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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CONVERSION OF TRADITIONAL FARM
BUILDING AT VILLA FARMYARD, CLEATHAM, GAINSBOROUGH, LINCS
DN21 3HY**

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. PLANNING HISTORY
3. POLICY
4. THE APPLICATION
5. USE
6. AMOUNT
7. LAYOUT
8. SCALE
9. LANDSCAPING
10. APPEARANCE
11. ACCESS
12. PROTECTED SPECIES
13. STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY
14. CONCLUSION
15. APPENDICES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The property, Cleatham Villa Farm, is an agricultural yard made up of a number of traditional agricultural buildings, together with a number of "more modern" buildings including circular grain storage bins.
- 1.3 Cleatham Villa barns are located in a rural location, under 2 miles north-west of Kirton Lindsey adjacent to the B1400. National Grid Reference – SE 922015. The yard is well served by several accesses from the B1400, a well maintained road linking the A159 to the A15.
- 1.4 The traditional farm buildings are now redundant in terms of modern farming use and the more modern buildings on the site are virtually redundant, out of date and reaching the end of their useful lives. The yard is no longer a useful asset for the farm and is becoming increasingly derelict as it goes out of use.
- 1.5 The traditional buildings are generally in good condition, but increasingly requiring expensive maintenance without any viable end farming use. At present although a potential asset, they are in fact a liability and a drain on the farms capital.
- 1.6 Ian Fowler & Co has investigated various options for the re-use of the site including marketing the buildings for commercial use using the offices of J H Walter of Lincoln. There has been no genuine interest in the buildings for commercial use.
- 1.7 During the marketing period a number of enquiries were made with regard to residential use of the barns. Whilst all enquiries were rejected it is clear that there is a demand for such a proposition.
- 1.8 Ian Fowler & Co require a capital injection into their already successful farming business and would like to fully utilise the farm assets. As commercial marketing of Villa Farmyard Barns has proven unsuccessful, a planning application for conversion of the traditional buildings to residential use was submitted but rejected. After much discussion with NLC a re-application, PA/2010/0536 was submitted for a single unit conversion of the stone and pantile range. This was granted on 06/07/2010
- 1.9 This planning application is proposed for the conversion of the remaining brick and slate traditional farm building at Cleatham Villa to one residential unit.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Pre-application discussions have taken place including a meeting on 31st January 2008 with Scott Jackson, Senior Planning Officer at NLC. Subsequently having discussed the matter with William Hill, a letter dated 8th February 2008, suggested reducing the original proposal from six properties to three prior to submission. The proposal was redesigned in response to this request/advice and a planning application submitted for the conversion of the traditional farm buildings into three live/work units.
- 2.2 A planning refusal dated 6th August 2008 stated that the development proposal was unsustainable and did not conform to Local Plan policies ST2 and ST3. This was due to the fact that the application "exceeds the maximum of 3 dwellings allowed within minimum growth settlements". Despite the fact that the application did not exceed the number as quoted in the refusal notice, but was equal to it.
- 2.3 A very useful meeting was held with Mr Ron White and the applicants at the NLC offices in Scunthorpe on 3rd February 2009, where Mr White clarified the matter. Mr

White-confirmed that NLC considered the traditional farm buildings at Cleatham Villa to be of interest and worthy of preservation. Mr White explained that NLC are not in principal against the development of the site for residential use, in fact a reduction in the number of units on the site would result in him supporting the application and recommending a planning permission.

