

BRISTON – LA/23/2049– Development of existing barn complex to form 11no dwellings with associated car parking and landscaping, including ground mounted PV Array, (Listed Building Consent) Manor Farm, 44 Fakenham Road, Briston, Melton Constable, Norfolk, NR24 2HJ

Listed Building Consent

Target Date: 17 November 2023

Extension of Time: 27 September 2024

Case Officer: Mark Brands

Listed Building Consent

RELEVANT CONSTRAINTS:

Site is located in the countryside

Landscape Character Assessment - Tributary Farmland

Grade II Listed building – Manor Farm House (list entry 1049240) the farmhouse is the principal structure, the grouping of farmyard buildings are considered accessory to this listing.

Within Nutrient Neutrality Zone (discharge)

GIRAMS Zones of Influence (various)

EA Risk Surface Water Flooding

THE APPLICATION:

The proposal is for the change of use and associated works to convert former agricultural buildings to create 8 no. dwellings and demolition of existing barn and replacement with 3 no. dwellings to create in total 11 no. dwellings, with associated car parking and landscaping, including ground mounted PV Array

Further details / amendments received during the course of the application (relevant to LBC)

- Proposed site plan, drawing no. PP.500 Rev. E, received 11 July 2024
- Barn 1 proposed plans, elevations and section, drawing no. B1.PP.1001 Rev. A
- Barn 2 proposed plans, elevations and section, drawing no. B2.PP.1001 Rev A
- Barn 5 proposed plans, elevations and section, drawing no. B5.PP.1005 Rev B
- Barn 6 proposed plans, elevations and section, drawing no. B6.PP.1006 Rev A
- Barn 7 proposed plans, elevations and section, drawing no. B7.PP.1007 Rev. A
- Barn 8 and 9 proposed plans, drawing no. B8.PP.1008 Rev. A
- Barn 8 proposed elevations and sections, drawing no. B8.PP.1009 Rev. A
- Barns 10, 11 and 12 proposed plans, drawing no. B8.PP.1010 Rev. A
- Barns 10, 11 and 12 proposed elevations and sections, drawing no. B8.PP.1011 Rev A
- Battery store and outbuilding proposed plans, elevations and sections, drawing no. OBS.PP.1012 Rev A
- Carport and bin store proposed plans, elevations and sections, drawing no. OBS.PP.1013 Rev A

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

Reference PF/23/2048 (associated application)

Description	Development of existing barn complex to form 11no dwellings with associated car parking and landscaping, including ground mounted PV Array
Outcome	Pending consideration, this is a joint planning application, to be determined concurrently with this application
Reference	LA/23/1850
Description	Re-building of roadside gable wall to barn
Outcome	Approved 19.10.2023
Reference	PU/23/1033
Description	Change of use of agricultural building to 3no. "larger" dwellinghouse (Class C3) and building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion
Outcome	Permission not required 16.08.2023

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

On the basis of the Council's Scheme of Delegation any development including ground mounted solar panels that have a capacity in excess of 250kw and **the site area exceeds the 0.5 hectare threshold** set out within paragraph 6.2 (4) (b), in this case the site would exceed this threshold (NOTE: The accompanying FULL application exceeds the constitutional requirements)

CONSULTATIONS:

Briston Parish Council – objects (full comments on public site, summary below)

- Concerns over the scale of development, design, out of character with rest of village.
- Concerns over properties being used as second homes (request legal restrictions)
- Concerns services unable to cope with additional development, particularly the sewage system, Astley School and Melton Constable doctors' surgery.
- Concerns about additional vehicular traffic

Conservation and Design (NNDC) – Comments (following revisions made to the plans to address comments originally made).

Summarising, C&D would reiterate overarching support for these proposals on the basis that they offer a means of securing the future of an important designated heritage asset. We would also stress that much of the scheme has now been appropriately specified and detailed and would adequately mitigate much of the heritage harm.

