

Planning Statement

Commrooks Farm

Straight Drove

Coveney

Ely

CB6 2DR



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REPORT INFORMATION

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Date of Application	August 2023
Local Authority	Planning East Cambridgeshire District Council
Applicant	Andrea Pearman
Development Description	Siting and conversion of railway carriage for use as 2no. holiday lets, including change of use of land for tourism use (Retrospective)
Site Address	Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR
Our Reference	3992
Report Revision	V3.0

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR



Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Development Description	2
Site and Context	2
3. Planning Policy Context.....	3
Introduction	3
Local Policies.....	3
Site Designations	3
National Planning Policy Guidance.....	3
4. Assessment	5
Principle of Development.....	5
Design and Appearance.....	7
Impact on Amenities.....	7
Highway Safety	8
5. Conclusion.....	9

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR



1. Introduction

1.1. This This Planning Statement has been prepared by Parker Planning Services Ltd on behalf of Andrea Pearman (The Applicant) to accompany a full planning application for retrospective planning permission for the siting of a of a railway carriage converted into 2no. holiday lets as well as change of use of the land for tourism purposes.

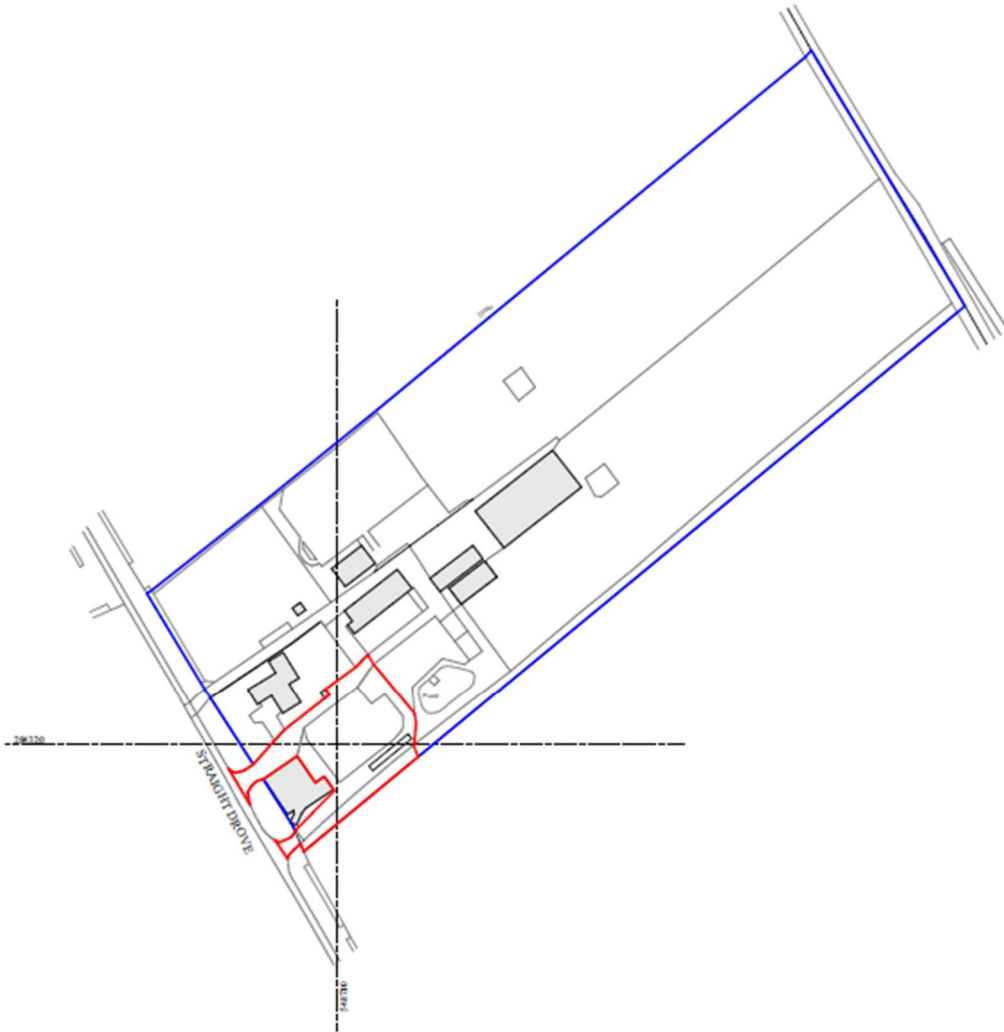


Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

1.2. The statement seeks to provide an assessment of the proposal against local and national planning policy and build a case to justify its approval.

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR

2. Development Description

Site and Context

2.1. The proposal relates to an application for full retrospective planning permission for the siting of a railway carriage and conversion into 2no. holiday lets and change of use of land for tourism purposes. The site area is approximately 0.1 hectares in size.

2.2. The site is located at Commrooks Farm, which is situated North of the main settlement of Coveney by approximately 1.77km and 5.36km to the larger settlement of Ely further afield (both distances as the crow flies). The proximity of the site to these settlements, particularly the city of Ely, makes it a sustainable location for tourism development.

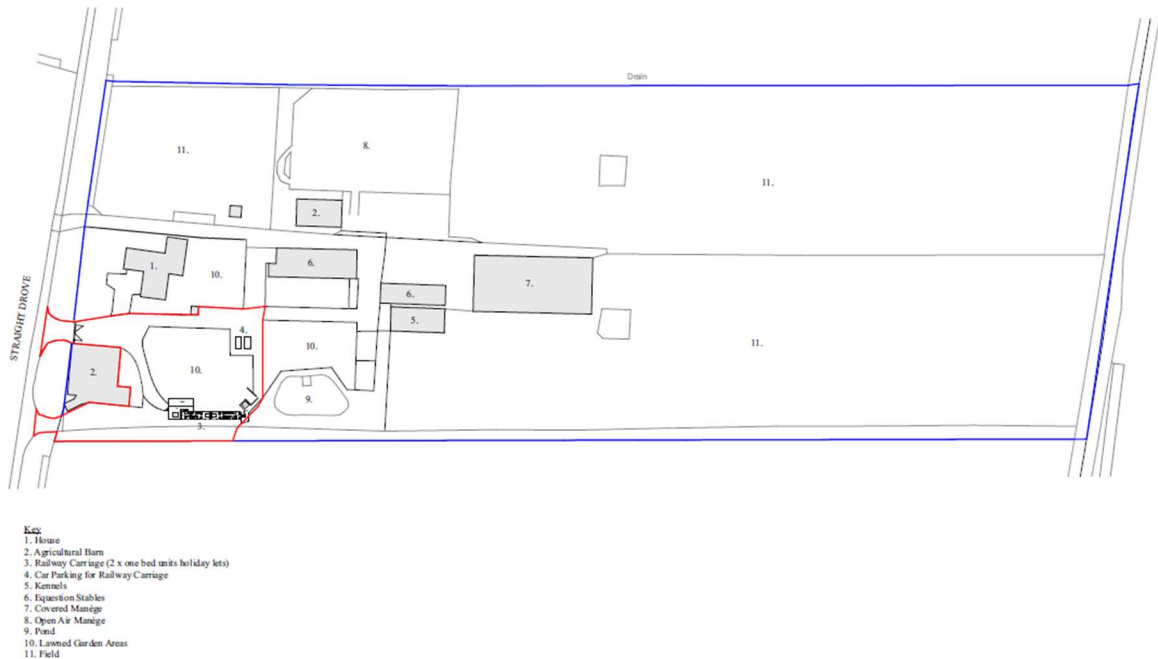


Figure 2 – Proposed Site Layout Plan

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR

3. Planning Policy Context

Introduction

3.1. In making this application, consideration has been given to relevant local and national planning policy and guidance.

