



PROPOSALS FOR THE ERECTION OF REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS

GUIDANCE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC MERIT OF THE EXISTING BUILDING

- CONSULTATION DRAFT -

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This guidance has been written to assist owners, potential purchasers, agents, Councillors and planning officers when considering proposals for the erection of replacement dwellings in the open countryside outside those settlements defined as Group and Area Centres and the Main Town in the South Holland Local Plan 2006 (the Local Plan).
- 1.2 Policy HS17 of the Local Plan establishes criteria for the assessment of proposals for replacement dwellings in the open countryside. The Policy is appended in full to this guidance. Criterion 4) of the Policy seeks to protect and preserve those unlisted dwellings which are of architectural and historic merit and capable of repair (other policies of the Local Plan deal with Listed buildings).
- 1.3 Rural cottages and houses are an important part of the agrarian heritage of South Holland and make a valuable contribution to the character of the District. Historically many locally important houses and cottages have been lost and replaced by new properties of very limited architectural quality. Policy HS17 seeks to prevent further loss. This guidance sets out how we will assess whether or not an existing dwelling has architectural or historic merit and offers advice on sympathetic repair and restoration.

2.0 VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

- 2.1 Before the middle of the 19th Century and the invention of the railway system, most houses were built of locally available materials, particularly those of lower and middling status. The size and design of a dwelling was also very much linked to the financial status of the person for whom the dwelling was intended. The resulting style, being a combination of the locally available building materials and the status and finances of the owner, is called vernacular architecture (as opposed to 'polite' architecture, which is architecture designed by

prominent architects of the time or to have been heavily influenced by national design trends brought into fashion as a result of the work of prominent architects).

2.2 All counties, and even districts within, have their own locally distinctive styles of vernacular architecture. It is easy to detect the form and style of these once humble dwellings in other districts such as Gloucestershire, with its stone cottages of mellow limestone, or Worcestershire with its timber framed wattle and daub buildings. Many districts retain examples of humble house types from the 16th Century. Lincolnshire is different from other counties in terms of readily available building materials, and with the exception of villages built on the Oolitic limestone ridge, has relied upon building materials of earth and timber (Mud and Stud) and later, brick, for dwellings of lower status. This means that little survives from the 17th Century or before in the way of modest vernacular dwellings in comparison to other counties. The Fens area (which includes South Holland, and to some extent, the adjoining districts of Boston, West Norfolk and Fenland) has regionally distinct styles of architecture. The vernacular architecture of the Fens is not perhaps recognised or appreciated in the same photographic 'chocolate box' way that other more picturesque areas are. Our regionally distinct architecture is now characterised by brick and pantile cottages (of which many early examples may have had thatched roofs, with thatch sometimes found hidden under tin or pantile). Several historic types of brick dwelling houses are to be found within South Holland as national fashions for architecture eventually travelled down the social strata.

2.3 The most typical example is that of a Fenland cottage built of brick and pantile, of one and a half storeys, with a symmetrical frontage. A central door flanked by either vertically hung box sash or Yorkshire sliding sash windows (some examples have cruciform casement windows) and gable stacks (occasionally central stacks are found). Other types found within the District include a one roomed cottage

dating back to 1694 in Tydd St Mary (extended to two rooms by about 1800 but now much altered), a lobby entrance plan cottage, originally consisting of two rooms plus attic rooms built of roughly coursed stone rubble and massive stone quoins at Moulton Chapel (also extended historically in three phases and having some alterations and modern insertions). There are also several good unlisted examples of two storey symmetrical 'three bay front' farmhouses within the District, often built following parliamentary enclosure. Whilst some houses may have lost part of their original fabric or have been subject to unsympathetic alteration this will not justify demolition or replacement. Cosmetic damage such as the introduction of modern windows can be reversed through sympathetic repair and reinstatement. Planning permission will not be granted for the replacement of a dwelling of architectural or historic value on grounds of the costs of repair set against the cost of new build.

3.0 WHAT VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE HAVE WE GOT LEFT?

- 3.1 By the 19th Century the use of brick was universal to the country, not just the Fens area, and it is perhaps therefore easy to overlook the importance of brick as a locally distinctive material. This may well be the reason why so little vernacular architecture within South Holland survives intact. Research within the District currently reveals only two typical Fenland cottages (both Listed grade II) that have not suffered from significant alteration. However, one of these buildings also stands semi derelict despite its Listed status.

- 3.2 There are a limited number of remaining close 'mud and stud' cottages in the District which are Listed buildings. There is evidence to show that much more of this style of vernacular architecture existed. The Cottage, Station Road, Donington is one extant example, (currently on the South Holland District Council Buildings at Risk Register). This building was originally three one roomed cottages dating from circa 1690. Substantial oak framing can be seen below later modern

pebbledash render. Records show that Holbeach once had a rectory built of mud and stud and there were several mud and stud cottages in Moulton village which survived until the middle of the 20th Century.

