

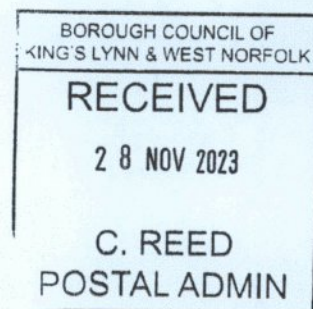
# Planning, Design and Access Statement

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The Old Vicarage, Ely Road, Hilgay PE38 0JN



**Proposed conversion of existing stable buildings to form  
two holiday lets and ancillary facilities**



## **Site Location and Characteristics**

The Old Vicarage is located on the eastern side of Ely Road at the southern side of Hilgay village. The property includes a significant area of landscaped garden to its southern side and which extends 130m southwards from the main dwelling. To the south-eastern corner of these grounds there are located some single-storey outbuildings which have until recently accommodated the Applicant's own horses and now provide general storage space, and overnight bedding/accommodation and feeding stations for the Applicant's chickens and ducks.

The former stable buildings are of single-storey construction, built of brick and concrete block with concrete pantiles to the roof. The stables abut farmland to the east and south, and The Old Vicarage's garden land to the north and west. There are no existing residential properties in the near vicinity of the site.

The site is located within an established landscaped setting with mature trees situated to the south and west of the site.

The site is accessed from Ely Road to the west, via an unadopted track which provides access to nearby farmland and serves Lodge Farm to the south-east.

### **The Proposal**

It is proposed to convert the longest stable block into two units of holiday accommodation. Each holiday unit incorporates a smaller adjacent stable building to be used for ancillary accommodation (utility/laundry-drying room, garden furniture/barbecue storage, and secure and weatherproof cycle parking etc) for holiday guests' use.

The buildings are constructed of buff brick and concrete blocks to the facing elevations with concrete pantiles to the roof. Existing stable doorways comprise typical 'split' side-hung timber doors, with additional small, high-level, windows positioned to each stall in between (main building only). The area between the three buildings of the complex comprises a concreted yard.

Access to the holiday units is shown from a new driveway off the private track to the south of the site and in the position shown on the accompanying plans, with parking provision in accordance with Highways Authority standards (minimum of 4 car parking spaces with associated vehicle manoeuvring area). The new driveway into the site would be located to the immediate west of the stables complex, between two existing mature oak trees on the southern boundary of the site. The new access would comprise a low-key track into the site, would be a no-dig construction with the adjacent boundary ditch culverted at the crossing point.

A tree survey of the site accompanies the proposal.

### **Planning History**

16/00469/F: Proposed conversion and extension to stable to form dwelling: REFUSED 10.06.16

15/00139/PREAPP: Proposed dwelling: Likely to REFUSED 29.10.15

07/01289/F: Demolition of existing and construction of new stable block: APPROVED 26.09.07

2/01/0572/F: Two storey extension to dwelling (amended design): APPROVED 08.06.01

2/00/0830/F: Extension to dwelling (The Old Vicarage): APPROVED 30.06.00

### **Policy Considerations**

The Old Vicarage is located at the southernmost end of the village of Hilgay, the dwelling and its immediate curtilage being located within the settlement boundary as shown in the development plan. However, further land associated with The Old Vicarage and used as garden extends some 130m further southwards, beyond the defined settlement boundary of the village: Accordingly, this extended garden and the application site, are located within an area designated as countryside and accordingly are subject to countryside protection policies contained within the adopted development plan for the area.

Within the Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP), Hilgay is designated as a 'Rural Village' within the Settlement Hierarchy. The village itself contains few services, although there are some employment opportunities, a village school, small general store,

church, pub and small hotel. The village has a regular bus service to King's Lynn and Downham Market, and the site lies close to the route of the A10, a principal route in the strategic road network and a 'corridor of movement'.

The following planning documents and their associated policies are considered relevant to the consideration of this proposal:-

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The NPPF emphasises the presumption in favour of sustainable development with three key objectives: Economic, Social and Environmental.

Good design is considered to be a key aspect of sustainable development, and should contribute to making better places for people, high quality and inclusive, and well integrated in the local environment.

Planning decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside, thereby supporting a prosperous rural economy (para 84).

