

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/3(c)

Parish:	Heacham	
Proposal:	Conversion of 1No. existing building and erection of 6No. replacement buildings (following demolition of existing derelict buildings) for use as Holiday Accommodation.	
Location:	Church Farm Church Farm Road Heacham Norfolk PE31 7JB	
Applicant:	Mel-Able Farming Ltd	
Case No:	21/00943/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs N Osler	Date for Determination: 16 September 2021 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 8 April 2022

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Officer recommendation is contrary to Parish Council recommendation and referred by Sifting Panel

Neighbourhood Plan: Very limited weight; scheduled to go to referendum in summer 2022

Case Summary

The application seeks the conversion and repair of 1No. two-storey, detached building and the construction of 6No. single storey, semi and terrace, replacement buildings, for use as 1 and 2-bed units of holiday accommodation.

The site lies outside of the development boundary for Heacham (countryside) within the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB.)

The site lies within the 2km buffer zone of a SSSI and is ranked as 'Medium' in terms of groundwater risk.

The land is agricultural and is therefore not classed as previously developed land in planning terms.

The existing highway access via the B1454 will provide access to both the existing and continued agricultural operations on Mel-Able Farm as well as the proposed development of holiday lets.

The application was accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Business Plan and Structural Survey.

Key Issues

Principle of Development
Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Highway Safety
Residential Amenity

Crime and Disorder
Other Material Considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The application seeks the conversion and repair of 1No. two-storey, detached building and the construction of 6No. single storey, semi and terrace, replacement buildings, for use as 1 and 2-bed units of holiday accommodation.

The site lies outside of the development boundary for Heacham (countryside) within the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB.)

The site lies within the 2km buffer zone of a SSSI and is ranked as 'Medium' in terms of groundwater risk.

New materials will comprise brick, carrstone, natural timber cladding, pantiles and powder coated grey aluminium (the latter for the window and doorframes.) Existing materials will be reused where possible.

Foul drainage is to be via septic tank with surface water drainage via soakaways.

The land is agricultural and is therefore not classed as previously developed land in planning terms.

The application form suggests that the proposal would result in the creation of 2No. full-time equivalent jobs (e.g. cleaning, maintenance and gardening.)

Of the 7No. resultant holiday lets, 5 would be 2-bed units and 2 1-bed units. Each unit would have its own private patio, garden area, 1No. car park space and secure bike storage. Soft landscaping will be used throughout the rest of site.

Church Farm can currently be accessed by 2 entrance points, from the North via Church Farm Road and from the South via the B1454. However, the existing highway access via the B1454 will provide access to both the existing and continued agricultural operations on Mel-Able Farm as well as the proposed development of holiday lets. To cater to both types of traffic, the existing private driveway to the B1454 will be upgraded with passing places to reduce any potential conflict between agricultural vehicles and holidaymakers.

The application was accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Business Plan and Structural Survey.

SUPPORTING CASE

This proposal will assist with sustaining Mel-able Farming Ltd. by providing additional supplemental income to the farm operation allowing it to diversify its income stream by making efficient use of under-utilised buildings on the farm and will support the local tourist economy.

We have worked with the Council in a proactive manner to modify and adapt the proposal into its current form to find the most acceptable form of development possible. A number of improvements to the original proposal have been made as a result of this positive engagement, including a reduction in the total number of units, the roof height and the amount of glazing.

The existing barns are an eyesore and are dilapidated. The proposal for holiday accommodation reflects the footprint and ridge heights of the existing farm buildings, with only small extensions to the interior of the site that will not be visible from the wider landscape. The proposal keeps the buildings subordinate to the surrounding farm buildings and does not seek to overdevelop or alter the existing layout of the site. Rather than detract from the AONB, the redevelopment of the barns into a viable tourism operation will conserve and enhance the landscape as well as bring about local economic benefits for generations to come.