3.3 Many more examples of vernacular architecture survive but are disguised by layers of change. However, where such examples are found as a consequence of replacement dwelling proposals, the Local Planning Authority will place much emphasis on retention and restoration of local vernacular architecture. Although some examples may well be heavily disguised, if sufficient evidence exists to show that these buildings are typical Fenland structures, they will be considered to have historic merit even though some architecturally distinguishing features may have been lost. Policy HS17 requires that buildings are assessed for both their architectural and historic merit. (Note: a building does not have to have both architectural and historic merit to be Worthing of retention.) This assessment of merit will include the potential for reinstatement of lost architectural details. Even where details are missing, it is possible to reinstate authentic detail to bring these disguised buildings back to something of their original appearance by giving back architectural merit when repairs are required.

4.0 HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL MERIT

4.1 In assessing whether or not a building has architectural and/or historic merit the following criteria will be taken into account:

Building Type

4.2 Some examples of vernacular dwellings are statutorily protected. However, many unlisted examples exist within the District and they can be 'hidden' by later (often unsympathetic) modernisation. Where such buildings exist, consideration will always be given to possibilities of retention and restoration, especially where buildings exhibit

architectural and/or historic merit. The District of South Holland contains examples of early vernacular Fenland cottages, usually of brick construction and these can date from the late 17th Century onwards through to the mid 19th Century. (Any early surviving buildings would be considered rare and may be put forward as a candidate for Spot Listing, if not Listed already). The style of vernacular architecture changes with fashion and status throughout the Georgian era (1715 – 1837) with the design, detail and plan form of houses of higher and more fashionable status beginning to influence those building houses further down the social strata. Each building will be considered on its merits and by comparison of its type. For example, an Edwardian lodge may be possessed of a very different style to that of a typical Fenland cottage. Each would be considered in its own right and neither example is less or more valid in terms of type.

Age

4.3 The following will be taken into consideration when establishing the approximate age of a building:

(1) *Plan, Scale and Form* – although sometimes disguised by later additions and alterations historically important buildings can be readily recognised by those with sufficient expertise. There are several variants to be found in the District. A typical early Fenland cottage may well have consisted of two principal rooms with later outshut extensions. An indication of early plan form may be that of a lobby or baffle entry plan (found in houses of lower status from around 1700) and would have a central chimney stack with a front door which aligns or almost aligns with the stack (hence the term ‘baffle entry’) with a window to the ground floor either side. A mid 18th Century Fenland cottage would be more likely to have a direct entry with gable chimney stacks to either end of the building. Both of these would normally be one and half storeys in height with the attic forming bedrooms at first floor. Georgian

houses for those of slightly higher status would have attempted to copy the style of more grand examples and usually resulted in what is called a 'three bay front' type of house of two full storeys, usually 'L' or 'T' shaped in floor plan. Such houses normally (but not exclusively) have a central door flanked by box sash windows with three placed directly above on the first floor when first constructed. Another variant that can be found is the Fen Half House a two down, one up house with a 'catslide' roof to the rear.

Proposals for the replacement of other historic building types such as railway cottages, toll houses, lodges or chapels will also be assessed in terms of architectural and/or historic merit.

- (2) *Brick size and bond* - Brickwork bond was often used to denote status. Flemish bond (alternate headers and stretchers in each course) was a highly fashionable brickwork bond normally reserved for houses of middling and high status from approximately 1700. Flemish bond eventually travelled down the social strata to be used on often quite plain farmhouses. Old English Garden Wall Bond (every third or fifth course is formed of headers with stretcher bond between) is the most common form of brickwork bond found during the 18th and early to mid 19th Centuries on farm buildings of lesser status, as this form of bond cost less to build, but it was also used on domestic dwellings of lower status during the 19th Century. English bond (a course of headers followed by a course of stretchers) is usually confined to early buildings (before 1700) and came into fashion again towards the end of the 18th Century and was also used for agricultural or sometimes industrial buildings where strength was required. Most bricks were hand made and fired in local brick pits, but the 19th Century saw an increase in mass produced bricks. Victorian buildings are often of a machine made brick and are larger in size with a smoother texture, often being of a standard 3" high brick.

(3) *Shape and pitch of the roof* - Earlier roofs often have a steep pitch, often with a deeply raised parapet gable where the original roof was likely to have been thatch. Pantiles are also found on many historic buildings. Later roofs have a shallower pitch, sometimes with a roof covering of slate, particularly buildings from the mid 19th Century. The loss of the original historic covering may indicate that some architectural merit has been lost but the building may still have historic merit. Reinstatement of the original roof covering will be encouraged.