- 2.4 Mr White clarified the confusion expressed in 2.2 above, he pointed out that in the detailed explanation of ST2, the policy suggested that no more than three units should be granted permission in a minimum growth settlement (the next hierarchical level up from the application site), therefore this application, in his opinion, should be for less than this number. "As the buildings were worthy of preservation he would be very willing to support an application for one dwelling and possibly two" and suggested that the applicants forward a pre-application enquiry with a revised scheme for discussion, prior to re-submitting.
- 2.5 A pre-application document was duly submitted making a case for two units. Mr White again re-iterated his support for development on the site for two dwellings, although he would like to see the conversions completed one at a time (see Appendix 3 e-mail correspondence) in order to ensure that the development enhances the site. An issue that the applicant believes could be covered by condition or requirement to submit fuller details on issues of concern to the satisfaction of North Lincs Council.
- 2.6 This second application was subsequently refused at planning committee level on 9th December 2009 with any development of two units being contrary to policies RD2 & 9 being used as reasoning.
- 2.7 It was decided to re apply for permission to convert the single storey range into one residential unit and this was subsequently granted in 2010. building Regulations and all ancillary surveys and reports have now been concluded on this application.
- 2.8 Further informal discussions were held with Mr Mike Welton regarding the remaining brick and slate two storey barn and it was indicated to the applicants that positive support would be given to an application for conversion to a single dwelling in due course, to which this application now refers.

3.0 POLICIES

- 3.1 Limited specific national policy guidance is available on conversions of rural buildings and most proposals are determined on their individual merits. Each Local authority produces its own policy stance within the overall framework of ministerial guidance. The general benefit of the development is usually weighed against any perceived dis-benefits to the general environment and the architectural integrity of the buildings. Good design is required to ensure the project hangs together and does not lead to a development looking "too residential".
- 3.2 Ministerial advice which bears on the reconstruction and re-use of rural dwellings is contained in PPS7 on *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*, PPS1 on *Delivering Sustainable Development* and PPS3 on *Housing*.
- 3.3 PPS7 (2004) is the main source of ministerial advice relating to residential conversion of agricultural buildings, barns etc. At para.17 it is stated that *The Governments policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building. Planning authorities should therefore set out in LDDs their policy criteria for permitting the conversion and re-use of buildings in the countryside for*

economic, residential and any other purposes, including mixed uses. These criteria should take account of

- the potential impact on the countryside and landscape and wildlife*
- specific local economic and social needs and opportunities*
- settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, markets and housing*
- the suitability of different types of buildings, and of different scales, for re-use*
- the need to preserve, or the desirability of preserving, buildings of historic or architectural importance or interest, or which otherwise contribute to local character.*

Local planning authorities are expected to apply the following five criteria in respect of the conversion of barns etc. to commercial or residential use. These are

- a) that the rural buildings (which can include modern buildings) are of permanent and substantial construction*
- b) conversion does not lead to a dispersal of activity on site on such a scale as to prejudice town and village vitality*
- c) form, bulk and general design is in keeping with the surroundings*
- d) reasonable conditions are imposed to overcome legitimate planning objections which would otherwise outweigh the advantages of re-use*
- e) open countryside buildings are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction.*

- 3.4 PPS1 on *Delivering Sustainable Development* (and the supplement *Planning and Climate Change*) set out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. In terms of the general approach to sustainable development, at Para 27 (viii) it is emphasized that planning authorities should seek, amongst other things, to promote the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings. Planning should seek actively to bring vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings back into beneficial use to achieve the targets the Government has set for such development.
- 3.5 PPS 3 on *Housing* reiterates the Governments commitment to promoting more sustainable patterns of development. In terms of maintaining a supply of housing this can be achieved by maximising the re-use of previously-developed land and the conversion and re-use of existing buildings (Para 36). Further, at Para 37 it is recognized that not all development can take place within urban areas. Para 41 mentions the governments target to have at least 60% of developments on previously developed land including vacant and derelict land and buildings.
- 3.6 PPG15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) gives general advice that proposals for the re-use of buildings may be the key to the preservation of historic buildings.
- 3.7 North Lincolnshire Council Policy H1 "Housing Development Hierarchy" refers to housing development being permitted in the open countryside including rural hamlets "in other circumstances where there is a special justification".
- 3.8 NLC Policy RD2 "Development in the Open Countryside" states that development will be strictly controlled. Planning permission will only be granted for development which is (amongst others)- "v) for the re-use and adaption of existing rural buildings".
- 3.9 NLDC Policy RD9 – Re-use and/or Adaptation of Rural Buildings for Residential Use in the Open Countryside states:

Proposals for the conversion of rural buildings in the open countryside for residential use will only be permitted if:

- i) the building is of architectural or historic importance to the rural scene and is of substantial and permanent construction capable of conversion without major alteration;
 - ii) it can be demonstrated that residential re-use or adaptation is the only way to retain viable continued use and/or secure the retention/improvement of the building; and
 - iii) the development will not create a need for new buildings to house activities displaced by conversion;
 - iv) the general design of the conversion retains and respects the original character of the building and is in keeping with its surroundings. Any extension should respect the scale and appearance of the original building; and
 - v) the development will not lead to the loss of habitat for protected species.
- 3.10 The proposal is a sustainable re-use of a traditional rural building that is now redundant, and is in accordance with NLC policy. A planning permission would bring back into full an area that is presently an under utilised "eyesore".
- 3.11 The proposed development has been carefully considered and designed to be in accordance with the above policies and in particular RD9:
- It is accepted that the site is of historic/architectural interest (as agreed by NLC), is permanent, in good condition and capable of conversion without major alteration.
 - There has been no interest stimulated by a formal commercial marketing of the site since 26th September 2006.. The marketing report has been reviewed and is attached at appendix 8. On review it is clear that the content is still current except for the fact that there is even less demand for commercial property in the present economic climate and in fact it is reasonable to comment that the current climate is even less attractive than in 2006 for any rural commercial use.
 - The development is not displacing farming activities. The traditional buildings have no agricultural use and the more modern buildings are coming to the end of their life, except for the workshop building for which there is an extant planning permission to move.
 - We believe the design is sympathetic to the site, for example by utilising existing openings, shielding cars and domestic use from a view from the road.
 - Professional surveys have established that there are no protected species issues that cannot be appropriately catered for and, importantly, that the barns are structurally sound.
- 3.12 The application also conforms with both NLC Local Plan policies ST2 & ST3:
- NLC Policy ST2 in particular refers to a settlement hierarchy and the control of new development, however conversion of an existing rural building as a windfall development is an exception covered by policy RD9. The application is also only for one unit which is fewer units than the 3 stated as the maximum for Minimum Growth Settlement.
 - NLC Policy ST3 is also addressed. Although the site is outside the Development Limits, the proposal is not new development, but conversion of a vernacular building

that the NLC have confirmed that they would like to see preserved. Alternative uses have been investigated and residential conversion is considered to be the only use to preserve the building. The exception to ST3 being covered under policy RD9. This principle is again clarified in e-mails correspondence at Appendix 3.

4.0 THE APPLICATION

- 4.1 This application proposes the conversion of a traditional brick and slate farm building at Cleatham Villa Yard to 1 residential unit.

5.0 USE

- 5.1 The site is a set of redundant traditional farm buildings positioned adjacent to the B1400 and situated 1 ¾ miles from Kirton Lindsey and 2 ½ miles from Messingham both Medium Growth settlements in the NLC Local Plan Policy ST2. The settlements have a variety of facilities including shops, supermarkets, libraries, pre school nursery, primary and secondary schools. Both are fully sustainable locations, provide jobs and service a rural hinterland. In addition, Scotter is 2 miles distant and although situated within the neighbouring Lincolnshire County Council, it nevertheless also has a range of local facilities, pre school nursery, primary school and amenities. All three settlements are a very short car journey away, an easy cycle or an enthusiastic walking distance.
- 5.2 There is a regular weekday Stagecoach bus service every hour from 7am to 6pm from Scunthorpe to Kirton Lindsey (and subsequently further south to Lincoln) and the identical hourly return journey, that passes the site and a stop is therefore readily available, The school bus for both primary and secondary schools in Kirton Lindsey turns in Villa Farmyard, presently picking up children from Villa Farm cottages and previously the applicants children from Cleatham Villa adjacent to the site. There are further schools in Messingham, Scotter and Bottesford and it is understood at the time of writing, places are available in all year groups.
- 5.3 In addition to local facilities (which includes two supermarkets each in Kirton Lindsey Messingham and Scotter respectively) the area is regularly serviced by the usual internet based services such as deliveries from Tesco and ASDA online.
- 5.4 The re-use of the existing building is a very sustainable way to build, the saving of the embodied energy within the buildings, and the proposed tree planting will lead to a development that has the potential to have a low carbon footprint.

