JB Architectural Design Services
www.brammadesign.co.uk

Durham House, 44 Northorpe Road, Donington
Spalding, Lincolnshire. PE11 4XU
07837 735718
info@brammadesign.co.uk

Design, Access, Planning and Heritage Statement

9-11 High Street, Holbeach PE12 7DU

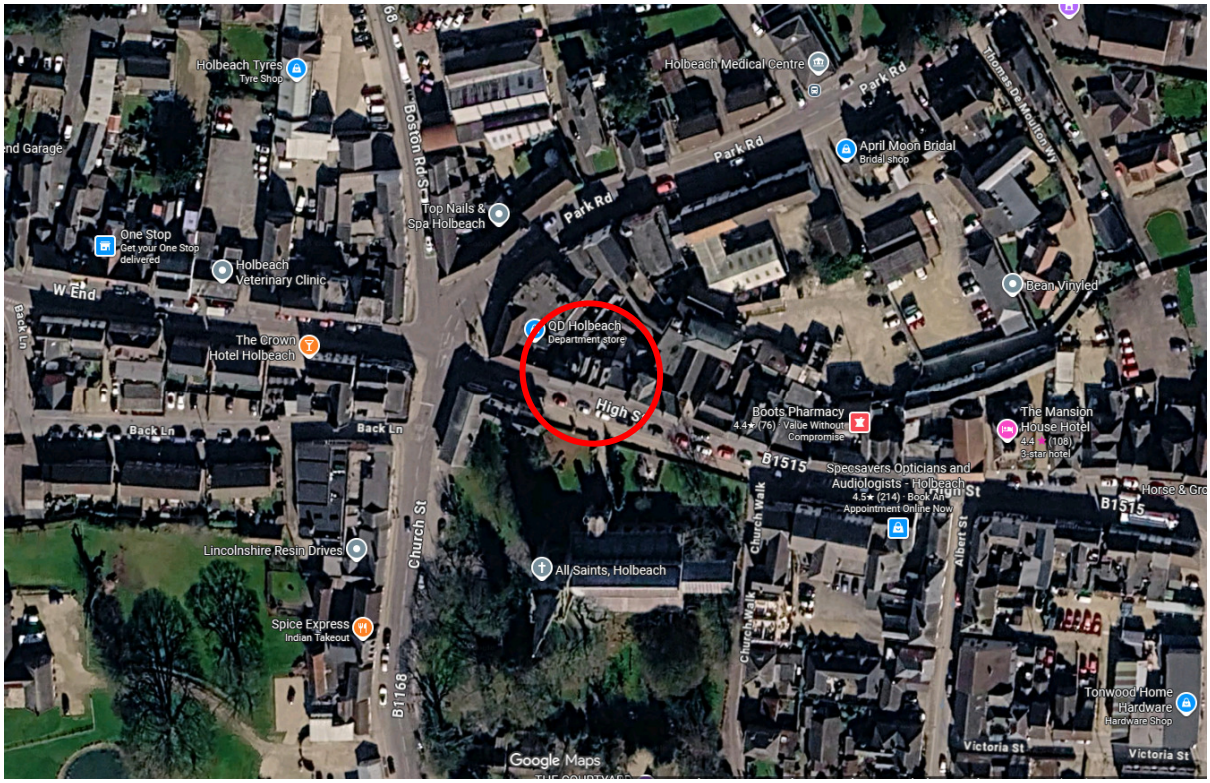


Image reproduced from Google

Proposed Change of Use of First and Second Floor Offices (Front Building) and Ground and First Floor Ancillary Retail Space (Rear Building) to Residential Dwellings (Use Class C3)

Applicant : House of Barakah Ltd

July 2026
Ref: SS.221-01

1. Introduction

1.1 This Design, Access, Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application submitted to South Holland District Council for the change of use of the first and second floors of the front building at 9-11 High Street, Holbeach from office to residential use, and the change of use of the ground floor of the rear ancillary building from ancillary retail storage to residential use, to provide a total of three one-bedroom flats. The existing ground floor retail unit fronting High Street is unaffected and will remain in retail (Class E) use.

1.2 This Statement should be read alongside the accompanying floor plans, which set out the existing and proposed arrangement of the building.