#### **Local Development Plan -**

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Core Strategy (2011)

- **Policy CS01** - sets out the spatial strategy for new development within the Borough, encouraging sustainable development within the settlements and fostering sustainable communities with an appropriate range of facilities.
- **Policy CS02** – Settlement hierarchy: Hilary is designated as a Rural Village within the settlement hierarchy for the Borough.
- **Policy CS06** – Development in rural areas: Small scale tourism opportunities will be supported in rural areas to sustain the local economy in sustainable locations and that are not detrimental to the natural environment.
- **Policy CS08** – Sustainable development: All new development in the borough should be of the highest quality design and should enhance community wellbeing by being accessible, inclusive, locally distinctive and by promoting healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy CS10** – The Economy: Smaller scale tourism opportunities will also be supported in rural areas to sustain the local economy, providing these are in sustainable locations and are not detrimental to our valuable natural environment. Such proposals should be located in or adjacent to our villages and towns, be of a high standard of design and would not be detrimental to the landscape.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) (SADMP)

- **Policy DM1** – Presumption in favour of sustainable development reflecting that contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- **Policy DM2** – Development Boundaries: Areas outside these development boundaries will be limited to, inter alia, tourism facilities (under Core Strategy Policy Cs10).
- **Policy DM15** – Environment, Design and Amenity – New development should respond sensitively and sympathetically to the local setting and pattern of adjacent streets including spaces between buildings through high quality design and use of materials.

## Planning Considerations

The application seeks permission for the change of use of existing stable buildings to two holiday lets with ancillary facilities associated with the holiday use.

The larger, main stable block, currently accommodating 3 large stalls, a tack room, two smaller stables and incidental store, is positioned on a north-south axis along the south-eastern boundary of the site. To the front (west) is a concrete yard area, with two detached smaller stable buildings immediately adjacent.

The larger main stable building is constructed of buff brickwork with concrete pantiles to the dual-pitched roof. The southern detached smaller building comprises a mixture of pale red brick with timber weatherboard to its upper elevations and concrete pantiles, again, to the roof. The last small block is located to the north-western part of the quadrant of buildings and yard, and is constructed of concrete block with concrete interlocking tiles to the roof area, which provides canopied overhang to the north-facing stable doors' elevation, and an open-sided lean-to on its southern side, currently providing hay/feed storage.

### Principle of development

In terms of the *principle of development*, the site lies within an area designated as countryside in the adopted development plan. Accordingly, protection policies apply which seek to prevent inappropriate and unjustified new development.

As set out under the previous section, the development plan allows for certain forms of development which may be considered appropriate within rural areas, including appropriate tourism purposes, and subject to the development adhering to and complying with:-

- sustainable development principles;
- appropriate design and landscape impact;
- safe access and highway conditions;
- minimise flood risk;
- contribute to the local economy; and
- appropriate in amenity terms.

Both the NPPF and the development plan require new development proposals to accord with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy (The Economy) indicates that the Council will support 'smaller scale' tourism opportunities in the Borough's rural areas to support the local economy subject to these being situated in sustainable locations and not being detrimental to the natural environment. Accordingly, such proposals should be located in or adjacent to settlements, be of a high standard of design, not detract from the landscape, and be capable of being retained for that tourism-related use.

It is considered that national and local planning policies, in respect of the reuse of existing buildings for tourism proposals, are broadly supportive of the proposal based on sustainable development principles.

### Visual Impact

The application site lies outside the settlement boundary of Hilgay (SADMP Inset Plan), but close to the built-up area. This rural location already accommodates the buildings subject of this application, and which are under-utilised for their original and recent function as stabling for the Applicant's own horses.

Although the site is not located within any national or locally designated important landscape area, the impact of the proposal on the countryside is a material planning consideration in the assessment of planning applications. In terms of visual impact, the single-storey buildings' complex is low-key and well screened by existing hedgerow and mature deciduous and evergreen vegetation. Whilst some Ash trees have recently been removed as a result of Ash die-back, remaining Oak trees to the southern and western boundaries are to be retained and provide a natural verdant backdrop and setting to the application site.

Accordingly, there are very limited public views of the site due to existing vegetation screening the buildings and the stabling being low-key structures in their own right.

Similarly, in terms of landscape impact, the existing building are not prominent in views of the site within this existing rural setting, and the proposed change of use of the existing buildings to a low-key tourism use would not increase their impact on the countryside, nor detract from the rural character of the area.

Alterations to the existing buildings have intentionally been kept low-key as part of the proposal: Existing stable door openings have in the main been retained with appropriate fenestration in order to respect the rural character of both the buildings and the local environment.

