RIXON FARM, ASHTON KEYNES

HERITAGE STATEMENT (amended)

7TH NOVEMBER 2023

(revision to planning ref PL/2021/04896, including Conditions 3 + 4)

Chris Robinson Architects
7.11.23

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Further to Listed Building Consent PL/2021/04896, proposed minor amendments to Plot 3 including relocate internal gallery and staircase, replace permitted 2no. staircases with 1no. staircase to first floor bedrooms and relocate ground floor wc.

1.3 The proposals is to help to ensure the retention and maintenance of the listed buildings

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Ashton Keynes was in the possession of Tewkesbury Abbey around the 1590's. Rixon was an area of pasture and later represents the site of Rixon Farm

2.2 A map associated with the sales particulars in the early C19th shows Rickstone Farm (Figure 1).

2.3 The 1st Edition of Ordnance Survey map of 1886 shows an enlargement with the addition of a yard area to the south-east (Figure2). The 2nd Edition map of 1900 provides more detail in that the open sides of the buildings are marked (Figure 3). This shows the south facing yard as a Regular Multi-yard plan common across Wiltshire and Swindon Unitary Authority. Clearly Rixon was a pastoral farm reflecting farming practices in the locale.

2.4 Gravel Extraction became a major land use in the area in the mid to late C20th. By 1970 all of the land formerly associated with Rixon Farm had been sold for gravel extraction leaving the farmstead detached from agriculture. As two aerial photographs taken in the 1960's and 1970's show (Figures 4 + 5) this resulted in the dereliction of many of the smaller ranges, it is probable that the Cotswold stone roofing slates were sold leaving roof structures and walls to decay and collapse

3.0 DESCRIPTION

3.1 Farmstead

3.1.1 The site consists of a Farmhouse and its ancillary buildings (Plot 1), a stable building attached to the Threshing Barn (Plot 2) and a Threshing barn open sided with an east wing former Milking parlour (Plot3). This application concerns amendments to Plots 3.

3.1.2 The farmstead lies in a flat landscape that has been severely compromised by gravelextraction. Views into the farmstead are limited from the north as the bulk of the farm buildings are on the northern boundary with two entrances separated by the Threshers barn. One entrance serves the Farmhouse whilst the other predominantly serves the farmstead.

3.2 Farm buildings

3.2.1 The farm buildings at Rixon Farm were listed as a group in 1986. They are described as:

> Barn and associated farm buildings at Rixon Farm
> Range of farm buildings, C17 or C18. Limestone rubble with ashlar quoins, comprising barn of limestone rubble with stone slate roof, 4 bays with midstrey to south, half hipped roof. Three tiers of ventilation ports on north side, and doors in second bay. Attached to west, 2-storey 2-bay stables, rubble with concrete tile roof, and front external stair. Attached to stables to west, cowhouse of 6 bays, stone, stone tile roof supported on circular rubble columns on open front. Trusses with cambered collars, blade principals and two in-line purlins. Attached to east end of barn 6-bay structure of stone, raised in C19 brick to provide attic. Four depressed arches with stone keys, 3 blocked and containing windows, and a similar arch, also blocked, at gable end.

Threshing Barn (Plot 3)

3.3.1 The four bay barn has the threshing bay located in the third bay from the west with a hipped porch on the south side (Figure 9) and full height double doors on the north, roadside elevation. The walls are constructed in coursed limestone rubble with ashlar dressings and the barn has a half-hipped graduated Cotswold stone tile roof. On the north elevation to the east of the doors are square holes in the wall, set vertically, which represent part of the pattern of the ventilation 'ports' referred to the in the list description.

3.3.2 The interior of the barn has unrendered stone walls. The roof is formed by a series of simple trusses having a tie beam and a collar, the latter being halved over the principal rafters and secured by large nails or bolts. The ties are quite irregular timbers, they are not high quality squared beams. There are two sets of in-line butt purlins. The roof was in need of immediate repair so the rafters/purlins and trusses where rotten have been replaced in consultation with the Conservation officer. The oldest rafters survive in the roof of the porch. The roof has been insulated with the rafters exposed internally ready for the conversion. Cotswold stone tiles have been retained.

