Michael Lyons Architecture

Bencroft House, Stanley, Chippenham, SN15 3RQ

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

Project Ref: 604/5.1 July 2023



Figure 1: View from Stanley Lane

Introduction

This statement has been prepared in support of our client's Application for Planning and Listed Building Consent to construct a workshop in the curtilage of Bencroft House.

It is to be read in conjunction with the Historic Building Report and Documentary Research by Wiltshire Buildings Records.

Existing Site and Context

Bencroft House stands in an elevated and exposed position in Stanley, a village and civil parish in Wiltshire. Bencroft is a little under two miles to the north-west of Calne and four miles to the east of Chippenham.

It was originally built as a dairy farm in c.1700, as part of a loose courtyard plan, and has seen several alterations and additions throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries before it was eventually broken-up into separate lots in 1972. The detailed site history and farmhouse development has been provided by Wiltshire Buildings Records (WBR) in their Historic Report and Documentary Research (HBR & DR).

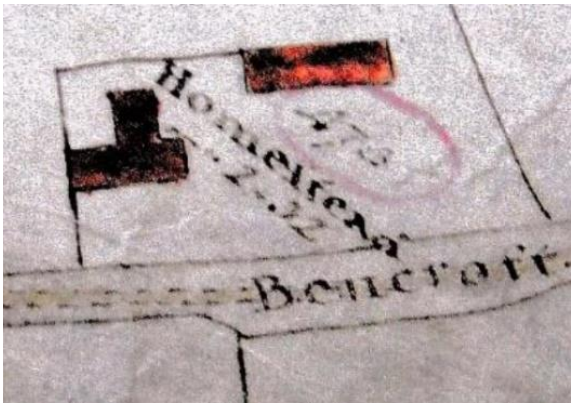

Figure 2: Extract from Enclosure Award Map of 1775



Figure 3: 1886 Extract from 25 Inch OS Maps

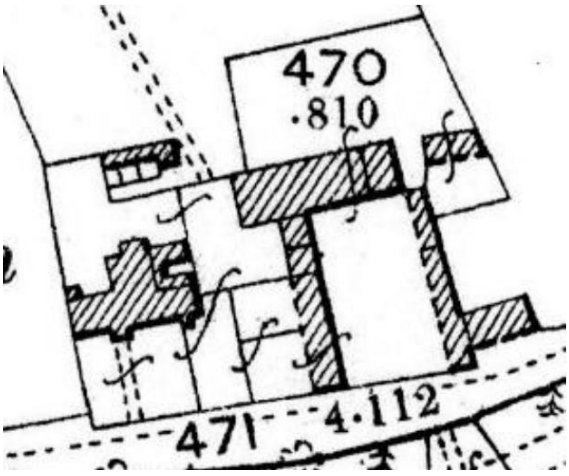

Figure 4: *1900 Extract from 25 Inch OS Maps*

Bencroft House now consists of 4 principal buildings, a three-storey farmhouse including an attic floor with dormer windows, an open fronted cart shed, a stable block and a long cowhouse. The three latter buildings are arranged in an L-shaped configuration and form part of the eastern boundary of the application site. Access to the site is along the southern boundary from Stanley Lane.



Figure 5: South Elevation 2020



Figure 6 – West Elevation 2020



Figure 7: North Elevation 2020



Figure 8: East Elevation 2020

The original farmhouse is of coursed random rubble stone construction with stone quoins, timber casements, metal casements in stone surrounds under a stone slate and clay tiled roof with coped gables and ashlar stone chimney stacks. The later single storey extensions to the east, which originally comprised the milking parlour and covered dairy storage and passage, and the lean-to to the north are of a similar construction. The 20th century addition of the west flanking range is of a similar wall construction at ground floor level, which sits on top of a modern damp proof course, but has horizontal timber feather-edged boarding at first floor level and a flat felted roof that awkwardly straddles over the historic main and rear range roofs. Photographs of the existing elevations have been included above under Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8.

The farmhouse is a designated Grade II Listed Building and was first listed on the 26th November 1976. The listing details have been included in the appendix below.

Significance

The following 'significance' appraisal has been assessed against Historic England's criteria outlined in their Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance literature.

Evidential Value:
Bencroft House has much evidential value, which is primarily focused on its origin as part of a wider farmstead and its subsequent development to adapt to a changing dairying industry. Its recent and current domestic use will ensure its survival throughout the 21st century.

