HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In respect of:

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT BARN TO HOLIDAY LET

At:

MOOR FARM, ASHTON ROAD, MINETY, SN16 9QP

On behalf of:

Mr Alex Millar

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement accompanies applications for planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion of a redundant barn adjacent to the Grade II listed Moor Farmhouse.

1.2 The barn comprises a single-storey linear building within the farmstead to the east of the farmhouse, with its gable end facing the road. The building is redundant from agricultural use.

1.3 The main objectives of the proposals are to retain the barn and put it to a beneficial new use, namely a two-bedroom holiday let.

1.4 The report describes the impact of the proposals on the heritage asset and its setting to fulfil the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, revised December 2023), and to meet the council's local validation checklist for applications affecting heritage assets.

1.5 A Planning, Design and Access Statement (incorporating a Heritage Assessment) dated July 2023 was lodged by RAW Planning Ltd as part of the application submission. The statement identified the barn as a curtilage listed building to Moor Farmhouse.

1.6 The conservation officer, while not objecting to the principle of conversion of the curtilage listed barn, objected to the application proposals on the basis that they failed to respect the significance of the building; In particular, the new opening in the south gable, the internal wall linings and loss of the existing mezzanine floor were not considered appropriate.

2.0 Significance

2.1 Moor Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building of special interest as an early 17th century vernacular farmhouse constructed in local stone.

2.2 The redundant farm building the subject of the applications appears on the 1880 Ordnance Survey map and possibly dates from the 18th century (as evidenced by the design of the roof purlins, which are shaved back where they meet the principals, and the stone walling). The six-bay barn was likely to have been open-fronted on the west side but filled in with brick, probably in the 19th century judging by the type of bricks and fine lime mortar joints. It was perhaps originally used as a cart shed and latterly stables and animal shelter when the front was filled in. The queen-closer bricks around the window at the southern end suggest this was an original opening, whereas the stable doors and the wide opening without queen-closers were likely to have been later insertions.

2.3 The barn is of heritage significance as part of the historic farm group and individually of merits as a modest, historic cart shed building of traditional form, materials and method of construction. It contributes to the setting of Moor Farmhouse and the adjacent Grade II listed Tellings farmhouse. Key aspects of the barn's significance are:

- The agricultural character of the barn;
- The building's simple linear form and pitched roof;
- The natural materials used in its construction;
- The stone gables and east wall with limited openings; the south gable is a particularly prominent feature and is seen within the context of Moor Farmhouse and Tellings Farmhouse;
- The loft opening and boarded mezzanine floor within the southern end of the building evidence the hayloft;
- The undivided full-height space within the northern end of the building illustrates the building's original open-plan nature;
- There are some historic A-frame trusses within the northern end of the building;
- The exposed stone walls internally reflect the unadorned and agricultural nature of the barn.

