

Design and Access and Heritage Statement

Bapton Farm, Bapton

January 2024

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01
Introduction

This statement has been prepared in reference to the reuse of an empty agricultural unit within Bapton Manor Farm, the description of which is below.

Change of use of existing agricultural building (Sui Generis) to indoor ski slope facility (Use Class E(d)) alongside internal and external amendments to the building (including its roofscape) as well as landscaping and car parking.

Our client wishes to reuse the building to open a ski school which will host a limited number of clientele at one time. The barn is surplus to requirements by the farm owners and this new use will bring the building back into a viable and economically sustainable use, whilst also aiding the County's policies on rural diversification and creating jobs. There will be limited to no impact with regard to highways, ecology and heritage, and we conclude that the benefits of the proposed scheme outweigh any potential harm.



02 Existing Building and Context

The existing building was erected around 1960 as an agricultural shed, forming a range of sheds surrounded by open fields and detached houses, all within the same ownership as the land/farm owner. In 1983, the building began to be used as a commercial garage. However, this change of use was never formally regularised and in October 2023, the owner of the garage retired, leaving the shed vacant. The owner has no need for the shed for agricultural purpose, having erected three large modern shed to the east.

There are three listed properties within the vicinity of the building, and these are discussed in more detail within the heritage section of this report.

Internally, the building forms one large space, with a blockwork wall providing some separation between the main space and the northern section which has a lower roof height. An office space, WC and storage unit have also been integrated into this area.

The building is constructed from blockwork at lower level, with profiled sheet cladding above, integrated with sections of polycarbonate to provide daylight internally. Two large rolling doors provide access to the east and single panel domestic scale doors provide additional access and egress to the east and south elevations. There are also a series of unfinished metal framed fixed lights to the north, south and east elevations.

The roof is formed from profiled sheeting and PVs have been installed on the southern slope.

Internally, the floor is formed from a concrete slab, set above the external ground level, with a full width ramp to the east elevation providing level access. The building is not insulated internally and therefore the internal finish of the construction materials form the internal material aesthetic.

The building has an associated hard standing to the south which has been used as a dedicated parking space for the building. Both the farm and leaseholders for the building will share access from the main road.

The building lies on the western boundary of Bapton Manor Farm with an open field to the west which provides views of the western gable end of the building from Watermeadow Lane, although this will be seen by a relatively limited number of people. The building is almost entirely hidden from the main road, with a view from the road access point only.



Image references, left to right, top to bottom:

Aerial view looking north, South elevation of existing building, East elevation of existing building, North elevation of existing building, aerial view looking south, West elevation of existing building, open field and boundary to the west, existing shed to the north east, aerial view looking north, existing shed to the east, view towards the main access, office building to the north

03 Planning Context

A separate planning statement has been produced to accompany this application which sets out how the proposals respond to local and national policy. This section, therefore, summarises the main considerations which have directed the design of the interventions. The site lies within the Cranborne Chase AONB, Salisbury Plain SPA and within an area identified for phosphate neutrality associated with the River Avon (Hampshire) SAC.

The building is not a designated heritage asset and does not lie within a Conservation Area. There are three listed buildings within the vicinity: Grade II Bapton Manor to the north east, Grade II Dairy Cottage to the north and Grade II Bryants Cottage to the south west.

The site is within flood zone 1 with no evidence of surface water flooding, however, it is within a medium high risk area of ground water flooding.



04 Proposed Use

The building is proposed to be re-used as an internal ski facility. Unlike large scale dry ski slopes (which can sometimes include external provision), the use will be moderate in scale and house a ski slope simulator which is 12m x 6.5m in footprint and 5.5m tall. The simulator allows users to benefit from a continuous skiing experience, rather than having to traverse up and down a slope.

Due to its scale, it is assumed a maximum of 8 visitors would be able to use the simulator at one time. Usage would be controlled via 1 hour booking slots, with users expected to include experienced skiers who wish to practice, as well as novices and beginners learning to ski – including school groups. Whilst some are expected to arrive by car given its rural location, the adoption of booking slots is intended to make shared travel more feasible – including car sharing and minibuses in the case of groups. Moreover, the building has been designed to be used only by those who have booked slots, with no facilities that promote lingering (such as cafés) provided within the building. There will be a waiting area provided for those who are waiting for their slot or just finishing their session. Further information on the space uses internally can be found in the next section and on the accompanying plans.

