

Heritage, Design and Access Statement in respect of Conversion of

Barns at The Old Farmhouse Stonehaugh Shields NE48 3BU



Background History

There is evidence that a farm existed at Stonehaugh Shields since around 1700. Gravestones at Simonburn attest to the occupants' association with Stonehaugh Shields.

The existing barns and farmhouse are a typical Northumbrian long house i.e. a 2 storey house attached to a 2 storey haybarn attached to 4 no single storey barns. The whole sited directly on an outcrop of Whinsill running WNW/ESE. The house was possibly built around 1812 although some of structure may be older.

Stonehaugh Shields as now is, was originally only a small part of a 150 acres holding owned by The Ridleys of Parkend. The holding was compulsorily purchased by the Min of Agriculture and Fisheries as part of the grand forest project in 1953. Until then it had been Tenanted by the Beattie family (Andrew 1913 on)

After that date the larger part of the holding went to forestry and part was developed as Stonehaugh village. Originally 54 houses were planned although only 29 were ever built.

A small sewage works was built on the Warksburn on the site of what had been a very old (?Roman) quarry. A borehole to supply water and underground storage reservoir was constructed just outwith our current 18 acre holding.

The Forestry commission acting as agents of the Min of Ag and Fish gutted the farmhouse and the adjoining hayloft which were converted into an office and rest area. To service this a small outbuilding adjoining the farmhouse was converted into two toilets The attached long barns to the north were used for the storage of tools, equipment, vehicles, gerry cans of fuel and crystalline Urea which was dissolved and used as a fertiliser. There is no record of any planning permission or building regulation approval for this work.

At the same time the 30+ houses were constructed to form Stonehaugh Village and a small sewage works was built at the northern boundary of Stonehaugh Shields. Just to the northeast of what we now own, a borehole with an underground reservoir were also constructed to supply water for the housing. Both of these facilities are accessed across Stonehaugh Shields. These were maintained by the Forestry Commission until 1994 when they passed to Northumbria Water.

Due to increased mechanisation fewer employees were required and the use of the farmhouse as a rest depot was abandoned before 1969 when there was diversification and various planning permissions were sought, obtained and land sold off or leased.

In 1969 planning permission was granted for a chalet estate of 33 timber lodges and a temporary permission for a touring caravan site, 14 chalets were built in the initial phase, of which 7 remain. A valid permission for a further 19 chalets exists in the area to south of the existing chalets. To service the touring campsite a small outbuilding adjoining the farmhouse was converted into two toilets and a small wooden building with two toilets was erected on the campsite itself along with a septic tank. The freehold for the whole holding rested with what was then the Forestry Commission (Min of Ag and Fish).

In 1990 the chalet estate freehold was transferred to Hartley Leisure.

In 1992 the applicants A and CM Townsend acquired the freehold of the remainder of Stonehaugh Shields.

There are no records of any planning permissions granted until the following.

Planning History

1. S 69/49A (18.12.69) use of land as caravan site
2. S 70/29 (02.10.70) layout plan and winter storage areas for caravans (pursuant to S 69/49A)
3. S 70/29 (15.03.72) Detailed planting scheme (pursuant to S 69/49A)
4. S74/336 (09.1974) proposed chemical disposal point and septic tank
5. 75/E/246 (04.06.1976) Petrol filling station comprising 2 pumps- 2storage tanks of 1500 gallons
6. 76/E/282 (04.06.1976) Change of use from vacant rooms in farmhouse to craft shop

In 1992 we tendered for the purchase of an 18 acre portion for the land which had been part of the whole Stonehaugh Shields 150 acre holding our offer was accepted and began negotiations.

We ascertained that S74/336 (09.1974) proposed chemical disposal point and septic tank related to the toilet facility we were acquiring on the campsite and that

75/E/246 (04.06.1976) Petrol filling station comprising 2 pumps- 2storage tanks of 1500 gallons related to the timber haulage facility south east of the houses and not this site and that

76/E/282 (04.06.1976) Change of use from vacant rooms in farmhouse to craft shop related to the derelict farmhouse we were acquiring to use as our home.