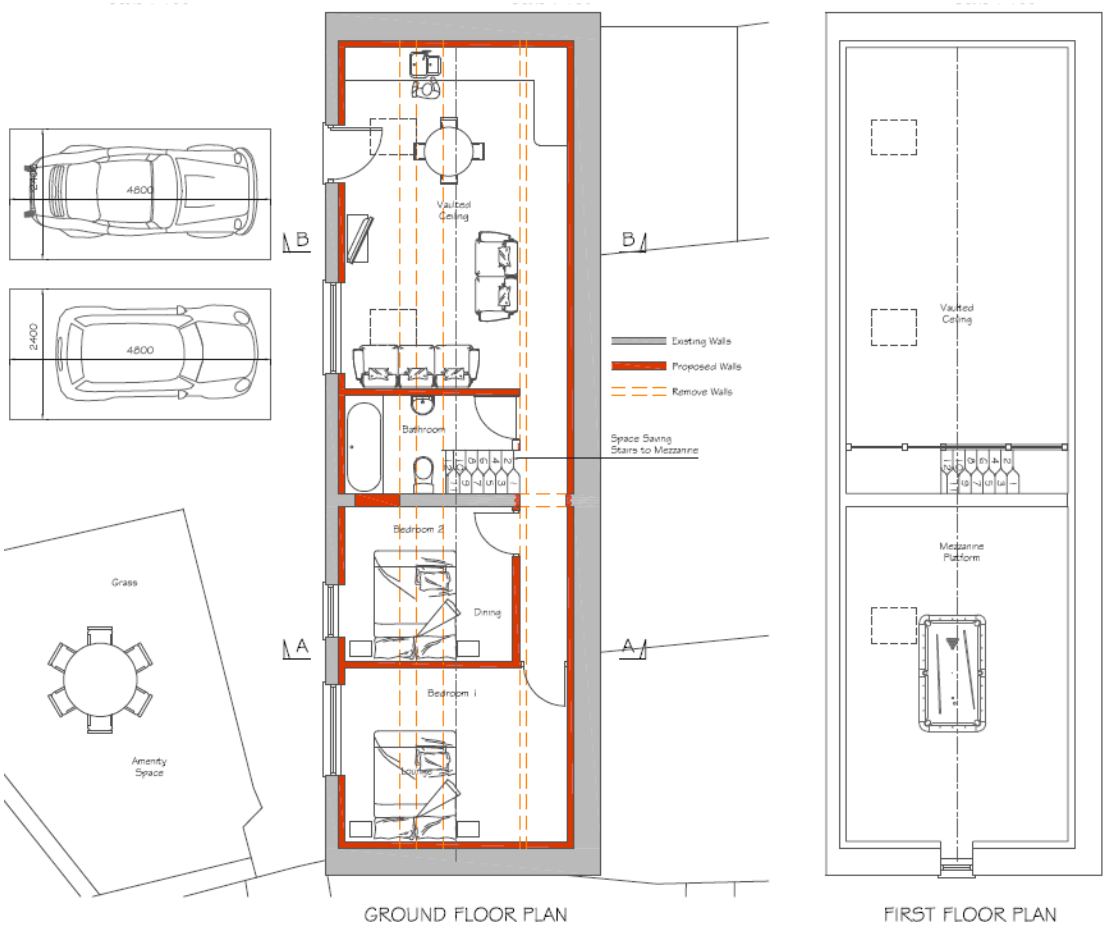
2.4 The brick infill within the west elevation dating from the 19th century is of historic value, albeit modest, and due to the contrast with the stone walls evidences the former open frontage. It is, however, of poor condition and appearance.

2.5 The ground floor is formed in concrete, mostly plain but with an area of incised concrete within the stable doors at the northern end of the building. It is not of special interest.

2.6 The 20th century corrugated metal roof probably replaced a stone roof. It is not waterproof and lacks insulation.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The redundant barn is proposed to be converted to a two-bedroom holiday let (see proposed plans below).

