

Worts Farm Barn, Landbeach

A Proposed County Archaeological Store



Cambridgeshire
County Council

Rural Strategy

WORTS FARM BARN, LANDBEACH

A Proposed County Archaeological Store

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Report no. 32



converted barn

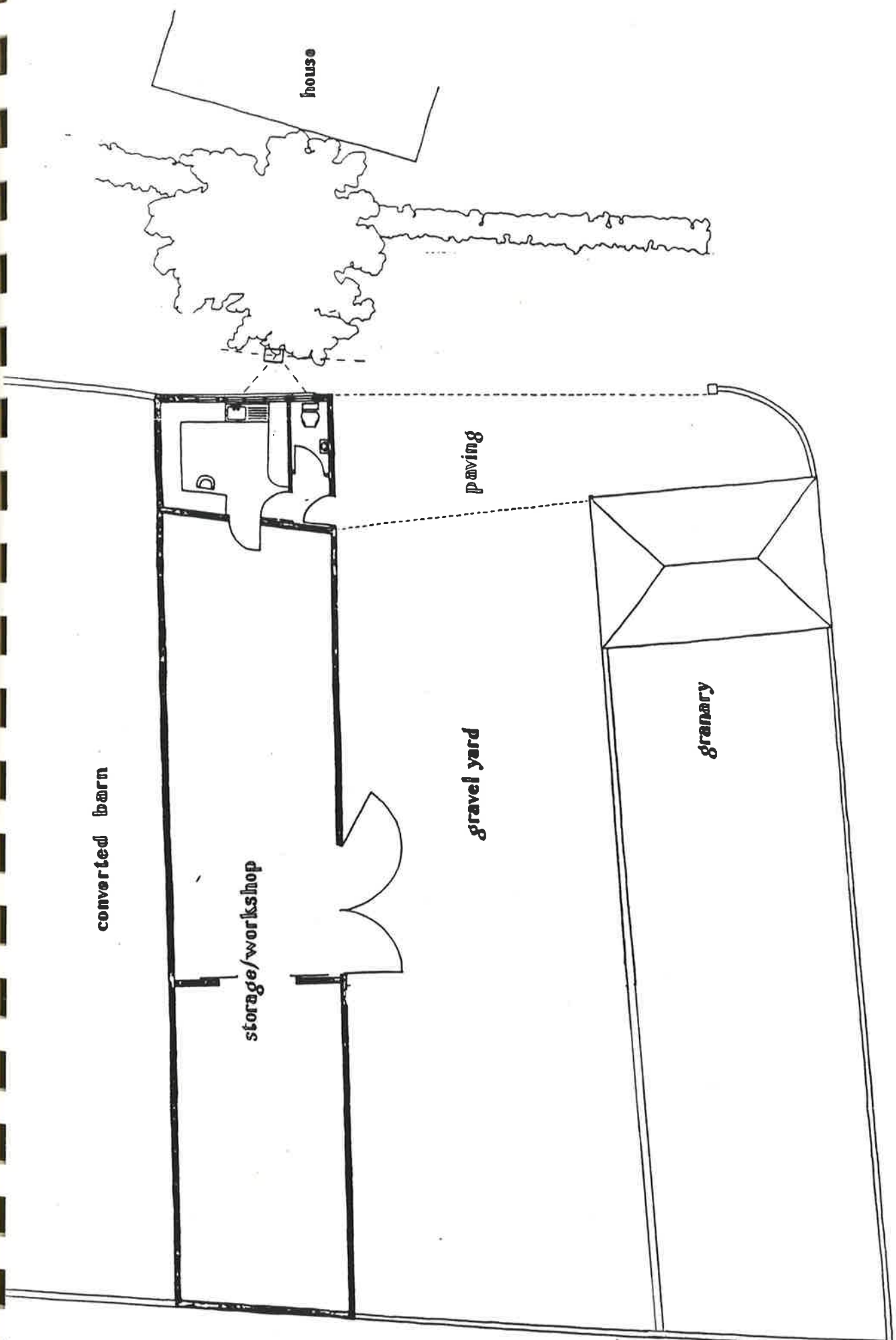
storage/workshop

gravel yard

granary

paving

house



Worts Farm Barn, Landbeach.
Proposal for Archaeological Store.

