

28th May 2026

Our Ref: SWLC.LPC6318

Development Services – North
Wiltshire Council
Monkton Park
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 1ER



Dear Sir/Madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Re: Conversion of existing residential outbuilding to provide self-contained annex at Sparrow Farm, Fowlswick Lane, Lanhill, Chippenham, SN14 6LX

Please find enclosed a duly completed Listed Building Consent and associated Planning Application in respect of the above proposal. The initial need is for a carer, living as part of the single planning unit and as necessary for extended family members to help support my client's father to continue to live at home as long as possible.

As you will be aware, given the existing incidental residential use of the outbuilding range in question case law (*Uttlesford District Council v SSE & J R White [1992]*) determines that planning permission is arguably not actually required for its adaptation and ancillary use as a self-contained 'Granny Annex'. The annex must of course remain as part of the single residential planning unit.

In this case however the outbuilding range to be converted is believed to be a curtilage Listed Building (see Historic England Advice Note 10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage – June 2025). Accordingly, the use and alterations are proposed by the corresponding applications enclosed. The ancillary use is therefore expected to be conditionally controlled in the long run.

It is the purpose of this over-arching correspondence to provide a proportionate assessment of the heritage impacts resulting from the proposed changes. The application works will be described in detail and will be reviewed within the context of both national and local planning policy. It will be shown that the changes proposed are both very modest and sensitive to the building's significance. There are no reasons to resist the building's more active use, and indeed the investment proposed will ensure the building's long term survival. Furthermore, by extending the potential to live at home, the ancillary accommodation reduces potential pressures on social services, both of which matters are by definition public benefits.

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The Proposal

The extent of the outbuilding to be converted for residential use is shown edged red on the aerial photograph inserted below. The following photographs show that it is attached to the existing garage (which is accessed from the north). There is a pedestrian door from the north into the application building so it can be served from either point of vehicular access.



