

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

*1025 - Hillview Farm, Laxfield Road,
Fressingfield, Eye IP21 5PY*

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CONVERSION OF AN
EXISTING FORMER AGRICULTURAL THRESHING BARN INTO NEW
HOLIDAY LET ACCOMMODATION AND PERSONAL USE.**

May 2023.

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Aerial View of The Proposed Site

1.0 - Introduction to Development and Location

- 1.0** This statement is in support of a full planning application, submitted to Mid Suffolk district council for the conversion of an existing, former, agricultural barn to form holiday accommodation and personal use (restricted by a 12-week, or similar, occupancy condition).
- 1.1** The proposed site area as shown edged in red on existing site / location plans measures approx. **1,690m²** – 0.17 Hectares. Additional land owned by the applicant is edged in blue.
- 1.2** The proposed site sits half-a-kilometre South-East of Fressingfield main centre, South of the adjacent property, Hill View House. The site is predominantly grassland with a mixture of mature / young trees and shrubbery to the boundaries.
- 1.3** Surrounding the site on the East, South and West is arable farmland, the long drive is accessed directly off Laxfield Rd (B1116).

2.0 – Site History

- 2.0** Relevant history of prior applications goes back to 1989, where under application 0114/89/OL the previous owners applied for - CONVERSION OF BARN AND OUTBUILDING INTO THREE HOLIDAY UNITS FOR LETTING. The application was granted on Mon 19 Jun 1989.
- 2.1** Other minor applications relating to the main house or smaller outbuildings on the site are not relevant.

3.0 – Heritage

3.0 No designated heritage assets are within the proposed site. The nearest listed building is over 350m to the East, TITHE FARMHOUSE – grade II*.

3.1 These proposals have little to no impact on the listed building, any impacts in our opinion, would be positive.

4.0 – Contamination / Pollution

4.0 A Site Walkover was conducted in early 2022, by KFD Architecture. The purpose of the survey was to assess existing site and identify any potential causes of contamination, including a robust review of the physical condition of the surface to identify any existing areas of contamination.

4.1 There were no obvious areas of scarring or vegetation dieback to indicate any spillages, filled pits or buried materials on site. No signs of any fuel storage tanks were noted. No invasive plant species were noted.

4.2 The site no longer contains livestock, nor has it since the applicants purchased the property in 2000 and for many years prior to that. Since then, ALL the barns on site have been used solely as storage. The modern concrete block unit (outside of the proposed site area) was formerly used to house livestock.

5.0 – Flooding



5.0 The property and proposed site are located on higher ground. As can be seen from the images above (taken from Government Maps) the site is not at risk of flooding from either surface water or rivers / costal.

5.1 Drainage details will be reserved for future determination but would hope standard infiltration units can be proposed, localised rainwater butts could be included (with outflows to the main network) for sustainable measures.

6.0 – Ecology Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Survey

- 6.0 An Ecology Survey has been undertaken by Norfolk Wildlife Services, see statement accompanying this application.
- 6.1 No significant trees will need to be removed as part of these proposals and proposed hardstanding will be outside the Root Protection Area (RPA).

7.0 – Traffic and Highways

- 7.0 Proposals utilise the existing access off Laxfield Rd (B1116) which is designate as a 40mph speed limit. The existing access has been recently upgraded to a bound surface at 4m wide and 10m from the road edge.
- 7.1 There is sufficient space for turning at the top of the drive, close to the main dwelling. Turning and two parking spaces will also be provided for the new unit.
- 7.2 Laxfield Road is relatively straight along our proposed access position, and **good visibility and required visibility splay of 2.4m x 90m can be achieved in both directions.** Existing trees / hedges located in highways land will need to be removed and trimmed back, as can be seen on drawing 1025-02.
- 7.3 As the site entrance is just outside Fressingfield village 30mph zone, any cars coming past the access to the village should be slowing down and any cars leaving the village, coming towards the access, will have only just left a 30mph zone and therefore should be going slower than an average 40mph stretch of road.

8.0 – Sustainability

- 8.0 The applicants intend on incorporating an electric vehicle charging point at the new unit.
- 8.1 **This new development will certainly minimise dependence on fossil fuels and help towards the councils climate change objectives** by implementing renewable energy technologies, such as, Air Source Heat Pump, Photovoltaic Panels and/or Solar Heating. In addition, it is likely thermal values will exceed building control standards.

9.0 – Access to Services

- 9.0 The footpath accessing the main village of Fressingfield is approx. 200m from the main road access.
- 9.1 The village has two pub / restaurants, the Swan Inn and the Fox and Goose. Along with a general store and a sports and social club.

10.0 – Compliance with Local Plan

10.0 The site is located outside the settlement boundary of Fressingfield.

10.1 We believe the historic value of the buildings and site make the barn worthy of retention and re-use via conversion to a holiday let. The social and economic benefits, create an overall net positive on the surrounding area.

10.2 POLICY H9

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE CONVERSION AND CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER RURAL BUILDINGS WHOSE FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN ARE IN KEEPING WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS, WILL BE FAVOURABLY CONSIDERED, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- THE PROPOSED CONVERSION MUST RESPECT THE STRUCTURE, FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING AND RETAIN ANY IMPORTANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES. EXISTING OPENINGS SHOULD BE UTILISED WHEREVER PRACTICABLE AND NEW OPENINGS KEPT TO A MINIMUM.

