

Application Number: FYR12/0275/F

Minor

Parish/Ward: Elm/Christchurch

Date Received: 11 April 2012

Expiry Date: 6 June 2012

Applicant: Mr and Mrs S Flint

Agent: Mr K Elener, KL Elener Architectural Design

Proposal: Conversion of buildings to residential (1 x 3 bed, 3 x 2 bed and 1 x 1 bed) incorporating extensions and garages, retention of 2 bed residential dwelling and erection of a 2 storey, 3 bed dwelling with garage involving demolition of 2 no barns and piggery.

Location: Woodhouse Farm, Jew House Drove, Friday Bridge, Wisbech

Site Area/Density: 00.66 hectare

Reason before Committee: Departure from Development Plan Policy

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission to convert and extend an existing complex of farm buildings into dwellings, along with the erection of a new "barn style" dwelling and the retention of an existing conversion which is currently used as holiday accommodation.

The key issues to consider are current policy, the impact on the character of area, the scale, layout and existing built form and the design and appearance of the proposal.

Initially concerns were raised regarding the scale and design of the proposal, however amended plans have been received which have addressed the main points of concern in particular with regard to the design of the proposed new dwelling.

The proposal is on the edge of a sustainable settlement, identified as a Limited Growth Village in the Fenland Communities Development Plan, Core Strategy (Draft - July 2012). It is considered that the proposal will not result in any significant adverse impacts upon the character and appearance of the area and will provide an attractive complex of residential units through the conversion, extension and replacement of redundant buildings. It is therefore recommended that the application is approved subject to appropriate conditions and a Section 106 agreement to cover affordable housing provision.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2.1 | F/YR06/1322/F | Change of use of grain store to indoor play area and extension to form toilets and reception area. | Granted
19/04/2007 |
| | F/YR05/0292/F | Change of use of farm buildings to form farm park comprising; 1 x 2 bed holiday unit, tea room/shop, | Granted
19/04/2005 |

F/YR02/1151/F	animal handling room and erection of animal pens and toilet facilities. Conversion of outbuilding to 5-bed dwelling and double garage.	Granted 19/05/2003
F/96/0673/AG1	Erection of general purpose agricultural building.	Further details not required 20/12/1996

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

3.2 Draft Fenland Core Strategy:

CS1: Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside.

CS2: Growth and Housing.

CS10: Sustainability and no harm to the wide open character of the countryside.

CS14: High Quality Environments

3.3 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

H3: Development should be within existing settlement boundaries

E8: Landscape and Amenity Protection

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *Parish/Town Council*

Supported the original scheme and no additional comments made on the revised scheme.

4.2 *Local Highway Authority (CCC)*

I have no objection from the highway point of view to the proposal as submitted. Both accesses to Jew House Drove already exist, the western most access having been installed to cater for the commercial use. The private footway between the two accesses and the proposed 1.8m wide footway from the eastern most access to link up to the existing footway to the east shall be provided prior to the occupation of any of the new dwellings.

4.3 *Environment Agency:*

Site is located within Flood Zone 2 and a condition is recommended to require scheme for disposal of foul water.

4.4 *Middle Level Commissioners*

Requires details to prove proposed surface water/treated effluent disposal system will work efficiently and effectively in the long term.

4.5 *FDC Scientific Officer (Land Contamination)*

Attach Contamination Condition.

- 4.6 **Cambs Fire and Rescue** Fire Authority requests that adequate provision be made for fire hydrants.
- 4.7 **Local Residents:** None received.

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The site is located on land west of Woodhouse Farm, Jew House Drove, Friday Bridge. The site has an area of c. 0.66 hectares and was originally the farmyard to Woodhouse Farm. There is a range of traditional brick, tile and weather boarded buildings at the rear of the site and a more modern general purpose agricultural building to the front. Two accesses exist onto Jew House Drove which is a class C highway and there is an existing footpath from the March Road which it is proposed to link to.

