

DESIGN STATEMENT FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE MILLSHOP TO A DWELLING

Introduction

This Design & Access Statement accompanies an Application for Full Planning Approval to convert an existing shop to a single, new residential dwelling.

This statement is intended to be read in conjunction with the submitted plans and documents:

2305/01 Survey drawing with Site and Location Plan

2305/10B Proposals drawing

219269 Canham Consulting Structural Report for Feasibility of Conversion

219269 Canham Consulting letter dated 28th February 2024 regarding strengthening works

219269 Can Consulting Nutrient Neutrality Assessment and Mitigation Strategy

BiOME Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - Final Version 3



Aerial photograph of the development site (in red) and owned adjacent land (in blue) showing their relationship to Ebridge Mill

The Building's Previous Uses

The building was last used in 2020, prior to COVID lock-down, in connection with the sale of pet foods. The use of the building as a shop was in operation in August 2018. The building has a long history of retail use, having been built for the sale of animal feeds in connection with Ebridge Mill.

Floor Areas

The current Gross Internal Floor Area is 301.4sqm and, when converted with thick insulated walls, this would be reduced to 284sqm at ground level with a further 118sqm at first floor.

Land Contamination

The original use of the building was as a retail outlet to Ebridge Mill. The site of the building has never been used for the storage of vehicle fuel nor the parking of commercial vehicles. It has also never been used in conjunction with agricultural use, so no agro-chemicals have ever been stored within the building. Although coal was stored adjacent to the Victorian steam powered mill, now demolished, this site was never used for this purpose.

Flood Risk

The site is within Flood Zone 1, as shown on the EA Flood Risk Planning Map. It is similarly designated on projected flood maps produced by Norfolk County and North Norfolk District Councils. The converted mill was the subject of a Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by consulting environmental engineers, Plandescil, which identified the source of potential flooding was limited to the mill pond.

Plandescil were consulted in respect of this proposal and Sally Hare BSc (Hons) CSci MEnvSci MCIWEM, Environmental Director, commented: *We have briefly reviewed the Environment Agency flood maps, and the local Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) mapping for the site, and are in agreement that the site appears to be in Flood Zone 1, and at low risk of surface water flooding.* The preparation of an FRA for the site relating to this Application is therefore unnecessary.



The buildings seen from Happisburgh Road



Both structures viewed from the site entrance

The Existing Structures

The structures on site consist of a pair of buildings, linked by a short, flat-roofed corridor, and a double garage with a steel, portal-framed structure. The latter is clad with profiled steel sheeting on sheeting rails.

The smaller north wing also has a steel portal frame supporting an asbestos-cement corrugated sheet roof covering on galvanised steel Z-sheeting rails. Blockwork is built between the stanchions of the portals, with the exterior clad in profiled steel sheeting. Internally, a timber-framed ceiling spans between the block walls with the roof space insulated with fibre-glass. The interior is subdivided by blockwork partitions and is fully plastered with double-glazed, external uPVC joinery.



West and south facades



East gable

The larger wing to the south is constructed using a hybrid frame of steel stanchions bolted to brick piers supporting a roof frame utilizing ply-box principal rafters with timber ties and struts connected with plywood gussets. Timber sheeting rails span between the trussed frames to support an asbestos-cement corrugated sheet roof covering, with fibreboard lining. Dwarf walls 1350mm high are constructed of blockwork bonded to the brickwork piers previously described. Above the exposed dwarf walls, timber framing extends to eaves level, clad externally with softwood ship-lap boarding and internally with fibreboard. Doors are full height for loading with a canopy to the north side. UPVC joinery is provided to the south side to serve the staff kitchen, which is enclosed by blockwork partitions. A mezzanine level is situated at the west end supported by a steel frame and accessed via a softwood winder staircase.

Preliminary visual surveys indicate that all buildings are sound and capable of conversion with the larger two upgraded to form a new dwelling. This is confirmed by the engineer's appraisal undertaken by Canham Consulting.