1.3 The principle of this development was previously established under planning permission reference H09-0346-20, granted by South Holland District Council on 24 July 2020 for a materially similar scheme. That permission has since lapsed, as the development was not begun within the three-year period required by Condition 1 of the decision notice. This application seeks to renew that principle of development, with a scheme that is in most respects identical to, and in one material respect less intensive than, the permitted 2020 scheme, as set out at Section 4 below.

2. Site Description and Surroundings

2.1 The application site comprises two connected buildings at 9-11 High Street, Holbeach: a three-storey building fronting High Street (the 'front building') and a two-storey building to the rear (the 'rear building'), which is reached via a rear alleyway accessed through a gate to the west of the site. The two buildings are linked by an enclosed first-floor walkway.

2.2 The front building accommodates a retail unit at ground floor, which was most recently in retail use, with office space on the first and second floors. The rear building is arranged over ground and first floors and was most recently used for storage ancillary to the retail unit. The building is currently vacant on all floors.

2.3 The site sits within the Holbeach Conservation Area and forms part of the town's primary shopping frontage on High Street, a prominent thoroughfare into the historic core of the town. Although not a listed building, the front building is a visually distinctive property within the streetscene, characterised by first floor bay windows, decorative stone detailing to window cills and keystones, and a rear access archway. The site is surrounded by a mix of retail and residential uses typical of a market town centre.

3. Relevant Planning History

3.1 The site benefits from a directly relevant planning history. On 24 July 2020, South Holland District Council granted full planning permission under reference H09-0346-20 to Rugby Property Assets Ltd, the then owner of the site, for the following development:

> *"Convert first and second floor of front building into residential and ground and first floor of rear building into residential - creating 3 one bed flats in total."*

3.2 The 2020 scheme proposed the retention of the existing ground floor retail unit, with the office floors above converted to two residential flats and the ground and first floors of the rear building converted to a third residential flat. The scheme also proposed two minor external alterations: the replacement of two south-facing ground floor windows in the rear building with U.P.V.C. units with an adjusted cill height, and the formation of a new doorway in the northern elevation of the front building to provide rear access to the retail unit.

3.3 In granting permission, the Council's case officer concluded that the proposal accorded with Policies 1, 2, 3, 11, 17, 26, 29 and 36 and Appendix 6 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), and with Sections 12 and 16 of the then National Planning Policy Framework (2019). The officer report specifically found that the proposal would not result in the loss of any functional retail frontage, would bring long-vacant upper floor space back into effective use, would have no material impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area given the very limited and largely unseen nature of the external changes, and was acceptable in highways terms as a car-less, town-centre development.

3.4 Condition 1 of the 2020 permission required the development to begin within three years of the date of the permission, i.e. by 24 July 2023. The development was not implemented within this period and the permission has consequently lapsed. This application is submitted to renew planning permission for substantially the same development.

4. The Proposed Development

4.1 The current proposal is, in principle, identical to the permitted 2020 scheme, and comprises:

- Change of use of the first floor of the front building from office to one residential flat (Flat 2, approximately 60m²), comprising a kitchen/living room, bedroom, bathroom, home office and hallway;
- Change of use of the second floor of the front building from office to one residential flat (Flat 3, approximately 60m²), comprising a kitchen/living room, bedroom, bathroom, home office and hallway; and
- Change of use of the ground floor of the rear building from ancillary retail storage to one residential flat (Flat 1, approximately 48m²), comprising an entrance lobby, kitchen/living room, bedroom, bathroom and store cupboard.

4.2 As with the 2020 scheme, the ground floor retail unit fronting High Street is retained in its existing commercial use and is unaffected by this application. No loss of retail floorspace or frontage results from this proposal.

4.3 The proposal will create three one-bedroom flats in total, the same overall quantum of residential accommodation as was permitted in 2020.

4.4 Difference from the 2020 Permitted Scheme

4.5 The essential difference between this application and the 2020 permission is that no external alterations whatsoever are proposed. The current scheme does not include the replacement windows to the rear building or the new rear doorway to the front building that formed part of the permitted scheme; the external envelope, fenestration and elevations of both buildings will remain entirely as existing. The first floor of the rear building, previously proposed for conversion, is not included within the residential floorspace of the current scheme. In all other respects — the principle of use, the extent of upper floor conversion in the front building, the retention of the ground floor retail unit, and the absence of dedicated parking — the proposal mirrors the 2020 permitted development.