At the same time, however, the originally expressed concerns around the two new build extensions on Units 1 & 3 have not gone away – in essence they are still considered to be inappropriate for the host buildings and the wider group. Therefore, for the Local Planning Authority to set aside these concerns, it would not only need to be satisfied that there is a justifiable need for these additions but also that there would be sufficient public benefits accruing from the scheme to outweigh the 'less than substantial' harm identified. Otherwise, the application could not be considered compliant under para 208 of the NPPF.

REPRESENTATIONS:

1 public comment received, **supporting** proposals. Summary of the comments can be found below (full comments can be found on the public site);

- Enhances this area of the village
- Utilises an existing site instead of greenfield
- Sufficient parking
- Ecological and biodiversity enhancements
- Should be restrictions during construction period, and ensure not used as second homes

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS:

Art. 8: The right to respect for private and family life.

Art. 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions

Having considered the above matters, APPROVAL of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are not considered to be material to this case.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

North Norfolk Core Strategy (September 2008):

Policy SS 1 - Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk

Policy SS 2 - Development in the Countryside

Policy SS 4 - Environment

Policy EN 2 - Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character

Policy EN 4 - Design

Policy EN 8 - Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Policy HO 8 – House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

Policy HO 9 - Conversion and Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework:

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 - Decision-making

Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Other material documents/guidance:

North Norfolk Design Guide (December 2008)

OFFICER ASSESSMENT:

Main Issues:

- 1. Principle of development**
- 2. Impact on heritage Assets**
- 3. Planning balance and conclusion**

1. Principle of development

The site lies to the north of Fakenham Road, comprising a cluster of agricultural buildings, located outside of a settlement boundary, and therefore designated as 'countryside' under Policy SS 1 of the North Norfolk Strategy, which sets out the spatial strategy for the North Norfolk district. Briston and Melton Constable are designated as a Service Village in the settlement hierarchy under SS 1 (where a small amount of new development is supported to support rural sustainability), and this settlement boundary includes dwellings opposite the application site, on the south side of Fakenham Road

In areas designated as countryside, Policy SS 2 restricts development to that which requires a rural location and is for the types of development listed in the policy. This includes the conversion of suitable agricultural buildings to appropriate uses and replacement dwellings.

2. Impact on Heritage Assets.

Core Strategy Policy EN 4 states that all development will be of a high quality design and reinforce local distinctiveness. Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable. In this case the proposal is of a good visual design, demonstrating a good understanding of the context of the building and site and respecting its character.

Policy HO 8 permits the replacement of dwellings in the countryside where the proposal would not result in a disproportionately large increase in height or scale of the original dwellings and would not materially increase the impact of the dwelling on the appearance of the surrounding countryside.

Policy HO 9 allows for the conversion and reuse of buildings in the Countryside to dwellings subject to this being in an appropriate location, worthy of retention, structurally sound and suitable for conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension and the alterations protect or enhance the building and its setting and of an appropriate scale.

Policy EN 8 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of designated assets, historic buildings/structures, monuments, landscapes and their settings through high quality, sensitive design. This policy also seeks to ensure that the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is preserved, and where possible enhanced, encouraging the highest quality building design, townscape creation and landscaping in keeping with these defined areas.

When considering applications for listed building consent, Section 16(2) of the of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

'In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

When considering proposals or works affecting listed buildings, Section 66(1) of the of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

This obligation, found in Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, applies to all decisions concerning listed buildings. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.

In drafting the legislation, Parliament's intention was that *'decision makers should give "considerable importance and weight" to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings' when carrying out the balancing exercise'.*

The barns to be converted are located amongst a cluster of agricultural buildings and the Grade II Listed farmhouse and historically forms part of the same grouping, its conversion to a C3 use is therefore appropriate. It has been demonstrated through the structural report that the barns are generally in a sound structural condition and readily adaptable for conversion to residential accommodation and are not considered to require substantial rebuilding. See summary from the structural report below:

'To summarise, provided civil and structural design, construction, repair, and maintenance works are all undertaken in accordance with modern codes of practice and regulations; and following the advice and recommendations in this report, there is no reason why the existing barns 1-8 cannot be converted into habitable domestic properties that will be structurally sound for many years to come'.