Overall, the building will provide a viable reuse of a redundant agricultural building, allowing for rural diversification of the applicant's portfolio. The scheme has been sensitively designed to accommodate its rural location within an AONB. It will create new jobs in a rural location, suitable for part-time workers or young adults potentially from nearby villages, as well as promoting an active lifestyle.

05 Proposal

Layout

Internally, the building will largely remain in its current form, however, the internal wall between the main space and northern section will require removal in order to accommodate the ski slope simulator. The office will remain in its current position, with a new kitchenette providing staff facilities. The storage area and existing WC will be removed and a new accessible WC and 2 additional WCs will be created. The north west of the building will provide space for a new equipment store. The east of the building will provide a waiting area space.

Landscaping

The only proposed changes to the surrounding landscape will be to the south. A new boundary fence will be created to the south and west to delineate the site area more clearly. The existing graveled area to the south will be retained and used to provide car parking, with flush masonry blocks used to mark parking bays. Further information on car parking is provided below and detailed on plan ref: 2101 REV02.

Appearance

Externally, the existing building has a profiled sheet cladding to the upper section of the walls and roof, with the lower section in blockwork. To maintain an agricultural aesthetic consistent with its AONB location and and one which enhances and maintains the character of the farm, a profiled metal sheet will be used for the roof, with the existing PVs re-installed after its installation. A vertical timber cladding will be used for the upper sections of the walls, to match that to the newer sheds on the site. The ski simulator requires a minor increase in height to the roof, with the proposed ridge line raised by 1.5m, and the lower roof slope raised to create a continuous roof pitch to the north. The ridge line, although raised, will still remain lower than the surrounding buildings. The eastern window to the south elevation will be converted into a new entrance door, with the large double roller doors maintained, allowing the building to be converted back to agricultural use should it be required in the future.. The existing rainwater goods will be replaced with uPVC in a larger capacity diameter, although existing drainage arrangements will be maintained.

Internally, the walls and roof will be insulated with a sheeting material installed internally, to provide a painted but robust surface. The floor will remain as a concrete slab and painted, to provide a hard wearing surface. The blockwork to the office will remain and will be repainted. The new WCs will be constructed from studwork and painted. A wall mounted storage unit will be fitted to the east wall to provide storage for ski equipment. All other furniture will be loose fitted.

Lighting will be provided through new pendent fittings. Services will be surface mounted.

Access

A separate transport statement has been produced to accompany this application. In summary, access will be via the main road which links Bapton, Stockton and Wylye. A dedicated parking area will be maintained to the south of the building for customers and staff of the ski school. Due to the number of intended users, the number of vehicles on site will be limited, with 6 dedicated spaces available. This includes a dedicated disabled parking space and a dedicated mini bus space. Overflow parking is available to the concrete hardstanding to the east of the building, providing up to a further 5 spaces if required. Covered secure cycling provision is also provided inside the building. We understand the number of spaces within the principal carparking area is slightly below the recommendations for leisure buildings set out within Wiltshire's parking standards, however, the use model of the business will limit visitors, with one group booking per hour with a maximum of 4 users on the slope at one time. As such, this will greatly reduce the anticipated number of visitors. The overflow parking will also provide additional parking which brings the building in line with standards, if required.

The applicant supports the Council to reduce dependence on private car use, but we believe the following relevant factors are of relevance in consideration of parking provision:

1. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF states it should be recognised that sites to meet local business needs in rural areas may have to be in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances, it is important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

2. Leisure facilities such as this will always attract private car use, due to users often wishing to use their own equipment, thus restricting walking, cycling or public transport use.

In addition, whilst never formalised, the previous use of the building as a commercial garage attracted vehicle traffic which we would suggest will not be made worse by the proposed development.

Contamination and Asbestos

The existing roof and wall cladding are assumed to made from an asbestos based material. A demolition and refurbishment survey will be undertaken prior to building works commencing, and if asbestos is identified, this will be disposed of in line with regulations. Due to the use of the shed as a garage, there is the potential for land contamination, although this is limited to the existing slab only, as there are no below ground tanks or storage on site. The proposal does not require the existing slab to be amended in any way and no excavations are required. There will also be no external excavations.