There is concern from the Norfolk Coast Partnership that the proposal will affect the openness of the AONB through the introduction of suburban features, such as gardens, entrance driveways, and increased glazing and light pollution. However, the proposal does not introduce any suburbanising features: the small garden courtyards are internalised so not visible from outside the site, no new driveways are part of the scheme, and the outward-facing glazing has been reduced as much as possible whilst still allowing for natural light. The Norfolk Coast Partnership also felt that “New farm buildings or conversions require exceptionally high standards of siting and design due to the openness and quality of the landscape here”. However, the existing site is not open – it is currently a very built-up commercial farmyard complex and the proposed single-storey replacement buildings lie in the middle amongst a series of two-storey industrial farm buildings and farmhouses/cottages.

Except from the south along the B1454, the site is not visible from the wider landscape or any known public viewpoints within AONB. 650m to the north, Ringstead Road is bounded on both sides by mature hedgerows and thick copses of woodland which obstruct any views into the site. 700m to the west, views from Ringstead Road to the site are blocked by dense residential development and further copses. To the east, Ringstead Road and Peddars Way (1.6 and 2.5km respectively) are also blind to Church farm, as more mature hedgerows and copses hinder any views toward the site. The site is visible only some 900m to the south of the site from the B1454, a main road that is unlikely to cater to people walking or cycling for the quiet enjoyment of the AONB. Glimpses of the development would likely be by car in passing but in any event, would only be seen right before encountering the built edge of Heacham, where the openness of the landscape immediately ceases. Furthermore, the most prominent feature in the view from the south is the green two-storey chemical store, which will be removed as part of the proposal thereby improving the openness and visual aesthetic when viewed from the south on the B1454.

The proposal will help to relieve pressure on local housing to meet both residential and tourist needs. Overall, the development proposal will bring about a number of social, economic and environmental benefits through the redevelopment of these dilapidated and unsightly barns into a diversified farm operation offering tourist accommodation that will benefit the wider local economy, conserve the landscape and reduce pressure on local housing for holiday purposes.

PLANNING HISTORY

12/02081/F: Application Permitted: 18/02/13 - Proposed agricultural general-purpose building to store farm implements etc.

07/01931/F: Application Permitted: 13/11/07 - Proposed agricultural general-purpose building to store grain.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT Overdevelopment of the area, outside village not within proposed local neighbourhood plan.

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION The application now removes the redirecting of farm traffic to the north of the site and would serve the proposal from the improved southern entrance, which has adequate width and visibility to cater for the likely increases (24 daily vehicle movements) associated with the development.

Should the Authority be minded to the grant of consent, the LHA would seek to append conditions relating to access (from B1454 only) and parking provision.

Natural England: NO OBJECTION Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites.

Protected Landscapes – Norfolk Coast AONB: The proposed development is for a site within or close to a nationally designated landscape namely Norfolk Coast AONB. Natural England advises that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide your decision and the role of local advice are explained below.

Your decision should be guided by paragraph 176 and 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework which gives the highest status of protection for the ‘landscape and scenic beauty’ of AONBs and National Parks. For major development proposals paragraph 177 sets out criteria to determine whether the development should exceptionally be permitted within the designated landscape.

Alongside national policy you should also apply landscape policies set out in your development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We also advise that you consult the relevant AONB Partnership or Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the AONB’s statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape’s sensitivity to this type of development and its capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area’s natural beauty. You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose. Relevant to this is the duty on public bodies to ‘have regard’ for that statutory purpose in carrying out their functions (S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Norfolk Coast Partnership: OBJECT Whilst there has been a [further] reduction in scale, height and glazing the amendments have not been sufficient to address our concerns and the proposal is in our view contrary to policy.

The site lies in the AONB, countryside and outside of the Development Boundary. Although close to Heacham village the site is surrounded on all sides by agricultural fields and is relatively isolated. Any development here is going to have a high visual impact in the AONB due to the exposed location and any disturbance will be in conflict with NPPF 176 to conserve

and enhance. 'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues'. The Planning Statement stated that 'The Application Site does not contain, nor is it near to, any designated international, national or local nature conservation sites' The AONB was not identified and is an important national site which Local Authorities have a duty of regard for.