- I) Verge, eaves and parapet details such as tumbled gables, raised brick parapets and dentilled eaves are often found. Such details can often be seen beneath layers of render and pebbledash.
- II) Original window/door openings (pattern of fenestration), size, type, including window head and cill details.
- III) Joinery details

Extant Architectural Features

4.4 *How much of the original building and its detail (as set out above) actually exists or could easily be replaced as part of a scheme of repairs?* In a case where much detail has been lost to later alterations, the building may be considered to have reduced or even no architectural merit, but as a consequence of other features set out above (plan form, pitch of roof, pattern of fenestration, extant internal features, etc) may well be deemed to have historic merit. This same approach has been applied to buildings which have been Spot Listed in recent years where a building may have suffered a degree of alteration but is nevertheless considered to be a building of architectural and historic value by the Secretary of State. An example of a typical early Fenland cottage (circa 1700) found in South Holland was Listed in 2002 with a corrugated tin roof (covering thatch) and had lost its original casement windows having top opening 1970's replacements

but contained its interior plan form and almost all of its original internal details.

Other Factors

- 4.5 *Group value* - Historic buildings with a variety of functions can often be found together forming attractive groups of buildings. It is important to maintain the grain and character of such groups, even if in separate ownership.
- 4.6 *Landscape Value* - Old buildings may well have landscape value. In many cases, vernacular architecture is our link to the past. There is a direct link between such houses and the landscape. Where buildings contribute positively to the landscape of an area providing interest in a remote and generally open, flat countryside, they will be considered, with the aspects set out above, to have landscape value. A typical enclosure farmhouse may well have reduced architectural merit but may still have historic merit due to landscape value, especially where original features could be reinstated as part of a scheme to repair a building in poor condition.
- 4.7 Vernacular buildings are a highly visual reminder of the District's social and cultural history and the Local Planning Authority will seek to retain buildings through Policy HS17 where they have historic and/or architectural merit.
- 4.8 We will use the above criteria to assess architectural and historic merit when considering proposals for replacement dwellings. We will seek to retain all typical Fen cottage structures regardless of cosmetic alterations because so few now exist. We will also seek to retain most examples of buildings erected during the Georgian (1715 – 1837) and Victorian (1837 – 1901) periods. Careful consideration will be given to buildings of the first half of the 20th Century and all major relevant buildings styles to include the Art Nouveau and Art Deco Movements.

Emphasis will be placed on retaining more humble examples of architecture in order to preserve the District's social and cultural heritage.

5.0 REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC MERIT

5.1 If a dwelling is considered to have architectural and/or historic merit (as defined by the criteria set out above) we will offer free advice on how the property can be sympathetically renovated.

6.0 STRUCTURAL AND HOUSEBUYERS SURVEYS

6.1 Where it can be proven that residential use has not been abandoned and it is argued that the building is structurally incapable of repair we will require any planning application for a replacement dwelling to be accompanied by a report prepared by an engineer or surveyor. The engineer/surveyor should be a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and/or who has conservation accreditation under the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Conservation Scheme to demonstrate that this is the case. As indicated previously in this guidance, the cost of repair will not be accepted as justification to demolish houses considered to have architectural and/or historic merit. It is therefore expedient in all cases where an owner, applicant or agent intends to make an application for a replacement dwelling that they approach the Local Planning Authority for an assessment of architectural or historic merit before appointing a structural engineer/surveyor and/or architect in order to avoid incurring fees for unnecessary or irrelevant professional advice.

6.2 Surveys of historic buildings should always be carried out by those who have proven experience of working with historic buildings. Modern techniques and methods are not appropriate to apply to historic buildings and standard housebuyers surveys or surveys produced by

those who are not experienced in surveying historic buildings can make unrealistic and unfavourable comparisons between historic buildings and those constructed in more recent times.

- 6.3 Traditional methods of repair and the use of traditional materials will always be better for an historic building allowing it to move and breathe. Indeed, introducing modern materials, such as cement, can often be detrimental to historic fabric. There will be cases where a building deemed to be of historic merit may well have suffered as a result of modern interventions. In such cases we can advise on appropriate remedial works to repair any damage.
- 6.4 Where structural problems exist, modern innovative techniques have been developed to repair structural cracks and foundation movement without the need for demolition. Such methods have been used successfully on Listed buildings over the last thirty years and are now tried and tested and widely accepted by professionals who are accredited in the repair of historic buildings. In cases proposed for replacement where a building is deemed to have architectural and/or historic merit the Local Planning Authority will expect to see that all such methods have been given consideration within a structural report.

