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**BARN AT "THE OLD BAKERY", MAIN STREET, FLINTHAM, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG23 5LA**

**Heritage Statement to accompany proposed conversion as a residential annexe.**



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**Cover illustration:** General view of the front (west) elevation (see also **Photo 1**).

## INTRODUCTION

1. The writer was commissioned to prepare a heritage statement in association with a scheme to convert a Grade II listed outbuilding of The Old Bakery as a self-contained residential annexe. A detailed site visit was made on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

2. This statement is submitted in accordance with paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF), which says:

“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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

## THE HERITAGE ASSETS

3. The principal heritage asset is the building itself, which became Grade II listed on 14/11/1986, as did many other of the 38 listed buildings in the village. A lesser number of buildings, including the Grade I listed Hall, had been listed in 1972. The Church, also Grade I listed, was listed in 1965, but is omitted from the list of listed buildings in the current Conservation Area appraisal.

4. The list description of the Barn is a simple one, as follows:

“Barn at The Old Bakehouse. G[roup] V[alue Grade] II. Barn. 1778. For J. Bettinson. Brick with pantile roof. Rebated eaves. Single storey, 3 bays. To left, C20 garage with pair of doors. To right, 3 breathers. To right, a double and a single door with segmental heads. To right again, barred oval opening and a stable door. Above, to left, 3 breathers. To its right, datestone inscribed "J. Bettin [son]. 1778". Interior has half-height loft and mid C19 kingpost roof. 2 diamond breathers in north gable”.

5. Two other buildings at the property are also Grade II, i.e. the house and an adjoining pump and trough. They became listed at the same time as the barn, and their list descriptions are as follows:

“G.V. II Water pump. Late C18 with C20 wooden case. Lead pump has straight iron handle with oval knob. Square stone trough on brick plinth.”

“G.V. II Farmhouse. 1778. Brick with pantile roof. First floor band, coggled eaves, coped gables. 3 gable and single side wall stacks. 2 storeys, plus garrets, 3 bays. L-plan with 2 storey lean-to rear addition. c.1980. Windows are casements with segmental rubbed brick heads. Street front has central reeded timber doorcase with curved brackets, open pediment and fanlight. Flanked by single casements. Above, 3 casements, the central one larger. North west front has to left, 2 C20 oriel windows. To their right, 2 small casements and larger casements with segmental heads. Above, to left, a casement and a Yorkshire sash. Above again, a garret casement. South east gable has datestone to left, inscribed "JB 177-". To right, louvre door

and casement. Above again, garret casement. Rear wing has C20 fenestration. Above to left, C18 glazing bar casement.”

6. The other heritage asset concerned is the Flintham conservation area, within which numerous other listed buildings are “nested”. There is a dense concentration of listed buildings in the village, of which the three at the Old Bakery are a part. Collectively, they give the main street a strong sense of enclosure, and it is therefore no surprise that they have the “Group Value” notation, recognising their general importance in forming the attractive composition of the street scene.

7. The Flintham conservation area was designated in 1972 and the present conservation area appraisal and management plan is dated January 2009. It is the largest conservation area in the Rushcliffe district, and has the highest number of listed buildings.

## DESCRIPTION

8. The building is aligned north-north-east to south-south-west, but for simplicity of description is taken to be aligned north-south in this report. The main 1770s part of the building has two main parts, separated by a cross-wall, which is the only subdivision that the floorplan of the main building has. A lower, single storey building is attached at the north end, said to be 20<sup>th</sup> century in the list description, but clearly older, with a pair of blocked square openings in the north gable (**Photo 10**). It contains a single, square-ish room, and the front wall appears to be a modern rebuilding, with double doors.

9. The south part of the main building (proposed lobby, bedroom, WC and en-suite) was a stable, with a loft over. The north part is of two bays, the bay division being marked by the kingpost truss as marked on the plans. It is open full-height and, for want of better identification, may be called simply a “barn”. The loft above the stable is accessed by a first floor doorway opening into the barn, and requires the use of a ladder.

10. The “barn” and “stable” identifications are henceforth used to identify the respective parts of the main building in the remainder of this report, along with “north addition” to refer to the lower addition at the north end.

11. The building was built against the east boundary of the plot, such that its rear wall (**Photo 2**) is also the boundary wall with the adjoining property. The rear wall has a rubblestone plinth, which may be older than the brick building now built on top of it, given that it is the only part of the building to have such a plinth. The lower part of the internal cross wall also contains rubble stonework about 14” thick, which again may be “inherited” from a previous building. The first floor structure over the stable at the south end of the building contains joists which are re-used, possibly from a previous building on the site.