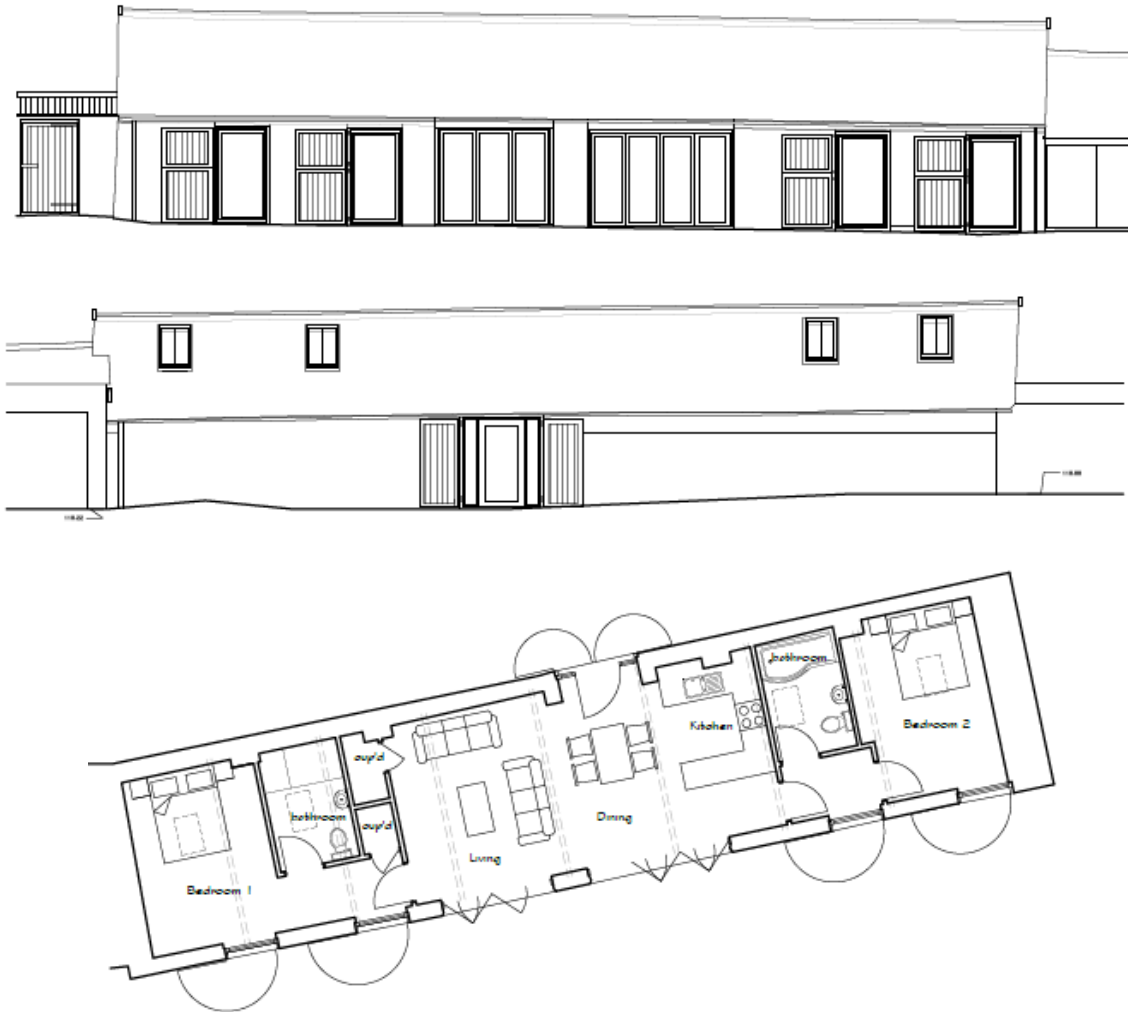




The farmhouse includes a large garden that wraps around the house. The domestic curtilage is less distinct to the west of the house, which shares the courtyard and farm access with the farm buildings located further to the west.

It is strongly maintained that in light of the incidental domestic use (storage) and the close proximity, with access from both sides, that the northern range of the western courtyard is clearly in established domestic use in function and relationship.

The adaptation proposal will subdivide the existing space to provide an open plan living space with a bedroom at either end of the building. This is shown by the plan details inserted on the following page.



Heritage Context

Sparrow Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building, The Historic England listed description is inserted below.

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1022904**

Date first listed: **09-Dec-1985**

List Entry Name: **Sparrow Farmhouse and Dovecote Cottage Attached**
Details

CHIPPENHAM WITHOUT FOWLSWICK LANE ST 87 NE 3/218 Sparrow Farmhouse and Dovecote Cottage attached

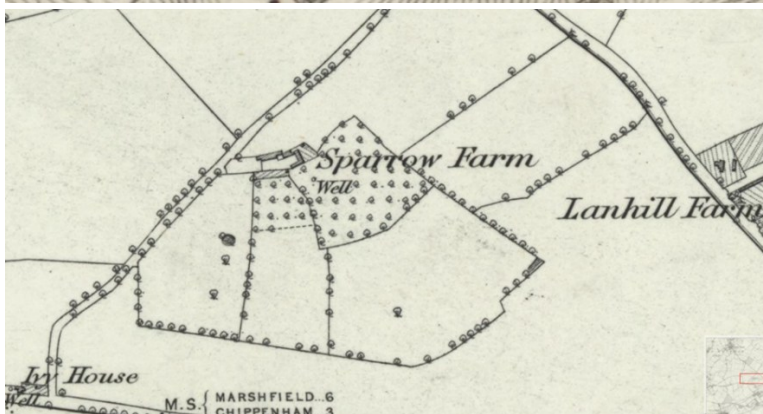
Farmhouse early and later C18, rubble stone with stone-tiled roofs. Original range one-and-a-half storeys with south end ashlar corner stack. Main east front with 2 dormer gables and casement windows under timber lintels, 3-light to right side, 2-light to left side, both floors and door to left. South end wall has flush cyma-moulded stone-mullion windows, single-light to attic, 2-light to first floor and 3-light to ground