The application in no way serves to conserve or enhance the AONB.

The AONB Management Plan objectives relevant to this application also include:

- BE7. Ensure that any development conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Area and provides net environmental gain.
- BE8. Ensure that changes to the built environment respect the landscape character and special qualities of the Area, and reinforce a sense of place and local distinctiveness

The site lies in the Rolling Open Farmland area indicated in our integrated Landscape Character Assessment. The majority of the landscape is characterised by large arable fields with low flailed or trimmed gappy hedgerows. Due to the low and fragmented hedgerows and openness of the landscape the views within the area are open and panoramic framed by the topography of the land.

Some of the key forces for change include:

- Potential farm diversification, resulting in conversion of agricultural buildings to houses and recreational facilities.
- Pressure for development of second or holiday homes.
- Small-scale development within villages, which may be out of character with existing settlement pattern.

Due to the open and expansive landscape here the introduction of suburban features, including gardens, fencing, lighting and entrance driveways, which can cumulatively alter the rural character of the landscape should be avoided. Increased glazing will create localised light pollution which impacts the Sense of remoteness, Tranquillity and Wildness, a special feature of the AONB currently in amber, cause for concern.

New farm buildings or conversions require exceptionally high standards of siting and design due to the openness and quality of the landscape here.

In relation to CS06 there is a conflict with the proposed scale and rural location, there is a wide provision in the area for tourists. The development of greenfield sites will be resisted unless essential for agricultural or forestry needs. The development will cause adverse visual impact in the surrounding area. 'Ensure that any new development enhances the distinctive local character of coastal areas as well as helps to support and enhance services and facilities for local people and visitors alike.'

CS07 'ensure that any new development enhances the distinctive local character of coastal areas as well as helps to support and enhance services and facilities for local people and visitors alike'. Whilst there will be some new provision for visitors this will be at the detriment of the landscape here.

We understand the desire for diversification however this is a high-quality landscape in the AONB and therefore any development needs to conserve and enhance in line with national

policy. We are still of the opinion that the proposal does not 'conserve and enhance' the AONB and that there will be visual disturbance in the countryside.

Therefore, the amendments do not remove my concerns. This will not serve to 'conserve or enhance the AONB' in line with para 176 of the NPPF.

CSNN: NO OBJECTION If this was for residential dwellings I would have some potential concerns about the layout of the units where the bedrooms back onto the lounges of other units as there would be the potential for intrusion from TV/conversation noise etc. if people went to bed at different times to the neighbours, and I would be likely to ask if they could consider alternatives to these layouts.

However, as these are proposed as holiday lets, any issues would be short-term, and the nature of holiday lets means that most people might generally be staying up later than normal so are less likely to feel disturbed by noise from others. On the same theme, there could be potential for annoyance from the operational noise and late-night use of the hot tubs and if these were permanent residences I might ask for conditions in relation to this.

Therefore, please can I have confirmation that these properties cannot be changed to residential occupation without further planning consent as that will affect what my finalised consultation comments would be?

I also recommend a drainage condition given the lack of detail submitted.

Environmental Health & Housing – Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION subject to condition(s) relating to potential contamination.

Environment Agency: NO OBJECTION. We have no comment to make on this application, but request informatives relating to risks to controlled waters and SUDS be appended to any permission granted.

Historic Environment Service: Thanks for consulting us about this application.

You are quite right, we looked at this case when we were checking the weekly planning lists and decided that archaeological mitigation was not required. Looking at this case again, we would stand by that decision.

The surrounding cropmarks are agricultural in nature; of ploughed-out field boundaries. There are some more interesting cropmarks to the southwest, but those are too far away to be of relevance here. There are records of artefacts being found in the surrounding fields, but not of the number or character to be considered significant. The standing farm buildings are not something we would normally comment upon.

In conclusion, we do not consider archaeological mitigation to be justified in this case.

REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of objection have been received. The issues raised can be summarised as:

- Impact on AONB and countryside as a whole
- Disturbance to local residents and road safety (this comment was received prior to confirmation that all traffic would use the B1454)
- Comments regarding the proximity of public transport are somewhat misleading as they state distances to the farm access rather than the proposed properties

- Whilst the Church Farm buildings date from the late 19th Century, the site has a long and interesting history. According to the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) the site adjoins two Archaeology Areas with Medieval cropmarks to the north and south (NHER 26823 & 26844) A Neolithic Axe Head was found on the exact site of the proposed development (NHER 14703 refers). The field bounded by the two access roads to the farm contains the remains of both a Medieval chapel and a Roman Villa. C.H. Lewton Brain (1967) The Archaeology of Heacham describes this as the "Golden Gates" field, as legend has it that such gates are buried in the field. A Roman ring was found in Church Farm Road (NHER 53103). I would suggest that the history of the site and proximity to so many heritage assets merit some sort of professional investigation before work commences on this site.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS10 - The Economy

CS11 - Transport

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM11 – Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

DM19 - Green Infrastructure/Habitats Monitoring & Mitigation

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Little weight can be given to the following Neighbourhood Plan Policies in advance of a referendum, although once passed full adopted development plan weighting should be given. Please note that Policy numbers may change between the submission and referendum versions of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy 6 – Design Principles

Policy 11 – Holiday Accommodation

Policy 15 – Dark Skies

Policy 17 – Settlement Breaks

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
National Design Guide 2019

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of Development
- Form and Character and Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Highway Safety
- Residential Amenity
- Crime and Disorder
- Other Material Considerations

Principle of Development

The application falls under the ‘banner’ of both farm diversification and rural tourism. Both of which are supported at national and local level. Other relevant policy and guidance primarily revolves around protecting the natural environment (AONB and countryside), although other issues such as highway safety and residential amenity are obviously key material considerations too.

The NPPF covers the rural economy at paragraphs 84 and 85:

84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

85. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

Development Management Policy DM2 allows development within the countryside where is complies with Core Strategy Policies CS06 and CS10, and Development Management Policy DM11 the latter of which relates specifically to Holiday Accommodation.

Core Strategy Policy CS06 states: *The strategy will be supportive of farm diversification schemes and conversion of existing buildings for business purposes in accordance with Policy CS10 providing any proposal:*

- *meets sustainable development objectives and helps to sustain the agricultural enterprise*
- is consistent in its scale with its rural location
- is beneficial to local economic and social needs
- does not adversely affect the building and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity.

Core Strategy Policy CS10, where it relates to tourism, states: *The Council will promote opportunities to improve and enhance the visitor economy:*

- Supporting tourism opportunities throughout the borough
- Promoting the expansion of the tourism (including leisure and culture) offer in Hunstanton to create a year-round economy
- Smaller scale tourism opportunities will also be supported in rural areas to sustain the local economy, providing these are in sustainable locations and are not detrimental to our valuable natural environment.

The Council will permit the development of new tourism accommodation in rural areas subject to the following criteria being met:

- *It should be located in or adjacent to our villages and towns*
- *It should be of a high standard of design in line with national guidance*
- *Will not be detrimental to the landscape*
- *Mechanisms will be in place to permanently retain the tourism related use.*

The application falls under the 'banner' of both farm diversification and rural tourism and is considered to meet the criterion listed above.

Development Management Policy DM11 states: *Proposals for new holiday accommodation sites or units or extension or intensification to existing holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted unless:*

1. The proposal is supported by a business plan demonstrating how the site will be managed and how it will support tourism or tourist related uses in the area
2. The proposal demonstrates a high standard of design in terms of layout, screening and landscaping ensuring minimal adverse impact on visual amenity and the historical and natural environmental qualities of the surrounding landscape and surroundings and
3. The site can be safely accessed
4. It is in accordance with national policies on flood risk
5. The site is not within the Coastal Hazard Zone indicated on the Policies Map, or within areas identified as tidal defence breach Hazard Zone in the Borough Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Environment Agency's mapping.

