DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
(incorporating HIA)

For

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL BARN TO RESIDENTIAL DWELLING

At

HOLMLEA
MILL GATE
WHAPLODE
SPALDING
PE12 6RT

For

MRS. MARIE SPENCER

PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE

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Application Summary

- This application seeks Full Planning Approval for the restoration and conversion of a Dutch Barn to a single residential dwelling.

- The site is located outside of the Settlement Development Boundary for Whaplode and as such is in the Countryside.

- The Dutch Barn is a building form that is distinctive and is closely associated with agriculture in the South Holland District. They are a finite resource, and numbers have decreased over recent decades. This conversion presents an opportunity to secure the long-term future of the barn by finding a new use for it.

- Earlier in 2024 an application was submitted to demolish the barn and replace it with a timber lodge dwelling. That application failed to recognize the historic importance of this barn and the part that it plays in representing the development of agricultural architecture in the district. Consequently, the application was withdrawn.

- This application recognizes the part played by this barn within the Fenland landscape and seeks to ensure its survival by reusing it to create a modest dwelling.

- The building is not listed, nor is it within a conservation area, but it does have heritage value.

- The building is considered suitable for conversion under SELLP Policy 23. Prior to withdrawal of the previous application, reasons were provided for a proposed refusal and one of these was that the application failed to recognize the historic value of the barn. This reason, along with confirmation from the Conservation Officer demonstrates that the building has historic value and consequently satisfies the criteria of Policy 23 relating to historic interest.

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Site Information

Location:

The barn is located within the grounds of Holmlea on the east side of Mill Gate, approximately 800m south of the centre of Whaplode. Holmlea comprises a farmhouse, outbuildings (glasshouses, barns etc) and land totalling in the order of 6 acres, much of which is used to graze horses. The barn that forms the focus for this application (fig. 01) is located approximately 45m north of the farmhouse, close to the Mill Gate frontage. The location of the site can also be referred to via the following methods:

Grid reference	-	TF 32417 23558
Easting / Northing	-	532417, 323558
Lat/ Long	-	52º47'36''N, 000º02'15'W
What3Word	-	surpassed.quaking.twin

Refer to drawing A1731-01 for the location and extent.

Site extents:

Internally the barn footprint measures approximately 7.5m x 13.6m giving it a total internal area of around 102m2. Externally the barn sits within the wider grounds of Holmelea and it would continue to do so.



Fig. 01 – The Dutch Barn located 45m north of Holmlea.

Boundaries:

The North boundary of the barn site it located approximately 7m north of the Dutch Barn and divides the Holmlea site from the adjacent property to the north.
The West boundary is defined by a hedge that runs roughly parallel to Mill Gate.
The East boundary is defined by the west gable of the adjacent brick-built hay barn.
The South boundary will be defined by fencing part-way across the existing drive.

Views into, across, and out of the site:

Views of the Dutch Barn from outside of the site are very limited. From the west there is a view into the site from Mill Gate, though the lower section of the barn is obscured by hedging (fig. 02). From the north a section of the west end of the barn roof is visible, but the remainder of the building is obscured by trees and hedges (fig. 03). From the east, the nearest public viewpoint is on Hagbeach Gate 1km away and from this direction the Dutch Barn is obscured by the hay barn and stables (fig. 04). From the south, all views from along Mill Gate are obscured by Holmlea and the other associated outbuildings (fig.05).

There are no significant views or vistas through the site.

Looking out from the site, there is a view from the upper section of the barn westwards across Mill Gate and Thorpe's Lane to open fields beyond. To the north, all views out are obscured by trees and hedges. To the east, all views are obscured by the adjacent haybarn. To the south, views are limited to a few meters by the other barns associated with Holmlea.


Fig. 02 – View in from West (obscured by hedge etc).


Fig. 03 – View in from North (roof only visible).


Fig. 04 – View in from East (very distant)


Fig. 05 – View in from South (totally obscured).