floor. To left a former barn converted in C20 with south side dormer gable and cyma-moulded stone-mullion windows. West end wall has plaque TMT. C20 stair tower in angle to rear of original range. Attached to north end of original range, 2 storey and attic later C18 range with coped north gable and end wall stack. To east front, a 3-light cyma-moulded mullion window, to north end a single-light attic window and renewed 2-light mullion window, to west side flush cyma-moulded doorcase, two 2-light cyma-moulded first floor windows and hipped dormer. A short C20 link at north west corner to 'Dovecote Cottage', dated 1714, rubble stone with Bridgewater tile roof and west end ashlar stack. One storey and attic with chamfered doorcase with datestone TMT 1714 over and two 2-light flush stopped cyma-moulded windows to south front. East end wall has 2-light recessed cyma-moulded window to attic and dove-openings over, west end wall has similar 2-light attic window, north wall has 2-light flush stopped cyma-moulded window.

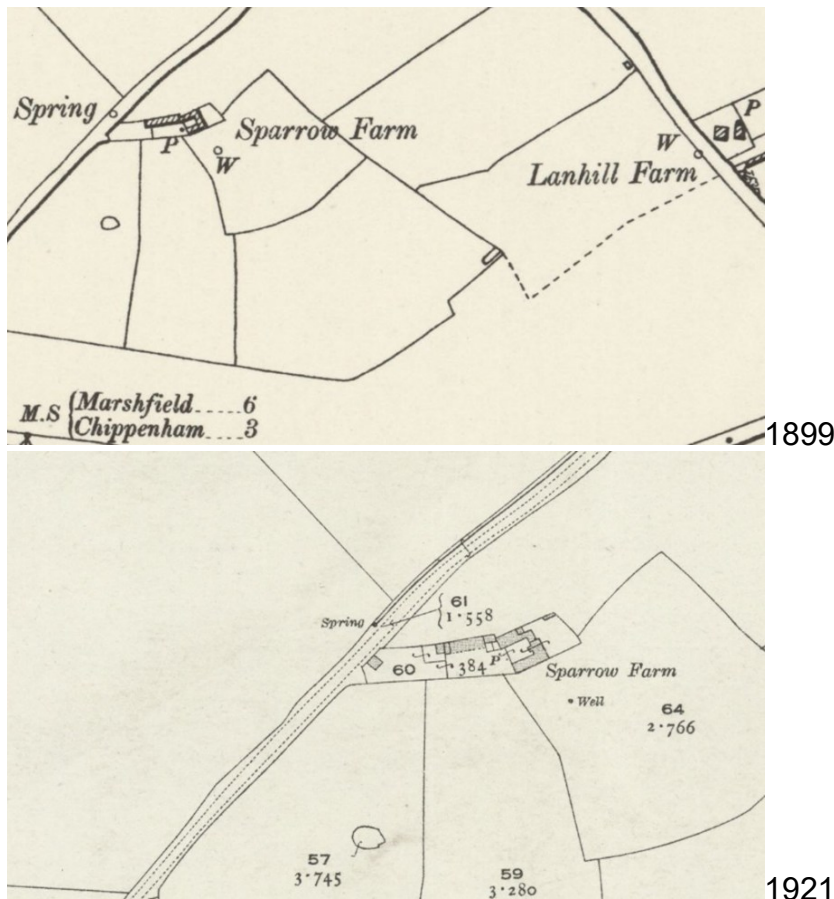
The northern range can be seen from the historic mapping evidence inserted below to have been present at the time the first built grouping is mapped in the late 1880's, which appears to contradict the listing description and most obviously by reference to the dated Dovecote Cottage. The historic grouping has been little changed since it is mapped though, separate from the 20th century more utilitarian barns that have been built to the south west and are evident in the aerial photograph extract inserted earlier.



1808



1887



There is no recorded planning history plotted for the house.

Section 66 to The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 indicates that for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the decision maker shall 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.

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states 'that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any Heritage Asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal or their significance.' Heritage Assets are defined as:

'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting considering in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage Asset includes designated Heritage Assets and assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including local listing).'