3.3.3 At the east end of the barn there is a door at ground floor level in the north-east corner giving access to the attached milking parlour. This opening is a later insertion in that it has a concrete lintel over and modern brick to the south side. There is a second door in the east gable wall, set a high-level and accessed by a rough ladder stair. The door to the loft level of the milking parlour has the words 'CHEESE ROOM' painted on its west face, the words now being very faint. It is uncertain whether this door is in-situ or has been re-used from another building. This door will be replaced as it is in a poor condition with a like for like replacement and fixed.

3.3.4 To the east of the porch is an attached lean-to shed accessed from the barn via a door on the side of the porch or a door in the south wall and with a window in the east end. The opening retains an oak framed two light window with a pegged frame and rebated mullion. The cill is heavily decayed. The shed has a monopitch roof of graduated Cotswold stone tiles set just below the eaves of the

main roof of the barn rather than being a continuation of the barn roof slope. In addition to the door in the east side of the porch to the attached shed there is a door in the west side of the porch with retains an early door although it is currently detached. At the threshold of this door there is a small area of exposed stone cobble flooring beneath concrete.

UPDATED as of 7th November 2023
A new floor slab has been laid ready for the level threshold into the barn to match the existing ground level. The North wall opening has been blocked up ready to clad in timber to match the existing barn doors as approved drawings (Figure 15)

Milking parlour (Plot 3)

3.4.1 Attached to the east gable of the barn is a 1½ storey building that was originally a single-storey building. The list description is not accurate in that the western section attached to the barn is of Flemish bond brick on the south elevation; only the eastern half of the building has stone rubble to the ground floor and brick above (Figure 12). The southern part has three depressed arched openings separated by narrow brick piers. Only the central arch remains unblocked; the opening to the right is blocked with brick apart from a metal-framed window 5 panes wide, two deep and the arch to the west is blocked with brickwork. Set approximately centrally to the stone-built section is a further blocked archway, possibly slightly wider than those to the west. All the arches have a slightly raised stone key to the centre of the arch. The stonework of the eastern part of the building is predominantly of a green/grey limestone topped by a couple of courses of a pale buff limestone with ashlar limestone quoins to the corner. There are no quoins at the junction between the stone and the brick suggesting that the stone element does not represent the original extent of the building.

3.4.2 The east gable is of stone to full height but there is a distinct change in the character of the stone; to the lower part of the ground floor wall the stone is a green/grey limestone with a creamy limestone above, the change occurring at just below the springing of the depressed arch set centrally to the gable. The sides of the arch have been blocked with stone leaving a wide opening closed by a sliding door. A door opening has been inserted to the north of the arched opening and there is a former loft door with a depressed arch formed in brick in the centre of the gable which has lost its joinery. At the south-east corner, the brickwork of the south elevation forms the corner and is regularly keyed into the stonework of the gable. The north wall of the building is stone rubble

3.4.3 This building had a shallow pitched slate roof which has collapsed. The building had been used as a store for old equipment and other items which has now been cleared out, leaving a poorly built internal modern blockwork wall in place.

UPDATED as of 7th November 2023
The poorly built internal modern blockwork has been replaced on the ground floor with a new concrete slab and new blockwork supporting a new first floor. The new walls have been built up to ridge level which now supports a steel ridge beam and rafters. (Figures 16 and 17) The north-side and part of the south- side , either side of the rooflight, has been insulated and slated in accordance with the approved drawings. (Figure 18)

Stable block (Plot 2)

3.5.1 Attached to the west gable of the barn is a lower two-storey range which was originally a stable with a granary or hayloft above that has been converted to residential use at first-floor level (Figure 10). Rubble stone walling which has been poorly pointed on the south elevation and modern concrete tile roof, gabled at the west end.

3.5.2 The stable block already has a residential conversion to the upper floor and there are no internal features of significance. There are some subdivisions at first floor but this is considered to have a minimal impact on the interest of a building that has a relatively low level of significance other than its external appearance to the farmstead group.