Historical Value:
The house represents a typical early 18th century farmhouse, a humble and adaptable building that has supported developing agricultural and domestic use. The evidence of the historic core of the building shows that the building has been appreciated and cared for over the past three centuries. The needs and ambitions of the numerous tenants has inevitably seen additions and alterations to the historic fabric, some which contribute to its historic value and significance and others that detract from it; the two-storey west flanking 20th century range falls into the latter category.

Aesthetic Value:
The south elevation is the principal elevation. It can be seen from a public road, Stanley Lane, and therefore has an aesthetic value. Since the west, north and east elevations can only be seen by the family they are of less value.

Communal Value:
Assessing the communal value of a heritage asset without engagement with the communities for whom an asset may hold particular value is problematic. It is even more difficult when the heritage asset is a privately owned building, as is the case for Bencroft House. The house is not within an area of outstanding natural beauty, a conservation area or within a greenbelt. It is considered that the communal value of this building is medium at best and any value will be associated with its external appearance; predominantly its south elevation, which contributes to the character and appearance of the area.

Summary of Significance:
As a farmhouse, mostly of the 18th century with later additions and alterations, Bencroft House merits designation as a listed building. However, there are numerous buildings of this age, scale and design across Wiltshire, which combined limit the overall 'significance' and 'value' of Bencroft House.

Proposals & Assessment of Impact:
The proposal is to construct a workshop in the north west corner of the site adjacent to a modern tennis court. This will have a low impact on the listed building and a moderate impact to its setting being within the curtilage of the listed building, but not visible from the listed building with limited view from the highway.

Previous Applications

Planning (20/11207/FUL) and Listed Building (21/00574/LBC) Consent was granted in 2021 for refurbishing the house and replacing the existing two storey rear extension, along with an application to discharge the conditions associated with the application. A further Listed Building (PL/2022/04078) Consent was granted in 2022 for a WC to be installed in the previously approved proposal for a Utility Room.

Proposed

This application seek permission to construct a workshop building within the curtilage of Bencroft House. The building will be located in the north west corner of the site adjacent to an existing modern tennis court. Materials have been chosen to match the local agricultural vernacular – corrugated sheet roofing, weatherboard on brick plinth and unpainted joinery doors and windows. The building will be used for storage of gardening equipment and garden furniture, including basic joinery tools and workbench, whilst also being utilised to undertake repairs and general maintenance of building components relating to the house and other outbuildings as well as those around the garden.

The proposal will not be visible from the listed building and neighbouring properties, and will have very limited views from the highway. There is no proposal or requirement for vehicular access.

Conclusion

Bencroft House is a substantial farmhouse located in a beautiful area with far reaching views to the north and south. The proposals have been carefully considered and are sympathetic to the 'significant' and 'valued' historic elements of the house.



