Heritage Statement

Proposed change of use, alteration and extension of barn to form a single-dwelling house at Friend Green Farm, Warrensgreen Lane, Weston



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Produced by G C Planning Partnership Ltd, Bedford I-Lab, Priory Business Park, Stannard Way, Bedford MK44 3RZ, for

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The statement is structured as follows:

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Statutory Constraints
3.0 Review of Known Data
4.0 Planning Policy
5.0 Significance of the Heritage Assets
6.0 Effect of the Proposed Development
7.0 Conclusions

1.2 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support an application for planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use, alteration and extension of a listed barn to a single dwelling house.

1.3 This Statement identifies the significance of heritage assets and describes the implications of the proposal upon these assets. In this instance the heritage assets are the Grade II listed barn and the Grade II listed Farmhouse and archaeology.

STATUTORY CONSTRAINTS

4.1 The barn, associated farmhouse, and roadside barn are Grade II listed. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

2.0 REVIEW OF KNOWN DATA

Methodology

2.1 This assessment comprises a review of historical information located within approximately 500 metres of the site. This information is obtained from the following sources:

- The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record (HER);
- The National Heritage List for England,
- The National Monument Record (NMR), Swindon.

2.2 The research identifies human activity in the area from the late Iron Age to the Modern period.

Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record

2.3 A review of the HER within 500m of the site showed 8 records.

2.4 **HER 11064 – Building - Tilekiln Farm, Weston.** This is a range of 1th and 17th century barns that have now been converted to residential use. There are three buildings that are Grade II listed. The farm house is a late medieval open hall house with a 1thcentury north wing and 17th century alterations.

2.5 **HER 4257 – Monument – Earthworks of field boundaries, Warrens Green, Weston.** These are linear ditches forming large enclosures. One of the ditches is sinuous and is probably a relic field boundary. The others are likely to be post medieval field boundaries or trackways.

2.6 **HER 1592 – Find Spot – Roman Material (Occupation and cemetery), Weston Park Estate.** Various items were collected from the Weston Park

Estate and presented to Letchworth Museum by Lt Col Pryor c 1914 to 1926. They include fragments of cinery urns, pewter cup, horseshoe, coins, Samien, quern fragment, and pottery wasters.

2.7 **HER 1593 – Find Sport- Saxon Loomweights, Weston Park Estate.** Two Saxon loomweights forming part of a collection of objects collected from the Weston Park Estate by M R Pryor and donated to Letchworth Museum c1914-1926.

2.8 **HER 168 – Find Spot – Late Iron Age Finds – Weston Park Estate.** Objects were collected from the Weston Park Estate and include fragments of British quern, three lance heads and two spearheads.

2.9 **HER 1591 – Find Spot – Roman Coins from Weston Park Estate.** Two silver and twenty-five bronze coins ranging from Republican to Valentinian in the collections of the Letchworth Museum and recorded as having been found in Weston.

2.10 **HER 1587 – Find Spot – Two Roman Coins, Near Weston Park.** Two coins of Vespasian found near Weston Park.

2.11 **HER 6293 – Monument – Dovecote, Anchor Public House, Friends Green.** Dovecote in grounds of the Anchor public house. The Anchor is no longer a public house, though the building remains an interesting example of 20th century public house architecture.

National Heritage List for England

2.12 A review of the National Heritage List for England shows 6 entries within 500m of the site.

2.13 East Barn and Attached Outbuildings at Friends Green Farm, Friends Green, Weston – Grade II.



East Barn

2.14 Friends Green Farmhouse, Friends Green, Weston – Grade II.



The Farmhouse

2.15 Tilekiln Farm House, Friends Green, Weston – Grade II.

2.16 Barn Group around Courtyard at Tilekiln Farm, Friends Green, Weston – Grade II.

2.17 Barn to the east of Farmhouse at Tilekiln Farm, Friends Green, Weston – Grade II.

2.18 Farm Buildings Next to the Road at Friends Green Farm, Friends Green – Grade II.



Roadside Barn

The National Monument Record (NMR)

2.19 There are no entries on the NMR for the search area.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

3.1 This section considers the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

Listed Building

3.2 The listing of the barn and farmhouse indicates their historical and architectural significance. They are Grade II listed and are therefore of special interest and warrant every effort to preserve them.

3.3 There are a number of outbuildings that are proposed to be demolished, as well as two unsympathetic extensions to the barn.

Archaeology

3.4 The Desk-based Assessment suggests that the potential for this site to have remains from the late iron age to the Post-medieval.

3.5 The majority of the entries relate to Weston Park Estate, indicating habitation there during the roman period onwards.

3.6 Friends Green Farmhouse dates from the post medieval period. Given the continuous occupation of the site from the early 17th century or possibly earlier, it is contented that the site has potential for archaeological interest.

3.7 The proposed building work would be on the site of existing buildings. Therefore, the potential to harm archaeology is limited. However, archaeology is considered to be of moderate significance as a heritage asset, which could be adequately addressed by a suitably worded condition.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY RELATING TO THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 This document recently replaced Planning Policy Statement 5, and paragraphs 126 to 141 set out policy for development affecting heritage assets.

4.2 Paragraph 128 states *"in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail*

should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."

4.3 Paragraph 129 states *"local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."*

4.4 Paragraph 131 sets out three matters that local planning authorities should take account of when determining planning applications. These are

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

- The positive contribution that conservation and heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.5 Paragraph 132 indicates that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. The more important the asset, the greater

the weight should be. *"Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting."*

4.6 Paragraph 133 stipulates that where a proposal would lead to significant harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent. Whereas, paragraph 134 proposes that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

The Development Plan

4.7 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan includes the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2, April 1996.

North Hertfordshire Local Plan No. 2 1996

4.8 There are no saved policies in the local plan relating to listed buildings.

4.9 **Policy 16 Areas of Archaeological Significance and other Archaeological Areas** indicates that the Council may permit development proposals on other sites with conditions or a formal/informal agreement, depending upon the archaeological value to provide:

5.0 THE EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

5.1 The proposed development would involve the removal of large and unsympathetic extensions to the listed barn. The setting and openness of the site would be significantly enhanced.

5.2 The significance of the heritage asset is its simple agricultural character, reflecting agricultural practices and barn construction of the 18th century. Originally it most likely had a thatched roof. A clay tiled roof would be added later, and the weight of the clay tiles has had an adverse effect on the roof structure and timber frame. However, the roof structure and timber frame make an important contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

5.3 The preliminary structural report identifies some structural defects that need to be rectified, but on the whole the building is sound. Conservation works to the building are advocated in the survey.

5.4 Traditional timber framing repairs would be undertaken. This would involve the construction of a "bird-cage" scaffold on the inside of the barn in order to support the timber frame during conservation works.

5.5 Natural insulation, such as sheep wool would be used in conjunction with lime plaster to insulate the building but ensure that it remains "breathable".

5.6 Using accepted conservation methods the conversion of the building along the lines proposed in the Preliminary Structural Report would ensure that the architectural and historic interest of the building would not be harmed. The replacement of large and unsympathetic extensions, with modest and

subservient extensions, using materials that reflect those used on the barn, would significantly improve the setting of the listed barn.

5.7 The open layout of the original barn would be retained, as it would accommodate an open plan living space providing a living area, dining area and kitchen.

5.8 The single-storey rear extension would accommodate a bedroom/study with a small en-suite shower room. The existing opening would be filled in with a glazed screen and there would be a glazed link at the junction of this building with the original barn. This would minimise the structural impact of this extension on the original barn.

5.9 The two-storey side extension would replace a substantially larger extension. One small opening into the barn would need to be formed. The staircase to the first floor would be freestanding, avoiding any impact upon the structure of the original barn.

5.10 In conclusion, the proposed development would ensure the retention of this barn and bring is back into a viable use, thereby ensuring the future of this building which has suffered from neglect and resulting deterioration. Unsympathetic extension would be removed. Alterations to the building would be kept to a minimum necessary for the proposed use. The significance of the heritage asset would not be harmed.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The significance of the listed building as a heritage asset is high. The proposed works would ensure that the effect on the significance of the heritage asset is kept to an acceptable level so that the architectural and historic interest of the listed building is preserved. The removal of large and unsympathetic extensions, with significantly smaller extensions, necessary to provide a viable dwelling, would substantially enhance the immediate setting of the building.

6.2 The assessment of significance indicates that the heritage potential of the site for archaeology is low to moderate. Whilst the site has the potential to be of some archaeological interest, archaeology can be adequately addressed by a planning condition.