12. The building has a helpful datestone on the front, reading “J. Bettinson 1778” (**Photo 7**), and there is no reason to doubt this as the date of the present building, whose details appear generally consistent with such a date. In the main, it is built of 9” brickwork in a variant of English Bond, with a course of headers following every three courses of stretchers. The bond is interrupted in the upper part of the front wall at the stable (south) end, and the south gable end may be of a later period entirely; it may be that the 1778 building was built against an earlier one at the south end, and that the south gable had to be rebuilt when that building was removed.

13. The present roof is, in the main, a replacement, of unknown date but I would guess about 100 years old. Remains of the original roof can be seen in the loft above the stable, where it was partially reconstructed rather than completely replaced, and has more recently been strengthened

by the introduction of two steel purlins and additional timberwork, to arrest a pronounced sag. The original roof over the stable part comprised pairs of rafters jointed and pegged where they met at the apex, with no purlins or ridgeboard / ridgebeam (**Photo 9**). The rafters were “triangulated” to some extent by collars halved into each pair, but the lower ends of the rafters below the collar line were still able to bend and sag under the weight, and eventually this led to distress, failure and replacement of the collars and rafters in the central part of the loft, where the outward stress was greatest.

14. I assume that the roof of the entire building was formerly of the rafter-and-collar construction just described, but over the barn part it has been replaced with a conventional roof comprising a bolted softwood kingpost truss, purlins, rafters and ridgeboard. The severe outward bulging of the walls in the building, very evident today, is likely to have been caused principally by the original, inadequate roof, whose lack of lateral restraint would have pushed the walls out, causing a tendency to “self-destruction”.

15. The stable part has been stripped of its fittings (**Photo 6**), but there appear to have been three stalls in it, with racks and mangers on the rear (east) wall. Replacement rafters in the first floor structure suggest that there were originally gaps down the east side for pitching hay down from the loft into the racks, in the usual manner. There is an original door in the front wall, and an oval opening which appears to have been designed to have an internal shutter to slide across it (**Photo 5**).

16. The other, larger, part of the building to the north has breather vents like a threshing barn (**Photos 4 and 8**), and is open full-height like a threshing barn, but had no door in the east wall to create the required through-draught for flail threshing. The large doorway in the front is itself not the original one, as can be seen by examination of its jambs and the rebuilding of a triangular panel above its arch. Presumably there was a smaller doorway here before.

17. The flooring throughout the building is modern.

18. The Bettinsons of Flintham were a milling family in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, so it is no surprise that the house is known as “The Old Bakehouse”, given the obvious relationship between milling and baking. But the clue does not help much with the identification of the north part of this outbuilding. What was it for, if not a threshing barn? It is unnecessarily high internally for a cowhouse, and there is no sign that it ever had a first floor. It may have been used in some way with the baking or milling businesses, but for the time being the question remains open. All that seems conclusive is that it would not function as a “barn” in the true sense of a “threshing barn” with opposing doorways.

## **THE PROPOSALS AND THEIR IMPACT**

19. The building is under-used, and too large just for domestic storage. While its essential maintenance has clearly been attended to, it requires significant investment if its future is to be safeguarded. The brickwork requires repair and there is evidence of structural movement that appears to be ongoing, e.g. at the north-west corner. The rear wall in particular is significantly out of plumb and requires the opinion of an experienced structural engineer to determine whether it can be restrained in its existing position, or will require rebuilding.

20. The proposal is to use the building as ancillary residential accommodation. As it will be self-contained, it is understood that a condition will likely be imposed to prevent separate occupation as an independent dwelling house without a further planning application.

21. Outbuildings listed in their own right, rather than by the general “catch-all” of curtilage-listing, are comparatively rare. In my opinion, the listing of this one is a little surprising and “marginal”, given the alterations to the roof and elsewhere, and loss of all the stable fittings, but is not realistically contestable. It may be the fact that it is a dated example, and contemporary with the Grade II house, that provides the added value leading to a decision to list it. If not listed in its own right, it would still be “curtilage listed”, anyway. And if it were not curtilage listed, it would still be a “non-designated heritage asset” as a significant element of the conservation area. Its heritage significance is therefore clear, whether or not the decision to list it was an appropriate one.
22. The proposed plans involve conversion of the stable and loft part of the building to bedroom and bathroom facilities, with a bedroom and bathroom on each floor. The ground storey also accommodates an entrance lobby and WC, and the upper storey includes a bat roost at the south end. The first floor bedroom would have two rooflights.
23. The two-bay barn would remain as an open, full-height space, though necessarily interrupted by a new staircase and landing to access the upper floor, via a repositioned doorway in the crosswall. Natural light would be augmented by three rooflights.
24. The north addition would be a living room, involving creation of a new doorway to connect to the kitchen.
25. Care has been taken to preserve the breather patterns, and it is proposed to glaze some of the breather vents to give an interesting play of light inside. Although the detailing is not yet worked up, thought could perhaps be given to facing the new stud partitioning with painted matchboarding instead of plasterboard and skim. By doing this, the new partitioning could be easily read as a secondary introduction, while evoking something of the barn and stable character at the same time.
27. Some loss of existing character internally remains inevitable, due to the need to insulate the outside walls and roof, and because the conversion would domesticate the building. However I believe that this is outweighed by the public benefit of finding a sustainable use of the building in the long term.