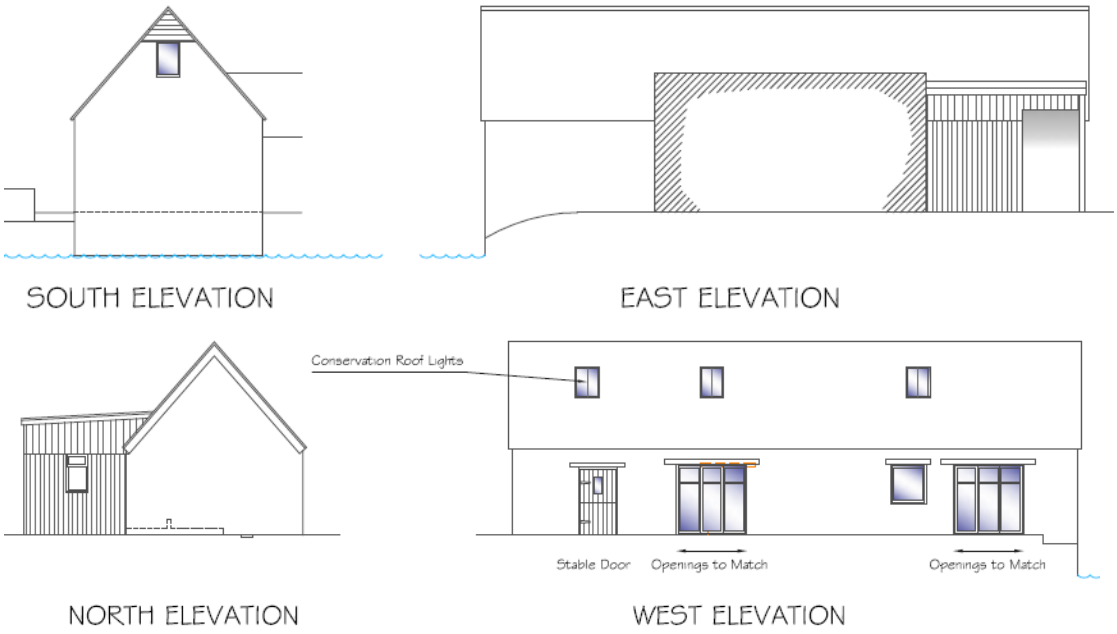


Proposed plans

3.2 A full-height open-plan living/kitchen/dining area would be formed within the northern end of the building. The existing roof trusses throughout and the mezzanine floor within the southern end of the building would be retained. A partition would be inserted at the southern end of the living space to create a bathroom and accommodate a minimalist staircase to the mezzanine/loft over the southern end of the building. The existing door opening in the intermediate wall at ground floor would be filled in and a new opening formed at the eastern end for corridor access to two bedrooms. The stone walls would be lined with an independent dry-lining system to provide a consistent finish and level of insulation. The concrete floor would be replaced with an insulated Limecrete floor.

3.3 Externally, the corrugated tin roof would be replaced with an insulated plain clay-tiled roof. The northernmost door would be replaced with a timber plank stable door while the southern door would be removed and widened, and full-height glazing

introduced. A new timber window would be inserted within the existing window opening. Full-height glazing would be inserted in the existing wide opening. A timber window would be inserted within the existing loft opening in the south gable. Three conservation rooflights would be inserted within the western roof slope.



Proposed elevations

3.4 Parking for the holiday let would be within the existing concrete hardstanding area in front of the barn. The occupants of the holiday let would have use of the small area of grass adjacent to the front of the building but it would remain open to the yard.

4.0 Policy Framework

Primary Legislation

4.1 Statutory duties exist under sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to grant listed building consent or planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Development Plan

4.2 The statutory duties are reflected in the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), which was adopted by Wiltshire Council on 20 January 2015. Core Policy 57 of the WCS seeks to ensure high quality design and place shaping. Core Policy 58 of the WCS seeks to promote the conservation and, where possible, enhancement of the county's historic environment.

National Planning Policy

4.3 National planning policy relating to the historic environment is provided within section 16 of the NPPF (revised December 2023). It advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

4.4 Paragraph 205 of the NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss to a heritage asset's significance should require clear and convincing justification and needs to be weighed against identifiable public benefits. Substantial harm or loss of a Grade II listed building should be exceptional.

4.5 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF advises where proposals would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the proposals should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to

achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of four listed criteria therein apply.

4.6 Paragraph 208 advises that where proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

4.7 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas or the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.

4.8 The setting of a heritage asset is defined on p72 of the NPPF as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced'. The NPPF advises the extent of setting is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

National Guidance

4.9 Proposals for repurposing redundant farm buildings should follow the Historic England guidance contained within *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings* and *The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings* (October 2017). The documents recommend *inter alia* that consideration be given to uses that minimise the impact on significance, e.g., uses that avoid or minimise subdivision, involve light-touch physical alteration, involve works that are reversible etc.

4.10 The guidance advocates the retention of agricultural character through such things as the reuse of existing openings (and avoiding the formation of new openings), glazing design to maintain the sense of any large openings, by preserving the openness within the buildings where this is a characteristic feature and avoidance/minimisation of domestic paraphernalia.

4.11 It is advisable that proposals for repair, restoration and alteration of heritage assets should follow the guidance within the *Historic England Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (HEAN2, February 2016). The document acknowledges (paragraph 3) that the best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, and that a *'reasonable and proportionate approach to owner's needs is therefore essential'*.

4.12 As a general principle for adaptation, HEAN2 advises as much of the historic fabric and plan form that contributes to the significance of a heritage asset should be retained as possible, with new work ideally being reversible. Harm to significance may be justified on grounds of overriding public benefit that may accrue including maintaining the building in its optimum viable use.

