OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00230/LBC **Listed Building Consent**

Proposal: **Demolition of existing outbuildings and conversion and extension of existing barn to a single self-build dwelling and associated works including the installation of air source heat pumps**

Location: **The Barn Garden Farm The Town**

Applicant: **Mr and Mrs Elizabeth and Murray MacKay**

Grid Ref: **512092 264200**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This Listed Building consent application seeks approval for the demolition of existing outbuildings and the conversion and extension of an existing barn to a single self-build residential dwelling alongside associated works at Garden Farm, Great Staughton.

Garden Farm, The Town, Great Staughton is a Grade II Listed Building approximately 1km south-west of the built-up area of Great Staughton. The existing property is a two-storey, 16th century, timber-framed and plastered farmhouse of a gable-end design. The property is approximately 80m south-west of the Great Staughton Conservation Area. The historic timber framed barn subject to approval for conversion and the ancillary buildings to be demolished are considered to form part of Green Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The site is located within the boundary of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan. The examiner's report on the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan was issued on 3 April 2025 and recommended that the Plan met all legal requirements and can proceed to referendum. This was considered by Cabinet on 17th June 2025 where it was agreed to accept the recommended modifications and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum. Accordingly it can be given considerable weight at this stage.

The Local Planning Authority is also considering a full planning application for the same development (Reference number 25/00229/FUL).
Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;

* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036 - Referendum Version - April 2025

Policy GSNP 10: Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):

* Place Making Principles parts 3.7 Building Form

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Given the heritage of the dwelling there is a wide planning history associated with it. The history from November 1974 onwards is available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. The most recent, relevant history is detailed below:

25/00232/LBC - Erection of Single Storey rear extension - Approved.

25/00231/HHFUL - Erection of Single Storey rear extension - Approved.

25/00229/FUL - Demolition of existing outbuildings and conversion and extension of existing barn to a single self-build dwelling and associated works including the installation of air source heat pumps - Pending consideration.

CONSULTATIONS

Great Staughton Parish Council - No comments received

Huntingdonshire District Council Conservation Officer - Objects to the proposed development due to the total loss of historic curtilage buildings, harm to the timber framed barn, loss of historic associations and introduction of an overwhelming domestic character to the agricultural setting of the listed farmhouse.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Impact on Heritage Assets

* Impact on Heritage Assets

The Local Planning Authority is required to ensure that special regard is given to preserving the listed buildings and their settings in relation to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Para 212 of the NPPF sets out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.' Para 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification...' The NPPF goes on to state that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use.

Local Plan Policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.

This application seeks approval for the demolition of existing outbuildings and the conversion and extensions of an existing barn to a single five-bedroom residential dwelling alongside associated works at Garden Farm, Great Staughton. The proposed extensions involves the creation of two single storey wings connected to the main barn by single storey glazed links. The eastern extension would provide a recreation wing with a swimming pool and gym, and be of a flat-roof design The western extension is also of a flat-roof design and creates a garage, office and bedroom. The extensions would be constructed with a black metal finish with black windows and sedum roofing with solar panels.

The historic timber framed barn subject to approval for conversion and the ancillary buildings to be demolished are considered to form part of Green Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The Barn is a five bay timber framed building and the size and quality of timbers is suggestive of a 16th Century date which is supported by the types of carpentry techniques used in the framing. There is no reason to think that this barn is not contemporary with the 16th Century listed farmhouse. The interesting timber joints, aisled construction and numerous clear carpenters' marks combine to give the building high evidential value which contributes to the special interest of the listed building and has significance in its own right.

To the south of the main barn is a group of brick, timber framed and weatherboarded cart lodges and outbuildings. These make three sides of a small yard area and define the southern boundary of the main farmyard. They appear to date to the first half of the 19th Century. In places these buildings are in poor condition but as ancillary agricultural buildings they make a positive contribution to the setting and special interest of the listed farmhouse.

It is proposed to demolish all the ancillary farm buildings except for the main timber framed barn which would be converted into a dwelling and extended on both sides with contemporary styled 'wings'. The former farmyard concrete surface would be removed and the area landscaped into formal gardens with a new access track and parking area introduced into the north of the site.

The converted barn would be finished with timber cladding walls and a slate roof with rooflights on the north-side elevation roofslope. The proposal includes various alterations to the fenestration of

the building, the installation of an air source heat pump, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments.

With regard to the conversion of the existing timber barn, it is unclear from the submitted details how the new structural elements of the barn conversion would respect the existing framing and plinth walls or how much historic fabric would be lost. The proposed floor plans indicate the location of the existing sections but do not show how the proposed external walls or internal steelwork relate to the existing structure. The proposed ground floor plan does not show the aisle sole plates that connect the principal post bases to the rear wall sole plates which is a specific and important part of the framing.

Based on the limited information provided, it is uncertain how the proposed underpinning will impact the existing stone and brick plinth upon which the framing rests and how the proposed inserted floors and walls would impact historic fabric. It is also uncertain how existing braces would impact headroom and if the missing braces are replaced as they should be how these would impact headroom at first floor level.

The subdivision of the curtilage by the eastern extension (recreation wing) would erode the spatial relationship of the farmhouse with the farmyard and walled gardens. The status of the farmhouse would be lessened by the increased presence and massing of the converted barn. This would be compounded by the introduction of a new access driveway to the converted barn over the existing pasture.

The proposal also involves the demolition of three ancillary curtilage farm buildings to the east and south of the barn to be retained. The buildings in question make a positive contribution to the special historic interest of the Listed Farmhouse and inadequate clear and convincing justification has been provided as part of this application.

The historic relationships between the farmyard, farm buildings and wider agricultural landscape forms a part of the significance of the Listed Building. The submitted Heritage Statement fails to consider cumulative impacts of the proposed development on the setting to the Listed Building and does not accord sufficient weight to the total loss of the curtilage outbuildings and their contribution to the significance of the farmhouse.

The Council's Conservation Officer has concluded that the cumulative impact of the total loss of historic curtilage buildings, harm to the timber framed barn, loss of historic associations and introduction of an overwhelming domestic character to the agricultural setting of the Listed Farmhouse would amount to a high degree of harm to the significance of that heritage asset. As such, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest and setting of the Listed Building to a less than substantial degree of harm.

Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The submitted Heritage Statement argues that the harm arising from the development would be "outweighed by the heritage benefits delivered by the scheme which include restoring the structure, rectifying historic interventions which has caused damage and providing it with a new long term sustainable use."

The Local Planning Authority do not consider the public benefits of the development identified by within the Heritage Statement outweigh the high degree of harm that would result from the proposal. Furthermore, the proposed works do not offer clear and convincing justification that conversion to a domestic dwelling is the optimum viable use of this building.

The development is therefore considered to be contrary to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP2, LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy GSNP 10 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Conclusion

The cumulative impact of the total loss of historic curtilage buildings, harm to the timber framed barn, loss of historic associations and introduction of an overwhelming domestic character to the agricultural setting of the listed farmhouse would not preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Garden Farmhouse or its setting. As such, the proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Listed Building. It is considered that there are no public benefits which would outweigh this harm, as required by Para 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

As such, the proposed development would be contrary to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 Policy GSNP 10 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that Listed Building Consent be refused.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Jennifer Wallis**