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Fox Covert Farm, Congerstone

19/23/HERITAGE

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Heritage Statement— Replacement roof

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Heritage Statement

In support of a Full Planning Application in conservation area.

Replacement roof – Existing dairy building

Fox Covert Farm, Main Street, Congerstone, CV13 6LZ

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for works at Fox Covert Farm. The proposal relates to the replacement of an existing deteriorated roof on a former dairy building located within a designated Conservation Area. The current roof is constructed of asbestos sheeting, is in poor condition, and is subject to ongoing water ingress. The proposed works seek to replace this with a modern insulated sheet system with a metal external finish.

2. Statutory Duties

Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Local Planning Authority has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. As the site lies within a Conservation Area, this duty is directly engaged in the determination of the application.

3. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. It recognises that harm to heritage assets should be weighed against public benefits. Proposals causing less than substantial harm should be supported where justified, particularly where they help secure the ongoing use and maintenance of buildings.

4. Historic England Guidance

Guidance from Historic England supports the maintenance and repair of buildings using appropriate materials, while recognising that modern interventions may be necessary where traditional materials are no longer viable. It promotes solutions that sustain the longevity and usability of buildings, provided that the character and appearance of the wider heritage asset are preserved.

5. Site Description

Fox Covert Farm is a rural agricultural site located within the Congerstone Conservation Area. The farm comprises a collection of traditional and later agricultural buildings set within an open countryside context. The former dairy building subject to this application is of modest architectural merit and is typical of functional agricultural structures within the area.

6. Existing Building and Roof

The building is a simple agricultural structure. The existing roof is formed of corrugated asbestos cement sheets, which are now significantly deteriorated. The roof suffers from multiple leaks and poses potential health and safety concerns due to the presence of asbestos. Its condition detracts from the building's functionality and contributes negatively to the overall condition of the site.

7. Proposed Development

The proposal is to remove the existing asbestos roofing and replace it with an insulated sheet roof finished in metal. The new material will improve thermal performance, ensure weather tightness, and provide a durable, long-term solution. The form and profile of the roof will remain consistent with the existing structure, with no significant alteration to the building's scale or appearance.

8. Impact on Heritage Significance

The proposal will result in minimal impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The building is of limited heritage significance and the existing roof is not a positive feature. The replacement material, while modern, will be visually recessive and appropriate for an agricultural context. The works will improve the condition and longevity of the building, thereby supporting the overall maintenance of the farmstead.

Any harm identified is considered to be less than substantial and is outweighed by clear public benefits, including the removal of hazardous materials, improved building performance, and the preservation of the structure's continued use.

9. Justification

The proposed intervention is justified on the basis that:

- The existing asbestos roof is unsafe and beyond reasonable repair.
- Replacement is necessary to secure the building's continued use.

- The design retains the building's form and agricultural character.
- The visual impact on the Conservation Area is negligible.

The proposal represents a pragmatic and proportionate response to a deteriorating structure within a sensitive setting.

10. Conclusion

The proposed roof replacement at Fox Covert Farm accords with the statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 by preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It aligns with the principles of the NPPF and Historic England guidance by delivering a sustainable solution that secures the building's future.

Overall, the scheme results in no harm, or at most less than substantial harm, which is clearly outweighed by the benefits of removing hazardous materials, improving functionality, and ensuring the continued use of the building. The proposal is therefore considered appropriate and should be supported.

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