Barns 10, 11, 12 (following demolition of existing barn A)

The agricultural building to be demolished and replaced with 3 no. dwellings (each comprising 4 bedrooms) benefits from a Class Q permission (PU/23/1033), confirming the works fall under the scope of Permitted Development in accordance with the conditions and limitations imposed by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). This includes the requirement set out within Article 3(1) that regulations 75-78 of The Conservation and Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) are complied with, concerning nutrient neutrality. A Regulation 77 application has been undertaken and accepted to demonstrate the development would be nutrient neutral under CD/24/0243. The Class Q conversion is therefore considered by the Local Planning Authority to be a viable fallback position in considering the proposals to replace the barn with 3 new units, subject to compliance with design and the replacement dwelling policy.

Following revisions made to the plans, to address concerns raised regarding the ridgeline, and use of dormers affecting the agrarian character of the site, the dormers have been omitted, and instead features rooflights to reduce the visual impact, and provide appropriate lighting

and means of escape. The end unit (12) has been increased to full 2 storey to break up the roofline, with the other two units subordinate with a lower scale 1.5 storey. The block would have prominence to the western side of the site, given this doesn't have a historic association with the rest of the site, a more contemporary build and material approach is appropriate to avoid disrupting the context and character of the rest of the site and its collective value. The inappropriate domestic features of the dormers have been omitted, and the materials are considered compatible with such a site, with facing brickwork, cladding and black metal roof.

The existing modern agricultural barn is of negligible aesthetic value, it is of a utilitarian form and scale. The proposed replacement is not considered to materially increase the impact of the barn / new dwellings on the surrounding landscape. The maximum height doesn't exceed the ridgeline height of the existing barn, the extent of the built form would be extended outside of the current footprint but within the overall built-up envelope of the site, with the extended part being to the south over the hardstanding area to the front of the existing barn, alongside the other barn range to the east. Additionally, the proposed building would be narrower and is more appropriate, with a proportionate scale and profile. The form is considered of a good visual design, sympathetic to the surroundings according with policies EN 4, HO 8 of the Local Plan.

Conversion of barns 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (and demolition of existing barns B, C, D, E)

Barns 1, 2 and 3

Barn 1 is located at the northern part of the site, comprises a simple linear cartshed with traditional brick and flint detailing (support posts have been rebuilt). Adjacent to the south is Barn 2, comprising a characterful two-storey granary with arched bays at first floor level and restrained fenestration above. Barn 3 is located to the southwest and similar to Barn 1, being single storey, traditionally detailed, appears to have housed livestock and is of a simple linear form. The proposed conversions of these structures seeks to create 3 dwellings, Barn 1 comprising 4 bedrooms, barns 2 and 3 comprising 3 bedrooms.

Revisions were made to the plans to address concerns raised by the Conservation Officer, including to the rooflights location and positions and removal of canopies to ensure better visual appearance and balance, avoiding an overly domestic appearance. The means of conversion of Barn 2 is considered appropriate, retaining and respecting the character of the former granary and its utilisation of existing openings. Barns 1 and 3 include perpendicular contemporary extensions, which would complicate the simple linear forms of these buildings and sit uncomfortably against the modest barn structures.

The extension to barn 1 would project by around 13m from the east elevation and have a width of 6.4m (the projection includes the articulated small link to the main part of the extension measuring 1.4m with a width of 4.6m, ensuring there is a set back from the main part of the extension), creating an additional footprint of 78sqm.

The extension to barn 3 would project by around 9m from the south wall and have a width of 5.6m (the projection includes the articulated small link to the main part of the extension measuring 1.3m, with a width of 5.1m, ensuring a set back from the main part of the extension), creating an additional footprint of 49sqm. The proposals fundamentally alter the underlying form and character of the buildings. The extensions are articulated from the linking structure. These elements would be large, dominating and will exacerbate the harm already created to the simple form of the buildings. Barn 3 has south elevation openings however the elevation

is extensively re-worked, rather than utilising the existing openings. The proposals lack sensitivity and detrimentally affect the character of this building.