Use and development:

The site has been in use for agricultural purposes for decades. As previously stated, there is a farmhouse and its associated barns and glasshouses, all surrounded by undeveloped land. The Dutch Barn is used to store agricultural machinery and plant. To the immediate west is a further barn that is used to store hay, and immediately beyond this is a range of stables. There are further barns used for storage approximately 10m south of this barn, on the opposite side of the access drive.

Architectural context

The Dutch Barn is set within the wider grounds of Holmlea. Holmlea itself dates from before 1887 and is a simple rectilinear structure set between gable walls with the eaves parallel to Mill Gate (fig. 06). The external wall finish was originally brick, though this has been painted and has some areas of painted render. The roof is duo-pitched and now has a tiled covering. Overall, this is typical of a modest farmhouse found in the South Holland District. Later extensions have been constructed to the rear and sides, some with pitched roof areas and some with flat. The outbuildings associated with Holmlea vary in function, design and materials. There are believed to have been 4 large glasshouses, but of these only 1 now remains. This has brick walls at low level, with glass set in timber framing above. These were originally heated. There are 2 brick-built barns (fig. 07). These are of simple form, constructed in brick with pitched roof forms. These now have corrugated sheet roof coverings. Immediately south of the Dutch Barn is another range of single storey barn buildings. These generally have timber clad walls and corrugated sheet roof coverings. The element nearest to Mill Gate has been overclad with steel sheeting. The Dutch Barn itself comprises a steel frame, set out across 3 structural bays (figs. 08 to 11 inclusive). Each frame comprises external columns which support a bow-truss, also in steel. The front and rear walls (west and east) are solidly clad with corrugated steel sheet. The south side is open, but the north side is substantially enclosed with further corrugated claddings. The curved roof has a corrugated sheet covering.


Fig. 06 – Holmlea

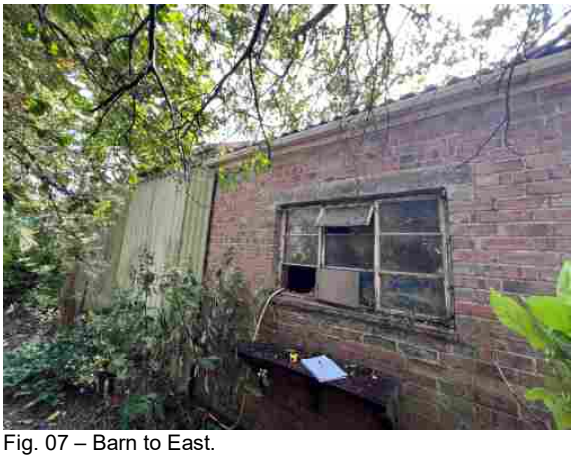

Fig. 07 – Barn to East.



Fig. 08 – Dutch Barn



Fig. 09 – Dutch Barn viewed from South.



Fig. 10 – Dutch Barn, West elevation.



Fig. 11 – Dutch Barn roof detail.

Heritage Interest

The Dutch Barn is a very distinctive building form and has become closely associated with agriculture in this district. A Heritage Statement is included later in this report.

Infrastructure and vehicle movements:

The site is located on Mill Gate and there are two access points to the wider Holmlea site on this frontage. One is immediately north of the farmhouse; this is used for parking and access to the house. The second is immediately south of the Dutch Barn and this is used to access the barns, stables and the associated land. The site has good connectivity to Spalding, Holbeach and the highway network beyond. There is a public bus service operating through the village of Whaplode, and stops are located along High Road. The speed limit is 30mph across the entrance to the site.



Fig. 12 – Visibility looking North.



Fig. 13 – Visibility looking South.

Context - general development

The site is generally surrounded by land in agricultural use. There is sporadic development along Mill Gate which becomes sparser to the south. Further north is the south edge of the village of Whaplode, where development becomes denser and is predominantly residential in nature. Its most immediate neighbours are as follows:
Immediately north of the site boundary is a large residential bungalow that sits at the centre of a substantial plot.
To the east stands the Hay Barn and stables. Beyond these there is no further built-form for at least 1.2km. Beyond this are further residential properties.
To the south stands Holmlea and then a further six properties, all of which have a residential element. These properties are generously spread along Mill Gate.
To the west there is no further development for a very significant distance.