3.5.3 The ground floor is currently a garage/store with a large opening with double doors and a window to the east. Both of these openings have a concrete lintel over. The door to the upper floor is accessed by a set of external stone steps beneath which is a void probably serving as a dog kennel. There are two windows to the upper floor; that to the west is a tall opening that may have been a loft door now infilled with a 20th century timber window with an inward opening top light above a single pane, the eastern window is square with a 20th century 6 pane metal-framed window with an inward opening top light.

UPDATED as of 7th November 2023

The existing doors and windows have been removed in preparation for the new timber aluminium composite replacements (Figure 19). The roof has been relaid with insulation over the existing rafters as approved drawings. A new slab has been laid ready for a level threshold with original ground floor level. The existing joists have been removed ready to reposition the existing steel beams for new staircase as approved drawings.

Derelict cowshed (Plot 2)

3.6.1 An attached former stable to the threshing barn includes a derelict six bay stone structure cowshed. When the stable block was listed in 1986, the cowshed was erect but since that time, the roof has disintegrated and disappeared and only the some of the stone circular columns remain. (Figure 11) The west gable and rear wall of the Stable block are blank. There is no obvious straight joint in the stonework between the two indicating that they are contemporary

UPDATED as of 7th November 2023

Work has commenced on rebuilding the stone piers and north wall ready to take a new timber trussed roof (Figure 20). There appears to be a straight joint on the Stable block west wall where the two buildings were connected. This will determine the level and pitch of the new roof over the derelict cowshed.

Dutch barn

3.7.1 To the east of the milking parlour were the remains of an iron-framed Dutch barn. Just two bays survive, the western truss being severely twisted due to a fire which destroyed the western part of the building.

UPDATED as of 7th November 2023
This building has now been demolished as approved drawings

Modern sheds

3.8.1 There are two modern sheds south of the milking parlour which were built in the late 1960s/early 1970s. The larger of the two sheds replaced a single storey stone cow house that closed the eastern side of the earlier, main yard area. This building was shown on the 1960s aerial photograph and had a hipped stone tile roof.

UPDATED as of 7th November 2023
The modern sheds have now been demolished as approved drawings

4.0 ANALYSIS

4.1 Rixon Farm probably has its origins in the late 16th or early 17th century when, or shortly after an area of pasture was enclosed in the 1590s. The barn is listed as 17th or 18th century in date; the simple roof trusses are difficult to date and there is little in the stonework to help with dating. Whilst a 17th century date is possible, an early to mid-18th century date is considered more likely – the fact that the north wall of the barn and stable appears to be of a single build may be indicative of a later, early to mid-18th century date for the buildings rather than 17th century. The house appears to be a late 18th century replacement of an earlier house; whether there is any evidence of an earlier building encapsulated within the present building is not known but should be considered if there are proposals for works within the house.

4.2 The farmstead was a 'Regular multi-yard' group by the mid-19th century reflecting the importance of cattle management in this area. The multi-yard character was further developed with the addition of another yard to the south of the main yard by 1886. This character is still evident to an extent although the definition of the yard area to the west of the barn and stable has been largely eroded through the loss of the roof of the shelter sheds and the modern sheds occupy most of the area of the original main yard area. The ruins of buildings and walls to the south of the modern sheds also serve to show the extent of the later 19th century farmstead and the multi-yard character of the group.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 The farmhouse and the barn with attached farm buildings are Grade II listed and are, therefore, considered to be of national importance. The loss of much of the cowshed attached to the stable is regrettable, but the c.1970 photograph shows it was already in a derelict condition when the range was listed in 1986 (although the list description refers to a stone slate roof so perhaps part of the roof was still

present in 1986).

