

Enforcement Case Report

Enf case reference: ENF/25/0187

Alleged Breach: Removal of barn and the creation of a new dwelling

Address: Scottow Barn, North Walsham Road, Scottow, NR21 5BZ

The purpose of this report is to detail the Enforcement Teams actions within the Enforcement case and outline the evidence gathered throughout the investigation.

Date: 10.07.2026

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Development Committee with a comprehensive overview of the actions taken by the Planning Enforcement Team, outline the evidence gathered during the investigation, and establish the Council's current enforcement position regarding the site.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report has been prepared at the request of the Development Committee. It details the investigative steps taken by the Planning Enforcement Case Officer and presents the evidentiary basis for the Council's findings.

2.2 The site benefits from previous planning permissions **RV/24/1618** and **RV/24/1619** (which varied the original permission **PF/12/1181**). These permissions consented to the conversion of a former public house and function room into two detached dwellings, incorporating specific conditions relating to approved plans (Condition 2) and landscaping (Condition 15).

2.3 The focus of this investigation is the structural integrity and subsequent removal of the barn intended for conversion. Appended to this report are site photographs capturing the timeline of compliance visits, alongside pre-collapse photographic evidence provided by the owner.

3. Enforcement Investigation Timeline

- **June 2025 | Initial Notification:** The Council received a report alleging that the substantial majority of the barn structure had been removed, leaving only the front elevation wall standing. Photograph supplied with report shown at **Appendix.6**.
- **16 June 2025 | Initial Site Visit:** The Enforcement Officer inspected the site and confirmed that the side and rear elevations, along with the roof structure, were entirely absent. Only the front wall remained, which was structurally compromised and held up by temporary wooden shoring. No personnel were present on site. *(Photographs at Appendix 3).*

- **June – September 2025 | Contact Attempts:** The Enforcement Officer made repeated attempts to contact both the site owner and the appointed Planning Agent to seek clarification; no responses were initially received.
- **20 September 2025 | Agent Clarification:** The Planning Agent responded to formal contact, confirming they were no longer instructed on the project.
- **23 September 2025 | Second Site Visit:** A follow-up inspection revealed that reconstruction works had commenced. The side and rear walls had been entirely rebuilt and were nearing lintel height. Again no one was present at the time of the visit.
- **13–14 October 2025 | Formal Owner Response:** Following formal correspondence sent by the Enforcement Officer on 13 October, the owner responded on 14 October providing a written summary of the events leading to the demolition. ***(Owner's Summary at Appendix 1).***
- **16 October 2025 | Site Meeting:** The Enforcement Officer met the owners on site.
 - **Owner's Explanation:** The owner stated that during the removal of the asbestos roof, the loss of structural tie-ins caused the northern elevation and a portion of the eastern (rear) wall to collapse. Due to immediate safety concerns regarding the stability of the southern wall and its proximity to a neighbouring boundary, the owners proactively demolished the remaining eastern wall.
 - **Officer Assessment:** The Enforcement Officer was concerned that inadequate structural shoring had been implemented prior to removing the roof. The owner confirmed that 9 pallets of original bricks had been salvaged to rebuild the structure in visual conformity with the previously approved plans. The Officer advised the owner that due to the extent of the demolition, the original conversion permission had likely been lost. ***(Photographs at Appendix 4).***
- **16 -21 October 2025 |** The owners provided structural calculation sheets and photographs detailing the poor state of the original building structure ***(Appendix 2).***
- **28 October 2025 | Enforcement Panel Review:** The case was presented to the internal Enforcement Panel. The panel's recommendation was to invite the owners to submit a retrospective planning application and Listed Building Consent. This is ultimately the only route available to the owners to try and regularise the breach of planning controls.
- **3 November 2025 | Application Submitted:** A retrospective planning application was validated by the Council- this has a Council reference PF/25/2438.
- **3 December 2025 | Cessation of Works:** The Enforcement Officer identified that construction works were continuing on site despite the pending application. The Officer issued an ultimatum that works must cease voluntarily, or the Council would

immediately serve a Temporary Stop Notice (TSN). The owners agreed to a voluntary cessation of works.

- **December 2025 – Present | Monitoring:** Regular monitoring visits have been undertaken by the Enforcement Team. No further works have been detected, and the Council is satisfied that the site remains inactive. The enforcement case is currently held in abeyance pending the determination of the planning application. **Appendix.5** shows further photographs from site visit in 2026.

4. Conclusions and Summary of Findings

4.1 Loss of Original Structure: Investigation evidence confirms that by June 2025, the original barn structure had been effectively demolished, save for a single, shored-up front wall.

4.2 Structural Failure Mechanism: Based on evidence and the owner's admission, the removal of the roof caused a loss of structural integrity, leading to partial collapse of the north and east elevation and the subsequent deliberate demolition of the eastern wall. This structural failure is attributed to a lack of preventative shoring during the removal of the roof.

4.3 Failure to Notify: At no point during the structural failure or subsequent demolition did the owner or their contractors contact the Council to report the incident or seek emergency planning guidance.