Amenities

The site is located approximately 800m south of the village centre in which there is a limited range of amenities. Holbeach is located approximately 3.5km away and Spalding is located approximately 7.5km away, both of which offer a full range of amenities.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks approval to convert the Dutch Barn to a single residential dwelling of modest size. The barn is already of sufficient dimensions to accommodate what is required. The design approach seeks to retain the existing structure intact such that the historic form will remain visible. To achieve this only localized repairs to the frame will be needed. The existing claddings are beyond their serviceable life however these can be replaced using new to match because very similar profiles remain available. The existing frame would therefore be retained, and the new dwelling would be created inside this. Areas of existing cladding would generally be replaced so that solid areas of wall remain so. Open areas would be finished using materials appropriate for a farmyard setting which could include brickwork, timber boarding, corrugated steel sheeting and glazing. Design drawings form part of this application pack.

Planning Statement:

This application seeks to reuse an agricultural building in the countryside for residential purposes. The relevant policy within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) is number 23 the wording of which is as follows:

Policy 23: The Reuse of Buildings in the Countryside for Residential Use Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings which are located outside defined settlement boundaries to residential use will be permitted provided that:
1. the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for significant extension, alteration or rebuilding;
2. the building is of architectural or historic merit or makes a positive contribution to the character of the landscape, to justify conversion to ensure retention;
3. the proposal is in keeping with its surroundings;
4. the design is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building in terms of architectural detailing and materials of construction; and
5. development leads to an enhancement of the immediate setting of the building. South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-36 Where permission is granted, Permitted Development Rights may be removed in order to control future alterations or extensions that may impact on the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

1. The barn is capable of conversion to create a modest sized dwelling and does not require extension to achieve the space required. A separate structural report is included with this application that sets out the engineer's opinion, that supports this.
   On this basis it is considered that criterion 1 of the policy is satisfied.

2. The foregoing report and the HIA conclude that the building is of historic value and that it does make a positive contribution to this Fenland landscape. The heritage value was also acknowledged in the planning officer's report that sought to refuse permission to demolish this barn, on heritage grounds, when this was previously proposed.
   It is therefore considered that the heritage criterion is satisfied.

3. The existing Dutch Barn structure has been a part of the wider agricultural site for many decades and is a good example of a typical agricultural shed in the South Holland District. These barns were once a common sight locally, but sadly many have now been lost. The proposal seeks to retain the structure and form, and provide accommodation within in a sensitive manner. There is no doubt that this building is in keeping with its agricultural setting.
   It is therefore considered that the proposal remains in keeping with the setting and that this criterion is therefore met.

4. The design seeks to expose the existing structure throughout, and to retain the wall and roof claddings in corrugated steel form. New areas of walling are proposed to be in either brickwork, timber boarding or corrugated cladding, all of which are commonplace in an agricultural setting. Overall is it considered that the design is sensitive and seeks to retain the character of the existing barn wherever possible.
   It is therefore considered that the criterion relating to design and materials is satisfied.

5. The existing building is still used for the storage of agricultural implements, but its conversion to a dwelling will allow money to be invested in it. This will ensure its longevity, and the improved upkeep of the building and site will do much to enhance the setting. This is only achievable when a new, viable purpose, such as residential use, is permitted.
   It is therefore considered that the re-use for residential purpose will lead to an enhancement of the setting.

It is therefore considered that all criteria of policy 23 are met and as such the proposal is believed to be wholly aligned with the policy for conversion.

Summary

The Dutch Barn retains its original form and structure and has heritage value both as a building and in the contribution that it makes to the setting. The foregoing report and associated drawings have illustrated how the building could be successfully repurposed as a single dwelling. The barn would not need to be extended, and it is clear that the structure could be retained with only localized repairs. This would allow the distinctive barrel roof to be retained and provide a weather resistant cover for the new dwelling. Conversion would justify investment to improve the building fabric and to ensure that it is maintained in the future.

Regarding Policy 23, it is considered that all relevant criteria have been met and in addition there are no matters of incompatibility that would make such conversion unsuitable.

