

Design and Access Statement

Land at Mill Drove South, Cowbit, Spalding, PE12 Full Planning Application for 5 Dwellings Including Conversion of Existing Engine Shed

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the development of land at Mill Drove South, Cowbit. The site has a complex planning history, including:

- Full permission (H01-0509-23) for 4 dwellings.
- Part-built foundations/walls for 3 of those dwellings, now discovered to be incorrectly positioned on the ground.
- A Class Q approval (H01-0098-24) for the conversion of the historic brick engine shed to a single dwelling.
- A client aspiration to convert the same shed into two dwellings, reflecting its size, internal proportions, and structural suitability.

Due to these overlapping permissions and the requirement to regularise the partly-built works, a comprehensive full planning application for five dwellings (three detached units + two dwellings within the existing engine shed) is necessary.

The proposal provides an opportunity to *properly plan, regularise, and optimise* the development of this brownfield site, delivering high-quality new homes that respect Cowbit's character while improving the appearance and condition of historically underused land.

2. Site Context and Character

The site is located to the west of Mill Drove South and to the north of Stonegate (B1357) within the settlement of Cowbit. It formerly served as part of the Great Northern & Great Eastern Joint Railway sidings, with the brick-built engine shed dating back to at least 1887. Historic mapping confirms long-term railway and employment-related use.

Today the surrounding area is a blend of modern residential properties along Mill Drove South to the east, with further housing to the north and south. Agricultural land lies beyond the built edge of the village. The site itself contains:

- The historic brick engine shed, structurally intact.
- Three part-built dwellings (roofed) from the earlier approved layout.
- Hardstanding and scrub vegetation consistent with former railway use.
- An IDB-maintained watercourse crossing the northern section.

Cowbit is identified as a settlement capable of supporting limited infill and small-scale residential growth under the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP). The site forms a natural continuation of existing residential frontage and represents efficient use of underutilised brownfield land.

3. Planning History and Rationale for a New Full Application

- Existing permission: H01-0509-23 approved 4 dwellings on the site, including the removal of the engine shed. With all conditions discharged.
- Class Q conversion: Class Q prior approval (H01-0098-24) confirmed the building suitable for conversion to a single dwelling. The approval reinforces its structural robustness, viability for residential use, and the principle of retaining the heritage asset.

Need for a new comprehensive approach:

During construction of the approved scheme, it became clear that three dwellings had been either built in incorrect positions or shown in the incorrect positions on the approved drawings, necessitating correction and re-siting of the dwellings on the approved drawings.



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An opportunity to integrate the engine shed sensitively as two dwellings, which better fits its proportions and openings.

A full application is therefore required to properly address layout, design and technical considerations in a holistic manner.

4. Proposed Development

The proposal seeks approval for:

Three detached 4-bed dwellings (Plots 1–3), positioned correctly within the site. Conversion of the existing brick engine shed into two semi-detached dwellings (Plots 4 & 5). Access, parking, landscaping, drainage, biodiversity enhancements and associated external works.

The overall layout follows the previously consented access arrangement from Mill Drove South and retains generous separation distances and private gardens appropriate to the area.

5. Design and Appearance

5.1 Plots 1–3 (Detached Dwellings)

These homes adopt a contemporary rural vernacular with TBS Old Cottage Blend Facing Brick consistent with local materials. Symmetrical façades with balanced window proportions. Gable-fronted forms that reference nearby recent residential development.

High-performance glazing and simple, well-articulated rear elevations.

Their scale is modest and entirely appropriate for this edge-of-settlement position.

5.2 Plots 4–5 – Conversion of the Engine Shed

A key driver of the design is the preservation and celebration of the building's historic and industrial character. The conversion retains the full external envelope, openings, proportions and roofline.

Subdivides internally only, maintaining the building's simple linear form.

Uses sympathetic materials such as brickwork repairs, black weatherboarding (seen used in the adjacent development H01-1240-22), matching roof finishes with the new houses on site and traditional window proportions.

Introduces discreet, contemporary elements only where necessary to support modern habitation.



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The result is two distinctive homes that preserve the building's heritage value while contributing positively to the site's character.

6. Layout, Scale and Massing

The dwellings are positioned to Maintain a coherent building line. Respect neighbouring properties north and south. Retain clear views and openness around the engine shed. Provide private parking and amenity space that meets SELLP standards. The massing is broken naturally between the three detached units and the retained historic structure, giving the overall site a varied and visually attractive composition.

7. Residential Amenity

The scheme has been designed to protect and enhance amenity:

Generous spacing between properties.

No harmful overlooking; first-floor side windows are bathrooms/obscure where appropriate.

Good garden depths and private outdoor space.

The engine shed conversion places primary living spaces at the building's ends, minimising overlooking and preserving privacy.

Internal layouts offer modern, practical family accommodation in line with national space standards.

8. Flood Risk & Drainage

The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, as confirmed by the submitted Flood Risk Assessment prepared by S M Hemmings BSc CEng MICE MIWEM. Flood Zone 1 represents land assessed as having a low probability of flooding, and is therefore suitable for residential development in accordance with national and local planning policy.

The Flood Risk Assessment confirms that there is no significant risk of fluvial, tidal, surface water or groundwater flooding affecting the site, either in present-day conditions or when allowances for climate change are applied. The assessment also confirms that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including to neighbouring land or downstream receptors.

Finished floor levels for all proposed dwellings have been set in accordance with the recommendations of the Flood Risk Assessment, ensuring appropriate freeboard and resilience over the lifetime of the development.



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These levels have been informed by site-specific ground levels, hydraulic considerations, and best practice guidance.

Surface water drainage will be managed through a controlled discharge strategy, with attenuation provided on site to ensure runoff rates do not exceed pre-development conditions. Foul drainage will connect to the existing Anglian Water network, as detailed within the submitted drainage information. The proposal therefore fully accords with SELLP Policy 28 and Section 14 of the NPPF, representing a safe, sustainable form of development on land at low risk of flooding.

9. Ground Conditions and Contamination

The Combined Phase 1 & 2 Geo-Environmental Investigation provides strong reassurance:

No significant contamination detected (metals, hydrocarbons, VOCs, asbestos all below thresholds).

Groundwater and watercourse risks assessed as Low.

These findings confirm the land is safe and suitable for residential development without requiring remediation, supporting SELLP Policies 2 and 3.

10. Biodiversity Net Gain

The updated BNG assessment demonstrates:

Baseline units: 0.6566

Post-development units: 0.7275

Achieved Net Gain: +10.81%, exceeding the statutory 10% requirement.

This ensures compliance with SELLP Policy 28 and NPPF 179.

11. Access and Parking

Vehicular access from Mill Drove South remains consistent with the previously approved arrangement. Each dwelling provides on-plot parking in accordance with SELLP Appendix 6. Level access and sensible gradients ensure inclusive and practical day-to-day use.

The layout allows refuse collection on the roadside.



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12. Conclusion

This proposal represents a comprehensive, well-considered and policy-compliant redevelopment of a brownfield site within Cowbit. It regularises and improves upon the previously approved layout. Retains and sympathetically converts a valued historic structure. Delivers five high-quality, energy-efficient family homes. Meets all technical requirements relating to flood risk, drainage, contamination and biodiversity. Enhances the character of the area and makes productive use of long-underused land.

Accord with SELLP Policies 1, 2, 3, 28, 31 and relevant design principles.

Aligns with national policy in the NPPF regarding efficient land use, sustainable development and protection of residential amenity.

In summary, the development represents a positive, well-designed and sustainable addition to Cowbit and should be supported by the Local Planning Authority.



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