The means of conversion of barns 1 and 3 would therefore conflict with local policy considerations, as policy HO 9 sets out such conversion proposals should only be permitted where substantial rebuilding or extensions, and the alterations protect or enhance the character of the building and its setting. Additionally, EN 4 sets out that the scale and massing of new development relates sympathetically to the surroundings. The extensions are inappropriate for the host buildings and the wider grouping, Officers consider that the harm to Barns 1 & 3 and their contribution to the wider historic group weighs against the grant of planning permission.

Policy EN 8 supports the re-use of listed buildings and associated curtilage listed buildings but requires development proposals to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the designated assets. In this case the extensions would result in harm and would be contrary to Policy EN 8. This harm is less than substantial to the significance of the designated asset and as such, in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF, this harm would need to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. This assessment of the harm against the public benefits of the development will be set out further in the report when considered against the whole development of the site.

Demolition of barns B, C, D, E

The proposal includes demolition of later low aesthetic value barns and infill structures, returning the site to the original layout of barns. These are of low quality, and do not make a positive contribution to the grouping of agricultural buildings, their demolition would be a positive intervention, and better reveal the significance of the historic group, and scope for enhancing the overall setting of the grade II listed entity, with the land being repurposed as gardens for the barn conversions. This aspect is therefore in accordance with local policy considerations.

Carport (Barn 4), bike and bin stores

Barn 4 is an older building, and probably has its roots within the historic group, however this has been heavily altered over time and now lacks any real significance towards the historic group. As such there are no objections to this building's demolition and would also represent a logical position for a new carport and bin store structure to replace this. The proposed new building would affectively reinstate the built form and enclosure within the middle of the site. The new Barn 4 carport and bin store building would provide parking provision for barns 2, 3 and 7 and the bin store serving units 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12. The outbuilding to the front adjacent to Barn 8/9 would be converted to provide a bike store and bin store to serving the rest of the units (5, 6, 8, 9).which is considered an appropriate reuse of this smaller structure to the front of the site. Limited works are required to accommodate this use. The new building and conversion of the outbuilding are therefore considered acceptable.

Barns 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Barn 5 appears to be the oldest building in the group and sits immediately adjacent to the '*principal*' listed house, this 18th century threshing barn is the most important of the '*accessory*' structures on the site. The proposal seeks to convert the barn into a 3 bedroom property. The front elevation mostly utilises existing openings. Revisions were made to the plans to address concerns raised including the removal of rooflights and repositioning of flue. The existing sliding barn doors and track are to be renovated/ repaired and retained, set in an open position.

New openings are rational and the means of conversion is both appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the building, retaining key characteristics and features.

Barn 6 is dominated by its asymmetric form and prominent south-facing roof slope, this particularly building is a relatively inanimate within the wider historic group but is important to the visual context of the immediately adjacent Barn 5. The building has been altered over time, it lacks the level of significance found elsewhere in the group. Nonetheless, by virtue of its age and focal position, it still makes a positive contribution to the group as a whole. The proposal seeks to convert this into a 4 bedroom property. The means of conversion is considered appropriate, utilising and reinstating openings. Revisions have been made omitting a rooflight, and reducing the rooflight over the stairs, The rooflight does raise some concern, but this has been reduced, recognising there would be limited options to provide alternative lighting in this section. The rear ground floor opening has been amended and is more commensurately sized.

Barn 7 comprises a former piggery with outside feeder pens, its use can be easily discerned through its arrangement of openings. The proposals seek to convert this into a 4 bedroom property. The means of conversion is considered appropriate, making use of existing openings. The canopy and Juliette balcony has been omitted and rooflight reduced addressing concerns previously raised, the means of conversion is on balance considered appropriate.