Paragraph 210 advises that in determining planning applications Local Planning Authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 215 adds that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

With regard to the building's heritage significance, and in accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF it is proposed to provide a proportionate description of the heritage asset affected by the application development. As a two staged approach the impact of potential change on the significance will then be assessed, having regard to the good practice pursuant to English Heritage's (now Historic England) publication 'Conservation Principles' 2008.

'Significance' can be defined as the 'value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance is unique to a place, and it is therefore important to identify such, as the purpose of conservation is to sensitively manage change to a place to ensure that its significance is protected, and also revealed, reinforced and enhanced at all opportunities. Significance can be eroded through, for instance, partial demolition or inappropriate alterations. Alternatively, it can be enhanced through informed, considered change which can bring positive benefit.

As indicated therefore, the farm complex has been developed since the 18th century, a hierarchy of functional farm buildings, which includes the application range though remain as originally configured. The site's farming activities are now largely based in the more utilitarian buildings, and the historical function is thus less visible as a group, being more residential by use and physical association. Nevertheless, as part of the historic grouping contextually the application building clearly contributes to the group's historic and illustrative significance.

The now former cowbrye has been altered internally, first as a stable stalls and evidenced by internal roof sheeting and use of block work in places. The rear door also appears to have been installed after construction.

The application building appears to have been little altered externally, especially in recent years. The shared yard space in front of the building, transitions from the modern farm buildings to the more informal residential space approaching the house. It still retains an important aspect of the range and provides evidence of its historic function

In general terms though as the building is too low for modern agricultural and is located too close to the house for any other livestock function that aside from dead storage it lacks any viable use, with its historic function clearly no longer being necessary or realistic. The new chapter of use proposed will achieve the investment to ensure the building's fabric and setting is safeguarded, representing an

opportunity to provide a viable use for the curtilage listed structure, ensuring its long term conservation and maintenance. Its aesthetic qualities will be enhanced too.

The unambiguous advice at paragraph 70 of the Historic chapter of the PPG (Reference 1D: 18a-020-20190723), under the heading, 'What is meant by the term public benefit?', is that it might include, 'works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset' and 'securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its longer term conservation'.

Historic England's -Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance refers to heritage values which help determine significance. These are:

- Evidential
- Historical
- Aesthetic
- Communal

Evidential Value

Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. Physical remains of past human activity are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them. The application building was clearly originally constructed as part of a farm grouping. The grouping as a whole is largely still present. Given that the grouping, particularly in terms of the built arrangement and footprint which survive relatively intact, the evidential value of the farm development is significant contextually.

Historical Value

Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative. Illustration depends on visibility in a way that evidential value (for example, of buried remains) does not. Places with illustrative historic value will normally also have evidential value, but it may be of a different order of importance. An historic building that is one of many similar examples may provide little unique evidence about the past, although each illustrates the intentions of its creators equally well. Illustrative value has the power to aid interpretation of the past through making connections with, and providing insights into, past communities and their activities through shared experience of a place. The illustrative value of places tends to be greater if they incorporate the first, or only surviving, example of an innovation of consequence, whether related to design, technology or social organisation.

In illustrative terms the application building and the attached structures are of course altered from their origins. They are not unique of type and are not considered to be prominent or important buildings within the built context of the landscape, nevertheless the farm complex is still well illustrated by the layout and built hierarchy present.

Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Some aesthetic values are not substantially the product of formal design, but develop more or less fortuitously over time, as the result of a succession of responses within a particular cultural framework. They include, for example, the seemingly organic form of an urban or rural landscape; the relationship of vernacular buildings and structures and their materials to their setting; or a harmonious, expressive or dramatic quality in the juxtaposition of vernacular or industrial buildings and spaces.

The application building makes a positive contribution to the historic built form of this part of the countryside but is not publicly prominent and its aesthetic perception is fairly moderate/neutral in terms of perception.

Communal Value

Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values but tend to have additional and specific aspects. For example, social or spiritual connections with a place.

The farm grouping, which is now in residential use are not, and never have been, public buildings, such as a church or public house. They perform no function as a place of gathering. There is therefore no communal value.