Local Policies

3.2. The site is located within East Cambridgeshire District Council and as such any development must account for the development strategies and plans in place. The Council have in place a Local Development Framework incorporating:

- East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Adopted April 2015)

3.3. The following policies from the Local Plan are considered relevant to the determination of this proposal:

- Policy GROWTH 5 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Policy EMP 7 – Tourist facilities and visitor attractions
- Policy EMP 7 – Tourist Accommodation
- Policy ENV 2 - Design

Site Designations

3.4. The site is located in the village of Coveney, albeit some distance away from the main built form of the village. Coveney is identified as a Small Village in the local plan document. However, the site has good links to the high tier settlement of Ely, which offers a wide range of services and facilities.

3.5. The site is not located within a protected area such as Greenbelt, Conservation Area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, it is located on the edge of Flood Zone 2.

National Planning Policy Guidance

3.6. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 and National Planning Practice Guidance are both material planning considerations. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied while the NPPG sets out Government guidance in relation to planning related issues in England.

3.7. The relevant sections from the National Planning Policy Framework include:

- Section 02: Achieving sustainable development.
- Section 04: Decision-making.
- Section 06: Building a strong, competitive economy.
- Section 08: Promoting healthy and safe communities.

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR

- Section 09: Promoting sustainable transport.
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places.
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR



4. Assessment

Principle of Development

- 4.1. The proposal seeks retrospective planning permission for the siting of a of a railway carriage converted into 2no. holiday lets and change of use of the land for tourism purposes. Policies EMP 8 and COM 1 of the Local Plan is considered to be relevant to the principle of development in this instance.
- 4.2. Policy EMP 8 of the Local Plan states that proposals for new tourism accommodation will be supported where:
- The need for the additional accommodation can be justified.
 - Proposals are located within, or well related to, an existing settlement boundary, or on sites where existing service providers require additional space to expand.
 - There is no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area or natural assets.
 - The proposal is of an appropriate scale and nature relative to its location, and would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount and nature of traffic generated.
- 4.3. It is also considered that paragraph 84c) of the NPPF (2021) is relevant to the principle of development. It states that planning policies and decisions should enable:
- Sustainable rural tourism and leisure development which respect the character of the countryside.
- 4.4. In terms of Policy EMP 8, the proposal is for a single carriage which is placed on a length of railway track on site as shown in the photo below:

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR



- 4.5. As can be seen in the photo below, the eastern boundary of the site consists of well-established natural planting that offers significant screening from wider views on the landscape. Additionally, there is an existing building situated at the front of the site fronting onto the public highway that also offers a significant amount of screening of the carriage from public vantage points in this direction.
- 4.6. As highlighted previously, the application site is in a relatively rural location, approximately 5km from the City of Ely, approximately a 15-minute drive. In the context of tourism development, it is not considered that this is an unacceptable distance to travel for attractions, services and facilities. This is particularly the case if the purpose of the holiday is to stay in a rural location.
- 4.7. In this regard, it should be noted that the benefits of the location for development is to offer semi-rural location for visitors to stay. The site would appeal to people with an equine interest given the presence of horses on site. Additionally, the site offers a number of attractive walks in the surrounding area that would be appealing to people wishing to stay there.
- 4.8. It should be noted that the applicant wishes to provide high quality unique tourism accommodation and offers the opportunity for 'Horsie Holidays', but this is purely limited to visitors bringing their own horse and keeping it within the Paddock Land adjacent to the Railway Carriage (or in unusual situations whereby ground conditions are unsuitable or where the grass has been eaten, the applicant will make an alternative area of land available for visitors to keep their horse). Given the scale of the tourism accommodation on offer, the visitors and Horsie Holidays will be on quite a limited and low-key basis. The guests with their own horses will then be able to ride and practice in the paddock and go out on suitable walks and hacks with their own horse.
- 4.9. One half of the Railway Carriage is dog friendly and given the land on site and around the area, this is a highly attractive area for people to bring their dogs. There is limited accommodation available nearby for dogs.