Small scale proposals for holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not negatively impact on the landscape setting and scenic beauty of the

AONB or on the landscape setting of the AONB if outside the designated area. Proposals for uses adversely affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or European Sites will be refused permission.

Policy DM11 also requires certain restrictive conditions relating to holiday use.

In relation to the points raised above the LPA responds as follows:

1. A suitable business plan, that suggests how the site will be managed, states the development will provide two full-time equivalent posts and suggests it will support tourism, accompanied the application
2. The layout has taken careful consideration of the impact of the development with the main areas of outside space and parking in a central position surrounded by the proposed replacement buildings. Landscaping will be suitably conditioned if permission is granted.
3. The local highway authority raises no objection subject to all traffic using the site (both agricultural and tourism) accessing the site from the B1454
- 4 and 5. The site does not lie in an area at risk of flooding or within the Coastal Hazard Zone.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords with Policy DM11 of the SADMP.

The Heacham Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) is also relevant and given its position in the adoption process (it has been to examination and modified policies have been accepted although Referendum is yet to take place) can be given limited weight in the planning balance.

Heacham Neighbourhood Plan Policies (as modified and accepted), relevant to this application are: Policies 6 (Design Principles), 11 (Holiday Accommodation), 15 (Dark Skies) and 17 (Settlement Breaks).

Taking each in turn:

Policy 6: Design Principles

'Development proposals should deliver high quality design. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

1. Preserves or enhances the village of Heacham, be sensitive to its surroundings, and demonstrate that it minimises adverse impacts on neighbouring residences
2. Recognise and reinforce the character of the local area in relation to height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design, and materials of neighbouring buildings
3. Homes and streets are designed to be tenure-blind
4. Streets are designed to provide sufficient resident and visitor parking that is well integrated and does not dominate the street. Street design should also encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces
5. Incorporate measures which increase energy efficiency and which reduce energy and resource loss, e.g. installation of solar panels, use of grey water, use of alternatives to plastic
6. Provide sufficient external space for:
 1. refuse and recycling storage
 2. bicycle parking
 3. child and disabled facilities where appropriate
 4. the integration of meter boxes, lighting, flues and ventilation ducts, gutters and pipes, satellite dishes, aerials and telephone lines

7. New dwellings should have gardens commensurate with the intended occupancy
8. Ensure that car parking provision is large enough to fit a modern family sized car (for example a VW Golf or Ford Focus) and allow the driver to get out of the car easily, and is positioned and designed to have minimal impact on the streetscene
9. Where appropriate, respect and protect designated and non-designated local heritage assets and their settings
10. There is no unacceptable adverse impact (visual or otherwise) on the area's landscape, and proposals for development will be expected to demonstrate how they have minimised landscape impacts on the open countryside and coastline
11. Incorporate adequate landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of the development and to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the existing village context. Where possible, sites are screened through the use of landform, native trees and locally appropriate planting
12. For major residential developments applicants should produce a report to demonstrate that their scheme accords with national design standards (BFL 12 or equivalent)
13. Where practicable, provide adaptable homes through the lifetime homes standard in order to cater for a changing demographic
14. Where practicable, make better connections to other areas of the parish, including access to local services and public open spaces
15. Retain mature or important trees (NPPF 2019 Section 175 applies) 37
16. Ensure new boundary treatments reflect the distinct local character and incorporate semi-mature street planting and hedges to boundaries with open countryside
17. Access to the site is provided/improved to highway authority standards
18. Where appropriate, proposals make a positive contribution towards open spaces, whether respecting the amenity, recreational and wider environmental value of existing spaces or, especially for developments of more than 8 dwellings, provide additional public open space to meet the needs of new residents.