The site is rectangular in shape with a frontage approximately 60m wide and approximately 110m in depth. The eastern boundary of the site adjoins the farmhouse associated with these buildings and the curtilage of the farmhouse adjoins the existing built up settlement edge, where development is in a linear form of a mixed nature. To the west of the site lies open countryside.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The site is located on the edge of the existing settlement of Friday Bridge. The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas where it will maintain the vitality of rural communities. In essence the policies within the Local Plan and Core Strategy support new development in villages where it does not harm the wide, open character of the countryside; however Policy H3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan seeks to resist development which is beyond the main settlement boundary. In this instance, it is recognised that the overall site is well related to the existing settlement and that conversion and extension of the buildings would constitute unobtrusive growth and extension to the village whilst providing a natural cut-off point for further development given the nature of the scheme which is mainly a conversion of existing buildings.

The draft Core Strategy states that new development in villages will be supported where it contributes to the sustainability of the settlement and does not harm the wide open character of the countryside. Furthermore, it identifies Friday Bridge as a limited growth village in Fenland's settlement hierarchy, where a small amount of development will be encouraged and permitted in order to support their continued development. In light of this policy and the general direction of travel contained in national guidance it is considered that weight may be given in support of the principle of development on this site. However, the proposal will also need to be considered against other material planning considerations including the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

National policy in Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, a key aspect of sustainable development which is indivisible from good planning. Therefore, in light of national and local policies it is appropriate to assess the design of the proposed development and how it fits with the surrounding area.

(a) Character of the Area:

A key consideration in this application is the impact of the proposed development

on the surrounding established character and appearance of the area and other policy considerations in particular Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, Policies CS10 and CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy and the NPPF. The site location marks a transition point from the built village to a rural setting. The character surrounding the site and westwards along Jew House Drove is particularly open with more wooded and enclosed land to the east. As a result views of the site will be limited from the east and south but more prominent from the west.

As the majority of the buildings are already existing and the proposed new dwelling will replace a large agricultural building on the site frontage it is considered that the proposal will not result in a significant detrimental effect on the surrounding open countryside and will have a minimal impact upon the character and appearance of the existing predominantly rural part of the village, therefore conforms with Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan.

(b) Scale, Layout and Existing Built Form:

The site is rectangular in shape with a range of older farm buildings to the rear of the site. The most easterly unit already houses a 2 bed holiday unit which was granted consent in 2005 when planning permission was sought for the change of use of the site to a farm park.

The proposal is to convert the range of buildings to the rear (including the existing holiday unit) to 3 residential units with associated parking. This would provide 1 x 3 bed unit and 2 x 2 bed units.

An existing single storey building on the western boundary of the site would be converted to a detached 1 bed unit with its own parking and the former stables on the eastern boundary would provide 2 x 2 bed units. The converted stable block would form the eastern boundary of the development and have its own (existing) access.

The larger, modern agricultural building is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new residential unit to form a focal point of the scheme. The original plans showed a modest farmhouse, however it was felt that a structure with the appearance of a more imposing traditional barn would be more appropriate in this location. As there is already a large farmhouse on the adjoining site it is considered that a further 'farmhouse/standard dwelling' would be at odds with the existing character of development in this location. Conceivably the existing farmhouse would have traditionally had a range of substantial agricultural outbuildings in close proximity. It is considered that the introduction of a barn style dwelling responds to the overall site context more appropriately than the introduction of the smaller subservient dwelling initially planned.

Amended plans have been received and it is considered that these plans which now feature a 2 storey, 3 bed barn style dwelling are of a scale, design and appearance that is sympathetic to the site features, location and surrounding area. It is considered that the proposed development as amended is of a scale and character in keeping with the immediate village surroundings.

(c) Design and Impact upon Amenity:

The scheme has been designed comprehensively to ensure that the amenities of existing occupiers of the farmhouse are protected and standards of residential amenity for the proposed occupiers are not compromised. This is in line with the

core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

A mix of garaging and parking spaces have been provided to meet current parking standards and the choice of natural materials for both the conversion and new build will ensure the scheme will not detract from the character of the existing farmhouse and overall locality.

