

Turnbridge Farmhouse  
116 Low Road, Burwell

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## Heritage, Design and Access Statement

Revision 0 (29 January 2024)



## Introduction

This statement has been prepared to support an application for Householder planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the following proposed works at Turnbridge Farmhouse:

- Single storey rear extension to form new garden room
- New clay peg tile roof and alterations to roof structure
- Replacement windows and external doors
- Removal of concrete block first floor walls
- Installation of new oak staircase
- Installation of new timber stud walls
- Installation of new limecrete ground floor and underfloor heating
- Repairs to cast stone window surrounds
- Replacement of rainwater goods
- New gravel driveway finish and new driveway entrance area
- Extended stable block building (outside of listed curtilage)

## The Applicant

The applicants are Mr & Mrs Thomas, who recently bought Turnbridge Farmhouse and intend to make it their family home. They have been liaising directly with the Conservation Officer.

## Identifying the Heritage Asset

Turnbridge Farmhouse, 116 Low Road, Burwell is a Grade II listed building of c. 17<sup>th</sup> century (list entry number: 1161016), first listed 31 January 1984.

The listing details are as follows:

*Farmhouse, early and late C17. Originally the manor house of St Omars manor. Two storeys and attics. Early C17 clunch cross-wing to north with quoins and parapet to west rebuilt in small local, late C17 bricks; flint foundations and brick band to stepped clunch plinth; some original ovolo mullioned casement windows, and C19 or modern replacements. Range to south late C17, small local bricks coursed in English bond; brick plinth, sawtooth eaves cornice and parapet gable to south; roof raised in C19 on front elevation; windows sealed or with later, C19 replacements, one original casement with lattice lights in south gable. Two fine, square stacks with sawtooth cornice and one, or two blind round-headed arches on each face. Stack to right hand behind ridge has lower courses of clunch. Front elevation has three, three-light first floor casement windows, and three ground floor casement windows. Cross wing has two stone mullioned three-light casement windows. Main entrance to left of centre has brick pilasters supporting a projecting hood of three recessed brick courses with a lead cover. It is possible that the cross-wing was the parlour wing to an earlier hall replaced late in C17 by the south range. Interior has large sealed cooking hearth and exposed floor frame. RCHM, North-East Cambs, p.35, mon. 41 Lucas C. The Fenman's World, p.101, 1930 Pevsner. Buildings of England Series, p.312*

(sourced from Historic England, [www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk))

Please note that the heritage asset appears to be titled incorrectly as “Turnbridge Farmhouse”, and is known on the deeds and historical maps as “*Tunbridge Farmhouse*”.

## Planning Background

There are no recent planning applications associated with Turnbridge Farmhouse. It is not known whether any works have been carried out to the building since its listing in 1984.

## Relevant Planning Policy

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted 2015 (as amended 2023) states:

### **Policy HOU 8: Extension and replacement of dwellings in the countryside**

*Proposals which seek to extend or replace an existing dwelling in the countryside will only be supported where:*

- *The extension to an existing dwelling is in keeping with the height, scale and character of the original dwelling and does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the locality or its countryside setting.*
- *The replacement dwelling is of a scale and design which is sensitive to its countryside setting, with its height being similar to that of the original dwelling. If an alternative height is proposed, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that the scheme exhibits exceptionally high quality of design and enhances the character and appearance of the locality.*
- *The proposal is within the existing curtilage.*
- *The residential use of the dwelling has not been abandoned.*
- *Proposals accord with Policy ENV 2 on design and other relevant Local Plan policies; and*
- *Proposals have regard to maximising carbon neutrality (see Policy ENV 4 in Chapter 6).*

Whilst Turnbridge Farmhouse lies within the large village of Burwell, the host dwelling occupies a site on the edge of the village, overlooking open countryside to the west. Particular consideration ought to be given to the impact of any extension.

It is considered that by virtue of the location to the rear of the property, the scale of the proposed extension, the quality of the proposed materials to be used and

its distance from the nearest public right of way, that the extension would be in keeping with requirements of Policy HOU 8.