It is therefore concluded that the conversion accords with Policy 23 and that a good opportunity to ensure the long-term future of the Dutch Barn exists.

Appendix A:

Heritage Statement

Heritage Assessment

The barn proposed for conversion is not listed, however it has historic and architectural value because it is a good example of a Dutch Barn. The Dutch Barn form has a distinctive low barrel roof that originated in the Netherlands but has become closely associated with the South Holland District. These barns are a finite resource in the district and are therefore worth conserving. Due to this heritage value, the following investigations have been undertaken.

Heritage Information

Historic Map Study
An historic map study for this site indicates that there has been development on the Holmlea site since at least as early as 1887. There are however anomalies between the date stone on Holmlea and the Ordnance Survey map information. There may also be some anomalies regarding built-form on the wider site, including the Dutch Barn.

Further details are provided below.

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1887



Fig. 14 – Detail of the Ordnance Survey Six-inch map published 1887.

This is the oldest map of the site found during the production of this report. This indicates the following:
There is a building on the Mill Gate frontage, this appears to be in approximately the location of Holmlea. The other land surrounding this block is enclosed but not developed. To the north there is a well, and a further developed block, though the latter appears to be beyond the boundary of the proposal site.

Holmlea as it exists today has a date stone of 1906, so this map predates this by 19 years. Speaking to the current owners however, it is understood that a single storey cottage existed on site earlier. This was extended and increased to two storey and the date stone was added as part of those works in 1906.

This map shows a benchmark at 14.5, however no evidence of this was discovered on site.

There is further development south of the site, which appears consistent with development that exists in 2024.

The barn being considered for conversion is not shown on the 1887 map.

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1906

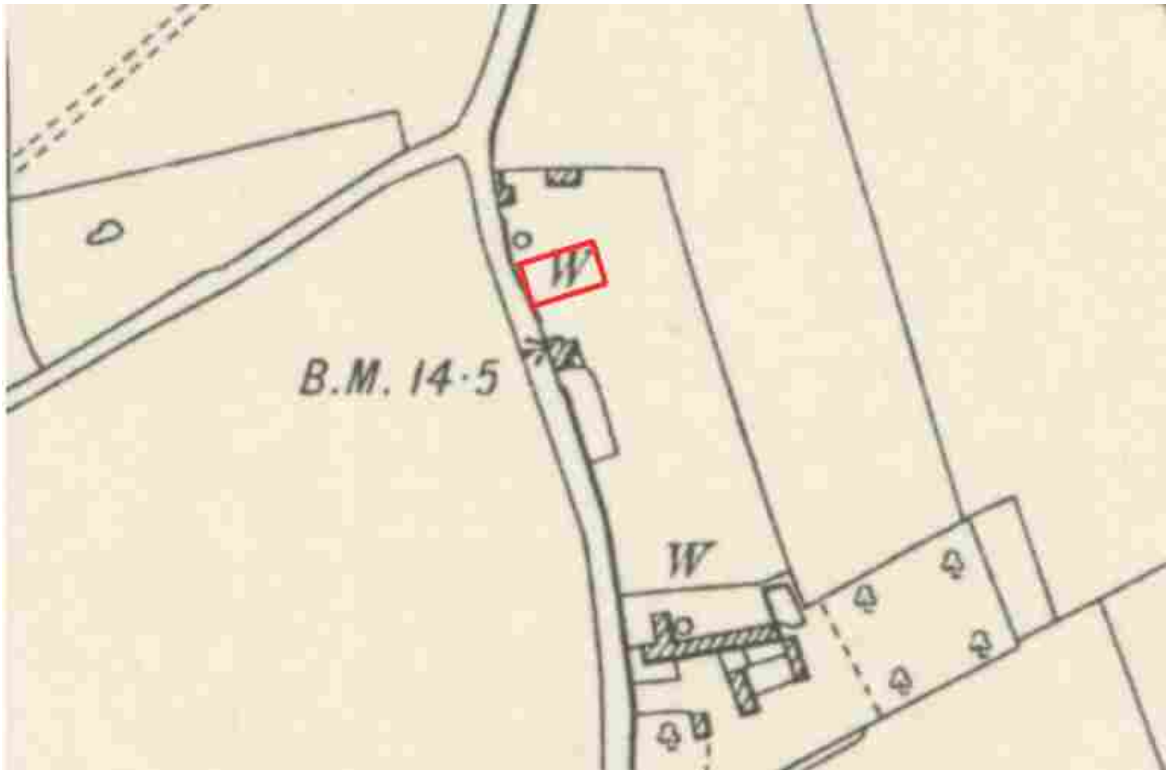


Fig. 15 – Detail of the Ordnance Survey Six-inch map published 1906.