4.6 A summary comparison of the two schemes is set out below.

	2020 Permission (H09-0346-20)	Current Proposal
Description	Convert first and second floor of front building into residential and ground and first floor of rear building into residential – creating 3 one-bed flats in total.	Convert first and second floor of front building into residential and ground floor of rear building into residential – creating 3 one-bed flats in total.
Ground floor, front building	Retained as retail (no change).	Retained as retail (no change).
First & second floor, front building	Office to residential (2 flats).	Office to residential (2 flats – Flat 2 and Flat 3, each 60m²).
Rear building	Ground and first floor, ancillary to retail, converted to residential (1 flat).	Ground floor, ancillary to retail, converted to residential (Flat 1, 48m²).
External alterations	New doorway to rear elevation of front building; replacement of 2no. south-facing ground floor windows to rear building with U.P.V.C. units.	None. No external openings are proposed to be altered, added, or removed.
Parking	Car-less development; no objection raised by LCC Highways.	Car-less development, consistent with the town-centre location.
Status	Granted 24 July 2020; not implemented within the 3-year time limit and now lapsed.	Full application now submitted to renew the principle of development established in 2020.

5. Use

5.1 The existing and most recent lawful uses of the building are as follows: the ground floor of the front building was last used as retail (Class E); the ground and first floors of the rear building were last used as ancillary storage to the retail unit; and the first and second floors of the front building were last used as office space (Class E).

5.2 The proposed uses are as follows: the ground floor of the front building will remain in retail use; the first and second floors of the front building will change from office to residential use (Use Class C3); and the ground floor of the rear building will change from ancillary retail storage to residential use (Use Class C3).

5.3 The change of use from office and ancillary storage space to residential accommodation reflects the fact that the upper floors and rear building have been vacant and under-utilised for a sustained period, and that the existing layout and access arrangements make the space difficult to let or sell in its current configuration. Bringing this space into residential use secures a viable long-term use for accommodation that would otherwise be likely to remain vacant.

6. Access

6.1 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is unchanged from the existing situation and from that assessed and accepted under the 2020 permission. There are two existing entrances to the front of the retail unit from High Street. A further existing door to the rear of the retail unit provides access to the rear alleyway and the rear building. The alleyway is accessed via an existing gate to the west of the site and leads to the rear building, which is entered via its existing main door. Internal stairs within the rear building provide access to its upper level, and the two buildings are linked at first floor by the existing enclosed walkway, from which stairs rise to the second floor of the front building.

6.2 As no external alterations are proposed under this application, the means of access to the site and between the two buildings remains entirely as existing. Unlike the 2020 scheme, this application does not include the formation of a new rear doorway, and the existing means of access to the ground floor retail unit is unaffected.

6.3 The proposal is a car-less development, consistent with the 2020 scheme, which does not provide for dedicated on-site car parking. This reflects the site's town-centre location within convenient walking distance of shops, services and public transport, and the constrained nature of the site itself. Lincolnshire County Council, as Local Highway Authority, raised no objection to the equivalent car-less arrangement under the 2020 application.

7. Design and Layout



Ground Floor Plan 1:100
PROPOSED

First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

7.1 As this application involves no change to the external appearance, form, scale or massing of either building, no design changes are proposed to the exterior of the site. The proposal is exclusively a change of use and internal reconfiguration of existing floorspace.

7.2 The proposed internal layout has been designed to provide three self-contained one-bedroom flats, each with a kitchen/living room, bedroom, bathroom and home office/study space, together with appropriate hallway and storage provision. The layout has been designed with reference to nationally described space standards for residential accommodation, and the proposed flats (48m² and 60m² respectively) exceed the minimum gross internal floor area for one-bedroom, two-person dwellings.

7.3 Ground floor W/C provision is not proposed for the residential unit in the rear building; this is consistent with the approach accepted in the 2020 scheme, where Building Control confirmed that such provision is not a mandatory requirement in the case of a change of use/conversion of this nature.

7.4 As the ground floor retail unit is unaffected by this application, no changes to its internal layout, shopfront or servicing arrangements are proposed.

8. Heritage Impact Assessment

8.1 The application site lies within the Holbeach Conservation Area. The front building, although not a designated heritage asset (it is not statutorily or locally listed), is a positive, non-designated heritage asset within the Conservation Area by virtue of its decorative façade, feature first floor bay windows, stone detailing and rear access archway, and its prominent position on High Street.

8.2 In assessing heritage significance, the site's contribution to the Conservation Area derives principally from its external appearance as viewed from the public realm of High Street, and from the historic grain and character of the town centre, of which the linked front and rear building arrangement is a good example.