Our solicitors received confirmation in writing from Northumberland County council that the permission for the campsite use was legally valid.

We were also advised that the use of the house as a home still existed and the use of the barns as ancillary accommodation to the house still existed.

When we occupied the house and barns they were derelict i.e. holes in roofs and attendant rot and completely empty and with no electrical supply.

In 1994/5 permission was granted for a sunroom + solar hot water panel, porch and dormer extensions to the farmhouse. The outside toilets were thereby accessed by the sunroom and one was converted into a utility room.

In 2000 permission was granted for a wind turbine and shower block and solar hot water panels on the campsite itself.

We renovated the house and have used the attached barns as ancillary accommodation. When our children were little they played in them and kept rabbits in one of them. Storage use was much as it is now, i. e. for a large stock of Wood (fuel), storage of domestic building materials, paint, plywood, plasterboard, insulation, wood fencing posts, drainage goods, grass cutters, tools and over winter storage of garden furniture including bench table seating for the campsite.

We now wish to develop our campsite business by offering small holiday lets by converting the single storey barns.

Design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development

Design

Sustainable design has been of paramount concern in the development of Stonehaugh Shields so far and will be in further development. The showerblock on the campsite incorporates a grey water disposal system, a 6kW wind turbine provides power and 3 solar hot water panels provide the majority of hot water. A solar hot water panel on the farmhouse extension provides summer and part of the winter domestic hot water needs. Excess power generated by the wind turbine is diverted to our home as heat.

The redundant barns the subject to a planning application are traditional Northumbrian long barns in terms of appearance and construction. Albeit that during the period of ownership by Forest Enterprise, (1952-1992) there was some ad-hoc alteration (openings increased to facilitate the storage and repair of vehicles, inappropriate windows cut in.) Changes necessary to new use will be respectful of traditional construction details and materials.

There are large areas of stone roads and a large concrete area, (to the west) which was once the floor of a very large barn. This was removed long before we acquired the proper. It is proposed that for environmental reasons (re-use/recycling) these existing stone roads and concrete are re-used provided other objectives are still met.

Views

From the north on the public road to Wark there are no views of the barns. Since a public footpath and bridleway cross the site there will be some visual impact however views from these routes and from the residential properties in the village are mitigated by considerable semi- mature mixed tree planting.

Access

The site is constrained by the public footpaths, bridleways and private rights of access, (Northumbria Water to sewage works and reservoir.) which cross the site; these are indicated on the attached site plan.

The current arrangements are confusing and do not deliver any privacy or private space to the Old Farmhouse. Further they do not follow natural boundaries such as fences or drainage ditches.

To reduce confusion private spaces for the holiday homes are to be created.

Refuse Collection

Since the introduction of the twin bin recycling scheme 6 receptacles (for the chalets which are **not** in our ownership) have been permanently located on the verge adjoining the un-surfaced access road owned by Wark parish council. This position is extremely exposed and they are frequently blown over and waste has been scattered. We do not keep receptacles either for domestic refuse or our commercial waste from the campsite on this verge. Two domestic receptacles for the farmhouse are located at the farmhouse collection point and moved to the verge for collection on that day only and then returned to their normal space. Commercial waste from the campsite is held in receptacles in designated areas on the campsite and then moved to a collection point shown on the 1:500 plan. Waste from the proposed holiday homes will be held at the same collection point and then removed from there under the same commercial contract.

Car Parking

Parking areas will help to define boundaries and territory.

Drainage

Foul water from the farmhouse flows into the main drainage system handled by the sewage works, rainwater from the farmhouse flows through the ground into a drainage ditch to the west (see 1: 500 plan) and into the ground to the east where it flows into the main drainage ditch from the village. We are in the process of directing increased run off from the house (climate change) towards this nearest watercourse.

Quality of Appearance

The traditional appearance of the long barns are retained with the current minimal openings, blocked ventilation slots opened up and roof lights added to deliver necessary daylight.