This is the second oldest map of the site found during the production of this report. This varies little since the previous map of 1887.

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1931



Fig. 16 – Detail of the Ordnance Survey Six-inch map published 1931.

This is the third oldest map of the site found during the production of this report. This varies little since the previous map of 1906.

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1932



Fig. 17 – Detail of the Ordnance Survey Six-inch map published 1932.

This is the fourth oldest map of the site found during the production of this report.
This varies from the previous map of 1931 in that there is now a further block shown north of Holmlea, approximately in the area of the Dutch Barn. Its form and exact location cannot however be confirmed accurately from this information.
Holmlea now appears to be divided off from the block to the north, by a hedge, fence or wall.

This shows the benchmark being changed from 14.5 to 13.66

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1948

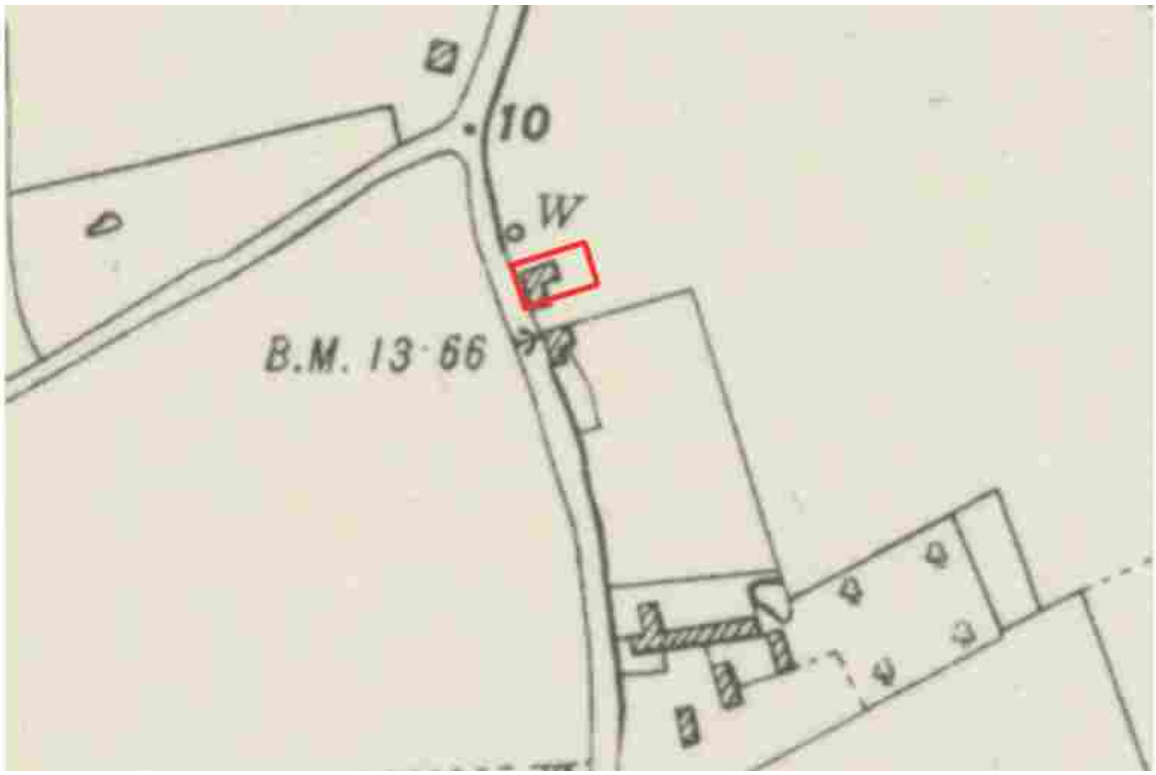


Fig. 18 – Detail of the Ordnance Survey Six-inch map published 1953.