Barns 8 and 9 are to all intent a single structure, being a single isled threshing barn. It is an attractive and commanding building standing gable end to the road and which faces directly back to the listed house. With its catslide roof and ridgeline vents to the fore, it most definitely enhances and gives meaning to the overall setting of the heritage asset. Equally, it has a significant want of repair (most obviously the roadside gable which is due for reconstruction). It is currently shrouded by unsightly structures on its western side (barns D and E). It is therefore urgently in need of attention and a viable reuse. The proposal would convert this building into 2 no. 3 bedroom properties. The plans have been revised, reducing the rooflights on the west elevation, and reducing the openings on the east elevation, reducing the visual impact from the size and cumulative impact from the openings on the original plans and reducing the loss of historic fabric. The roof vents are to be removed, which would result in the loss of a feature that reinforces the building's function, utilitarian appearance and visual interest at a high level. Regrettably the vents have been found to be made of asbestos and not suitable for retention, on balance their loss is considered acceptable.

The proposals would also result in the partial demolition of the farmyard wall to facilitate parking which would result in no more than a localised harm, which is otherwise accepted in the interests of creating a workable layout

Summary

Overall, the means of conversion of the barns is broadly acceptable and would accord with local policy considerations which seek to ensure that conversions are undertaken in an appropriate and sympathetic manner, respecting the characteristics of the site and preserving the historic fabric. The means of conversion would utilise existing openings, to reduce the external impacts from the conversion and keeping domestication to a minimum, to ensure the agrarian character of the site and grouping of barns are respected keeping new openings limited and rationalised. Internal and external features are being restored and retained where possible.

There is an overarching support from Officers for these proposals, as a means of securing the future of an important designated heritage asset. Harm has been mitigated through revisions

made. However, support is not unequivocal, the notable exceptions of the large uncharacteristic and dominating perpendicular extensions to barns 1 and 3 is most unfortunate. This harm would need to be weighed against the public benefits accruing from the proposals to be compliant with paragraph 208 of the NPPF. Subject to satisfying this aspect, the proposals would broadly be compliant with the local conversion, conservation and design considerations.

3. Planning Balance and Conclusion

While there is overarching support for the proposals, harm has been identified with the extensions proposed to barns 1 and 3. Accordingly under paragraph 208 of the NPPF, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

In this case, Officer's planning judgement rests that the public benefits would outweigh the harm created by inappropriate extensions to barns 1 and 3, and the residual harm associated with converting the collection of agricultural properties to residential use and associated domestication required (such as new openings and fenestration etc).

The redevelopment would make a positive contribution towards the shortfall in the local housing supply. The redevelopment would ensure the long-term preservation of the barns and better reveal the barns through demolitions of modern structures that do not make a positive contribution on the site, thereby improving the overall setting of the designated asset. Additionally, the barn subject of the Class Q conversion would be demolished and redeveloped with a more appropriately designed building. This includes breaking up the bulk with different ranges while ensuring this wouldn't compete or dilute the character of the site with the more traditional barns through use of metal sheeting resulting in a far superior design compared to implementing the prior approval. In addition, a commuted sum would be provided and other S106 contributions that would also derive a local public benefit.

Without these additions this could affect the deliverability of the proposals. This would lead to uncertainty for the future of these former agricultural buildings which make a positive contribution to the designated asset with the grouping value from the associated barns. The preservation of the barns and enhancements of the site in addition to the other public benefits are considered to comply with the tests set out in paragraph 208 of the NPPF, and accordingly, on balance would accord with the aspirations of the Local Plan and provisions within the NPPF and recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVAL subject to:

1. Imposition of conditions including any considered necessary by the Assistant Director - Planning including matters relating to:

- **Time Limit for implementation**
- **In accordance with approved plans**
- **Materials and joinery details**
- **Reuse of clay pantiles (any shortfall made up from compatible materials)**

- **Details and samples of the brocks and wall copings**
- **Rooflights flush-fitting conservation examples**
- **Flues to be matt black or grey finish**

Final wording of conditions to be delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning.