

Design and Planning Statement **Change of Use and Proposed Conversion of The Old Barn - Ferring**

1. Introduction

This planning application relates to the change of use of the Old Barn, the Annex Building and Warehouse, a Grade II Listed Conservation Area Site, from Class A1 Retail to Residential Use (two three bedroom houses).

The proposal involves (i) the removal of a single storey rear flat roofed Warehouse with the retention of the existing boundary walls, (ii) the conversion of the Warehouse space into a rear walled garden, (iii) the introduction of fenestration to the front and rear elevations of the Old Barn, (iv) the replacement of an existing door opening by a new window within the north elevation of the Annex Building and (v) the remodelling of the front Courtyard into outside amenities for the Annex Building and communal areas including car parking accommodation and refuse enclosure.

2. The Site, Buildings and Location

The site area is 0.092 hectares and the building complex is located in the historic centre of the Ferring Conservation Area and is within the historic mix of the Parish Church, St Andrews, original farmhouse and its ancillary farm buildings.

The building complex is a group of three buildings namely; (i) the Old Barn, (ii) the Annex Building and (iii) the Warehouse. The building complex is fronted by a concreted Courtyard area. The buildings are visible from Ferringham Lane and Church Lane.

2.1 The Old Barn

The Old Barn is an 18th century threshing barn, built of sea flints bedded in grit sea sand and lime. The ventilation apertures are intact on all elevations, but are now blocked with bricks slips. The original shape and volume of the half hipped roof is intact. The original tiled roof has been replaced by red asbestos slates and clay

bonnets and the inclusion of several roof lights to the rear elevation. The replacement roof is in poor condition with visible areas of disrepairs. See Marshall Clark Surveyors' report dated 11th October 2011.

2.2 The Annex Building

The Annex is a single storey wing on the southern boundary and is an early 19th century structure. The southern wall is original and is good quality field flintwork and dressed brickwork. The ventilation slots on this elevation are intact but blocked. The existing fenestration, doors and doors openings are not original and in a poor condition.

The north and east elevations, together with the whole roof structure have been completely rebuilt in the 1930's. The roof is covered in slates, which are now finished in bitumen paint.

2.3 The Warehouse

The Warehouse has been created over the historic rear yard by a flat roofed constructed with corrugated asbestos sheet roofing. The roof structure is precariously supported in several places by scaffolding with visible evidence of water ingress. This structure covers from view the north elevation of the Old Barn. The original timber lintel forming the opening from the Old Barn to the original rear yard has been destroyed and has been replaced by an in-situ concrete lintel. See Marshall Clark Surveyors' report dated 11th October 2011.

2.4 The Courtyard

The front Courtyard is covered with cracked and unlevelled in-situ concrete.

The northern boundary wall of the Courtyard shows evidence of a single storey wing that has been removed. The northern section of the east elevation of the Old Barn shows evidence of a flint infill panel, where the structure once stood. The space has now been overtaken by two self-seeding Holm oaks.

3. Background to the Proposed Development

This planning application is for a residential use from a redundant retail and warehousing use. The location and typology of the original existing buildings lend themselves to a change of use to domestic occupation.

The site is sensitively located adjacent to a Residential Home to the north, historic houses to the west and south, and the significant Parish Church to the east. Therefore a residential use is more appropriate to this location.

4. Proposed Development Particulars

The proposal will not harm the character of the existing buildings and will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which would be valued now and in the future.

The design will decrease the level of development on the site by demolishing the existing Warehouse (214m²). It will create an opportunity for improvements to the front Courtyard and replacement of the Warehouse by a walled garden. The proposed roof lights and fenestration will not cause loss of privacy to the neighbouring dwellings.

The principles of inclusive design have been applied to the proposals so as to provide a single solution for all users of the buildings, recognising peoples' differing needs and accommodating them in a unified manner. This we believe results in a satisfactory outcome both with regard to aesthetic and function.

4.1 The Old Barn

The design objectives for the Old Barn are to provide a two storey three bedroom family size dwelling that incorporates a walled garden (214 m²). The original roof form will be kept; the existing unsympathetic roof light will be replaced by conservation roof lights and patented glazing over the existing rafters above the entrance barn doors. The level of subdivision of the Old Barn facilitates the central two storey space to be architectural enhanced and incorporates two internal glazed partitions at first floor level making effective use of natural light for two bedrooms.

The secondary internal subdivision at ground and first floor is not excessive. Therefore the number of conservation roof lights and fenestration in the flint walls has been kept to a minimum.

4.2 The Annex Building

The single storey Annex was constructed at a later date and physically independent of the Old Barn. A small connecting access was constructed in the 20th century. The proposal will reinstate the Annex as an independent unit.

The design objectives for the Annex Building are to provide a single storey three bedroom family size dwelling that incorporates a front garden (130 m²). The proposed new roof to the Annex Building will remove all existing roof lights to the front elevation. The proposed internal subdivision will make use of natural light through the existing fenestration and three conservation roof lights will be incorporated in the south elevation to allow natural light to the back corridor. The existing north west door entrance will be replaced within the same opening by new fenestration and a lower wall section to match existing.

4.3 The Courtyard & Common Facilities

The design objectives for the old Courtyard are to provide a new formal landscape design delineating the private spaces for the Old Barn and the Annex Building and to incorporate common facilities to the two dwellings.

The current proposal would provide four new off street car parking spaces. Access to these new car parking spaces would be through the existing vehicular access and the current ingress and egress from the Courtyard. The change of use will generate less traffic activity in this location. It is considered that the proposal would not result in an adverse impact in the highway safety of the area. Also it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the reasonable living conditions of neighbours by virtue of noise or disturbance.

The proposals also include a secluded refuse enclosure near the entrance gate for both dwellings.

The two residential dwellings will have relatively easy and close access to public open space such as the Little Twitten Recreational Ground to the east and a sports field to the immediate north.

5. Change of Use

The design objectives for the site are based on identification of the optimum viable use compatible with the fabric, context and setting of the historic buildings.

PPS5 defines the historic environment as being comprised of all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time. Change in itself should not be harmful and harm would only occur where the change has an adverse impact on the special significance of the heritage asset.

The use Class A1 has introduced elements of architectural incongruity resulting in destructive alterations and important physical deterioration of this heritage asset.

The area is predominantly residential use and the property is relatively inaccessible to passing trade due to its location in relation to other commercial businesses. The retention of a Class 1 retail use will not make a significant contribution to the vitality and viability of the local community.

Prior to the purchase of this property the sales agents marketed the complex for continuing the retail and warehouse use. No positive response was forthcoming from the market to a set of historic buildings that have become functionally redundant. The existing Class A1 retail use has been proved not to be viable.

See Marshall Clark Surveyors' report dated 11th October 2011.

6. Conclusion

The proposed residential use is more acceptable within this sensitive residential location in the Ferring Conservation area. The proposal architecturally enhanced the Old Barn and the Annex Building. The designs and details of this proposal seek to protect and enhance the listed buildings.

The quality of the design is enhanced by the use of traditional architectural detailing. The removal of the Warehouse and the proposed landscape scheme enhances the setting of the listed Old Barn.

The proposed design of the main front courtyard enhances the visual amenity of the streetscape when viewed from Ferringham Lane and Church Lane.