Internal Works

Although no controls will be applied to internal works, unless the building in question is listed or considered to be worthy of listing, we would strongly recommend the retention of historic fabric wherever possible. We will be happy to offer free advice on internal features of historic interest.

Pre – Application Advice

South Holland District Council prides itself on the quality of its pre-application advice. We welcome approaches from owners, potential

owners and agents to discuss any building in the district before proceeding with purchase and/or plans. This is to ensure that issues regarding the replacement dwelling and possible refusal of submitted plans are addressed earlier rather than later if a building is considered to have architectural and/or historic merit.

Glossary

Bay – (as in three bay front) A bay is a division of an elevation (or interior space) as defined by any regular vertical features such as windows.

Mud and Stud – A form of timber framed construction covered with mud once prevalent in Lincolnshire (comparable to wattle and daub of other regions but with the exception that Mud and Stud frameworks were not as substantial as those in other areas of the country and were always concealed by the mud covering).

Pattern of Fenestration – Fenestration is the arrangement of windows in a building and the pattern of fenestration is that which is original to the building type.

Plan Form – The historic layout of rooms.

Tumbling or Tumbling-In - a term used to describe courses of brickwork laid at right angles to the slope of a gable and forming triangles by tapering into horizontal courses

This Glossary will be expanded before the final draft is completed – this will be an architectural glossary in order to assist those reading the document to assist with the understanding of architectural terminology.

Further Reading

How Old is Your House – Pamela Cunnington, (published by Marsont House, £9.95 ISBN 1-899296-08-5)

Traditional Buildings of Britain, An Introduction to Vernacular Architecture, R.W. Brunskill (published by Victor Gollancz Ltd. ISBN 0-575-05299-6)

The Truth about Cottages – John Woodforde, (published by Routledge and Keegan Paul. ISBN 0-7100-0165-7)

Lincolnshire -The Buildings of England Series, Pevnsner, Harris & Antram, (published by Penguin £29.95) (Lesser Rural Building, pages 33 – 41)

► Replacement Dwellings In The Countryside

- 4.87 We will permit the replacement of dwellings in the countryside providing the dwelling to be replaced has not by its condition or subsequent use abandoned its residential use, and provided that the existing dwelling is not of architectural or historic merit. Where a dwelling has been demolished or has collapsed, or where because of its state of dereliction any new building work would in effect be creating a new dwelling, its replacement will not be permitted. Temporary or mobile structures such as caravans are not acceptable for replacement with new permanent dwellings.
- 4.88 Replacement dwellings will be required to be of a similar scale to the original dwelling and of a design appropriate to its rural setting. The floor area of the replacement dwelling should not exceed the floor area of the existing property by more than 20% and it should be designed in a vernacular style sympathetic to traditional development in the area. Suburban styles of design including bungalows are unlikely to be acceptable.
- 4.89 The replacement dwelling should be located on the site of the dwelling which it replaces unless it can be demonstrated that a more appropriate alternative site exists. A replacement dwelling may not be permitted, for example, where access is unsatisfactory and cannot be improved or where there is an unacceptable risk of flooding.
- 4.90 It is important to protect the rural landscape from the intrusion of large dwellings which could detract from the rural character of the area. The policy aims to ensure that the replacement dwelling is complementary to its surroundings in all matters of design, siting and amenity.
- 4.91 Permitted development rights will be removed so that control can be administered over the size and design of any future alterations or extensions to the dwelling or curtilage buildings to ensure that any development carried out at a later date does not have a materially harmful effect upon the rural character of the area.

Policy HS17 - Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

The erection of replacement dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1) The original building has not been abandoned or allowed to fall into such a state of disrepair that it would not be capable of habitation without significant structural repair, and retains the appearance of a dwelling.**

- 2) The original building is not a temporary or mobile structure.**
- 3) The original building has a lawful dwelling house use.**
- 4) The original building is not of architectural or historic merit and is capable of repair, where restoration would be preferred to replacement.**
- 5) The replacement dwelling is of a similar scale and size to the original building and does not exceed the floor area of the original dwelling by more than 20%. The floor area of any existing ancillary structures will not be included in this calculation.**
- 6) The replacement dwelling is positioned on a similar footprint to the original building unless it can be demonstrated that repositioning would benefit the character and appearance of the site and locality.**
- 7) The design of the replacement dwelling reflects the design of traditional, vernacular buildings in the area in terms of scale, character, materials of construction and architectural detailing.**

Permitted development rights for the future extension and alteration of replacement dwellings and for the erection of curtilage structures will be withdrawn. Special regard will also be had to the landscaping and boundary treatment of replacement dwellings.