

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Client: D Brown Building Contractors Ltd

Project: Change of use of Barns from 6 no. Holiday Lets into 1 no. Dwelling, Seas End Road, Moulton Seas End, Spalding, Lincs, PE12 6JZ

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INTRODUCTION

The application is for a change of use from 6 no. Holiday Lets into 1 no. single dwelling at Waitte's Farm Barns, Seas End Road, Moulton Seas End.

The applicant received planning permission (ref. H13-0618-10) in November 2010 for the conversion of existing agricultural barns into 6 Holiday Lets. Building work started on site during 2011 and the shell is now substantially complete including walls, floors and roofs. Subsequent applications have been submitted and approved to facilitate the demolition and rebuilding of structurally unsound walls to Holiday Let units 5 & 6 (ref. H13-0815-13) and the use of authentic roofing materials (ref. H13-0058-14).

Since February 2014 the Holiday Lets have been marketed for sale by local, experienced estate agents and valuers, Brown & Co. Despite this they have failed to sell and accordingly, the applicant has decided to secure the long term future of the barns through the introduction of an alternative, sympathetic use in the form of a single dwelling which by its very nature will substantially maintain the character and design established through the approved scheme for the Holiday Lets.



Figure 1. Current photograph of barns

USE

The historical agricultural use of the barns ceased many years ago and, although not evident today, a residential use (in the form of a farm house) existed on the site to the south of the barns which formed part of the farm complex. This can be seen in Figure 2 below.

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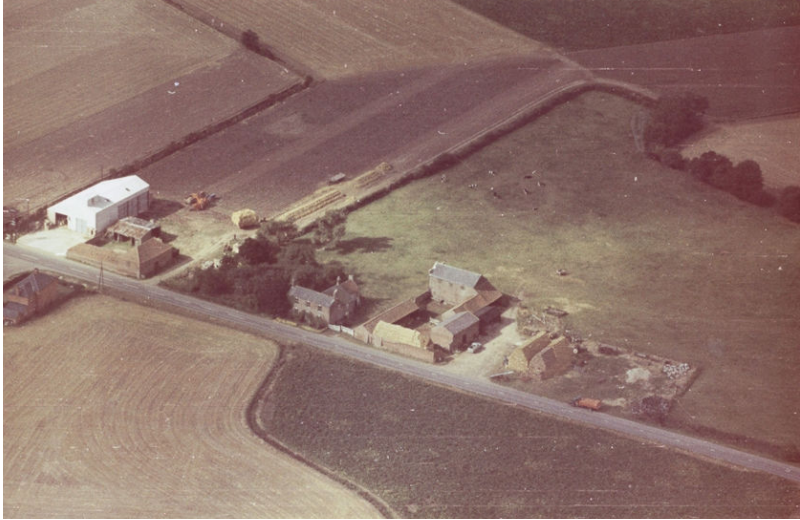


Figure 2. Aerial photograph showing the barns in the context of the farm with dwelling to the left of the barns

Historically, the site was a farm with substantial living accommodation. It is not known why the house was demolished. Due to changes in agricultural practices and machinery size, the barns would no longer be suitable for agricultural use. Indeed, a more modern farm portal frame type shed was constructed later to the area south of where the house existed which has more recently been converted into commercial use.

The proposed change of use will be from 6 no. Holiday Lets into 1 no. dwelling house. This effectively, brings back to the site a residential use that once existed by virtue of the farm house.

The applicant has undertaken a study of property usage along this stretch of road between River Lane and Green Lane at the start of Moulton Seas End (see Appendix A). This demonstrates that the majority of residential properties have no agricultural tie.

This re-use of redundant or disused buildings will lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting which is in accordance with NPPF paragraph 55.

AMOUNT

The application reduces the amount of units from 6 no. Holiday Lets to 1 no. dwelling house. The site area is approximately 0.49 ha. The building footprint will remain unchanged except for enclosing some of the car port to form an enclosed garage. In addition a glazed conservatory link will connect the two currently separated barns. The total gross internal floor area will be in the region of 432sq.m.

LAYOUT

The layout of the site is unchanged from that of the current permission.

Further tree planting is proposed to help enclose the area outside of the barns.

SCALE

The scale is that of the existing barn complex, comprising single storey barns with a single two storey barn to the rear of the site.

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Figure 3. Aerial photo showing scale of original barn complex

LANDSCAPING

Hard landscaping will comprise a tarmac driveway for the first 10m into the site from the edge of the carriageway. The remaining driveway and courtyard areas will be block paving. This is in accordance with proposals submitted previously and approved under planning condition approval ref. H13-0835-12.