Sustainability

The existing building has a range of PVs on the south slope which will be re-installed after the roof has been replaced. It is also proposed that the building is insulated, with the existing building being single skin blockwork and profiled cladding. Daylight will be provided through existing windows and low water and energy use equipment specified to reduce demand. The building will require limited space heating within the main space, as a colder environment is beneficial and required for its use. In summer months, the large roller doors can be open to provide ventilation internally.

Flood Risk

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should require applications to be, where appropriate, supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment. Footnote 50 goes into detail the situations where this should be undertaken:

- All development in Flood Zone 2/3;
- In sites greater than 1ha in Flood Zone 1;
- Land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems;
- Land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or;
- Land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use. The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1, though extends to a size less than 1ha. The site is not within land identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems.

The Wiltshire SFRA (May 2019) does not indicate that the site is upon land identified as being at increased flood risk in the future, but does show an existing groundwater flooding risk owing to groundwater levels being between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface. However, within regard to the Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification at Annex 3 of the NPPF, the proposed development would not introduce a use that would be more vulnerable than the previous, with both 'land and buildings used for agriculture and forestry' and 'buildings used for [...] assembly and leisure' both considered to fall within the 'Less Vulnerable' classification.

The proposed development will incorporate a water entry reliance strategy to provide protection against groundwater flood risk, including:

- Low-permeability materials up to 0.3m
- Easily-replaceable materials at higher depths
- Design to drain water away after flooding
- Access to all voids to permit drying and cleaning

Ecology

Advice from the Councils ecologist has confirmed that the scale and nature of the proposals do not warrant an ecology report. In support of Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, roosting opportunities for bats on site will be enhanced by the inclusion of integrated bat boxes (such as bat tubes) with a total of two proposed. These will be placed over 4m above the ground, on the south elevation, providing shelter from strong winds.

Nesting opportunities for birds will also be enhanced by the provision of a sparrow terrace and a swift box which will be installed over 3m above the ground, out of the reach of predators, on the north elevation to avoid direct sunlight and heavy rain.

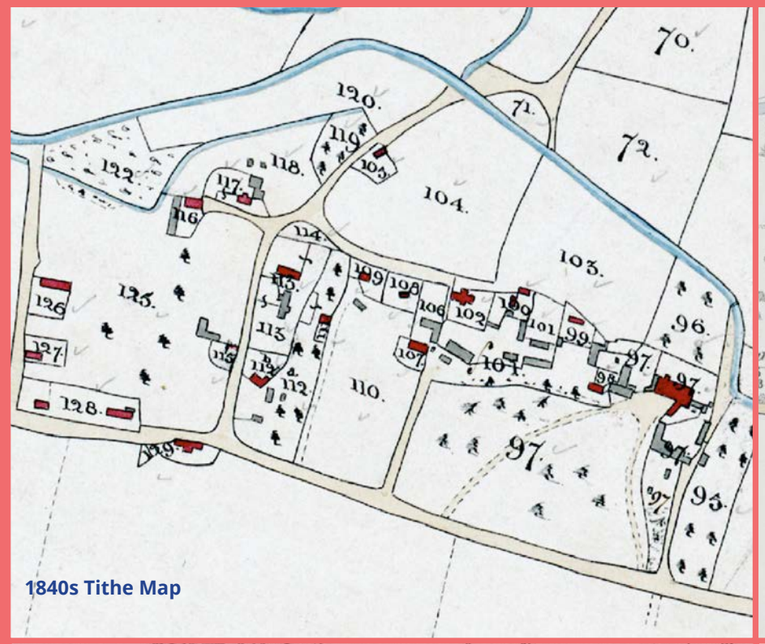
Summary

The existing form, location and space provided by the existing building suits a business of this type, with only marginal alteration required externally. The removal of potential asbestos sheeting is considered a benefit, and the choice of materials will maintain an agricultural character and reflect the appearance of other buildings on the farm. Although the roof will require raising, this will not increase the overall mass of the building, which will remain subservient to surrounding buildings. There are limited viewpoints towards the site, with the building being largely hidden behind other buildings, landscape or on account of its location bordering private fields. Although the buildings use will likely attract the use of private cars, it is felt that this will always be the case for buildings of this use, no matter their location. Sustainable transport options have been provided to give users flexibility in their options. With the current building unused, and the farm owners not requiring the building for agricultural use, the potential users for the building are limited. This proposal will provide an economically viable use whilst providing local jobs in a rural location and supporting rural diversification and the economic viability of the farm estate.