6.0 AMOUNT

- 6.1 North Lincolnshire Council considered the earlier proposals as overdevelopment. This proposal suggests conversion of the two storey brick and slate barn into a single dwelling. .
- 6.2 The proposed development will stick rigidly to the existing footprint of the traditional building provide a two storey residential property with four bedrooms, office space /guestroom and garaging.
- 6.3 See drawing RDS 10153/27 for proposed site layout:

7.0 LAYOUT

- 7.1 The layout of the site (see drawing RDS 10153/27) has been dictated by the size and shape of the available location which have historic and architectural interest and

together with their prominence in the landscape, merit preservation in situ. It is also intended to remove the corrugated steel grain silos, which are in poor condition. The layout will not change significantly and the site will be de-cluttered and visually improved whilst maintaining the distinct visual form of a traditional barn.

- 7.2 A minimal number of extra boundaries have been proposed. They will be brick walls or post and rail fencing as appropriate, to keep the rural feel. The design creates areas of private open space to enable the unit to function independently as a dwelling with due privacy for the occupiers.
- 7.3 Parking has been made available, but situated out of sight to limit the visual impact of the vehicles.
- 7.4 The open frontage from the road will be landscaped with a mixed hedgerow and trees and the present open access along the road frontage reduced and limited to two access points.
- 7.5 Access to the site will be along the new shared access road.

8.0 SCALE

- 8.1 The proposed development will stick rigidly to the existing footprint of the traditional building, but has the benefit of ensuring that the development fits well into the local area re-enforcing local character. See drawings supplied by Ryland Design Services Ltd as listed in Appendix 4.
- 8.2 The size of the property and the large garden areas with limited boundary division will re-enforce the existing sense of scale and place, as the site will continue to look like a traditional agricultural yard, except for the tidiness of the area. Due to the layout of the site any domestic visual impact will be behind the buildings and not easily visible from outside the site.

9.0 LANDSCAPING

- 9.1 Limited landscaping will take place to restore and replace existing brick walling including the provision of areas of lawn/garden. It is also suggested that a limited number of new trees will be planted and that the development be screened from the road by a new mixed species hedgerow including a number of locally native tree species.
- 9.2 Please see proposed site plan RDS 10153/27 for further information. The general aim is to enhance the existing and retain the feel of an agricultural yard, rather than make major changes.
- 9.3 The Environment Agency flood mapping service has confirmed that there is no perceived flood risk in the area (see Appendix 9). The landscaping proposed will result in a reduction in hard surfaces and an increase in areas set down to grass and garden. Run-off will be therefore be reduced, limiting potential surface water flood events yet further.

10 APPEARANCE

- 10.1 The general appearance of the development is designed to preserve the rural nature of the site and also to preserve the architectural details of the original building. Good and sensitive design is being used to ensure the completed development still retains the visual form of an agricultural barn. All areas where residential clutter (e.g. washing lines) could be an issue are screened from the road and not visible. Car parking is also treated in a similar way; there is more than sufficient parking, which is screened from view.
- 10.2 Where appropriate the building will be enhanced with the replacement of tradition roofing materials. Openings will be dealt with sensitively with deeply recessed and carefully designed fenestration, all framing in wood painted an appropriate colour. Requests for new openings have been reduced to an absolute minimum to limit the visual impact on the buildings.
- 10.3 Presently there are a number of silo's and lean to structures that are in a very poor state and the site has the appearance of a fairly run down farm yard.
- 10.4 All work will be carried out using traditional materials and to a high level of craftsmanship. Wherever possible using reclaimed materials or well produced facsimiles and where sensible and appropriate modern materials. It is intended to use local skilled craftsmen for the majority of work.