1.0 The Barn.

- 1.1 Worts Farm barn is part of the Worts Farm complex within the Conservation Area and village framework of Landbeach. Adjacent to a new pocket park, which contains a scheduled ancient monument, it is significant rural feature in this small and attractive village. It is also an essential element of Worts Farm, and falls within the curtilage of the Listed farmhouse.
- 1.2 It is a 19th century timber barn, with many older re-used timbers and a corrugated asbestos roof. Measuring 30m x 6m, with a small lean-to, it is divided into 2 bays. It is in generally sound condition, with access currently through the farmyard.

2.0 Barn conversion policies.

- 2.1 Although not listed in its own right the barn, like the adjacent granary, is important to the setting of the house and is protected by virtue of its being within the curtilage of a Listed Building. Its sensitive position in a Conservation Area indicates that policies regarding historic barn conversions are applicable, especially with regard to exterior appearance and general character.
- 2.2 English Heritage has published an advisory leaflet, "The Conversion of Historic Farm Buildings", which "especially where it deals with the treatment of exteriors, could be applicable to unlisted traditional farm buildings". This document recognises that the adaptation of redundant historic buildings to new uses is an established way of saving them, but in general objects to residential use. Instead, it recommends "agricultural, commercial or community use" should all be considered.
- 2.3 South Cambridgeshire District Council is concerned to protect Conservation Areas and the setting of Listed Buildings. Its District Plan (Policy C34) states that it will "seek to retain the character, materials, features and details of unlisted buildings or structures which contribute to the character of a Conservation Area".

Their policies for conversion of historic, traditional or vernacular buildings, including barns or farm buildings, would be satisfied by a use such as an archaeological store, which would have minimal visual impact, traffic generation and demand for services but would ensure preservation of the character and setting of the building.

3.0 **The Need for Archaeological Storage.**

3.1 **The importance of archaeology**

The value of archaeology can be described in terms of the extra dimension that it gives to human history. It informs us of a wide range of activities such as cooking, farming, housing conditions, manufacturing and fighting for which no written records are available in the prehistoric period, and often very few until modern times.

The collection, conservation and interpretation of the past of a community helps individuals to develop their own sense of place, by relating to their past. It can help to create pride in the area, and help to explain it to tourists, in the broadest sense of the word.

Over recent years Cambridgeshire has been recognised as a county with rich archaeological potential. Work has concentrated on the unique Fenland environment, with a series of notable excavations at Flag Fen, Stonea and Haddenham, on prehistoric sites and Roman sites around Peterborough and on multi-period sites in the Ouse, Nene and Welland valleys. In the countryside aerial photography and field surveys have identified sites on an unexpected scale.

3.2 **What happens after excavation**

Local excavations have produced a wealth of material, all of which requires proper conservation, storage and interpretation. In the absence of proper facilities being available within Cambridgeshire a significant proportion of material is inadequately cared for, whilst the most important excavated material has left the county for good.

The care of excavated materials is a proper function of a museum. Unfortunately, with the exception of Peterborough District Museum provision in Cambridgeshire is inadequate. Neither local government,

the independent sector nor the University provides the facilities required.

3.3

Current position

Continuing development in Cambridgeshire has led to an increasing number of 'rescue' excavations, with an increased pressure on the limited storage available in museums, and on the resources of the County Archaeologist. Archaeology is inevitably unpredictable but there is little doubt that the pressure will increase. The proposed new town developments in the Cambridge area will, whatever sites are chosen, produce archaeological finds. Similarly the expansion of the roads system will result in more 'finds'.

The products of the long-term archaeological investigation of Godmanchester also require proper storage within the County. The town, with continuous occupation from the Roman period onwards, has yielded a wealth of material which should be cared for within the area. The display and interpretation of the material should also be a priority, which we hope will follow when it has been returned to Cambridgeshire and collected in one place.

Excavation continues on various sites within Cambridge itself, but the finds from previous excavations are still unable to be properly looked after and displayed.