In relation to the policy criteria above the LPA comments as follows:

1. Covered later in this report; there are no neighbouring residencies
2. The parameters of the replacement buildings are very similar to those they replace and are of an appropriate height, scale, etc. Materials will be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. The current site benefits from three wind turbine and solar panels on the main barn. It has been confirmed that the proposed units will be connected to these
6. Appropriate for the type of development sought
7. Appropriate for the type of development sought
8. Appropriate for the type of development sought
9. N/A
10. Covered later in this report
11. Can be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
12. N/A
13. N/A
14. Not proportionate given the scale and type of development sought
15. N/A; no trees will be affected by the proposed development
16. Can be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
17. It is
18. Not appropriate given the scale and type of development sought.

Notwithstanding issues that are covered later in this report, it is considered that the proposed extension is in general compliance with Policy 6, as modified, of the HNP.

Policy 11: Holiday Accommodation

In order to maintain and improve Heacham's attraction as a quiet uncommercialised holiday centre, applications for further holiday accommodation beyond existing defined holiday areas, will only be supported where the proposals:

- 1 Maintain the distinction between the contrasting holiday centres of Heacham and Hunstanton and do not diminish the physical separation between these centres; and
- 2 Do not have any unacceptable impact on local infrastructure, including green infrastructure; and
- 3 Minimise any visual and physical impact on the village by including, where appropriate, a landscaping plan incorporating the use of landform, native trees and locally appropriate planting ; and
- 4 Are not directly adjacent to any residential areas; and
- 5 Do not need to be accessed through the village centre of Heacham and
- 6 Incorporates high quality accommodation for which adequate parking and servicing arrangements are provided and
- 7 Can demonstrate a link to wider tourism or land use initiatives that provide demonstrable benefits to the local area.

In relation to the policy criteria above the LPA comments as follows:

1. The site does not diminish the physical separation between these centres
2. Heacham is a Key Rural Service Centre with many services and facilities. It is not considered that the scale of the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on local infrastructure
3. A detailed landscaping plan can be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
4. The development is not directly adjacent to any residential areas
5. The site does not have to be accessed through the village centre
6. The proposed units are a scale, mass, design and utilise appropriate materials, and appropriate parking is proposed
7. The development would provide additional tourism accommodation and provide new employment opportunities.

It is therefore considered that the proposed extension is in general compliance with Policy 11, as modified, of the HNP.

Policy 15: Dark Skies

External lighting associated with development proposals should be sensitively designed to safeguard the dark skies environment of the neighbourhood area and minimise the extent of any light pollution. In particular:

- external lighting should be designed to minimise the risk of light spillage beyond the development site boundary; and
- light-emitting diode down lighting, including lights at lower levels, should be used wherever practicable and be in keeping with the existing LED lighting stock.

Lighting can be suitably conditioned if permission is granted to ensure compliance with Policy 17, as modified, of the HNP.

Policy 17: Settlement Breaks

Development proposals outside the development boundaries of Heacham (and as shown in Inset G47 of the SADMP) will only be supported where they:

- *do not cause unacceptable harm to the landscape setting and distinct identity of Heacham*
- *do not detract from the visual separation of Heacham from Hunstanton*
- *do not detract from the views or settings of the Norfolk Coast AONB*
- *New development must not result in the coalescence of Heacham with Hunstanton to the north.*

In relation to the policy criteria above the LPA comments as follows:

- Impact on the landscape (and AONB in particular) is covered in more detail later in this report
- The development would not detract from the visual separation between the settlements.

In summary it is considered that the principle of development is to be supported and that the development accords with the overarching policy criterion outlined above.

However, the site lies within an AONB and therefore careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of the development on this nationally designated area.

Form and Character and Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):

Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states: *Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues...The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.*

Paragraph 177 continues by stating: *When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development* other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- a)the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy*
- b)the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c)any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

*the NPPF states that 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

Your officers do not consider that the development is major development for the purposes of the NPPF. However, there is still a need for all development to either conserve or enhance the AONB.

The proposal will replace a series of dilapidated barns which unfortunately are not capable of conversion due to their poor state of repair. This is confirmed in the structural survey report that accompanied the application.