(d) Highways:

The proposal involves the use of 2 existing access which have previously been used for farm and commercial traffic onto a Class C road. CCC Highways have no objections to the proposal subject to appropriate conditions and the provision of a footway to join up with the existing footway as shown on the submitted plans.

(e) Previous Use

The site has been used as a farm park in the past in order to diversify and provide a commercial income from the buildings. Confidential business information has been submitted with the application to show that despite significant investment in terms of money and time the business did not succeed due to the downturn in the economic climate.

(f) Affordable Housing:

As the scheme is for over 5 dwellings (both new build and conversion) policy CS3 of the core strategy should be applied in seeking a 20% contribution to affordable housing provision. It is recognised that due to the unique site characteristics this can be provided as a contribution for provision to meet need elsewhere.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The site is located adjacent to the existing village settlement and is predominantly rural in nature. It is considered that the proposed development for the conversion, extension and part demolition of existing buildings plus the erection of a new dwelling and garages respects the form and character of the surroundings. The design and layout of the proposal is appropriate within its context and is compatible with the character and appearance of the locality.

In summary the proposal, as amended, is an appropriate form of development that will facilitate the re-use of redundant buildings. It is considered that the proposal will not adversely harm the character, appearance or amenity of the locality and as a result it is recommended that the application is approved.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to a section 106 Agreement in relation to the provision of an affordable housing contribution.

- 8.1 The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission
- 8.2 The conversions hereby permitted shall be finished externally in materials to match the existing buildings, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agrees in writing and should be retained in perpetuity thereafter.

- 8.3 Particulars of the materials to be used for the external walls and roof of the proposed new dwelling (unit 7) shall be submitted in writing to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development commences on the site and the work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved particulars and retained in perpetuity thereafter.
- 8.4 A 1.8m wide footway shall be provided along the frontage of the development site to run from that existing to the east up to eastern access to units 4 and 5. Such footway and any associated drainage to be constructed to the specification of the County Council and completed prior to first occupation of the development.
- 8.5 The permanent space shown on the approved plans for turning, parking and loading and unloading shall be provided before the use commences and thereafter retained for no other purpose in perpetuity
- 8.6 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
- 8.7 Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the relevant parts of the development are first brought into use and thereafter retained in perpetuity.