Figure 9: Site location plan

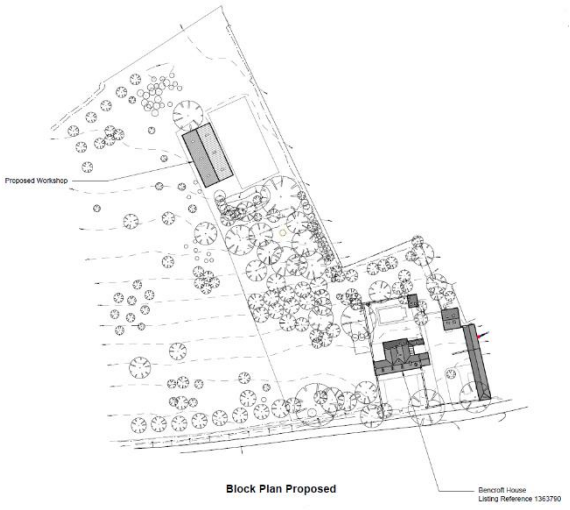

Figure 10: Proposed Site Block Plan

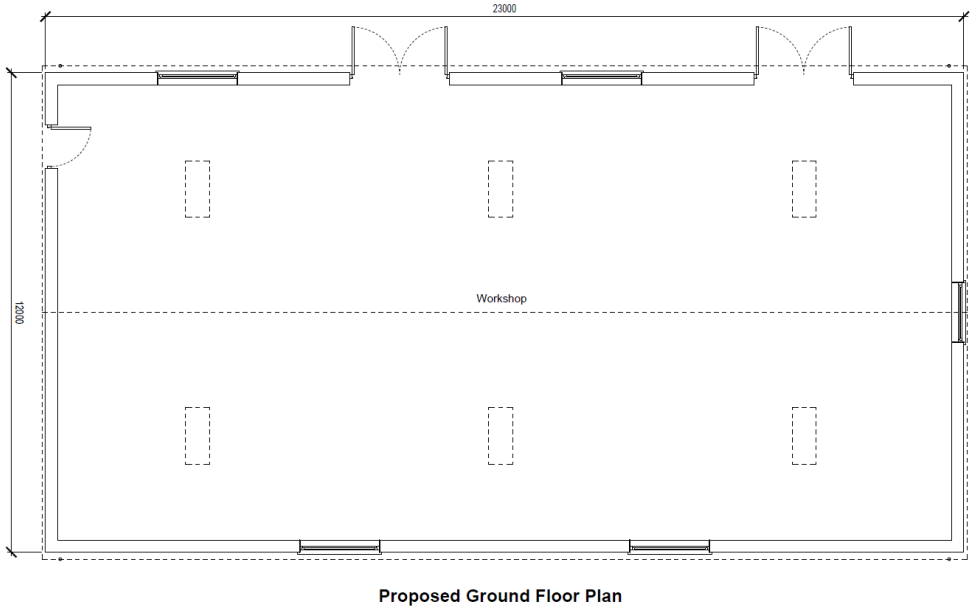

Figure 11: Proposed Ground Floor Plan

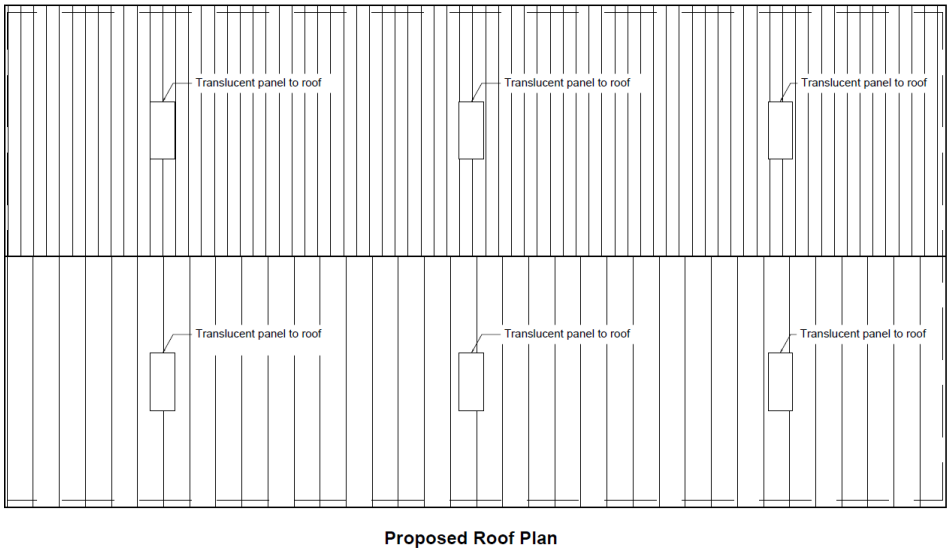

Figure 12: Proposed Roof Plan

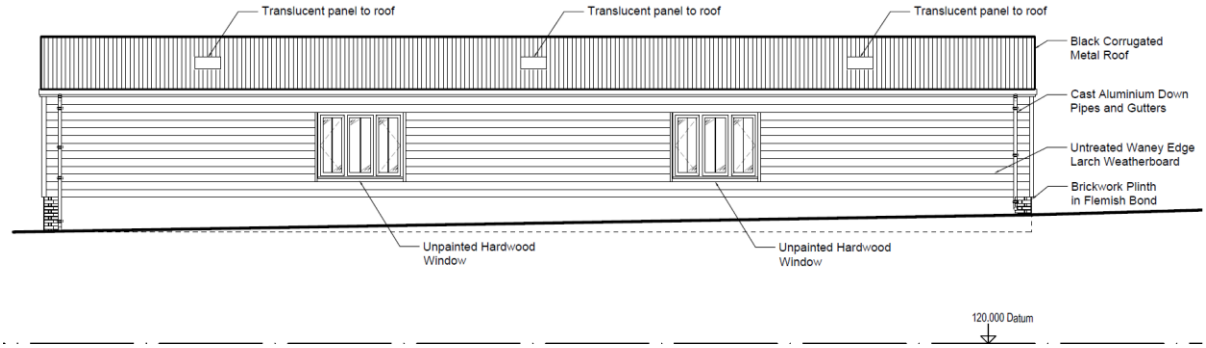

Figure 13: Proposed North East Elevation

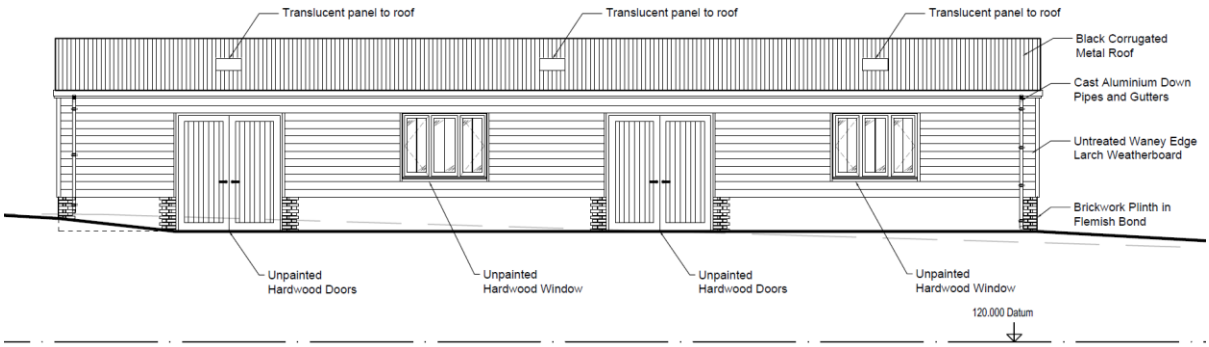

Figure 14: Proposed South West Elevation

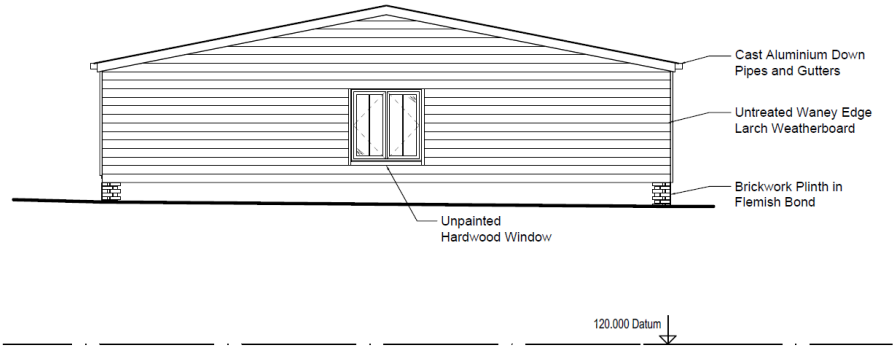

Figure 15: Proposed North West Elevation

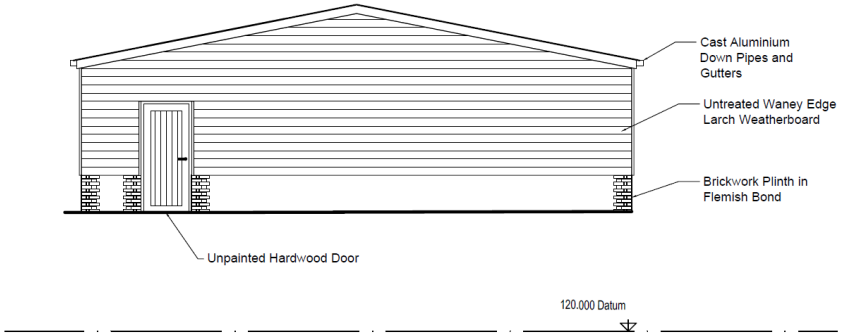

Figure 16: Proposed South East Elevation

Appendix

Listing Description

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1363790

Date first listed: 26-Nov-1976

Date of most recent amendment: 25-Nov-1986

Details:

BREMHILL BENCROFT HILL ST 97 SE 8/2 Bencroft Farmhouse II Farmhouse, mid to later C18, rubble stone with stone slate roof, coped gables and ashlar corniced stacks to west end wall and ridge. Two storeys and attic, 4-window range, possibly originally 3-window and extended to east. Four gabled dormers with casement pairs. Cyma-moulded flush mullion windows, the left side a symmetrical arrangement of 3-light windows each side and 2-light over door in moulded surround with single lights flanking. String course, orginally stepped up over door to just beneath window above, but this part damaged. Right bay has similar 3-light each floor and string course. Single storey east end addition. Rear wing with similar mullion windows. Marked on 1773 Andrews and Drury map.

Listing NGR: ST9665673004