5.2 In terms of the listed farm buildings, the barn is clearly the most significant element of the range given the conversion of the upper floor of the stable and the creation of a garage/store at ground floor level which has resulted in the erosion of the stable character. The milking parlour range was subject to considerable change in the late 19th or early 20th century when it was raised in height. The mid- 19th century plan of the farmstead indicates that there was a building attached to the east gable of the barn but this is now brick-built, infilling the area between the barn and the stone-built element of the milking parlour. The depressed arched openings must be later insertions and so it is difficult to assess the original function of this building but animal housing would seem to be the most likely use. The collapse of the 19th century roof will have further eroded the significance of the building. As a much altered building, this building has limited significance; if it were not attached to the barn the milking parlour would almost certainly not be considered to have sufficient special architectural or historic interest to merit individual listing. Similarly, it is doubtful whether the stable would be listable in its own right if it were a detached structure; the alterations to the south elevation creating the large opening at ground floor level and the changes to the fenestration have eroded the historic character.

5.3 The extent of blank stone rubble walling forming the north elevation of the linked buildings facing the lane, broken only by the double doors of the threshing bay, forms a significant element of the character of the farmstead. This character should be maintained in any future development of the farmstead.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Threshing Barn

6.1 This application proposes internal changes to the Threshing barn with revised drawings RFD B 03A, 04A, 05A, 06A, 07, 08A, 151120 – 152 C Condition details sheet 3 and 151120 – 153 C Condition details sheet 4

6.2 The proposed revision is to relocate the permitted internal staircase and gallery to a better position over kitchen and utility area. This extends the permitted ceiling/floor over the utility and boot room area and provides better useable space – See drawing RFD B 03A and 04A.

6.3 A proposed revision also includes relocating the permitted ground floor WC to the lean-to, to avoid mechanical ventilation in WC – See drawing RFD B 03A. The external elevations with contemporary ‘frameless’ glazing along with timber screening to act as ‘brise soleil’ will remain unchanged from the permission. (see Figure 13)

Milking Parlour

6.4 The proposed revision is replace permitted 2no. staircases to first floor bedrooms with 1 no. staircase. Where the previous application removed the existing steel beams this application retains them, with one rotated to allow a 90 degree dog leg in the stair. This improves Heritage and simplifies access - See drawing RFD B 03A and 04A.

6.5 The approved fenestration, which had a traditional appearance with glazing bars, would be replaced with contemporary 'frameless' glazing along with timber screening to act as 'brise soleil'. (see Figure 13)

6.6 For better permeability and pedestrian access to the Barn as a single dwelling, a new entrance lobby is created. The extant permission bedroom arrangement with an internal dark corridor is redesigned so the bedrooms are now stacked and exploits the two storey space with a new glazed internal courtyard. There will be little impact on the existing fabric, as the new first floor joists will be supported by the new internal ground floor load bearing blockwork and steel beams. The majority of existing brickwork/stonework on the south elevation is retained with the exception of two small window openings at first floor level (see Figure 14). The existing brickwork will be repaired and perished brickwork spun around 180 degrees and reused.

6.7 There is no roof as the original collapsed or was removed prior to new ownership, and the majority of existing features, such as doors and windows have disintegrated or disappeared. The proposed roof material will reflect the principle of the Farmhouse, ie a secondary structure to the main building in a different material. Like the Farmhouse this will be in slate to match.

6.8 Bedrooms are accessed by an internal metal staircase fed from the internal courtyard, and all glazing is south and east facing to maintain conservation concerns to retain a robust unaltered roadside elevation.

6.9 Windows are contemporary in style, ie PPC aluminium/timber composite which are tilt or casement, without the glazing bars of the more traditional types. These will reflect the new build of Plots 4 + 5 which was recently an approved variation of the permitted scheme ref 20/06177/VAR, and maintain a consistency of architectural language throughout the site.

6.10 Doors will either by full height glazed with PPC aluminium frames or traditional solid ledged and braced timber as shown on the drawings. The new rooflight will be in a dark grey coloured aluminium frame flush with the roof line.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This application proposes only minor amendments the extant drawings RFD B03 –08, 151120 – 152 B Condition details sheet 3 and 151120 – 153 B Condition details sheet 4

7.2 The internal reorganisation of the Threshing Barn and Milking parlour allows better access and provides a less complicated structure, but also preserves some of the original fabric which the previous approved application did not.