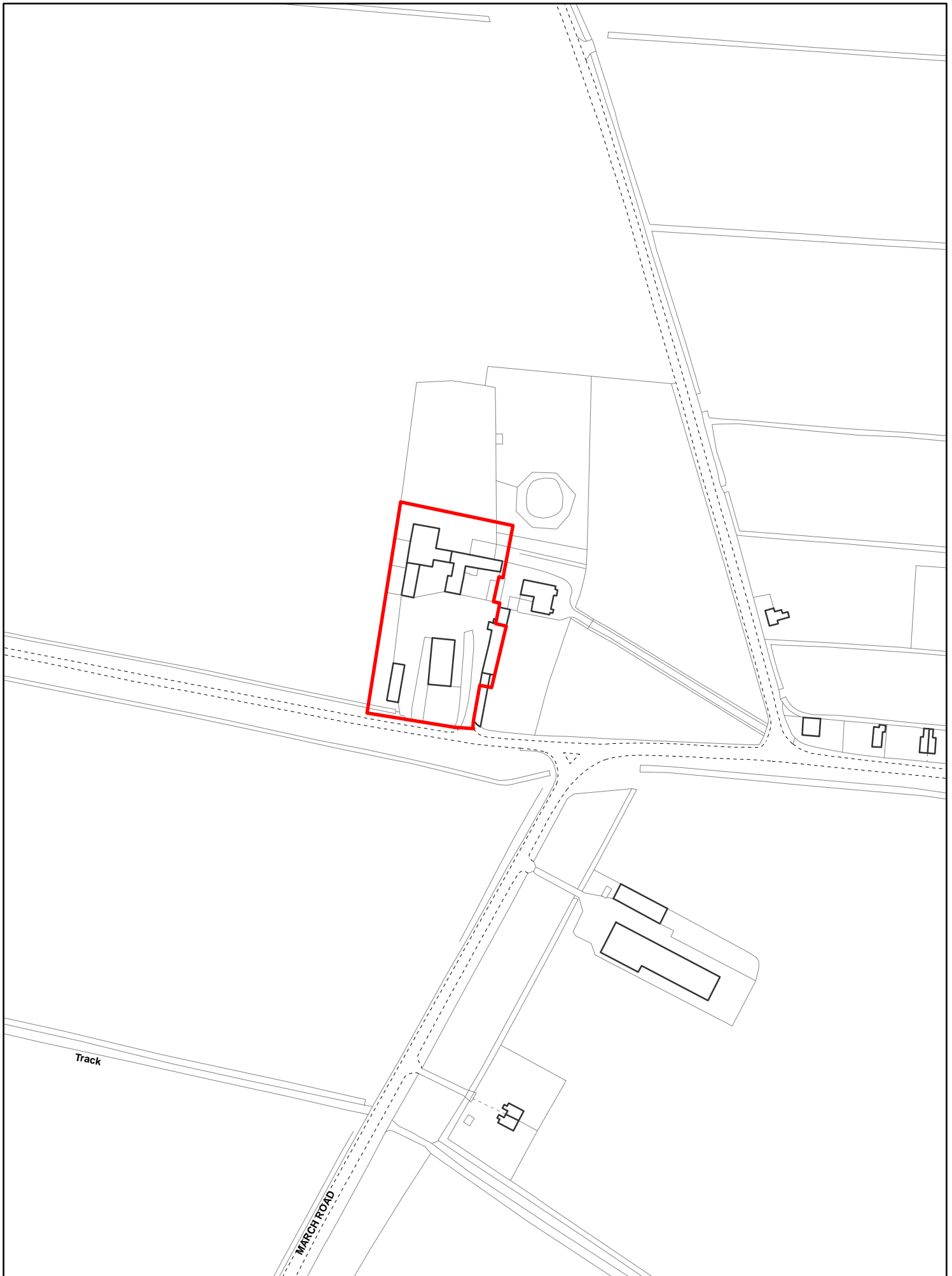
8.8 No development approved by this permission shall be **commenced** prior to a contaminated land assessment and associated remedial strategy, being submitted to the LPA and receipt of approval of the document/documents from the LPA. This applies to paragraphs a), b) and c). This is an iterative process and the results of each stage will help decide if the following stage is necessary.

- (a) The contaminated land assessment shall include a desk study to be submitted to the LPA for approval. The desk study shall detail the history of the site uses, the proposed site usage, and include a conceptual model. The site investigation strategy will be based on the relevant information discovered by the desk study. The strategy shall be approved by the LPA prior to investigations commencing on site.
- (b) The site investigation, including relevant soil, soil gas, surface and groundwater sampling, shall be carried out by a suitable qualified and accredited consultant/contractor in accordance with a quality assured sampling and analysis methodology.
- (c) A site investigation report detailing all investigative works and sampling on site, together with the results of the analysis, risk assessment to any receptors and a proposed remediation strategy shall be submitted to the LPA. The LPA shall approve such remedial works as required prior to any remediation commencing on site. The works shall be of such a nature as to render harmless the identified contamination given the proposed end use of the site and surrounding environment including any controlled waters.

No development approved by this permission shall be **occupied** prior to the completion of any remedial works and a validation report/s being submitted to the LPA and receipt of approval of the document/documents from the LPA. This applies to paragraphs d), e) and f).

- (d) Approved remediation works shall be carried out in full on site under a quality assurance scheme to demonstrate compliance with the proposed methodology and best practice guidance.
- (e) If, during the works, contamination is encountered which has not previously been identified then the additional contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme agreed with the LPA.
- (f) Upon completion of the works, this condition shall not be discharged until a validation/closure report has been submitted to and approved by the LPA. The closure report shall include details of the proposed remediation works and quality assurance certificates to show that the works have been carried out in full in accordance with the approved methodology. Details of any post-remedial sampling and analysis to show the site has reached the required clean-up criteria shall be included in the closure report together with the necessary documentation detailing what waste materials have been removed from site, and what has been brought on to site.

8.9 Approved Plans



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