4.4 Intent to Replicate: The owner's clear intent is to construct a replica building using salvaged and matching materials to mirror the physical appearance of the originally approved conversion.

4.5 Final Enforcement Position: It is the professional opinion of the Planning Enforcement Team that the operations undertaken on site have significantly exceeded the scope of a 'conversion'. As a matter of law, the total demolition of the original fabric means the original planning permission for a conversion has been lost. The ongoing reconstruction, therefore, constitutes the unauthorised erection of a new dwelling in the countryside.

Appendices (*attached below*)

Appendix 1: Owner's Summary of Events

Appendix 2: Owner's Photographs of building in poor structural condition

Appendix 3: Planning Enforcement Officer Site Inspection Photographs (16 June 2025)

Appendix 4: Planning Enforcement Officer Site Inspection Photographs (16 October 2025)

Appendix 5: Planning Enforcement Officer Site Inspection Photographs (8 January 2026)

Appendix 6: Photograph provided with the report.

Appendix 7: Photographs of Barn prior to works commencing.

Appendix 1: Owner's Summary of Events (14 October 2025)

As requested, I'm sending a summary of the situation to date. When we bought the property, we had no idea how bad the brickwork actually was and it wasn't until the asbestos roof was removed and the rotten boards underneath, that we realised actually how bad the walls were. The bricks were extremely eroded in certain areas, both on the outside and inside and literally crumbled to the touch. A lot, particularly on the South gable were so eroded that there was not even half a brick's thickness left which concerned us a great deal.

Literally within hours of the roof being removed, we were in the garden when the North gable end teetered and fell down before our eyes. We were absolutely horrified and saddened but also relieved that nobody was hurt, if it had landed on anybody they would almost certainly have been killed. We sometimes have friends or neighbours pop in to have a chat with us and see how things are going and we were extremely concerned about that happening again, with the walls being so unpredictable. We erected metal gates across the property as a safety precaution to prevent people just walking in and temporarily braced the remaining walls until we could make a decision on what cause of action to take. We were especially worried about the front wall as it was leaning out so much.

The South gable end was a mix of block work and bricks which again was leaning outwards and we were absolutely worried sick that the same thing might happen, and this wall would most definitely have hit the neighbour's house due to its close proximity, so for our peace of mind (and for the neighbours I'm sure), we removed the blocks and bricks one at a time. The bricks crumbled and there were very few bricks that we were able to retrieve from this wall that were any good to be re-used.

We soon realised that the walls were far too dangerous to work around so we made the decision to remove and clean as many bricks as possible to be re-laid with new mortar making the building a safe place to be near again

We are keen to re-use the old bricks and we have spent weeks, if not months, sorting through all the bricks that fell and we have retained, cleaned and kept these to use on the property as it's rebuilt.

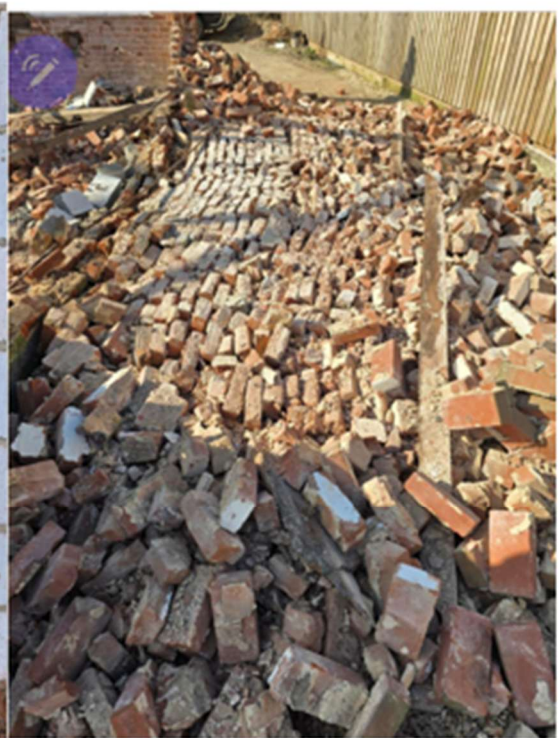
It became apparent that it was the roof structure which had been holding up the badly eroded walls, due to many years of neglect.

This is certainly not something we wanted and certainly didn't budget for at the time we purchased the property. However, we are knee deep now and are pushing forward the best we can.

I hope this provides you with some information as to where we are now but will discuss on Thursday when we meet.

Appendix 2: Owner's Photographs of collapse and building in poor structural condition





Appendix 3- Site visit photo 19 June 2025

Western elevation (Front)



View from the adjacent field- North elevation



Appendix 4: Planning Enforcement Officer Site Inspection Photographs (16 October 2025)

Western elevation (Front)



Eastern elevation (Rear)





Evidence of retained bricks



Appendix 5: Planning Enforcement Officer Site Inspection Photographs (8 January 2026)

Eastern elevation (Rear)



Northern elevation (Side)



Inside the barn



Appendix 6- Photograph provided with report of breach.



Appendix.7- Barn prior to works commencing

Western elevation (Front)





Eastern elevation (Rear)