10.3 Please see proposed plans and elevations accompanying this full planning application for full details of the proposed aesthetic. The main one-and-a-half storey historic barn structure will be retained as a full height space for recreational activities, associated with the holiday let and the applicant's personal use.

10.4 A structural appraisal has been submitted as part of this application, confirming the former agricultural unit is suitable for conversion.

- WHERE PROPOSED EXTENSIONS ARE ESSENTIAL, THEY SHOULD NOT DOMINATE THE ORIGINAL BUILDING IN EITHER SCALE, USE OF MATERIALS OR SITUATION. PROPOSED EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE APPEARANCE OR CHARACTER WHICH WARRANTS THE ORIGINAL BUILDING BEING RETAINED AS A FEATURE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

DOMESTIC FEATURES, SUCH AS PORCHES AND CHIMNEY STACKS, UNRELATED TO THE TRADITIONAL APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING WILL BE CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE.

THE CREATION OF A RESIDENTIAL CURTILAGE AROUND A NEWLY CONVERTED BUILDING SHOULD NOT IMPOSE ADVERSELY ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE.

10.5 The two single storey wings will house main bedrooms, bathrooms, and storage etc. The central space is to be fully filled in (as shown on floor plan) to help connect the internal space between the two wings.

10.6 As can be seen from drawing 1025-03, the section between the two wings was covered and historically used as the milking parlour. This section has been subject to damage in recent years, and the roof is partially collapsed.

However, we feel the central space being fully infilled will restore the barn back to its original form.

10.7 The proposals do not extend the building beyond its existing extents.

- THE EXTENT TO WHICH ANY RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION DETRACTS FROM THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING OR ITS RURAL SURROUNDINGS WILL BE TREATED AS A MATERIAL CONSIDERATION. I

10.8 POLICY HB5

DISTRICT PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL SUPPORT THE USE OF BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST IN A MANNER COMPATIBLE WITH THEIR CHARACTER AND SETTING.

THE CHANGE OF USE OF LISTED BUILDINGS OR OTHER BUILDINGS OF HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST WILL BE APPROVED IF THE PROPOSED USE PRESERVES THE BUILDING AND ITS SETTING WITHOUT UNDUE ALTERATION.

CHANGES OF USE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS SHOULD OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: -

- THE DESIGN OF ANY PROPOSED CONVERSION MUST RESPECT THE STRUCTURE, FORM, INTERNAL SPACES, AND MATERIALS OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING, EXISTING OPENINGS SHOULD BE UTILISED AND NEW OPENINGS KEPT TO A MINIMUM.

IMPORTANT HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES SHOULD BE RETAINED.

10.9 See proposed elevations drawing 1032-04 accompanying this application. The East elevation, facing the main house and drive, has openings kept to a minimum with the typical full height central glazed unit with two small windows each side.

10.10 The West facing infill section, between the two wings, will be heavily glazed to maximise the views and throw more natural daylight into the two wings and main barn.

- WHERE EXTENSIONS ARE CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO ACCOMMODATE THE PROPOSED USE, THEY SHOULD NOT DOMINATE THE ORIGINAL BUILDING BY VIRTUE OF THEIR SETTING, SCALE OR MATERIALS.

10.11 The proposed eaves and ridge heights will remain as existing, with the rear two wing sections and middle section single storey as existing therefore hidden by the main one-and-a-half storey section.

10.12 We believe proposals can be put forward which meet all the criteria set out in general planning policy and particularly Policy HB5 and H9.

11.0 **Scale**

11.0 The approximate proposed GIA of the development, as indicated on the proposed plans accompanying this planning application, are listed below:

Main Full Height Barn Recreational Area - Approx. **72m²**

The Single Storey Wings are Approx. **32m² EACH**

Central Section Shown Approx. **44m²**

Total Proposed GIA – 180m²

11.1 As mentioned above the external extents of the main barn and existing wings will not be extended and the overall heights will not be increased.

12.0 **Summary / Justification**

12.0 The existing main Threshing Barn has suffered in the recent years storms and the applicant is seeking to restore this historic building before further damage ensues.

12.1 The benefits of this scheme on the existing neighbouring dwellings and the wider surrounding area are net positive, the pre-application enquiry supports this statement, concluding the following: *'There is likely to be negligible impact to residential amenity due to the closest neighbouring property being the applicant's property and it is also a reasonable distance away for the impact to be minimal. It is also considered that the conversion causes no adverse impact on their landscape setting, wildlife habitats, nearby residential amenity or highway safety.'*

12.2 These proposals will add a good quality unit to the council's stock and provide economic benefits for the local area, albeit modest. Energy efficient and carbon reducing, the new building will fall in-line with the council's strategy for supporting sustainable development.

12.3 In addition to a holiday let, the applicant and their families will enjoy use of the recreational space for overnight / short stays, further enhancing their quality of life. The unit may even help to serve their future care needs.

12.4 The enquiry response from Mid Suffolk District Council was overall positive and based on the assessment of the sketch proposals, concluded that *'should a full application be made, the proposal for the conversion of the barn to a holiday let is likely to be considered acceptable in principle, having regard to local plan policy RT17 and H9. A Class Q prior approval application can also be applied for, subject to the criteria being met.'*