Conclusion on Significance of the Listed Building

In this case, the significance of the application building is primarily evidential and historical. On balance therefore, the significance of the asset is moderate reflecting the changes resulting from the lack of functionality for modern farming and changed context. The introduction of an active new chapter of use means there will be no significant change to the prevailing residential character of the site, whilst retaining the evidence of the farm function. There is ample space to accommodate the living space desired too. The built setting will be enhanced by the active use and removal of what has become a dumping ground.

Only modest physical works are required in the conversion scheme, and indeed it is proposed to under draw the insulation to avoid removing the tiles and plasterwork to the roof. All existing openings are retained and will accommodate new timber joinery rebated providing the necessary internally lighting. Fixed timber doors are retained to the single door openings as split stable doors. The impact though is by definition harmful, introducing a more domestic change and together with the loss of small areas of historic fabric. However, this falls at the lower end of the continuum referred to at paragraph 215 of the NPPF. On balance however, and on the understanding that the best way to secure the survival of such an effectively redundant heritage assets is to keep them in an active use, the application is a

catalyst for the investment required to not only repair the building but also address the rest of the built fabric retained, achieving the building's optimal viable use which in preserving the building as a heritage asset has an obvious public benefit, together with serving the social needs of the family.

The Development Plan

Section 38 (6) to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the relevant Development Plan policy framework is provided by the Wiltshire Core Strategy, from which the following policies are considered most relevant.

CP48 – Supporting Rural Life

CP50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

CP57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

CP58 – Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

To a great extent policy CP58 effectively repeats the statutory requirement derived at Section 66, and as noted above. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It is a material consideration and of course, the relevant heritage elements have been outlined above. The planning balance in these regards runs alongside the application of the development plan.

The proposed conversion is not only acceptable in principle, fulfilling the relevant criteria for the conversion of rural buildings at policy CP48 and will be satisfactorily accommodated generally, but in making the optimal viable reuse of the redundant rural building the changes have been made in a sensitive manner.

Externally the conversion is effectively in the main a repairing and decorative scheme which maintains the heritage interest and built quality. The Framework at Paragraph 215 requires the decision taker to weigh less than substantial harm against the public benefits of the proposal "including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use". Furthermore, paying special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or any features of special historic interest it possesses allows the decision taker to take into account the long term benefits that facilitating the preservation of the listed building will have when weighed against harm to or loss of elements that do not represent features of special interest. Accordingly, this development would not produce conflict with the statutorily assessment described for deciding this type of application.

The affected structure is in a state of disuse and thus it must be assumed it is deteriorating, and it is considered likely that, without a viable use to incentivise its restoration, it will continue to deteriorate. In this instance, therefore, securing the optimum viable use and returning the barn to a sustainable condition is afforded significant weight as a public benefit.

The NPPF outlines national guidance and the Government's policies on the many different aspects of planning.

Paragraph 2 explains that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 10 confirms that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 goes on to state that for decision-taking this means:

"c) Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed;

or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".

Paragraph 84 states new isolated dwellings in the countryside should be avoided unless one of the five special circumstances occur. These include where "the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting". However as explained although self-contained the proposal extends the single planning unit and will conditionally be restricted to ensure it is occupied as ancillary accommodation.

Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. The needs of the extended family and the current owner are addressed by the flexibility sought.

Section 12 is entitled "Achieving well-designed places". Paragraph 131 explains that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will add to the overall quality of their area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Planning Assessment

The annex is in principle self-contained residential accommodation (albeit to be conditionally controlled) such that the principle of the new chapter of use needs to be considered against policies governing new housing development within the countryside.

The location is outside recognised Limits of Development as designated firstly in the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015. The Spatial Vision of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (Core Policy 1 and 2) prohibits new residential development outside recognised Limits of Development unless supported by the 'exception policies' outlined in para. 4.25 of the Strategy; particularly in this instance, Core Policy 48.

Core Policy 48 supports the principle of the conversion and re-use of rural buildings principally for employment, tourism, cultural and community uses, with residential use only to be considered where none of these are a practical proposition. The principle of conversion is also only accepted by the policy subject to the criteria considered below:

i Structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding, and with only necessary extension or modification which preserves the character of the original building.