This is the fifth oldest map of the site found during the production of this report. This varies little since the previous map of 1932.

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1951

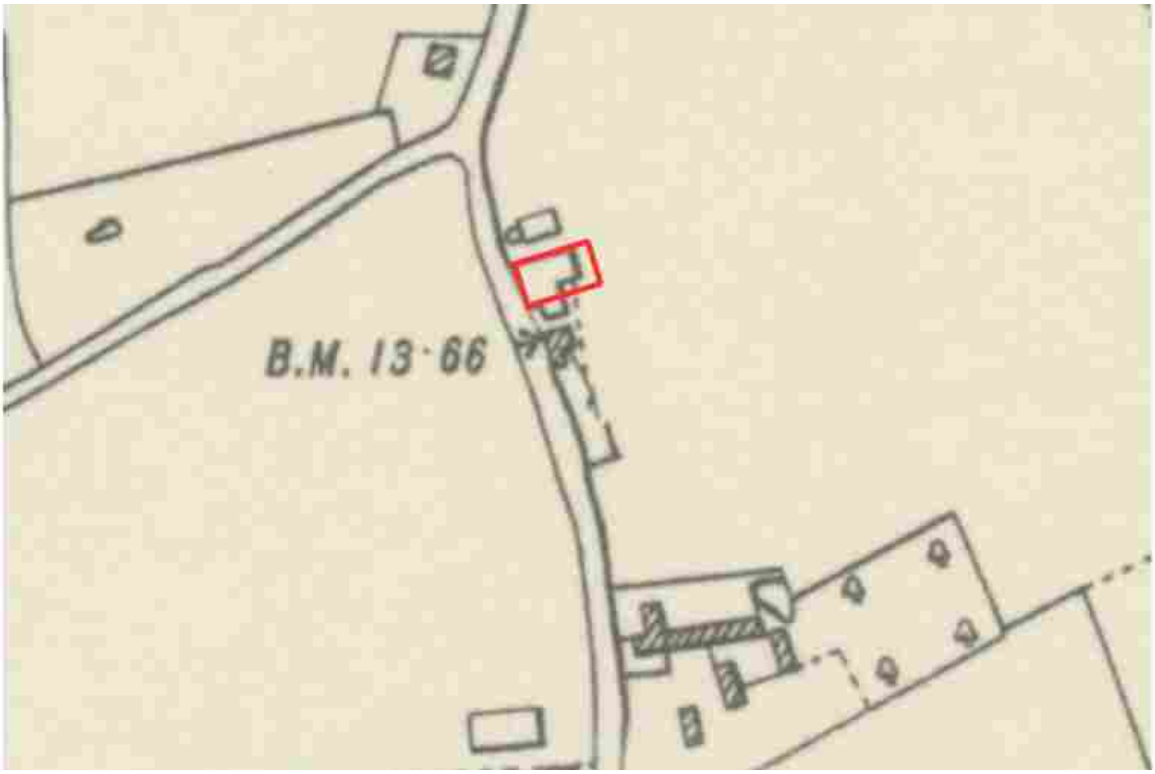


Fig. 19 – Detail of the Ordnance Survey Six-inch map published 1951.

This is the most recent historic map of the site found during the production of this report. This indicates 2 blocks north of Holmlea in the vicinity of the Dutch Barn. Again however, the information is inconclusive.

In summary, the range of historic maps available runs from 1887 to 1951. These indicate a dwelling at Holmlea from at least as early as 1887. Although not indicated by the maps, it is known that Holmlea was extended in 1906, the date at which the date stone was added. There is no development shown north of Holmlea in the vicinity of the existing Dutch Barn until the 1932 edition of the map, but even at that date it cannot be accurately concluded as to whether the block is the Dutch Barn. Inconsistency in the presentation of information across the map date range 1932 to 1951 also fails to confirm the situation with any degree of accuracy. Unfortunately, there are also no known historic photographs of this site that might provide further information.

