

RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE

THE COACH HOUSE AT WOOTTON FIELDS FARM, ROYAL WOOTTON
BASSETT, SN4 7SA

Rev A



Fig 1. Front elevation of The Coach House Today

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of the retrospective planning application for the change of use of the former coach house at Wootton Fields Farm, a Grade II listed historic farmstead. The purpose of this document is to assess the significance of the heritage asset, evaluate the impact of the conversion works, and demonstrate that the proposal conserves and enhances the setting and character of the listed buildings in accordance with national and local policy.

The proposal involves the reuse of an existing historic outbuilding as a small one-bedroom holiday let. Whilst the building has undergone some replacement and maintenance works over time (please see the relevant section below), all works associated with the conversion were internal and decorative, and no external alterations, extensions, or structural changes were required.

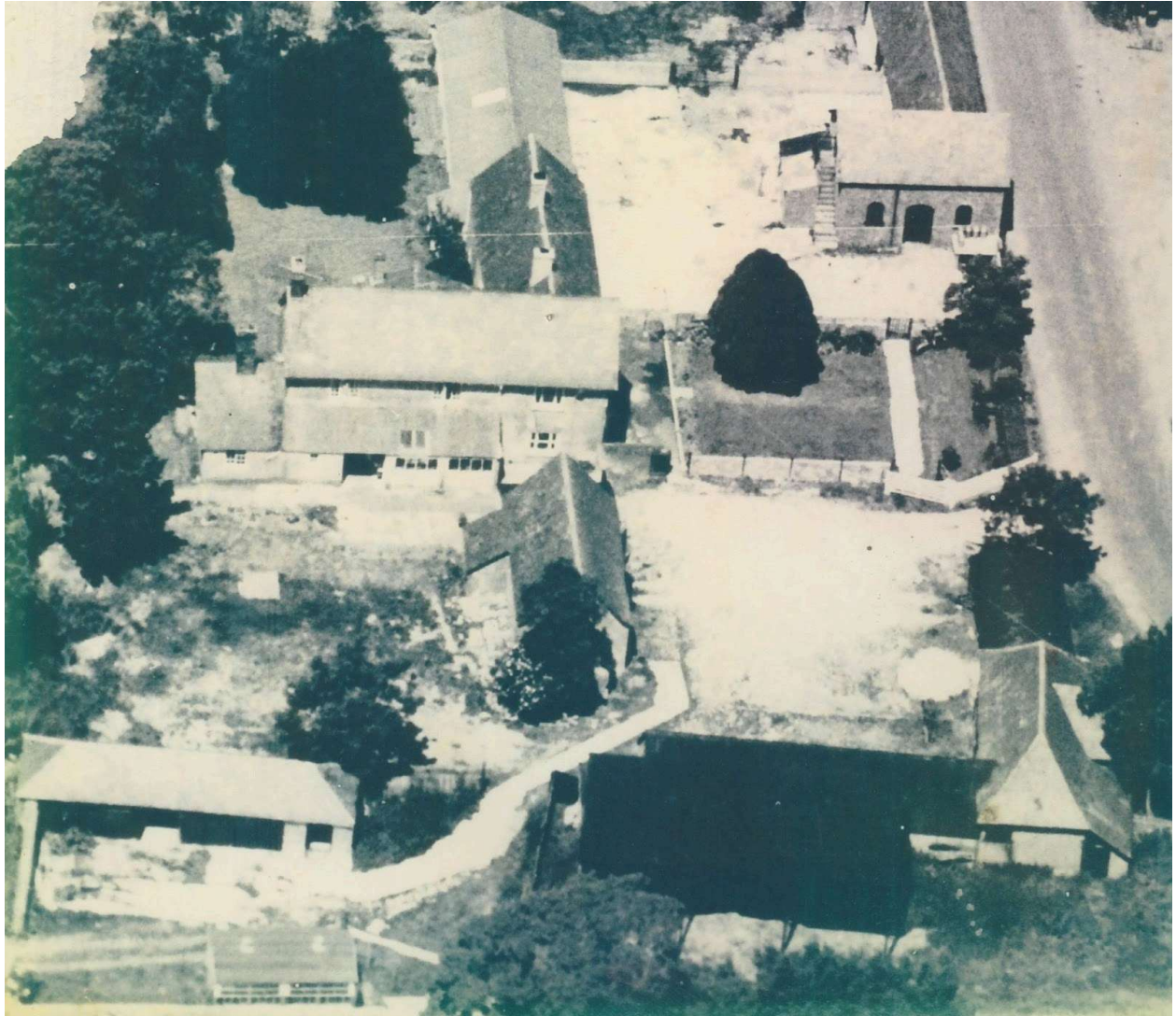


Fig 2. Aerial View of Wootton Fields Farm, circa 1950, The Coach house is in the centre of the picture.

2. Site & Historical Context

Wootton Fields Farm is a Grade II listed farmhouse with a collection of associated agricultural outbuildings reflecting its historic use as a working farmstead.

The farm ceased agricultural operations in 1986, after which some buildings fell into disrepair while others were repurposed to support the site's ongoing maintenance. The farmhouse remains in residential use by the applicant.

The coach house sits within the residential curtilage of the listed farmhouse and is therefore considered a curtilage listed structure despite not being individually listed. Its form, materials, and functional relationship with the farmhouse contribute to the overall historic and architectural significance of the site.



Fig 3. Rear view of The Coach house 1958. Previous roof lights visible on the rear roof slope.

3. Description of the Coach House

The coach house is a modest, single-storey, brick-built building with:

- a rectangular footprint,
- Gable ended pitched slate roof,
- traditional and typical barn joinery features internally,
- and simple, utilitarian proportions consistent with its former agricultural/commercial function.

