For

Planning Department

North Lincolnshire Council

Design & Access Statement

Conversion from Barn to Dwelling

Mill Farm, Appleby, North Lincolnshire

Ref 21 35

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ETTRIDGE ARCHITECTURE

Design & Access Statement

Conversion from Barn to Dwelling

1 Introduction

The proposals are to convert a ‘modern’ barn structure into a high-quality, low-carbon contemporary home.

The site was originally used for farming, then as tractor storage for a short time, then a builder’s yard from 2003. The first barn was converted into offices for the builders yard in 2004/5.

In more recent years the building company’s work has reduced and the remaining two existing traditional barns have been converted (or had planning approvals for conversion) into housing. This application would essentially be the past piece of the puzzle.

This site is brownfield, previously used land. This is an opportunity to improve the appearance of an unsighly structure and provide a 21st century countryside dwelling without encroaching on greenfield land. And also a perfect opportunity for a genuine low-carbon building.

Ettridge Architecture has been designing low-carbon buildings for over 25 years, but this is one we are particularly proud of. The clients approached us due to our experience in both ‘green’ and contemporary design which work together here to create a rather special dwelling.

2 The Site

The site lies to the west of Appleby. The Mill Farm site has been there since the 1800s at least. A map dating from 1856 shows the site. The site currently houses: -

- The farmhouse
- A barn converted into a dwelling
- A barn with approval to be converted into a dwelling
- A barn converted into offices
- The modern asbestos barn (subject of this application)

These buildings sit on a large site, sheltered on two sides by woodland. Some of the site has been rewilded, along with wildflower, tree and hedge planting.

Image 1 – Existing site (courtesy Google Earth).

Image 2 – Existing Barns viewed from the North East. The main structure (in the centre) is to be reduced in height, greatly improving the aspect for the traditional barn behind and improving views from the village and road to the East.

Image 3 – Existing barn viewed from the North West. This also shows a traditional stone barn, which has been converted in recent years.

Image 4 – Arial image of existing site from the south east. This shows PV panels behind (to be added to and relocated) plus the traditional stone barn that needs converting.


Image 5 & 6 – Existing stone barn. This is a true heritage asset and has approval to be converted to a dwelling. However, the impact of the modern barn currently makes this unviable - these wonderful arches look directly at the asbestos walling of the modern barn.

3 Design Methodology

2.1. Generally

Essentially, we propose a development of a high-quality, low-carbon building fit for 21st Century family living - for the clients to enjoy as a 'lifetime' home, whilst creating a positive contribution to the area.

This is the conversion of modern barn, which is less common to convert than traditional brick and stone barns. However, Part Q planning policy has made this more common in recent years.

it makes good sense all round to develop this brownfield site.

The proposed development is visible from the public highway and the village of Appleby. Due to the proposed reduction in massing and the careful design, including attention to material selection and detailing, it ensures that it would improve the visual amenity of the area.

The traditional barn, to the south of our proposed modern barn conversion, has planning approval for conversion into a dwelling. This barn has a wonderful set of arches that face the modern asbestos structure. The ideal scenario for this heritage barn would be to demolish the modern barn.

However, the modern barn would cost in the region of £50,000 to demolish, along with the asbestos removal. This renders the development unviable, due to soaring construction costs and relatively low sales prices in North Lincolnshire.

By converting the modern barn for the owner to live in, it will hugely improve the viability of the site as a whole, preserving the heritage asset for future generations and creating a genuine low-carbon 21st century home.

In summary, the ethos of the design is to: -

- Utilize an existing structure – the lowest carbon form of building.
- Improve the impact on the open countryside
- Create a legible and attractive place with a sense of identity appropriate to the area.
- Create a high-quality, low-carbon environment that would provide the future occupants with all the modern features associated with 21st Century living and a high standard of internal accommodation.
- To improve the viability of the traditional barn to the south, allowing the heritage asset to survive for future generations.
- To further rewild and 'green' the site. See part 8.

2.2. Massing & Scale

The massing is hugely reduced, with the living accommodation based mostly in the smaller 'wing' of the existing barn. See plans and elevations.

The main mass of the barn is reduced right down to domestic single storey, most of which is a walled garden.

2.3. Materials

Our design will be a carefully crafted structure, with a mixture of materials reflecting the history of the - but in a slightly contemporary manner: Timber, brick, glass and metal have all been used in farm buildings for hundreds of years.

Image 7 – Proposed building showing cladding replaced with zinc at first floor level (as more sustainable version of the metal cladding typically found on farm buildings). The main massing (to the right) is reduced to just a garden wall.

Image 8 – Proposed private inset balcony. This is set within the existing mass, to replicate the Part Q planning policy (as does the rest of the design).

Image 9 – Proposed elevation (looking from the north). Shows zinc to first floor and exposed original steel columns to the ground floor – this allows private views to the trees beyond.

Image 10 – Proposed view from above. The mass of the original main, large structure is now a flat roofed garage (bottom right), low pitched roof (for PV) panels and private walled garden, utilising the original ground floor brickwork.