11 ACCESS

- 11.1 The site has good vehicular access for both private cars and emergency vehicles, from a well used, well maintained but fairly quiet, country B road. All vehicles will be able to turn within the site in order to exit the site in a forward gear.
- 11.2 Presently there are two access points from the road, the eastern most access being a wide area to the south of the retained double storey barn which is open directly onto the road. These existing accesses will be utilised, however they will be modified in form to that shown on the proposed site plan drawing RDS 10153/27.
- 11.3 When modified the existing eastern most access will become the access to the proposed conversion unit and adjoining conversion, with adequate on site parking and turning areas. The western access when modified will continue to be used as an access to Cleatham Villa and the adjacent farmland.
- 11.4 Final detail of the surface treatment for the joint access has already been specified under building regulations for the adjoining barn conversion. It is assumed the turning area connected with this application will subject to similar conditions.
- 11.5 Access to and from local facilities at Kirton Lindsey is good. Kirton is accessible on foot in about 30 minutes, by bicycle in 8 minutes and the local bus stops at the site, giving access to a variety of options including all the facilities of Scunthorpe.
- 11.6 Disabled doors and access ramps will be provided where appropriate to the property

12 PROTECTED SPECIES

- 12.1 A protected species survey was undertaken by Mr Graham Colborne, Regional Expert with the Lincolnshire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, on 11 October 2007 where the barn subject to this application is called barn 3. A further survey and report was carried out on 28th June 2011 by Mr Colborne. There was record of activity of both a barn owl and bats in and around the barns. There was however no evidence of nesting owls, nor social roosting or hibernation of bats. No loss of habitat for protected species would take place as a result of the proposed development. A number of recommendations were made that would deal with all nature conservation concerns e.g. erection of owl boxes and provision for roosting bats as a precautionary measure. The applicants are currently signed up to a 10 year agreement with Natural England for inclusion into the Higher Level Conservation Scheme. This includes, with particular reference to this application, the provision of owl boxes and nesting bird boxes around their surrounding farmland, which have all been now erected.
- 12.2 The protected species surveys have been submitted with this planning application Appendix 6 to this report.
- 12.3 A review of the site has been undertaken within the last few weeks and no change to the protected species status has been observed

13 STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

- 13.1 Peter Smallwood Consulting Engineers Ltd inspected this barn as part of a survey of all the farm buildings on 27th September 2007. The barn, (number 3 in the survey) was found to be in very good structural condition.
- 13.2 The structural survey has been submitted with the planning application as Appendix 5 to this report. A recent review of the site indicates that no change has taken place with regard to the structural integrity of the buildings.

14 CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The proposal has been shown to address the main requirements of the planning framework and NLC policies in particular. The building is worthy of retention, prominent in the landscape, in very good condition and redundant. The applicants have shown that the site is very sustainable and does not need to rely solely on the car, and will convert an existing building in the countryside.
- 14.2 In particular we would refer you to 3.9 – 3.12 above, with respect to the relevant NLC policies. Much of the pre-application discussion with NLC has revolved around the issue of sustainability.
- 14.3 We submit the application to you for conversion of the site to one dwelling as a positive reuse of a rural building of heritage interest in Cleatham for your consideration and support.

15 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Location Plan

Appendix 3 - E mail correspondence with NLC

Appendix 4 - Architects Drawings

Appendix 5 - Structural Engineers Report

Appendix 6 - Protected Species Report

Appendix 7 - Aerial Photograph of crew yard

Appendix 9 - Flood Risk Map