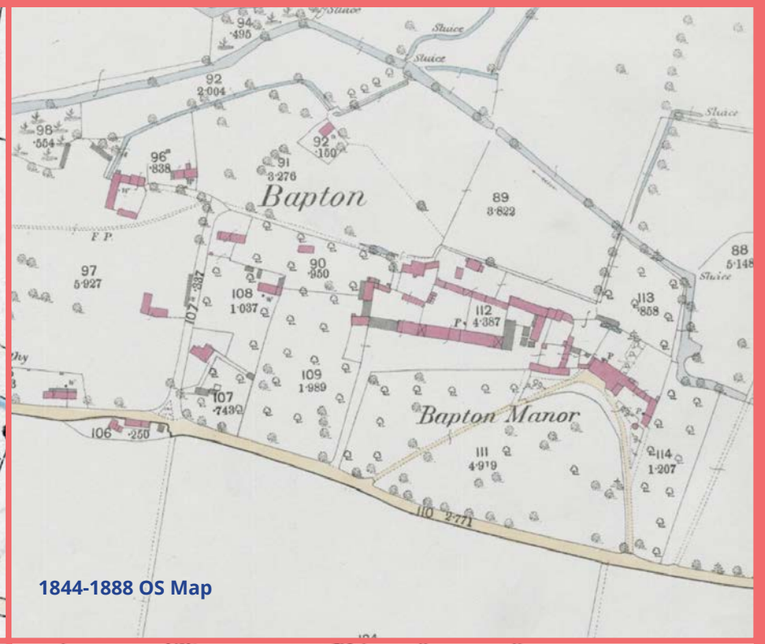
06 Heritage Statement

Historic Background

Bapton Manor Farm has been part of Bapton Manor estate since the mid 19th Century, although the farm which you can see today is almost wholly a product of the late 20th Century. The Manor itself was built around the 17th Century but was largely rebuilt in the mid 18th Century, with 19th and 20th Century extensions. The Old Dairy House to the north of the farm is mid 17th Century and appears on the 1840s tithe map, although this has been largely extended. Bryant's Cottage to the south of the site is also a remnant of the 17th Century village. Formerly part of Fisherton de la mere, Bapton became part of the parish of Stockton in 1934 and has, for most of its history, been owned as a single estate, as it is today. The site on which Manor Farm lies is shown as an empty piece of land throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, forming a driveway to the manor house. From the mid 20th Century, a structure in a similar position and of a similar mass to the shed to which this application relates, first appears, which is consistent with the appearance and style of the building which is assumed to be from the 1960s. This is the first of the structures to be built within the current farm. The open timber office to the north was constructed in 2009 and the grain store to the east in 2011. It is assumed that the other two large sheds were also constructed in the early 2000's.