4 Planning

4.1 Generally

The site has had planning permissions over recent years for: -

- A barn conversion into an office (complete). **PA/2004/0215**
- A barn conversion into a dwelling (complete). **PA/2010/0300**
- Change of use from agricultural store to business use (building concerned with this application) **PA/2004/0216**
- A barn with approval to be converted into a dwelling (not yet undertaken) **PA/2018/1665**

The barns were not big enough for modern agriculture (especially the older barns). The use for a building company was very well suited, but the company has slowly reduced it's output over that last few years – an then to almost zero with Covid.

Theoretically, commercial use would be considered a more sustainable use than residential in terms of Planning policy. However, with no interest being shown over many months of marketing the premises for any suitable commercial or other use (the property had been marketed by Paul Fox estate agents), a residential use would seem to offer the next best use. Due to the majority of the rest of the site being residential, this use would actually now make best sense. A commercial use would spoil the mostly residential setting as the form of the building would suit larger haulage/construction type firms, creating an adverse impact on the local residents.

The current application would fit in perfectly with the other approvals and be that last piece of a 'masterplan'.

4.2 Planning Policy

4.2.1 Part Q

This is not a 'Part Q' application. However, it meets all but one of the requirements from the checklist, which otherwise would have meant approval under prior approval.

Essentially, if the building was used for agricultural use on 20 March 2013 it would be approved under Part Q. The agricultural use ended in 2003.

A summary of Part Q (The building only fails on part 1): -

1. Firstly, the barn must have been in agricultural use on 20 March 2013, (or in agricultural use within 10 years before applying for the change of use – whichever is the lesser)
2. If it has been built after 20 March 2013, it needs to have been in agricultural use for 10 years (only relevant after 2023)
3. You are permitted to convert to create up to 5 dwellings per established agricultural unit (or farm). These can be split into smaller dwellings and larger dwellings. Smaller dwellings are up to 100m2 and larger dwellings 100-465m2.
4. You need permission from any current agricultural tenants, and permission cannot be granted if a tenancy has been terminated within 1 year unless agreed in writing it is no longer needed for agricultural uses.
5. Permission will not be granted if you have used your agricultural rights to build another structure since 20 March 2013 (or within 10 years if after 2023)
6. The proposed conversion must not be any larger than currently. No extensions of any kind are permitted, but you can add some walls, windows doors etc. “as reasonably necessary”.
7. The building must not be Listed, or part of/included on a Listing, sited on Article 2(3) land (eg a Conservation area, World Heritage Sites, AONBs, The Broads or National Park)
8. The building must be structurally capable of the conversion. New or reinforcing of the structure is not permitted, but an independent mezzanine floor is permitted

Whilst we appreciate that it cannot be passed under Part Q, we hope that this can be taken into consideration, perhaps by the planning committee?

4.2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England with a strong emphasis being on presumption in favour of sustainabledevelopment.

These are some of the items from the NPPF that appear most pertinent to our proposed scheme: -

“Achieving Sustainable Development”

On page 3 it refers to “improving the conditions in which people live” and “widening the choice of high quality homes”. This will be a high quality, energy efficient home, fit for future generations.

“Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes”

Our proposal offers high quality housing “based on current and future demographic trends…families with children, older people, people with disabilities” (pg. 13). This large dwelling is designed to bring in future older members of the family and work as a ‘hub’ allowing privacy and a variety of spaces for different age groups.

Paragraph 9 states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built and natural environment, as well as in people’s quality of life. This will be achieved with our proposals.

“Requiring Good Design”

We feel that our proposal reflects the heightened emphasis on ‘good design’ brought about by the National Planning Policy Framework, pages 14 – 16.

Paragraph 79

Planning should avoid the development of isolated homes in the open countryside. However, it may be allowed if shown to be of exceptional quality.

This can be shown if:

“It is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards of architecture, would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas, and: would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area”.

The design definitely reflects high standards of architecture, especially if viewed in regional terms.

Paragraph 131

“In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in the area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings”.

Again, the low-carbon brief and fitting into the surrounding landscape perfectly summarise this dwelling. And it would be good if the building's type's reuse and low-carbon credentials could be used as a case-study to help raise local design standards.

"Small sized sites"

Paragraph 68 states "small sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:

a) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements".

Assessing the proposed development against the main objectives of theNPPF, it is clear the scheme accords with the overarching approach to planning in that: -

- It is promoting sustainable development
- The proposal will make effective use of the existing available site
- The proposal will provide residential development which is compatible with the surrounding land use
- The development proposal will provide a development that is sympathetic to and reflective of the character of this part the locality and it will not undermine the visual amenity of this setting
- Good design principles
- Low risk of flooding

4.2.3 Local Plan Policy RD2

Criterion (v) of RD2 permits development when it is for the reuse and adaptation of existing rural buildings. The existing building has normally to be of architectural and historical interest which we cannot claim in this instance.

However, it does benefit (make viable) the structure to the south, which is a heritage asset, as proven by the current planning approval. Number **PA/2018/1665.**

Other aspects of the policy are met such as scale, appearance, good design & impact on the open countryside.

5 Parking and Transport

The traffic requirement for the one proposed dwelling are massively reduced when compared to an building company.