The lack of a block in the location of the Dutch Barn on the earlier maps cannot be accurately taken as evidence that the barn did not exist at that stage. On a recent study of a site in Tydd St. Mary, a whole range of barns which was captured on a historic aerial photograph (approximate date known) fails to appear on any Ordnance Survey maps from the correct date range. The Dutch Barn also has no date markings, so it is feasible that it could have been erected elsewhere earlier, and then moved to this site.

Overall this study remains inconclusive.

Aerial image dated approximately 1999



Fig. 20 – Aerial image circa 1999 (Google Earth)

This aerial image from Google Earth from 1999 shows development at that date. It terms of built development, the Dutch Barn is clearly shown. There are 4 glasshouses immediately north of Holmlea.

Aerial image dated approximately 2005



Fig. 21 – Aerial image circa 2005 (Google Earth)

This aerial image from Google Earth from 2005 is similar to 1999 except that the glasshouses have now been removed.

Aerial image dated approximately 2016



Fig. 22 – Aerial image circa 2016 (Google Earth).

This Google Earth image from 2016 shows development very similar to 2005 except that a polytunnel structure has now been erected in place of one of the previous glasshouses.

Aerial image dated approximately 2020



Fig. 23 – Aerial image circa 2020 (Google Earth).

This aerial image from Google Earth from 2020 shows development largely as it now exists, except that there is now a second polytunnel type building (on the site of the western-most glass house). No significant changes have occurred since 2016.

Current OS Mapping

The current OS map for the site is included as a separate drawing (A1731-01) and shows the site as it exists today.

Historic Local Knowledge

At present the only local knowledge available is concerning the rebuild of Holmlea in 1906. No information was obtained specifically relating to the Dutch Barn.

Statement of Significance

The foregoing establishes that the Dutch Barn is not listed, nor are any of the other buildings on the Holmlea site. The historic map study is inconclusive and does not show any of the outbuildings even though they clearly pre-date the publication date of the map. There is a possibility that some of the buildings, including the Dutch Barn, may have been relocated here after use elsewhere on another site, certainly this would be possible with Dutch Barn construction. This issue of missing information on historic OS maps was also the encountered for another site in Tydd St. Mary considered recently in a separate application. Nonetheless, the Dutch Barn does feature typical details, materials and form of this building type. The building also makes a contribution to the general setting of the site, as well as being a typical form for the district. It is therefore concluded that the Dutch Barn has both historic and architectural value and that this is found within its form, details and materials.

Heritage Impact Assessment

The building is currently used for small-scale agricultural storage, albeit that this is a low-grade use with little financial consequence. In such circumstances deterioration generally occurs because there is insufficient funding, or interest to ensure that an appropriate maintenance regime is implemented. Whilst the building remains structurally sound, unless it receives maintenance and occasional upgrade it will eventually become derelict.

The proposal seeks approval to convert the barn into a modest dwelling. The scheme drawings demonstrate that this can easily be achieved without the need to extend either the footprint or the volume. The proposal would ensure that the distinctive low-barrel roof clad with corrugate sheet metal would be retained; this is considered significant as it is the key feature of the building. Below eaves level the building structure comprises a grid of structural support columns arranged in regular bays. The building line for the external walls of the dwelling generally will sit inside these, ensuring that the columns remain exposed, expressing the structure. Finally, areas of the barn have solid cladding, again of the corrugated steel type. The proposal drawings largely retain this. New openings for windows and doors will be required, however the majority will be in areas that are currently open, ensuring that the solid nature of the east and west end walls is retained.

All conversions present compromises. Taking a purely conservation approach would suggest minimum intervention, but would leave the building without a future use, which would in turn risk deterioration and eventual collapse. Conversion requires more than

minimal intervention but does provide a new use with economic consequence that will ensure the longevity of the building. In this case, on balance, it is considered that the changes required by the conversion outweigh the losses because they will ultimately ensure that this traditional form continues to exist. Whilst there will be some loss, this is not considered significant, particularly because the change can be achieved sympathetically.

END