8.3 This application proposes no external alterations of any kind. The façade of the front building, its fenestration, roofline and shopfront will remain wholly unchanged, as will the external appearance of the rear building. Unlike the 2020 permitted scheme, this application does not even include the previously accepted minor external changes (the replacement U.P.V.C. windows and new rear doorway). The proposal is therefore heritage-neutral in terms of its effect on the external appearance of the buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

8.4 The works are limited to internal alterations and a change of use of upper floor and rear ancillary space that is not visible from the public realm. As such, there is considered to be no harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, or to the setting of any nearby designated heritage assets, arising from this proposal.

8.5 In heritage terms, the proposal is considered to represent a heritage benefit, consistent with the conclusion reached by the Council's case officer in respect of the 2020 permission: bringing long-vacant upper floor and rear ancillary space back into active, regular use helps to safeguard the long-term maintenance and viability of a prominent building within the Conservation Area, reducing the risk of the building falling into disrepair through prolonged vacancy. This is consistent with the aim of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024, as amended February 2025) that the historic environment should be conserved in a manner appropriate to its significance, including through the optimal viable use of heritage assets and buildings that make a positive contribution to a conservation area.

8.6 Given the absence of any external works, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Holbeach Conservation Area, in accordance with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the heritage policies of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Planning Policy Assessment

9.1 Development Plan

The statutory development plan for the area comprises the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted March 2019), prepared jointly by Boston Borough Council, South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council. The following policies are of particular relevance to this proposal, mirroring those applied to the 2020 permission:

- Policy 1 – Spatial Strategy
- Policy 2 – Development Management
- Policy 3 – Design of New Development
- Policy 11 – Distribution of New Housing
- Policy 17 – Providing a Mix of Housing
- Policy 26 – Primary Shopping Frontages
- Policy 29 – The Historic Environment
- Policy 36 – Vehicle and Cycle Parking, and Appendix 6 (Parking Standards)

9.2 Principle of Development

Policy 26 of the Local Plan supports the re-use of upper floors above ground floor retail units within primary shopping frontages, including for independent residential use, provided this does not result in the loss of functional retail frontage. This proposal retains the existing ground floor retail unit in its entirety and involves no loss of commercial floorspace or frontage. The upper floors and rear ancillary building, which have been vacant for a sustained period, will be brought into effective residential use. The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable and consistent with the approach previously endorsed by the Council in granting permission H09-0346-20.

9.3 Housing Delivery and Mix

The proposal will deliver three additional one-bedroom flats within the town centre, contributing to housing delivery in a sustainable, highly accessible location in accordance with Policies 11 and 17 of the Local Plan and the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

9.4 Heritage

As set out in Section 8 above, the proposal involves no external works and will preserve the character and appearance of the Holbeach Conservation Area. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy 29 of the Local Plan and the historic environment provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9.5 Parking and Highways

Consistent with the 2020 permission, no dedicated car parking is proposed. The site occupies a highly sustainable town-centre location within walking distance of shops, services and public transport, and Holbeach town centre benefits from significant nearby public parking provision.

Lincolnshire County Council raised no objection to the equivalent arrangement under application H09-0346-20, and it is not considered that circumstances affecting the acceptability of a car-less development have changed. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy 36 and Appendix 6 of the Local Plan.

9.6 Residential Amenity

The proposed flats have been designed to provide adequate internal space, outlook and amenity for future occupiers, in accordance with nationally described space standards. As the proposal is a change of use with no external alterations, there is no material change to the relationship between the site and neighbouring occupiers, and no adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining properties is anticipated.

10. Conclusion

10.1 This Statement demonstrates that the current proposal is, in all material planning respects, the same development previously granted planning permission by South Holland District Council under reference H09-0346-20 in July 2020, save that this application proposes no external alterations at all, making it a less intensive and more heritage-sensitive scheme than that already approved.

10.2 The proposal will bring long-vacant upper floor and rear ancillary space back into effective residential use, delivering three one-bedroom flats within a highly sustainable town-centre location, without any loss of retail floorspace and without any change to the external appearance of either building. As such, the proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the Holbeach Conservation Area and is considered to accord fully with the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10.3 For the reasons set out in this Statement, it is respectfully submitted that the application should be approved without objection, consistent with the Council's previous decision on this site.