Philip E. Heath, February 2024.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



1. General view of front (west) elevation. Only the central of the three doorways is original. The jambs of the double doors to the left have clearly been cut through pre-existing brickwork, and a triangular spandrel of brickwork above these doors has been rebuilt. The right hand door, with timber lintel, is also cut through pre-existing brickwork. The breather vents and oval opening are original. Note also the four pattress bars; the further one cranks up internally and is fixed to the tiebeam of the kingpost truss; the next one connects across the width of the building in the normal way; the two others are fixed to beam ends in the first floor over the stable, and are repeated at the other ends of those beams.



2. Rear (east) elevation of the building, taken by kind permission of the neighbouring owner. Note the sag over the south (left-hand) end of the roof, caused by spread and failure of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century roof construction, which partly remains "in situ" there and is restrained by modern steelwork.



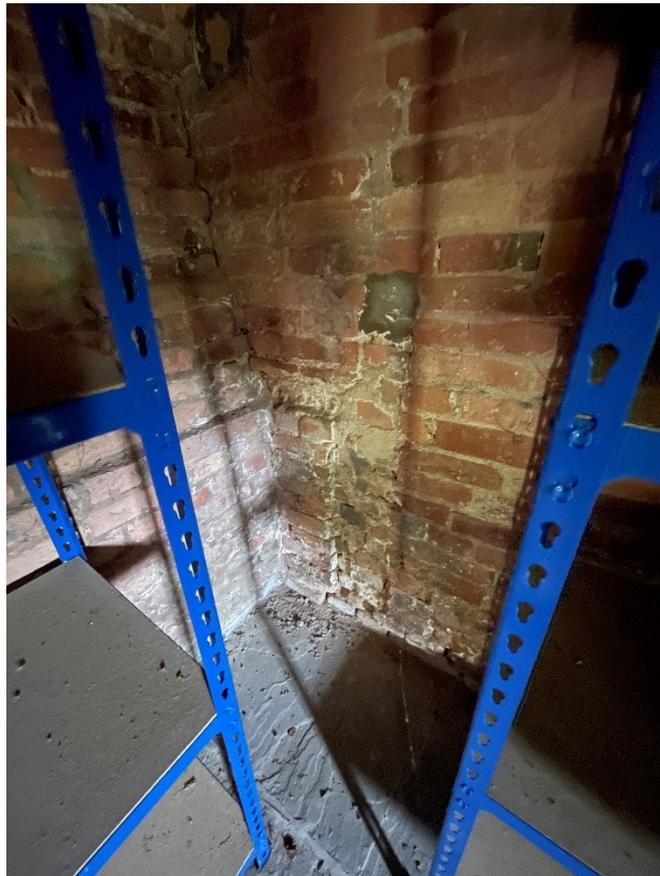
3. Interior of stable, looking south-east. Notches in the two main beams are likely to indicate where the original stall dividers were fixed to them. Some of the joists are re-used, and now support a modern boarded floor in the loft above. The joists above the former mangers on the back wall are modern, and may indicate the former presence of a slot in the floor there, for pitching fodder into the racks from the loft above.



4. Interior of barn looking north, showing ?early 20<sup>th</sup> century roof carpentry, and underfelt from a more recent re-tiling. The projecting pilasters may suggest an earlier roof truss in the position of the present one, perhaps consisting only of two rafters of more generous section than the others, with a collar and a tie beam. Note the tie rod, which cranks upwards to meet the tie beam.



5. Front (west) wall of stable, showing recess by oval window which presumably once housed a sliding shutter.



6. "Ghostings" or scars in the south-east corner of the stable hint that former brick-built mangers have been rebuilt.



7. Name and date stone on front of building reading "J. Bettinson 1778". The letters "son" are awkwardly squeezed into the top right-hand corner.



8. North gable end of original building, taken from the interior of the north addition, looking south. Note the pitching door high in the gable, and one of the diamond breather patterns below it and to the right, bricked up.



9. Ten pairs of the original coupled rafters remain in situ in the roof over the stable, pegged together at the apex without ridgeboard or ridgebeam, in line with common 18<sup>th</sup> century practice. They were “triangulated” by horizontal collars halved into them part way down.



10. North gable end of north addition. There are two square-ish blocked openings, symmetrically placed, below the line of the present gutter. Not also the small opening above the gutter, perhaps intended to allow access by hens to a loft.