CR 7.11.23



Figure 1 Sale Particulars plan of 'Rickstone Farm', 1845 (WSHC ref)

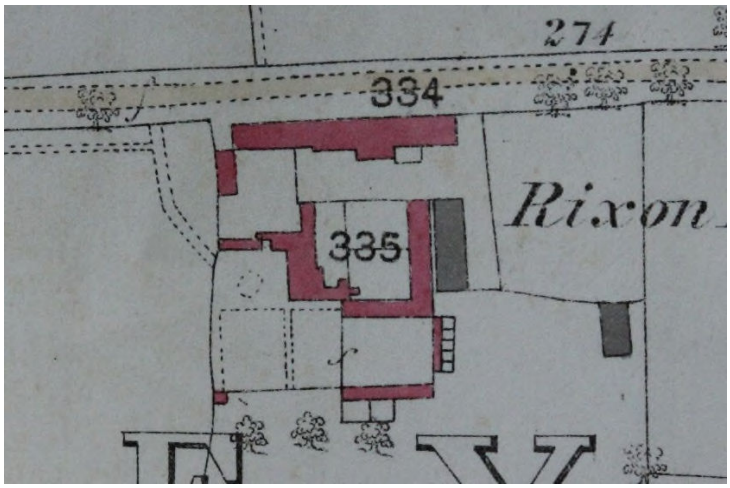


Figure 2 1st Edition OS 25" map 18**

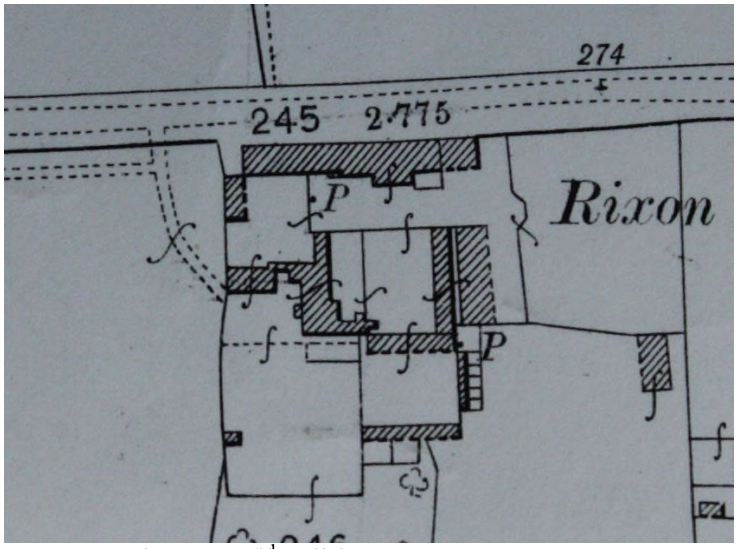


Figure 3 2nd Edition OS 25" map 1900



Figure 4 Aerial photograph of Rixon Farm from the north-west c.1965



Figure 5 Aerial photograph of Rixon Farm from the north-east. c.1970



Figure 9 Barn, south elevation


Figure 10 Stable, south elevation



Figure 11 Round piers of the remains of the shelter shed attached to the west gable of the stable



Figure 12 Milking parlour attached to the east gable of the barn. South and east elevations