4.13 HEAN2 advises that issues to consider in respect of new additions to heritage assets are proportion, height, massing, bulk, materials and setting, and that new work should not dominate the existing in terms of scale, material or siting. The guidance advises that an assessment of the asset's significance will usually suggest an appropriate form of any extension.

5.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 The proposals would provide the redundant agricultural building with a new use, which would help secure its long-term conservation in line with guidance from Historic England.

5.2 The proposed holiday let use would involve a low level of intervention to the fabric of the curtilage listed building and would be a low-key one within the setting of the listed farmhouse.

5.3 The main living area would be predominantly open-plan, occupying the majority of the space within the northern end of the building. The subdivision at the southern end to form a bathroom would be minimal and have a low impact on the space.

5.4 The loft would be retained within the southern end of the building allowing for maximum retention of fabric and a continued appreciation of the building's historic usage.

5.5 The more cellular bedrooms would be suited to the space under the mezzanine at the southern end of the building.

5.6 There would be no loss of historic flooring. Installation of a Limecrete floor would improve the breathability of the building while providing sufficient insulation for the new use.

5.7 The proposed dry-lining system for the inner faces of the walls would provide a consistent finish and level of insulation throughout the building. The system would have a light-tough impact on the walls and would be reversible.

5.8 The existing openings would be retained and reused thereby preserving the agricultural character of the building. The proportions of the larger opening would be preserved with full-height glazing. Retention of one of the stable doors would maintain the legibility of the northern end of the building, as would the reuse of the loft window in the south gable; the predominantly blank gable would be preserved.

5.9 The enlargement of one of the stable doors and insertion of full-height glazing would result in minimal harm resulting from the loss of the doorway and removal of brickwork of poor condition. The enlarged opening would provide the main living space with sufficient natural light.

5.10 The replacement roofing would improve the building's weatherproofing and insulation. The proposed clay tiles would have a high-quality, traditional finish that would be compatible with the character of the building and the setting of the listed buildings.

5.11 The three conservation rooflights proposed on the western roof slope would have a low impact on the appearance of the roof. They would enable effective use of the building and avoid the need for new window openings and consequent loss of wall fabric and character.

5.12 Parking for the holiday let would remain within the existing concrete-covered parking area within the yard, i.e., situation unchanged.

5.13 There would be no physical separation of the curtilage or change in character of the yard, with amenity space being minimalist.

5.14 The table below shows how the conservation officer's comments on the previous scheme have been addressed by the revised proposals:

Conservation Officer's Comments	**Current Scheme**
Concern regarding the new contemporary opening in the south gable	No new openings would be formed; the existing hayloft opening would be utilised as a window thus preserving the appearance of the south gable and making use of the existing aperture for the mezzanine
The inside face of the stone walls should be left exposed	An independent dry-lining system is proposed to provide a consistent wall finish and level of insulation; it would have a light-touch impact on historic wall fabric and would be reversible
Details are required for the flooring	The existing floor is entirely concrete and no historic flooring would be lost; the existing concrete would be replaced with a new Limecrete floor
The mezzanine should be retained	The accommodation has been reorganised within the building to enable the mezzanine to be retained and to provide the more cellular, bedroom spaces below; the existing trusses would be retained; most of the existing full-height space within the northern end of the building would be used for open-plan living/kitchen/dining

Information is needed regarding the roof covering	The corrugated metal roof would be replaced with clay tiles incorporating insulation; the new roof would have a traditional, high-quality finish in keeping with the barn and the setting of the listed buildings.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The application relates to the conversion of a disused barn within the curtilage of the Grade II listed Moor Farmhouse.

6.2 The proposed holiday let use would provide the redundant farm building with a new, low-key use, helping to secure its long-term conservation.

6.3 The alterations to facilitate the new use would be minimal and sympathetic to the agricultural character of the barn and the setting of Moor Farmhouse and the adjacent Grade II listed Tellings Farmhouse.

6.4 The intervention would be largely light-touch and reversible.

6.5 The 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the barn would be outweighed by the public benefits of reusing the heritage asset.

6.6 The proposals would follow the guidance for the adaptation of redundant farm buildings and alterations to heritage assets as advocated by Historic England.