The facilities available for the conservation of material excavated, or of material brought into museums as chance finds, are still negligible. Where possible 'developer funding' covers the cost of post-excavation work, but that is not always the case. The laboratory agency arrangements available through the Area Museums Service for South East England are limited, and beyond the resources of the small museums in the county.

The County Archaeologist currently has very limited storage space available at Fulbourn, in former school premises, but it is incapable of accommodating further significant excavation archives.

Solutions

The County Archaeologist, supported by the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Committee, and the County Museums Officer supported by the County Museums Advisory Committee, have previously made bids under the MTP for a purpose built Heritage Resources Centre to meet the needs of an expanding archaeological collection and museum support. The MTP bids have failed to attract support because of the lack of resources.

The County Council has recently, with reluctance, had to reject the opportunity of developing a joint local authority/University store with the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, because of the lack of adequate resources.

The proposal to develop the barn at Worts Farm Landbeach as a store for non-sensitive materials is a significant step forward, and an indication of the County Council's seriousness in addressing the problem.

4.1

Proposed development of Worts Farm

Although both the farmhouse and the barns have been declared surplus a scheme has been devised which, if approved, will enable the barn to be retained without detriment to the sale of any of the remaining buildings. Indeed the barn, especially if re-roofed, will positively enhance the Conservation Area and compliment the four proposed new dwellings to be created largely within the confines of the existing buildings of the farmstead.

The barn is capable of providing a significant amount (180m²) of low grade storage for the County Council. The barn would accommodate non-sensitive material from excavations, and allow some collation of archives. Sensitive and high value items will continue to require storage at Fulbourn or at an improved alternative site.

The storage space would be used initially for four purposes:-

1. Storage for excavation products currently held by the County Council.

2. Storage for excavation products from current excavations within Cambridgeshire.
3. Storage for excavation material held by museums incapable of providing proper storage and access arrangements.
4. Storage for selected parts of museum reserve collections, with particular reference to Cambridge Folk Museum. (40sq.m. of floor space and 13m of shelving have been requested by the Folk Museum).

The barn would also provide a small area for the construction of travelling exhibitions, to meet the needs of the County Archaeologist and Museums Officer. An area for the study of objects, and office accommodation would also be provided.

4.2 Costs of the Project.

If the Barn is handed over in sound condition, with a newly surfaced gravel yard and new roof, the following costs have been estimated (R. Walker, Historic Buildings Officer):-

Walls

Remove boarding	1000	}optional, to
Line outside studs with plaster board	7560	}give insulation
Replace boarding/repair doors	3780	
Tar exterior	1250	
Frame repairs	500	
Plinth repairs	500	

Floor

Concrete over floor, including membrane.	6000
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Office facilities

Line interior of lean-to to form office.	1500
Office floor	1800

Doors, windows	1500
WC cubicle	500

Services

Electric supply	1000
Water supply	1000
Drainage	2500
Internal electrics	2000

Shelving

Additional purpose built shelving.	10000 phase 2
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Total	<u><u>42390</u></u>
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5.0

Funding.

Following the proposal in August 1991 that Worts Farm Barn could be offered for archaeological storage, the following funds have been offered:-

Cambridgeshire County Council	13000
Cambridge Archaeological Unit	5000
South Cambridgeshire District Council	<u>2000</u>
	<u><u>20000</u></u>

Proposals for a Heritage Resources Centre have in the past included an element of grant-aid from bodies such as English Heritage and the Museums and Galleries Commission. It is recognised however that the accommodation offered by Worts Farm Barn falls short of their minimum standards in terms of controlled environment and physical security.

This would exclude the project from grant-aid support, but would not prejudice any future application for grant-aid.

All future developer funded excavations should include an element for the long term storage of excavation products. It is recommended that excavators be charged at a rate equivalent to the grant paid by the D of E to Museums for the storage of excavation archives. This is a once only payment of approximately £10.50 per standard box (0.017m²). Deposit by excavators would only be accepted when adequate documentation has been provided.

6.0

Administration of the barn

As the main beneficiary the County Archaeologist will assume responsibility for the day to day management of the store. This will be undertaken in close cooperation with the County Museums Officer. There is no staff implication as the building will be administered from within existing staff resources.

(worts-barn17.9)

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