Soft landscaping will generally comprise a scheme of native hedgerows around the site and native tree planting within the site which is in accordance with landscaping proposals submitted previously and approved under planning condition approval ref. H13-0835-12. This planting scheme has already commenced in part on site.

The central courtyard (former crewyard) will be softened around its perimeters with a planting scheme similar to that approved under H13-0835-12 but adjusted to suit the reconfigured door and window locations.

APPEARANCE

The change of use will not significantly alter the elevations or the established character currently approved under planning permission H13-0058-14.

Every effort has been made to keep the outward facing elevations as close as possible to those approved under H13-0058-14 with the following general exceptions:-

The open car port will be enclosed in part to provide two garage spaces for cars. An open area will be provided for the storage of logs and an area within the garage will be used for general garden storage.

The main entrance to the dwelling will be via the lean-to abutting the two storey barn of the north east elevation.

An existing opening has been retained and infilled with a full height glazed window to the north east elevation.

The rear elevation of the two storey barn and the lean-to element reflects the scale and height of the original barn composition.

An existing arched opening has been re-instated together with a matching arched opening. An additional window has been provided above these at first floor level in order to comply with fire egress requirements of Part B Building Regulations.

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The apertures to the south west elevation are the same, however, two of these now have full height glazed windows. A glass link connects the two barns, the intention being that this maintains the visual separation but allows a means of internal circulation between them.

The elevations facing into the courtyard are generally hidden by the buildings and the enclosing wall. The two storey barn has a larger arched opening together with an additional window at first floor level, however, the latter is located within the aperture previously occupied by timber boarding. The apertures are generally unchanged to the attached single storey barn, however, the kitchen aperture will be fully glazed. The gymnasium elevation has been changed to provide the effect of a former implement shed that has been infilled with glazing, again, this elevation can only be seen from inside the courtyard.

Great care has been exercised during the construction to source authentic and reclaimed materials sympathetic to the character of the barns.

ACCESS

The change of use will not affect the site access from that previously approved for the Holiday Lets.

The access would now serve only one dwelling as opposed to six residential units and as such has the potential to reduce traffic movements in and out of the site.

The Holiday Lets have previously received Building Regulations approval and as such accessibility has been incorporated within the building works carried out to date. Building Regulations Part M will include a gently sloping ramped approach to the front door, level threshold, ground floor accessible toilet and circulation on the ground floor suitable for visitor's wheelchair users.

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING

The Town & Country Planning (General permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 brought about permitted development allowing the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential use. Although this is not directly applicable to this proposal it is noted that had this Order been in place at the time when the applicant first sought planning permission that the barns would have fallen into the following applicable categories qualifying it for permitted development:-

- The previous use was agricultural.
- The cumulative floor space of the existing buildings or buildings changing use is below 450sq.m.
- Only one individual dwelling house would be the proposal (where the maximum permitted is three).

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The NPPF (Paragraph 55) supports homes in the countryside where there are special circumstances such as where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

SOUTH HOLLAND LOCAL PLAN 2006

The South Holland Local Plan (Paragraph 4.86) supports the re-use of farm buildings stating that they '*should not remain vacant or under-used or become derelict, detracting from the visual character of the countryside*'. Paragraph 4.87 accepts that there may not be demand for conversion into a commercial use in certain locations.

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The proposal for a change of use from Holiday Lets into a single dwelling meets the requirements set out in Policy HS16 of the South Holland Local Plan in the following ways:-

- 1) The applicant has put the Holiday Lets on the market for sale for over a year and no sale has resulted. (This demonstrates that there is no demand for this type of property in this location).
- 2) The building is of permanent and substantial construction and is capable of conversion without significant rebuilding. (Where elements have had to be rebuilt this has been done so in a sympathetic way and with the full support of the planning department under permission H13-0815-13).
- 3) The building is of architectural merit, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the landscape and conversion can be achieved without significantly affecting that merit.
- 4) The design of the scheme, materials of construction and detailing are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building.
- 5) The building is capable of conversion to provide a high standard of residential amenity without the need for significant extension or alteration.