The footprint of the new development closely follows the existing and thus reducing the impact on the character of the surrounding area and landscape. The applicant considers that the design represents a modern interpretation of the traditional vernacular and uses a local materials palette of carrstone and red brick elevations and clay pantile roofing to further reflect the character of the area.

The final revision:

- Reduces the number of units from eight to seven
- Reduction in roof height from two-storey to single-storey for units 2 and 3
- Removal of extensions to the south elevation of units 2 and 3
- Reduction in the amount of glazing throughout all units
- Reusing existing walls and materials where possible; and
- Clarification of the proposed route for agricultural vehicles and an accompanying as shown on the Highways Plan.

The layout ensures that the outside areas, including parking, are in a central position surrounded by the buildings. This not only places these areas in the most direct sunlight, it also shields them from public view.

The proposed replacement buildings are now much lower than originally proposed and are single storey, the same as those they replace, and follow the same footprint as the buildings they are to replace. Additionally, it is the intention to use as many of the existing materials as possible. However, in this regard it is inherently difficult to do this when there is such little material of quality left. Notwithstanding this, a materials schedule can be conditioned if considered necessary.

Whilst it is considered that the replacement buildings are a scale, mass, design and appearance that relate adequately to the site and the surrounding farm complex and would not in their own right be of detriment to the AONB, the use of the buildings (holiday let rather than agricultural buildings) will have an impact on this protected locality.

This will be principally by activity associated with the use. There will be greater vehicular activity, general activity and light pollution. The latter is considered to be acceptable given the reduction in glazing elements and external lighting can be suitably conditioned.

In relation to the former issue, activity, Members will need to consider whether this would result in conservation of the AONB and if the benefits to the existing agricultural enterprise and wider economy outweigh the harm these activities will have on the character of the AONB.

Your officers believe, on balance, given the only long view of the site is from the B1454 to the south, that the development would conserve the AONB and that any harm is outweighed by the benefits.

The proposal therefore complies with the NPPF and Development Plan Policies CS01, CS08, CS12 and DM15.

Highway Safety

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has confirmed that the access of the site to the B1454 to the south is adequate in terms of width and visibility to cater for the proposed development as well as the existing agricultural activity.

The LHA request a condition ensuring all traffic using the site (existing and proposed) do so via this access which is preferable to utilising an existing access to the west of the site that enters the main highway network (the A149) via Chapel Farm Road and Ringstead Road through residential areas.

The proposal therefore complies with the NPPF and Development Plan Policy CS11.

Residential Amenity

There are no non-associated residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the site and given the holiday nature of the accommodation the inter-development relationships are considered acceptable.

Crime and Disorder

There are no specific crime and disorder issues arising from the proposed development.

Other Material Considerations

The £55 per dwelling Habitat Mitigation Fee, as required by Policy DM19, accompanied the application.

CONCLUSION

Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan and any other material considerations. The application falls under the 'banner' of both farm diversification and rural tourism. Both of which are supported at national and local level, subject to other relevant planning policy and guidance and for the reasons outlined in the report above it is considered that the development is in general accordance with these enabling policies.

The site lies within an AONB and the Norfolk Coast Partnership object to the proposed development on the grounds of its impact on this nationally designated area.

It is considered that the scale, mass, design and appearance of the proposed replacement buildings are acceptable in their farm complex setting. However, it is acknowledged that there would be some impact from the proposed use (holiday accommodation.) Notwithstanding this, it is considered, on balance, that this impact would not be significant and would not result in material harm to the AONB. Furthermore, the proposal comes with benefits both to the existing agricultural enterprise, but also to the tourism offer and economy although it is acknowledged that this benefit will be relatively small when considered against the borough as a whole.

The proposed development would not result in any highway safety or neighbour amenity issues.