The parking arrangements are more than adequate. An EV charging points will be included.

Bus services are available from the main road. Cycle storage will be secure and well used, within the generous sized garages.

6 Access

All works will be designed to Building Regulations Approved Document ‘M’.

The proposed works will also incorporate a void for a future passenger lift installation.

7 Flood Risk

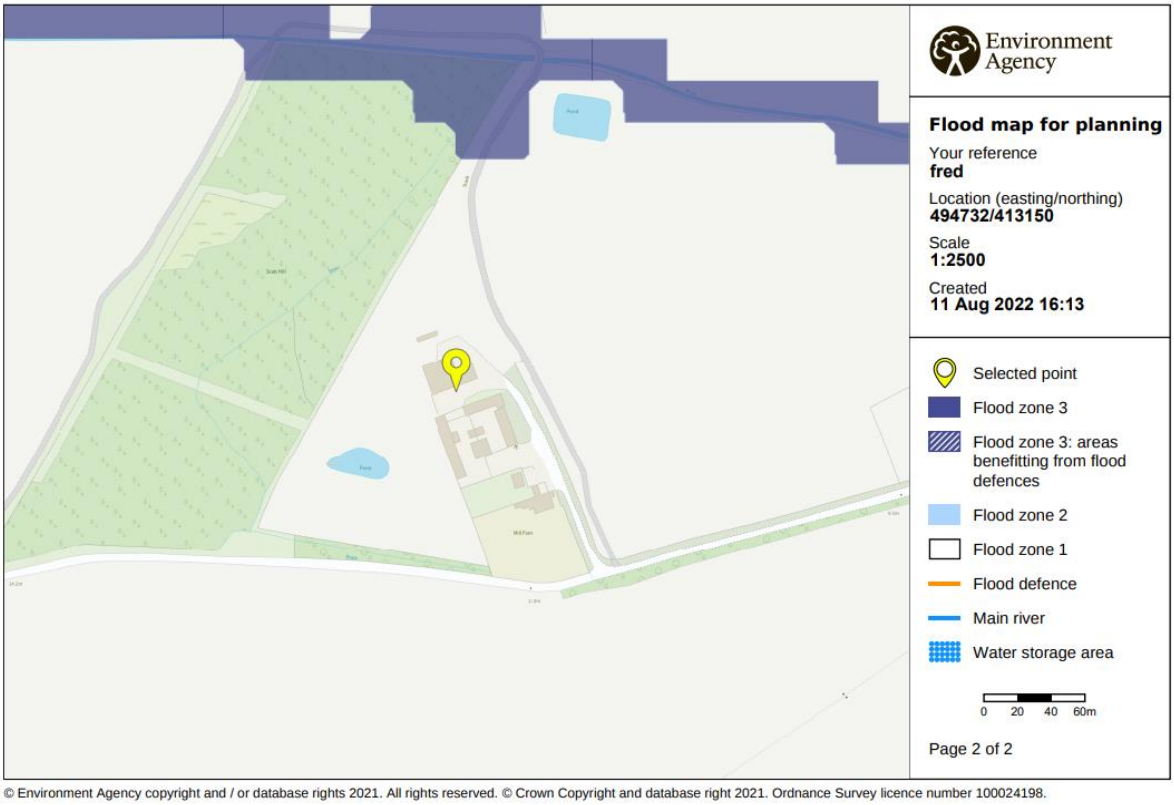

Image 11 – From Flood Risk for Planning.

The site is not at risk from flooding.

8 Protected Species

A report is included with the application. The clients have gone over and above the recommendations in the original report and intend to do so again, as the wildlife in the vicinity has become a passion for them in recent years.

The site is sheltered on two sides by woodland. Some of the site has been rewilded, along with wildflower, trees and hedge planting. Plus, the installation of bat, owl and wild bird boxes.

The proposed site plan shows how this will be further developed, with the implementation of bee hives, hedgehog houses, wild flower planting and an orchard. .

9 Contamination

Contamination should not be an issue, as the building has only been used for farming as far as we know historically. For the last 10 years or so the building has been used for material storage for the building firm on site.

10 Sustainability

The existing barn conversion has been done to a very high ‘green’ specification, with rainwater harvesting, air-source heating and a large photovoltaic (PV) array.

The proposed dwelling will utilise the same strategy, benefiting from the knowledge and performance of the original building in-use, to ensure that it is even better in energy and carbon performance.

The dwelling is designed to achieve an ‘A’ Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating, even in view of the newly revised Building Regulations.

The reuse of an existing building is by far the most sustainable way to build. The embodied carbon saved when compared to new build is immense.

The use of natural materials, such as timber and zinc for cladding and local sourcing will help the embodied carbon stay low. There will be a strict no-UPVC policy, and the use of the RIBA product selector (now NBS Source) will be utilised for ‘green’ specification ratings.

We propose 15kW photovoltaic panels and air-source heating, coupled with a mechanical ventilation with heat recovery system (MVHR). This, along with smart-technology heat and light controls will create a very efficient dwelling in terms of M&E and in-use energy performance.

David Ettridge RIBA
For and on behalf of Ettridge Architecture Ltd.