The Local Plan also states:

### **Policy ENV 12: Listed Buildings**

*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. Proposals to extend, alter or change the use of a Listed Building will only be permitted where they would:*

- *Preserve or enhance the significance of the building and not involve substantial or total loss of historic fabric.*
- *Be compatible with the character, architectural integrity and setting of the Listed Building; and*
- *Facilitate the long-term preservation of the building.*

*Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where they would:*

- *Preserve or enhance those elements that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset.*
- *Not materially harm the immediate or wider setting of the Listed Building. This setting may extend well beyond the immediate building curtilage and may include an extensive street scene or a wider urban design context, especially when the proposal is within a Conservation Area; and*
- *Facilitate the long-term preservation of the building*

***“Preserve or enhance the significance of the building and not involve substantial or total loss of historic fabric.”***

It is considered that the proposed works to the listed building will preserve its significance for generations to come. Much of the work proposed consists of much-needed repair work where either the building, or parts of it, have degraded over time or been damaged by fire. Other parts have been subject to ill-conceived and poorly designed alterations which have fundamentally affected the structural integrity of the building. These will be addressed as part of the works, thereby restoring the building and making it safe for the future.

***“Be compatible with the character, architectural integrity and setting of the Listed Building.”***

Arguably the most significant proposed alterations are the replacement roof structure and the replacement windows and doors. The roof structure is currently unsafe – further detail on this can be found in the engineer’s report and drawings. Given the extent of work required, there is also an opportunity to replace the relatively modern slate roof with a clay peg tile finish.

***“Facilitate the long-term preservation of the building.”***

The removal of clinker block first floor walls, the repair/replacement of roof structure and the replacement of rotten timber lintels will have a positive effect on the long-term preservation of the building. The replacement of rotten and poor-performing single-glazed windows and doors, of which there are multiple mis-matched variations throughout the existing building, will also improve the long-term preservation of the building.

***“Preserve or enhance those elements that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset.”***

Turnbridge Farmhouse is a large dwelling, but set well back from Low Road, barely advertising its relative importance as a heritage asset. The new driveway and gates to the frontage will make a positive addition to the street scene, improve and reinforce the boundary line to Low Road, and quietly indicate the presence of one of the village’s historic buildings.

The access drive will also replicate an historic arrangement, which included a turning area to the frontage.

## Proposals

In addition to the following written summary of proposed works, please refer to the Schedule of Works document (SOW), including window and door schedule, which are accompanied with photographs.

### 1.0 New ground floor finish and underfloor heating

- 1.1 It is proposed that a new limecrete floor and underfloor heating are installed throughout the ground floor. The floor build-up will be in accordance with recommended Historic England guidance, and engineer recommendations to ensure that breathability is maintained.

### 2.0 Replacement Windows and Doors

- 2.1 The SOW outlines which windows and doors are to be retained and refurbished, and which ones are to be replaced. Generally, where windows are in poor condition or out of keeping with the overall character of the property, they will be replaced with new.
- 2.2 Casement windows will be replaced with double-glazed timber casement windows with glazing bars, unless the windows are of a size and/or proportion that would make glazing bars inappropriate. Glazing will be 4mm glass, 4mm cavity, 4mm glass. Detailed drawings will be provided by the joiners for approval.
- 2.3 Metal “Crittall-style” windows in cast stone surrounds will be replaced with black slim-framed aluminium windows. The stonework will be repaired by a specialist.

### 3.0 Roof structure and finish

- 3.1 The existing roof has been altered in the past without due consideration to the distribution of its load and lateral forces, resulting in an asymmetrical roof of questionable structural integrity.
- 3.2 Significant parts of the roof have been badly damaged by fire, and other areas appear to have been cut away and altered in an ad hoc fashion, resulting in further question marks as to its safety.
- 3.3 A structural engineer has inspected the property and their recommendations for repair and replacement are outline in the SOW appendices.
- 3.4 The roof finish is currently a mixture of clay peg tiles and slates. It is considered that the peg tiles are more in keeping with the appearance of the original roof, and a suitable replacement has been found. It is proposed that the finish be replaced with a like-for-like tile throughout, thereby restoring its appearance and providing long-term preservation of the roof.