It is therefore recommended that this application be approved subject to the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

17.4018.264 EX-01
17.4018.265 PLO1 Rev.K
17.4018.265 PLO2 Rev.K
17.4018.265 PLO3 Rev.K
17.4018.265 PLO4 Rev.K
17.4018.265 PLO5 Rev.K
HIGHWAYS PLAN.
- 2 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition **No development shall commence** until full details of the foul and surface water drainage arrangements for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage details shall be constructed as approved before any part of the development hereby permitted is brought into use. Your attention is drawn to Informative 2 of this decision notice in relation to this condition.
- 3 Reason To ensure that there is a satisfactory means of drainage in accordance with the NPPF. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition as drainage is a fundamental issue that needs to be planned for and agreed at the start of the development.
- 4 Condition Means of vehicular access to and egress from the development hereby permitted shall be derived from and to the B1454 Heacham Road only
- 4 Reason In the interests of highway safety and traffic movement in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.
- 5 Condition Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the proposed on-site car parking and turning areas shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.
- 5 Reason To ensure the permanent availability of the parking/manoeuvring areas, in the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.
- 6 Condition **Prior to any demolition** a schedule of the materials to be salvaged for reuse in the redevelopment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
- 6 Reason To ensure that materials that are capable of re-use are retained in accordance with the principles of the NPPF. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition given

the fundamental details linked to the conservation of materials which need to be planned for at the earliest stage in the development.

- 7 Condition No development shall take place on any external surface of the development hereby permitted until samples of all materials (not covered under condition 6 of this permission) to be used for the external surfaces of the building(s), including roof materials, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 7 Reason To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 8 Condition No development shall take place on any external surface of the development hereby permitted until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building(s) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 8 Reason To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 9 Condition Prior to any works above ground floor finish floor level of the development hereby approved, full details of both hard and soft landscape works shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include finished levels or contours, hard surface materials, refuse or other storage units, street furniture, structures and other minor artefacts. Soft landscape works shall include planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers and densities where appropriate.
- 9 Reason To ensure that the development is properly landscaped in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 10 Condition Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted or within the first planting season all hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved under Condition 9 of this permission. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation or use of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that 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 as those originally planted, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.
- 10 Reason To ensure that the work is carried out within a reasonable period in accordance with the NPPF.
- 11 Condition Prior to the installation of any external lighting relating to the development hereby permitted a detailed outdoor lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the type of lights, the orientation / angle of the luminaries, the spacing and height of the lighting columns, the extent / levels of illumination over the site and on adjacent land and the measures to contain light within the curtilage of the site. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with approved scheme and thereafter maintained and retained as agreed. Your attention is drawn to Informative 3 of this decision in relation to the lighting within the AONB.

- 11 Reason In the interests of minimising light pollution and to safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 12 Condition The development hereby permitted shall only be occupied for holiday purposes and shall be made available for rent or as commercial holiday lets.
- 12 Reason The site lies within in an area in which the Local Planning Authority would not normally permit permanent residential development. This permission is granted because accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF.
- 13 Condition The development hereby permitted shall only be used for short-stay holiday accommodation (no more than 28 days per single let) and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence.
- 13 Reason The site lies within in an area in which the Local Planning Authority would not normally permit permanent residential development. This permission is granted because accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF.
- 14 Condition The owners / operators of the development hereby permitted shall maintain an up-to-date register of lettings/occupation and shall make this available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.
- 14 Reason The site lies within in an area in which the Local Planning Authority would not normally permit permanent residential development. This permission is granted because accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF.
- 15 Condition The holiday let hereby permitted shall at all times be held, owned and operated in association with Church Farm, Church Farm Road, Heacham and shall not be sold off separately.
- 15 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the building is not used for unrelated purposes that would be incompatible with the provisions of the NPPF and Policy DM11 of the SADMPP 2016.
- 16 Condition In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with current best practice, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
- 16 Reason To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.
- 17 Condition Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the parking area to the south shall be screened with a boundary the details of which shall be submitted to

and approved in writing by the LPA. The boundary treatment shall thereafter be maintained and retained in perpetuity.

- 17 Reason In the interests of the visual amenity of the locality in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.