Existing Site Services

As the buildings were in use until comparatively recently, water from a bore hole, 3-phase electricity, telephone and a private sewerage system are in place and still connected

Access

No changes are proposed to the site access nor will the traffic generated be any higher than at present. Level access for wheelchair use will be provided with the use of a ramp together with steps.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The accompanying revised report produced by BiOME confirms that no evidence was found of the presence of Bat roosts within the building and that the habitat was assessed to be of limited ecological value. There is the opportunity, however, to improve biodiversity by the restoration of the adjacent site, which is also in the applicant's ownership.

Nutrient Neutrality

Reference should be made to the accompanying Nutrient Neutrality Assessment and Mitigation Strategy produced by Canham Consulting dated 22 April 2024.



Design Proposals

The design provides accommodation for the Applicants, in addition to an annex for their mother. The latter forms part of the house with a shared spare bedroom on the ground floor. Most of the rooms are arranged on the ground floor, with three bedrooms, a study and two bathrooms at the first floor level. The use of the volume at this upper area is made possible by the removal of the plywood ties to the ply box beams and restraining the eaves by the introduction of some steelwork elements to be designed by the engineer.

The main entrance is located within the space of the current loading doors on the north side, with a separate door to the annex adjacent. Upon entry, the interior volume of the storage barn is revealed with staircase leading to a galleried landing. The east end is to be left as an open-plan living/ dining room with the kitchen located under the over-sailing study above. Beneath the first floor bedrooms, with the exposed timber floor joists, further rooms comprising a cloakroom, utility room, playroom and snug plus the annex bathroom and common spare room are provided.

The industrial aesthetic is to be maintained, which is the most appropriate to this building. The existing thin softwood boarding is to be replaced by dark grey corrugated steel, which will give it a sleek appearance and make it disappear into the treed background. The brick/block/boarded "tideline" half way up the building is dispensed with, as the change in materials makes the facades visually too fussy and broken up. The alteration works would also be more apparent and the detailing of the openings around windows more problematic.

As the structure is a hybrid of brick and steel/timber frame, openings have been kept relatively narrow so that the panels between are not destabilised. To compensate and allow sunlight to penetrate deep into the plan, many of the openings are full height, from floor to the underside of the exposed floor joists. This will also create a contemporary appearance. Natural light within the spaces will be generous but care is to be taken to avoid the building overheating with its long south facade. The use of external sliding shutters is proposed, which can be employed on hot sunny days. These would be fabricated with a galvanised steel angle frame and external door gear, with the frames infilled with larch louvres to admit filtered sunlight. The use of larch, sealed to maintain its colour, will add a domestic touch to an industrial structure and this is continued into a timber panel between the doors to the two dwellings marking their entrance and as deep timber surrounds to doors and windows.

The rhythm of the building's frame is reflected in the regular arrangement of windows, which again has echoes of historic industrial buildings. This is offset occasionally by an asymmetric group dictated by the internal plan and the desire to create long sight lines through the building which will add a sense of space through the use of long views out into the landscape beyond. Of the current limited number of external openings, only those to the larger doors are retained, as the others are not appropriate to the new rooms. The use of "domestic" windows, such as those currently in place, have been avoided as they do not match the scale of this large industrial structure. A bolder approach is required.

The first floor bedrooms have long pairs of coupled Velux windows to allow views out. As the cills of these are still too high to act as escape windows, for the purpose of the Building Regulations, smaller opening frames have been added at floor level, where they will add interest and offer further views out to the garden. These are similar to the arrangement of traditional structures to store rooms in France where small windows sit at low level above living quarters. Openings are positioned 200mm into the wall, in order to set the joinery within the line of the insulation, so have sub-cills of pressed, painted aluminium, or brick. The annex living room and kitchen/dining room has a long full height frame with glazed doors to provide views out into the garden and beyond, in addition to admitting sunshine in the afternoons. An assessment will be made on whether the existing hedgerow and trees on this side will provide sufficient solar shading. Otherwise some form of shutter / brise-soleil might be necessary.