Historically, the building is known to have been used as a commercial smokehouse until the 1980s, after which it remained unused except for storage. Its scale, materials, and spatial relationship to the farmhouse make it characteristic of small agricultural service structures found on historic farmsteads.

Prior to conversion, the building had undergone periodic maintenance to preserve its weatherproofing and structural integrity. These works were repairs only and did not materially alter the appearance or character of the building.

4. Significance of the Heritage Asset

The heritage significance of the coach house derives from:

- **Historic Value:** Its long-standing role as part of the Wootton Fields Farm agricultural complex and its association with the Grade II listed farmhouse.
- **Evidential Value:** The building retains original materials and form that illustrate historic agricultural practices and estate layout.
- **Aesthetic Value:** Its traditional rural vernacular appearance contributes positively to the character of the farmstead.
- **Group/Setting Value:** Its spatial relationship with the farmhouse and adjacent outbuildings forms part of a coherent historic group.

While the building is modest and utilitarian, its contribution to the wider setting and character of the listed farmhouse is appreciable and worthy of preservation.

5. Summary of Works Undertaken

Work to facilitate the Holiday let use:

- Conversion completed in early 2024.
- All works were internal, including:
 - installation of a mezzanine bedroom,
 - creation of a small kitchen and shower room,
 - internal insulation and finishes including a fully insulated floor system and the roof and walls dry lined with sheep wool and plasterboard.
 - mechanical and electrical installations,
 - installation of an air-source heat pump.

Work to coach house building in owners memory:

Changes to facilitate its use as a smoke house in 1988

- The slate roof was in bad repair and unhygienic because of birds, rodents and water ingress so was replaced with Onduline bitumen corrugated sheets.
- Interior walls between the stable, coach store and stableman's room were removed.
- Floor screeded and a special drain for animal byproducts fitted in the floor. Walls rendered with cement render all hygiene related.
- Render to the front (road side) elevation.
- New electricity supply installed and telephone line installed.
- Walk-in freezer room and smoke oven installed.

Decommissioning of smokehouse circa.1992/3:

- Removal of freezer room and disconnect telephone line.

Subsequent use:

The building was only used for seasonal poultry processing (Christmas turkeys).

The current owner and applicant inherited the farm in 2014. By 2020 the 1988 render was failing and the Onduline bitumen roof had collapsed on both the front and rear pitches. This form of roof finish has a life span of 15 years and it had been in place for 26.

Repairs were undertaken in 2021 to stabilise the building. Inspection revealed that a large proportion of the roof timbers had turned to dust and that the brickwork had deteriorated due to the render. All of the render was removed and the brickwork repaired along with replacement rafters and a new slate roof finish installed. The original iron roof lights had also deteriorated beyond repair and were inoperable and so new 550x980mm rooflights by 'Keylite' were installed.

The existing timber doors had all deteriorated beyond repair due to wood worm and rot and so these too were replaced with the matching doors that are evident today.

The original round gable vent and square window to the eastern gable end and the ventilator windows to the front elevation were all retained and are still in place today.

6. Assessment of Impact on Heritage Significance

6.1 Impact of Internal Works

The conversion has been designed to respect the internal volume and proportions of the building. The new internal layout does not affect the external appearance or historic fabric. No original internal historic features were present or removed.

Impact: Neutral — Internal changes do not affect the building's contribution to the heritage asset.

6.2 Impact on External Appearance

Overall, the repair and maintenance works have resulted in the removal of later, unsympathetic interventions and the reinstatement of more appropriate traditional materials, thereby enhancing the building's character and securing its long-term conservation.

Impact: Neutral/Positive — The external character, group value, and setting of the farmhouse are fully preserved with no harm to the asset's significance and a clear heritage benefit arising from the repair and continued viable use of the curtilage listed coach house.

6.3 Impact on Setting of the Listed Farmhouse

The continued use of the outbuilding and its maintenance contribute to the vitality and upkeep of the historic farmstead. The low-intensity holiday use does not generate harm to the setting, views, or experience of the listed farmhouse.

Impact: Positive — Active, sensitive use enhances long-term conservation.

6.4 Cumulative Impact

No cumulative harm arises. The proposal does not increase built form, alter historic character, or introduce incongruous features.

7. Policy Compliance

The proposal complies with:

- **NPPF heritage policies**, which encourage putting heritage assets to viable uses consistent with their conservation and avoiding unnecessary alteration;
- **Wiltshire Core Policy 48**, supporting reuse of rural buildings that conserve rural character and require minimal intervention;
- **Wiltshire Core Policy 39**, supporting tourism uses where existing buildings are reused appropriately;
- principles of sustainable heritage conservation by ensuring the building is actively maintained and retains its character.

The conversion delivers an optimum viable use that secures the future of a historic building with no harm to its significance or that of the listed farmhouse.

8. Conclusion

The conversion of the coach house at Wootton Fields Farm into a small-scale holiday let has been carried out with full regard for the protection of the site's heritage value. The works have:

- preserved the external character of the building,
- maintained the rural vernacular appearance,
- caused no harm to the listed farmhouse or its setting,
- secured the ongoing use and upkeep of a redundant heritage structure.

The proposal represents a heritage-sensitive, sustainable reuse of a curtilage-listed outbuilding and fully accords with national and local heritage policy. Accordingly, no harm has been identified and the proposal should be considered acceptable in heritage terms.



Fig 1. The Coach House from the front, the door to the left is the main entrance door with the double doors to the right boarded up internally. All openings are existing and have been retained.



Fig 2. The Coach House from the rear showing rear amenity space. New rooflights are the only addition to the external fabric.



Fig 3. The Coach House southern elevation and retained original windows.



Fig 4. The Coach House northern elevation showing rear entrance door to the accommodation and door to separate boiler room.