### Layout and Access

The layout and access arrangements for the proposed holiday accommodation are as shown on the accompanying plans. Access is proposed from the private roadway at the southern side of the site, and which meets Ely Road, some 44m to the west.

The access point joins Ely Road outside the village's 30mph speed limit sign which is positioned approximately 80m to the north of the junction. Visibility in both directions is good: There is a pedestrian footpath along the eastern side of Ely Road for the full length of the Applicant's property, up to the point of access of the site with Ely Road. To the south, there is a soft verge adjacent Ely Road, but the road is reasonably straight, and is clear of obstruction to views at this point.



View from access along Ely Road northwards



View from same point southwards

A new entrance into the site is to be created from the access track to the south, as shown on the accompanying site layout plan. This would be created using a 'no-dig' method of construction and would comprise a geotextile grid with a shallow layer of permeable shingle over, solely for access provision into the site. The position of this access point is broadly equidistant from two mature oak trees located along the southern boundary of the site.

### Flood Risk

In flood risk terms, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 with regard to tidal and fluvial flooding (Source: Environment Agency flood zone Maps): As the proposal seeks permission for use of existing stables for holiday accommodation, the land use vulnerability falls within a 'More Vulnerable' classification (App 3, NPPF). Under table 2 of the NPPG, the proposed use of the land for holiday let purposes within Flood Zone 1 is deemed to be appropriate and the Exception Test need not be applied.

The SFRA for the Borough does not indicate that the site is at risk from reservoir flooding or surface water drainage issues in this area.

### Transport Issues

The application site is located adjacent to the village of Hilgay with good access to local main roads, with the A10 road (King's Lynn to Cambridge) located 400m west of the site, and links to the wider highway network beyond. The site also has ready access to local public transport infrastructure, with mainline railway stations at Downham Market, 4km to the north, and Ely, 18km to the south. The site is also on a regular bus service route (Lynx 37) providing access to Downham Market and King's Lynn.

The site is additionally located within a central position for visiting locations such as Ely and Cambridge to the south, as well as other areas of interest such as Sandringham, Castle Rising and the North Norfolk coast.

Hilgay itself offers accessible, local-based attractions in the form of local riverside walks (Ouse Valley and Fen Rivers Ways and River Wissey Footpath), cycling, horse-riding, bird-watching and general access to the surrounding countryside and associated activities.

### Amenity Issues

The site is located away from nearby residential/built development and is therefore unlikely to adversely impact the amenities of any residential occupier in the vicinity of the site.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposal would have any material impact on amenity grounds by virtue of noise, disturbance, overlooking, loss of privacy or light pollution.

### The Economy

As will be noted from the foregoing, the village of Hilgay is limited in terms of the provision of services and local facilities, as is the case for many rural settlements in the Borough. However, the provision of two holiday lets to the immediate south of the village is likely to generate some benefit to the local economy by virtue of incidental use of nearby facilities, local interest visits around the area, use of public transport, social trips etc and would thereby contribute to the local economy of the area.

Additionally, in overseeing and managing the proposed holiday units, local employment would be generated in the form of the regular cleaning, servicing and maintenance of the holiday lets, meet-

and-greet arrangements etc. again providing some local economic benefits. The Applicant, resident at the host property, would oversee the administration and management of the holiday let operations and would maintain a register of visitors, their permanent address and duration of stay.

The provision of a broad range of holiday units is encouraged within both National and local planning policy to address different user requirements. The proposal for holiday accommodation in this location, away from the seasonally-busy, coastal holiday locations, would provide a sympathetic and potentially more attractive form of quiet rural holiday retreat. The works of conversion would meet with Part M Building Regulation requirements and would be accessible to all visitors.

### **Concluding Comments**

On the basis of the above it is considered that this proposal to provide low-key holiday accommodation within existing, under-utilised stable buildings would accord with policy requirements at both National and local level.

The development would provide holiday accommodation away from the main tourist locations but still situated within a sustainable location, accessible by public transport and the wider transport network, with ready access to local facilities, services and visitor destinations, thereby bolstering the local economy.

As the stable buildings already exist and the alterations proposed as part of the conversion works are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the buildings, the site itself and its verdant setting, the proposal would not undermine the character and appearance of the countryside and would be fully in keeping with this rural location.

In highway terms, the sustainability credentials of the site have been outlined above: The proposal for two holiday lets represents a low-key use which would not generate significant vehicle movements nor adversely affect highway safety.

For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposal represents a sustainable form of development which is supported by National and locally adopted policy and accordingly should be approved.

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