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR

- 4.10. In terms of additional information in relation to the suitability of the location for tourism use, it should be noted that the application site is directly opposite RSPB land and the Welney Wetlands ([Plan your visit | WWT](#)) and Visitor Centre are located nearby, which is a large attraction for those interested in walking and the outdoors.
- 4.11. There has also been a significant amount of interest in the accommodation and a number of stays already, prior to the submission of the application. This serves to highlight that there is a market and a need for this type of accommodation.
- 4.12. On this basis, it can be demonstrated that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy EMP 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.
- 4.13. In addition to these considerations, the 'fall back position' is a material planning consideration. The Town and Country Planning Act and the Caravan sites and Control of Development Act 1960 allows site licences to be issued and do not require planning permission, providing some limited conditions are met. In these situations sites are allowed to operate without planning permission being required and allow up to 5 touring caravans and camping on site, providing a licence is obtained through the caravan club. As such a similar (or even larger) tourism offering could be achieved on this site without planning permission being required.

Design and Appearance

- 4.14. The design merits of the proposal have been designed having regard to Policy ENV 2 of the Local Plan.
- 4.15. It is considered that the proposal is sensitive to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of a development that does not introduce a completely permanent structure into the landscape. Whilst it is not the intention that the carriage is moved, if a time arises where the development has served its purpose and is no longer required, the carriage could easily be removed from site, therefore leaving no impact at all on the landscape.
- 4.16. The nature of the carriage is that it reuses an existing structure that would otherwise be neglected and likely fall into a state of disrepair. In being converted into a holiday let, the carriage is allowed to be retained in good condition and to be re-used for an economically beneficial purpose.
- 4.17. Further, it is considered that the design and appearance of the proposal is respectful of the character and setting that it finds itself in.
- 4.18. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy ENV 2 of the Local Plan in terms of design and appearance.

Impact on Amenities

- 4.19. The potential amenity impacts associated with the development would primarily relate to noise disturbance and potential for light pollution.
- 4.20. The siting of the development is a significant distance from any other properties and as such, it is considered very unlikely that noise generated from the development by traffic movements

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR

of the general occupation of the holiday lets would result in any severe or detrimental impacts on neighbouring properties.

4.21. This distance from any other properties also means that any light pollution from the development would cause undue disturbance on neighbours.

4.22. In this regard, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any amenity impacts that would be detrimental to neighbouring properties and would subsequently warrant the refusal of the application.

Highway Safety

4.23. The site is served via an existing access off Straight Drove. The access has been constructed to as high standard and currently serves an existing residential dwelling. Further to this, the access historically served a working pig farm and could lawfully return to this use.

4.24. The access point benefits from perfect visibility in both directions and there is also ample space on site to accommodate the parking requirements of 2no. additional holiday let units being used concurrently.

4.25. In terms of the proposed development, there is a proposed increase by 2no. units. It is not considered that this would result in a significant increase on traffic movements to and from the site. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would have a significant impact on the highway safety qualities of the site and surrounding road network.

4.26. In terms of the requirements of paragraphs 110 & 111 of the NPPF (2021), the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of highway safety.

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. To conclude, this proposal is for retrospective planning permission for the siting of a railway carriage and conversion into 2no. holiday lets.
- 5.2. The proposal represents an opportunity to create sustainable, rural development for tourism. The site is considered to be sustainable on account of its relative proximity to the city of Ely which provides a variety of services, facilities and attractions.
- 5.3. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all technical aspects such as design, amenity impact and highway safety & parking in accordance with local and national planning policy.
- 5.4. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and should accordingly be recommended for approval on this basis.

Planning Statement for:

Commrooks Farm, Straight Drove, Coveney, Ely, CB6 2DR