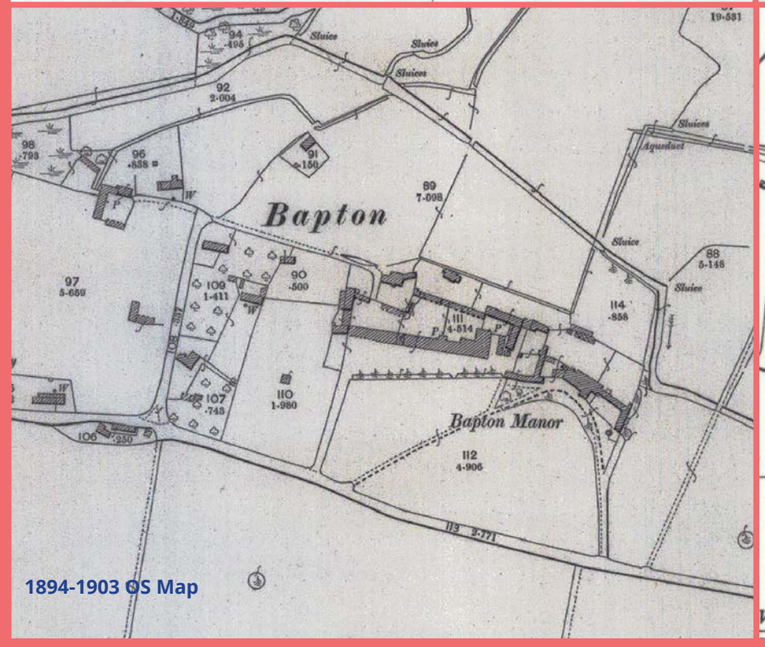
1840s Tithe Map



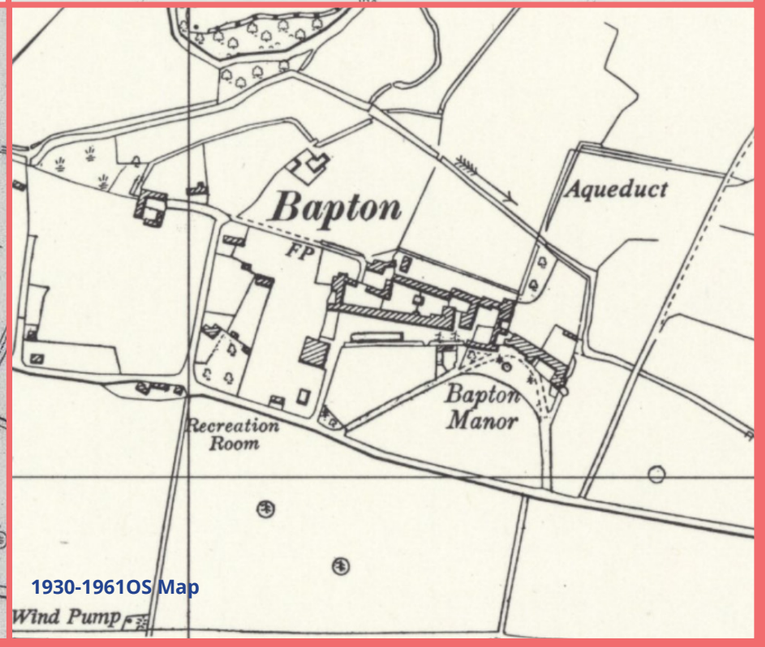
1844-1888 OS Map



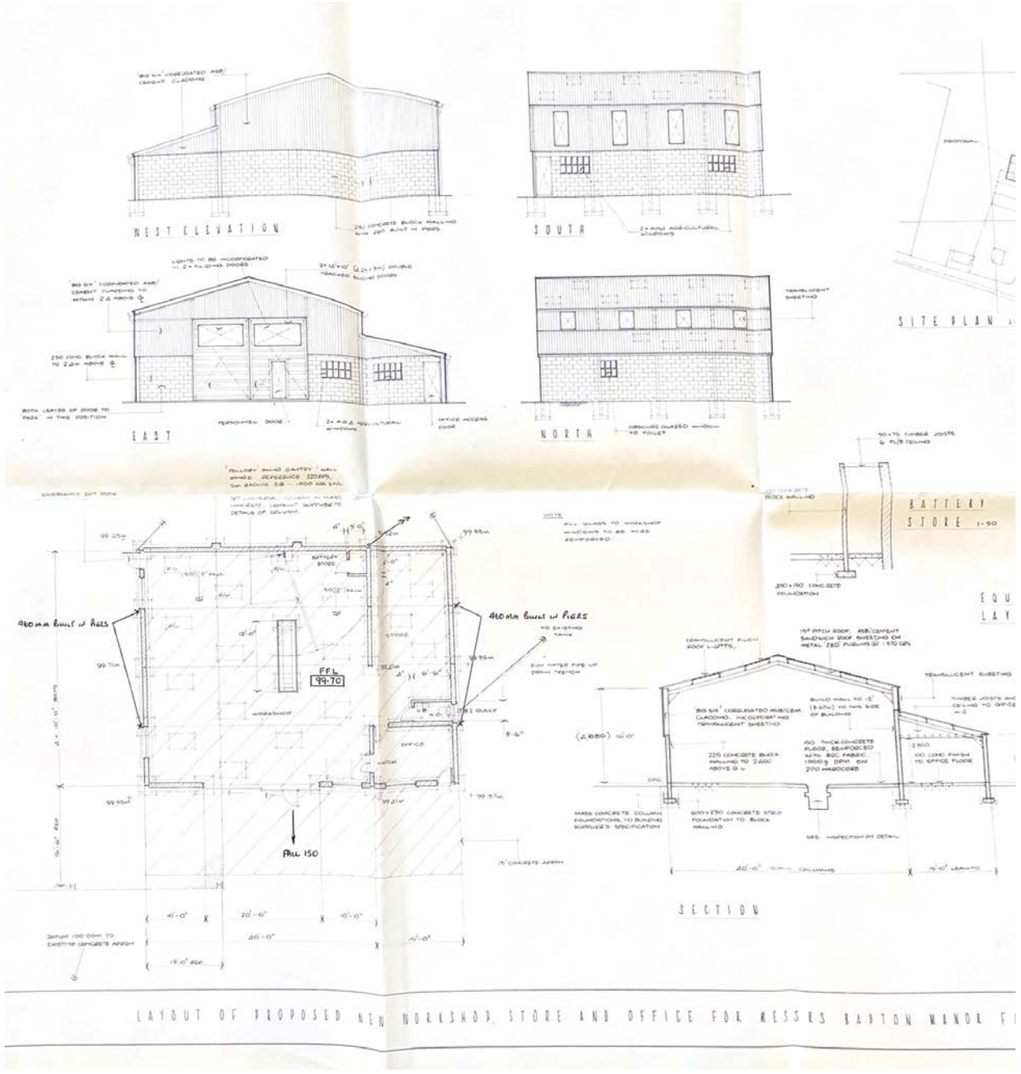
2023 Aerial Photograph with site highlighted