### 4.0 First floor structure and walls

- 4.1 The structural has noted that the concrete clinker block walls built onto the timber first floor structure has resulted in significant deflection and cracking of some of the original oak beams. It is considered important the heavy concrete walls are removed and replaced with lighter weight timber stud walls.
- 4.2 The significant rebuild of the first floor structure will provide an opportunity to make some alterations to the layout to accommodate a more modern configuration of bedrooms, including the installation of an ensuite space to the main bedroom.

### 5.0 Staircase

- 5.1 A new oak staircase is proposed to provide safe, fire-protected access from the first and second floors. Works will be carried out in conjunction with the repairs and improvements to the first floor structure and stud walls.
- 5.2 The existing stair is thought to be of stained pine and cuts across one of the lead-light window to the rear of the dwelling. The new stair will be of more appropriate material and will be reconfigured so that the lead-light window is not obscured.

### 6.0 Extension

- 6.1 A new, glazed garden room is proposed to the rear of the property, providing better connection and views of the rear garden. It will be finished with a zinc roof and a brick panel to echo the walls of the house, but will otherwise be understated add utilise a "light touch" in its design.

### 7.0 Driveway and access

- 7.1 A new gate and brick piers, along with post and rail fence and hedging to match the neighbour property is proposed to the frontage. This will provide improved security as well as demarcate the property and its entrance on Low Road.

In addition to the works on the listed building, the applicants seek permission for a new single storey building adjacent to the existing stables, providing a covered storage area and stable office, served by the existing access. This building is outside of the listed curtilage.

## Assessment of Impact and Mitigation

The heritage significance of Turnbridge Farmhouse, 116 Low Road, Burwell lies primarily in its external features and building fabric, including the clunch walls and brick quoins, ovolo profiled stone mullion window surrounds and impressive chimney stacks. These original and striking features, along with original latticed lead-light windows will be retained and unaffected by the works.

Areas affected by the proposed works – other than internal alterations which are generally being carried out on non-original, inappropriate or structurally damaging fabric – will be visible on the elevations and due care will be taken to limit any impact, other positive improvement, on the existing fabric. New windows will bring a visual harmony currently lacking due to the various additions that have been implemented over the years and left to degrade. The roof will be unified as a single material, appropriate and in keeping with the original roof.

## Design

The new extension proposed for the rear of Turnbridge Farmhouse will be of modest scale, constructed largely of glass walls and standing seam zinc roof to keep the roof height and pitch to a minimum. A single panel of brickwork will echo the walls of the original dwelling, set off from the clunch wall with a glass panel. The extension will be visually light-weight and subservient against the mass and scale of the host dwelling.

The proposed stable block extension will be of traditional construction and appearance, using a mixture of buff brickwork and shiplap timber cladding below a tiled roof. The building will be of an agricultural feel, belonging to the garden and surrounding grounds – outside of the curtilage of the listed building – and will be screened from view by intervening foliage and tree cover.

## Access

Access into the dwelling will be unaltered, save for the new gates and driveway to the frontage.

It may be possible to incorporate a flush threshold across the sliding door of the new extension, thereby providing wheelchair access into the ground floor. From there, all of the main facilities will be accessible and on a single level.

## Conclusion

Whilst it is recognised that significant works are proposed to the interior of the listed building, much of this work is required to address structural safety concerns and fire protection. A structural engineer and building control inspector have both visited the property, along with the Conservation Officer, to assess the work proposed and there is a shared recognition that much of the internal layout has been altered over time, often in a way that has been detrimental to the character and longevity of the original building.

All of the work to the exterior will be carried out to improve the long-term preservation of the building, as well as improve its appearance and performance as a viable family home.

The proposals respect the nature and character of the original building and all work will be undertaken sensitively, with specialist involvement where required to ensure that repairs are carried out carefully and in a way that brings long-term preservation to the building.