

Design and Access Statement – Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposed renovation and extension of The Old Croft, Green Street, Holt including the demolition of existing extensions and outbuildings together with the erection of an additional new dwelling.

The proposals have been under consideration for some considerable time and the product of a lengthy pre-application process to discuss the totality of the scheme. This has been by way of written consultation and a few telecoms due to the recent pandemic.

The proposals comprise the renovation of the existing property (The Old Croft), the removal of a range of extensions and out buildings, a proposed new extension to The Old Croft together with the proposed construction of a new dwelling within the depth of the site and generally relating to the adjacent existing small estates by way of infill.

The Old Croft is situated in and compliments the Conservation Area and discussions have developed to allow the careful renovation of the original buildings fronting Green Street. These were converted from two dwellings to one and the ordnance survey plan attached still shows the separate dwelling configuration.

The original scheme proposed two additional separate dwellings and after discussion this has been reduced to one dwelling. Thus, limiting development in the middle section of the site adjacent to existing two storey dwellings. This area has been proposed for garaging.

It had been proposed to locate a dwelling within the existing developed site as far as the existing garages and workshops but it was felt a more agreeable scheme would propose locating the new dwelling further down the site beyond the established village boundary, relating to the adjacent properties with aspect forward and down the site avoiding overlook to the adjacent properties.

The drawings and photographs attached to the application show the extent of the developed hedging and tree boundaries and it is proposed to manage and maintain these to retain a green boundary.

The topographic survey provided also indicates and records the relationship of the adjacent properties.

The existing main house, which dates from the mid 19th century, is in a very poor state of repair & is in danger of falling into dereliction if remedial work is not undertaken soon. e.g. little or no maintenance appears to have been done for many years & the property has recently stood empty since being vacated by the previous, elderly owner. The roof leaks and, in all likelihood will need to be replaced, dry rot is present on the ground floor, the house is damp and the front porch is held up only by the ivy which engulfs the building etc. etc.

The outriggers are partly lean-to, partly of brick construction, all with old, leaky UPVC windows & doors, & all covered in felt roofing materials of various vintages. None of it is of any merit, and in our opinion is currently detrimental to the general area.

There is a range of large outbuildings which have been used for garaging/workshop/sale of produce/ storage of machinery etc, and the housing & feeding of farm animals.

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The proposal is to demolish the outbuildings and the hard-standing that fronts them in order to facilitate the development as described in the accompanying plans.

The proposed new dwelling is designed to be sympathetic in detailed construction to compliment and reference the existing house and other houses of a similar age in the village of Holt, and by its proposed location and aspect not to compromise the privacy of nearby dwellings.

The entire plot is sandwiched between housing estates; one being of family-sized bungalows dating from the 1960s-70s; the other being of detached two-storey, 4 bed family homes having been built within the last 20 years.

The issue of areas of the proposed development being outside the defined development boundary has been discussed and due to the extent of the development either side it is clear the boundary was drawn around what was developed, ignoring the extensive adjacent estates and the thin section of site would surely have been brought into the recent developments were the owner to have been in agreement. Thus, we would contend that this small scale infill which would facilitate the thorough renovation of the existing dwelling within the Holt Conservation Area is reason enough to justify this development at the discretion of the Authority without setting any precedent given the specific geography of the site and surroundings.

It has been clear throughout the discussions that the Conservation Officer is supportive of the proposals and the benefit afforded to the Holt Conservation Area.

Heritage Impact Assessment

It is generally agreed that the removal of the low grade extensions will be beneficial to the site and surroundings and the proposal seeks to renovate the front and side aspects of The Old Croft.

Discussions have been held in respect of the front boundary wall which is proposed to be removed and rebuilt to facilitate and improved access and provide pavement to link the existing pavements, whilst re-using the existing materials. The wall has a modern damp proof course but it is felt that this will have been an earlier renovation/rebuild with existing bricks.

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The extensive ivy has been removed from the front and much of the brickwork has been exposed and we will agree appropriate remedial repointing and repair using lime mortar and traditional techniques avoiding mechanical equipment so as to preserve arises. Method statements will be submitted and agreed in advance of works.

The existing windows are not original and it is proposed that flush casement windows will be used throughout these elevations and samples and details will be provided for agreement prior to manufacture.

Archaeology

In the event of a successful approval it is proposed that an Archaeologist would be appointed to monitor demolition works involving subterranean structures and together with recording new excavations.

Recent use of the site.

The property was converted from two dwellings to one by the previous owner and the use of the outbuildings and extensions has varied over the years.

The land was littered with tractors, old vans & agricultural vehicles & machinery, the bulk of which were sold off in recent years. The entire plot was under cultivation for very many years as a market garden & the buildings down the side were used as shops, selling the produce .

Customers drove in to pick up their purchases. The owners would have been in & out of the Existing Access with delivery vans

Access

The attached drawings define an improved access arrangement with increased visibility splays achieved by the relocation and reduction in height of the boundary wall. This also facilitates the continuous pavement to Green Street. This is considered a significant safety improvement as pedestrians are currently required to step into the road to pass the property. This had been proposed to the previous owner by the local Authority but this was rejected.

It is also proposed to have turning provision within the site and a belay point immediately to the rear of the Old Croft to permit access and egress to and from the rear of the site in a forward direction as defined on the attached drawings.

The drawings show the much improved access and visibility splays and continuous pavement.

These improvements and the potential gift of the land to achieve the continuous pavement are related to the proposed new dwelling to the rear.

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Clearly the existing access has accommodated significant traffic flows during the past uses of the buildings within the depth of the site and also served the original two dwellings.

Given the remaining buildings on the site and their continuous and varied use, a more intensive use of these buildings generating greater traffic flow through the existing unimproved access is feasible and the proposals would both prevent this use and limit the onsite activity to purely to domestic dwellings.

Drainage

It is proposed that the new dwelling would be connected to a Vertical Flow Reed Bed until such time as the local treatment plant is brought up to standard to address the discharge of phosphates into the local water course.

This system is appropriate to the gradient of the site and would be located on the lower section of the land edged blue on the location plan.

This would be designed by specialists once the principal is agreed.

It would be preferred that a new mains connection were available but we understand that the upgrading of the treatment plants for this area may be some way off and given the available land and technology this solution would be adopted.

Should approval be granted subject to the provision of the above proposed drainage system it would not be intended to develop the new property for a couple of years and should the local Treatment Plant be upgraded in that time a direct connection would be preferred.

In summary we concur with the view expressed by your Conservation Officer that "these proposals may unlock development on the site which would include repair and re-occupation of the house" - which is currently in a decaying state and in need of significant expenditure to enable proper restoration.

We trust that favourable consideration can be afforded to this application.

Project Architecture

On behalf of Mrs Robson-Catlin