1894-1903 OS Map



1930-1961OS Map



1960's Constrution drawing for the shed

Heritage Assets

Bapton Manor, The Old Dairy House and Bryant's Cottage all lie within the vicinity of the proposed site, and are the only surviving buildings from the earlier settlement of Bapton. The 19th Century buildings which lay to the east of Bapton Manor have also been demolished, although the access roads and site boundaries remain largely intact.

Proposal Building

The existing building was erected around 1960 and was used as a space for repairing farm vehicles until the 1980s from when it was informally used as a commercial garage. It has remained largely unchanged since this time, other than the installation of a secure storage unit within the north, adjacent to the WC. Due to the age of the building, it is not considered curtilage listed as part of Bapton Manor.

Heritage Impact

The existing building is not considered a heritage asset - either designated, undesignated or curtilage listed. There is some historic interest in the fact that it appears to be the first building erected as part of the evolution of the estate into a farm, however, the proposals do not seek for demolition and only seek minor changes to the external appearance, preserving this character. Bapton Manor is not visually or spatially linked to the building, with two large sheds between the two. As such, there will be no impact on the setting of the building. This is also the case for The Old Dairy Cottage, with a series of buildings and vegetation visually separating the two buildings. Bryant's Cottage to the south, can also not be seen in relation to the building, due to its distance, the mature trees and vegetation to the highways boundary, and the detached house to the road, which blocks views between them. As such, it is concluded that there will be no impact to any heritage assets due to the proposals set out within this application.





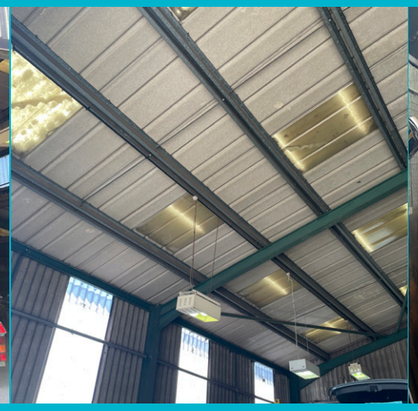


Top image - Aerial view towards Bapton Manor
Middle image - WC and storage unit to the north of the building, Bottom image - North storage area

07 Appendix



Looking west into the shed



Existing roof structure



Southern wall towards windows which is proposed will become a new access door



Looking west



Looking north within main space



Storage unit and WC



Looking north



Existing office looking north



Dividing wall which is proposed to be removed



Existing office looking south west



Existing WC



Looking towards the main access



West gable



Existing parking area looking east



Existing parking area looking south east



West elevation



West and north elevation



Existing parking area and south elevation

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