PLANNING PRECEDENTS

The following planning precedents are cited in support of this application. These planning approvals have significant similarities with this application which include attempts at selling the sites for non-domestic purposes:-

Tysdale Manor, Tydd St Mary (SHDC planning permission ref. H21-0795-10, granted January 2011)

This application was also for a change of use from Holiday Lets into dwellings. In 2008, full planning permission was granted for the conversion of the range of barns to form holiday lets and B1 business premises. During the consideration of the application and subsequent to consents being issued, the barn was marketed for sale. Despite the marketing carried out by local experienced estate agents, Longstaff & Co., the barns failed to sell and an application was submitted for the change of use of the barns to form two semi-detached dwellings with the erection of a single storey extension and two detached garages/stores. Planning permission was granted in January 2011.

Woodbine Farm, Gosberton Clough (SHDC planning permission ref. H08-0088-10, granted March 2010)

This application was for conversion of barns to form a dwelling. The barns were marketed for sale to investigate the potential for a light industrial use (B1) and / or short term Holiday Let. Marketing commenced in January 2008 and continued for 2 years until January 2010 at which time the selling agents, Brown & Co. wrote their marketing report. This demonstrated that there was very little interest and the agent concluded that this was due to the fact that the buildings had only possible conversion to light industrial (B1) use or holiday accommodation. They also concluded that there was little or no demand for commercial (B1) use and the low level of interest in the conversion of the property to holiday accommodation confirmed their view that the site location and lack of obvious tourism places of interest nearby made such uses unviable. In the absence of suitable employment uses the applicant turned to residential (with home working element) on which basis a planning application was submitted resulting in planning permission being granted in March 2010.

Former Risegate Farm, Gosberton Risegate (SHDC planning permission ref. H08-0688-12, granted October 2012)

This application was for conversion of redundant outbuildings to residential including new garaging incorporating a home-working unit. In 2009 Longstaff & Co were instructed to market the property. They confirmed that there is little or no demand for commercial use or employment opportunities for buildings of this type and condition in a rural location. In addition to this it was not financially viable to convert the barns into a commercial use (including office use) and in the opinion of the selling agent would not provide a realistic investment return. This resulted in a proposal for conversion to residential use with space for homeworking which would ensure the long-term survival of the building. Indeed, the planning officer's report supported this, stating '*Reasonable to accept that residential conversion is only viable option*'. Planning permission was granted for this purpose in October 2012.

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Barns at Maisdyke Lane, Fleet (SHDC planning permission ref. H05-0393-10, granted December 2010)

This application was for conversion of barns to a dwelling, including extension and detached garage. A valuation report produced by Brown & Co indicated that conversion to offices or holiday accommodation would not be viable and that there is no demand for such a use in that locality. Planning permission was granted for the dwelling, extension and garage in December 2010.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The application for a change of use from Holiday Lets into a single dwelling will not affect the site levels or the ground floor finished floor levels from those approved under planning permission H13-0618-10. Those proposals at that time were acceptable to the Environment Agency.

PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

A pre-application was made to the planning department in November 2014 explaining that the Holiday Lets had been on the market for almost a year and that the applicant was keen to explore an alternative use as a single dwelling.

David Gedney's letter (Ref. PE-00771-2014) included reference to Local Plan policy HS16 and with regards to the Council being satisfied that the building is unsuitable for employment use or that there is no demand for suitable employment use in the locality.

The applicant has demonstrated that following one year of marketing there have been no offers to purchase the Holiday Lets. Furthermore, the planning precedents cited above demonstrate that other owners of barns have failed to achieve a successful use for their barns other than for domestic homes which SHDC have granted planning permission.

CONCLUSION

The proposal for a single dwelling will secure the long term future of the barns.

The character established via the current planning permission will not be adversely affected by the proposals as the internal layout has been carefully designed to work within the overall scale and external appearance, maintaining an authentic barn character.

The applicant has marketed the Holiday Lets for over a year and has received no interest in terms of a potential buyer (refer to separate Brown & Co report). Research of similar planning applications for barn conversions has shown that there is no demand for Business Use or Holiday Lets and that such uses are unviable.

The alternative use as a single dwelling meets the requirements of planning policy HS16. The NPPF supports homes in the countryside where there are special circumstances such as where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

Evidence has been presented of building use along the ribbon of Seas End Road & Loosegate Road and this has demonstrated that there is a majority of residential use without agricultural ties.

Planning legislation was brought about in 2014 to actively encourage the conversion of barns into homes as a permitted development right, of which this collection of barns would have met the qualifying criteria.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION APPENDED TO THIS DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Appendix A - Property Usage Study Plan.

Brown & Co marketing report for Waitte's Farm Barns (inc. sales particulars).

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