The application does not include a structural report as the building's suitability for conversion is believed to be self-evident. It is therefore perfectly suitable for conversion as shown. The main changes to introduce glazed infill etc are really more cosmetic than physically intrusive.

ii. The use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas

The building proposed for conversion is located within the farm courtyard and adjacent to the applicant's residential property. The proposed conversion would bring a redundant listed barn back into use and would enable it to be restored. The building would therefore largely retain its existing character and appearance which would in turn ensure that the conversion does not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape.

Externally the enclosed yard area would continue to be used informally for parking and access beyond the farm buildings and the space behind is already laid to lawn. The wider application site would therefore remain as existing and would not detract from the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed use is part of the extended single residential planning unit and would be entirely in keeping with the main farmhouse and as there are no other nearby properties, the proposals would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.

iii. The building can be served by adequate access and infrastructure

The application site is located in close proximity to the main house. The location near Chippenham and the motorway means it is highly accessible generally and is in close proximity of a market town, which offers a great range of services and facilities and has great public transport links, including train station. The ancillary relationship will of course more likely increase shared journeys and services.

iv. The conversion or re-use of a heritage asset would lead to its viable long term safeguarding

The application building has been vacant/under-used for a considerable period of time and given its small size, and positioning it serves no functional purpose to the wider agricultural operations. The proposed conversion would provide a new use for the building and would lead to its viable long-term safeguarding.

In summary, the proposal to convert the application building to a self-contained annex for a carer and/or family members satisfies all of the relevant criteria to Core Policy 48 as an acceptable rural proposal and is considered to be acceptable in principle.

In terms of the development's highways impact the site would be accessed via the existing access that services the farm. The established access provides reasonable visibility in both directions on to the public highway and mindful of the advice at paragraph 116 to the NPPF the change of use will not lead to a serve cumulative reduction of highway safety and convenience. The enclosed yard will be utilised for car parking purposes which would remain unchanged and provides ample space for the parking of cars.

The additional traffic that will be generated from the annex is considered to be negligible, especially when compared with historic travel patterns from the wider agricultural use, and mindful it is ancillary to the single household. Therefore, the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on highway safety and its overall impact on the operation of the local highway network is considered to be very low.

As considered earlier and by reference to CP58, the domestication of the barn would have a minor negative impact on the overall heritage significance of the grouping. The level of harm would be 'less than substantial' however, and is judged to be outweighed by the benefit of preservation of the barn as part of the original plan form of the farmstead and providing a viable use to support the repair and maintenance of the building in the future. The viable long-term safeguarding of the building is a public benefit judged to outweigh the harm to the significance of the listed building and its setting and would be in accordance with government policy as set out in the Framework.

The application includes a Preliminary Roost Assessment. The works to the application building have therefore to all intents and purposes been taken into account and there is no reported harm. No evidence of bat activity was found in the external areas of the target building to indicate that bats are using these areas for roosting.

Core Policy 50 broadly speaking requires proposals to demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation value. Developments should incorporate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development and proposals should include opportunities to enhance biodiversity. In that regard the attached report provides details of the suggested bat and bird (sparrow) boxes to be provided at section 4.2 and this can of course be conditionally controlled.

The development benefits from the de minimis exemption for the need to provide 10% gain as the development would not impact upon an on-site priority habitat and would impact less than 25 square metres of on-site habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length.

Conclusion

The active use of the former barn as part of the single residential planning unit present raises no in principle questions of concern. To all intents and purposes, it has not been used for agricultural purposes for many years and is disused as it stands, other than for small scale domestic storage. Great care will be taken to minimise the changes to the existing built structure and its setting.

The application development minimises the impact on the significance of the heritage asset and achieves the optimal viable use of the former barn as a clearly readable former agricultural building, benefiting the long term care of the overall premises.

There will be no loss of local amenity beyond the contained nature of the changes proposed, or biodiversity, fully in accord with the Core Strategy.

I trust the above comments provide a proportionate assessment in support of the application development, however if there are any questions to ensure your support, please do not hesitate to contact me direct.

Yours faithfully



Simon Chambers
Director

Enc.

Cc Mr Bloomer