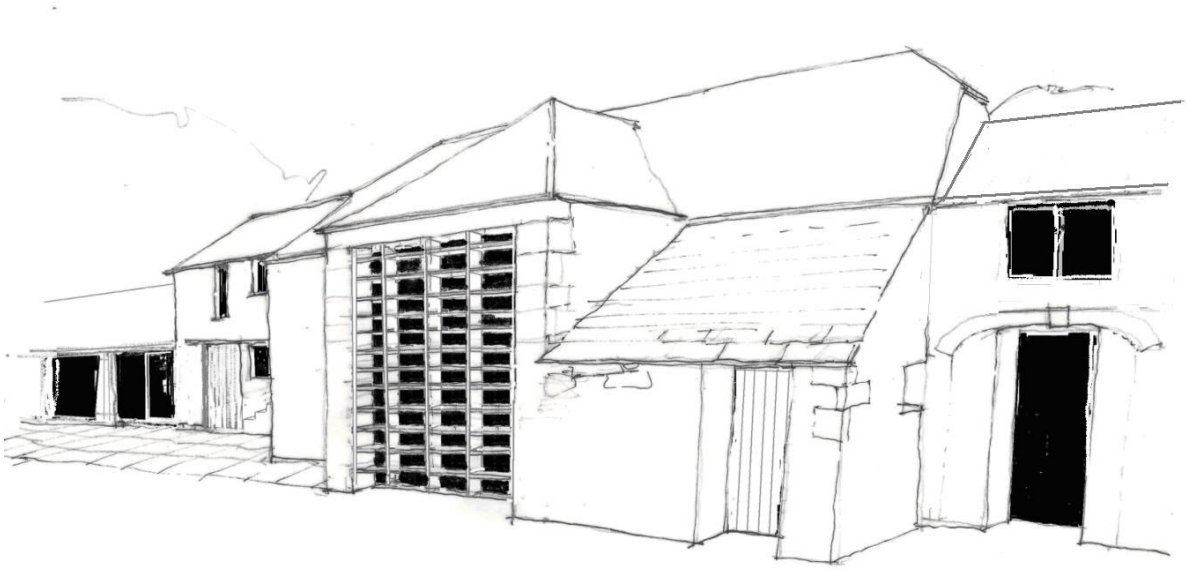


Figure 13. Threshing Barn, proposed elevations

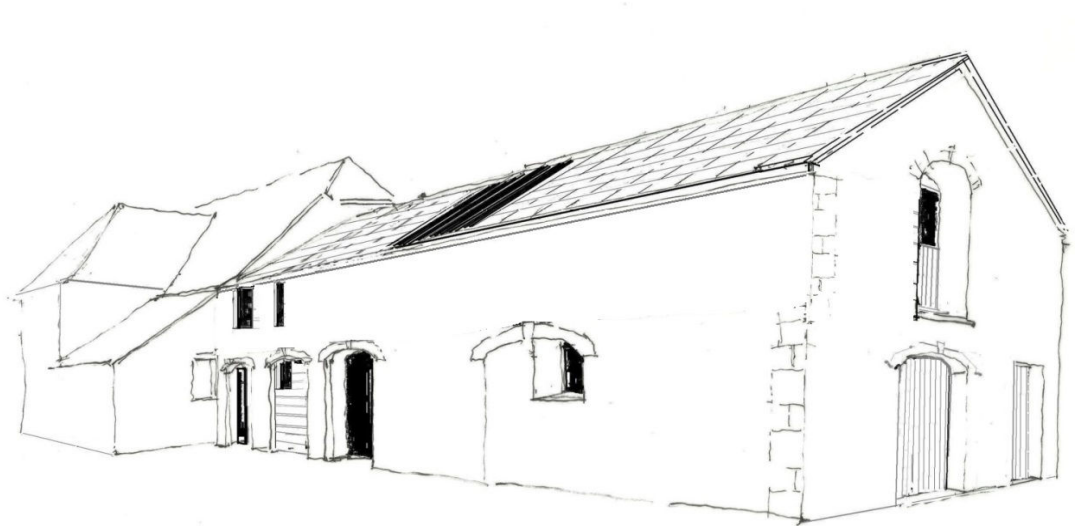


Figure 14. Milking parlour, proposed south elevation



Figure 15. North elevation (roadside) of Threshing barn showing work to existing opening



Figure 16. New roof being built on the Milking Parlour



Figure 17. New first floor in the Milking Parlour



Figure 18. North elevation (roadside) of the Milking Parlour



Figure 19. Former Stable (Plot 2) in progress



Figure 20. Stone piers being rebuilt in the former Cowshed (Plot 2)