition walling is considered to have minimal impact on the heritage asset.



Photograph 4 - First floor single skin gault brickwork partition in which the opening to the bathroom will be created.

- 4.8. The scheme proposes removal of the 1980s modern non-opening windows and replacement with more traditional openable windows that will be set back within the reveal on the ground floor to reflect how they would have been set historically. This is considered to benefit the heritage asset as it will be a reinstatement of original features of the property.



Photograph 5 - Ground floor modern, non-opening window frame flush with the brickwork to be replaced.

- 4.9. The scheme proposes the replacement of the existing 1980s plywood doors with more traditional vertically boarded framed doors in durable hardwood which is considered to be a benefit to the overall property and setting of Orchard House.
- 4.10. Overall and above the individual benefits and harm generated by the work on the outbuilding, the following section considers the public benefits of the scheme in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 202 of the NPPF. The NPPF states that public benefits are anything which delivers economic, social or environmental progress.

Public Benefits

- 4.11. The fact that the annex is proposed within an existing building is an important environmental benefit which will minimise impact on Orchard House and its setting and minimise the need for additional materials to create the annex within the curtilage of the property. The conversion works therefore have an environmental benefit compared to a new build.
- 4.12. The existing outbuilding currently has no functional use. It needs investment to enable the building to be preserved for future generations. The proposed use will result in the building being put to its optimum viable use, allowing in investment for the future. It will also make

the purchasing of Orchard House by future generations more economically viable. This will generate environmental and economic benefits.

- 4.13. The provision of additional space for family, friends or employees to live on site at Orchard House will result in additional individuals spending more time within the village of Stretham. This is likely to generate indirect economic benefits for shops and village amenities for example, if the Applicants have friends of family coming to visit, with the annex available they may choose to stay for the weekend and frequent the local public house and shops which they might not have done had they only been visiting for the day. As such, the development will bring economic benefits.
- 4.14. The Applicants' son no longer needs to travel to his office following the COVID-19 pandemic as long as he has access to a suitable space from which to work from home. The provision of an annex at Orchard House will allow the Applicants' son to live and work from the same place and therefore reduce carbon emissions by no longer having to travel to and from work. This will bring about an environmental benefit.
- 4.15. The cost of renting a property which has sufficient space for a bedroom and a home office is high for a single individual who needs to work from home. The provision of the annex will create a social benefit by providing private living and working space for the Applicant's son which may otherwise be unaffordable in the local area. This will generate a social benefit through the provision of an, albeit ancillary, residential use to meet an identified and specific housing need.
- 4.16. Reintroducing original features, such as windows set back into the reveal, will increase the quality of development on site and reinforce the importance of the building to the listing. This will bring about an environmental benefit.
- 4.17. The proposed scheme has been designed to exceed Nationally Designed Space Standards. The provision of sufficient space to meet NDSS and sufficient space to meet working from home needs which have arisen following COVID-19 pandemic, will result in healthy living environment which supports the mental health and wellbeing of the family, friends and employees that will be staying within the unit. This is an important environmental benefit.
- 4.18. Given the above assessment, it is considered that cumulatively, the public benefits weigh strongly in favour of the proposed development and outweigh any minimal harm arising from the development to the listed buildings and Conservation Area.

5. STEP 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

- 5.1. Introduction of replacement traditional timber doors that reflect the design guidance in appendix C of the Conservation Area Appraisal will minimise harm. The doors should have a solid appearance and should not have fanlights set within the door itself. The doors should ideally be vertically boarded to reflect the ancillary status of the property.
- 5.2. The colour of the window frames should be sensitive to the setting and reflect the colour palette within the local vernacular. It is understood that the doors and window frames will be Dulux Gardenia Cream to match those of Orchard House to re-establish the connection between the two heritage assets. The frames should be timber and the windows casement to reflect the advice within appendix C of the CAA.
- 5.3. The internal layout should protect and retain historic features of the building as far as is possible whilst still making the building functional. The store benefits from an inglenook fireplace with exposed brickwork which will be retained and will become a central feature within the proposed dining area.



Photograph 6 – Inglenook fireplace with exposed brickwork to be retained.

- 5.4. Ensuring there will be no impact on the landscaping on site (which is recognised as important to the setting), in particular the trees to the south and west of the outbuilding, will help to minimise harm. Whilst the building work itself will not impact on the trees, it will be important that contractors take into account the importance of the landscaping on site and tree protection areas are not used for parking or storage of materials or tools during the build programme.
- 5.5. Minimising the loss of existing historic fabric as far as possible through minimising new internal openings and retaining the elements of the partitions that remain will assist in reducing the impact on the historic fabric.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. In summary, this Heritage Statement has been written in accordance with the latest planning policies and national guidance. It follows guidance set out in '*The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)*'.
- 6.2. In light of the above assessment, it is concluded that the harm to the heritage asset has been minimised through design and layout choices.
- 6.3. The scheme will not be visible from the Conservation Area or directly from the principal dwelling, Orchard House, and therefore its impact on these heritage assets is considered to be minimised.
- 6.4. The proposals will not alter the access, scale or external appearance of the existing outbuilding. The only proposed change externally is to change the colour of the external joinery to Dulux Gardenia Cream to reflect the colour used on Orchard House. This means that overall the proposals will contribute positively towards the historic settings of Orchard House, Barn adjacent to 12-15 and the Conservation Area.
- 6.5. The proposals will not overlook any neighbouring properties which will minimise overlooking and impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 6.6. Internally, the alterations have been minimised as far as possible, making use of existing room spaces and seeking to make use of existing openings as far as possible. Two new small openings are required in historic fabric (brick internal partition walls); one to the first floor and one to the ground floor. The partitions will remain in tact beyond the openings and the overall benefits of returning the building to a functional purposes and the need to meet modern living standards means that these two minor alternations to historic fabric are considered to be considerably outweighed by the benefits of the proposal.

- 6.7. On balance, the scheme is considered to be suitable to the location and benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh any potential harm, meaning the scheme is considered acceptable in Heritage terms.