

Penn Hill Farm, Calne, Wiltshire: Heritage Technical Note

INTRODUCTION

Foundations Heritage have been appointed by Castlewood Property Ventures Ltd to provide additional advice on a forthcoming planning application on land at Penn Hill Farm, Calne for:

Outline planning application with all matters reserved (except for access into the site) for the proposed development of up to 210 residential dwellings, and 0.75ha of employment land and ancillary uses, open space, vehicular and pedestrian accesses, landscaping, drainage measures and all other associated works including the demolition existing buildings and structures.

Comments have been received from various interested parties and consultees on the proposals. This Heritage Technical Note has been prepared to provide a brief update to Wiltshire Council with regard to the Conservation consultee response issued on 6th January 2026. The response concurred with the finds of the Heritage Impact Assessment (Foundations 2022) and concluded:

The proposals would not result in any harm to designated heritage assets. Penn Hill Farm should, however, be considered as a non-designated heritage asset and proposals are required to mitigate the impact of development on its setting. I would suggest that this should include a buffer and landscaping where the development adjoins the farmhouse to allow the proposals to meet the requirements of CP57 and 58 and para 216 of the NPPF. Subject to this being actioned there would be no objection from the point of view of the historic built environment.

ASSESSMENT

Penn Hill Farm comprises a 19th century 'L'-shaped plan farmstead with an attached farmhouse set at the centre of a number of pasture fields, with which it has a tangible relationship through property ownership and use and an intangible relationship connected with the carving up of the last elements of the common pasture and its effect on the development of the English countryside. The farm buildings, many of which have been converted to offices, have seen significant extension and alteration including a large extension to the west side of the farmhouse that has almost doubled the size of the building.

The farm is sited just to the south of the ridge with front views predominantly into the former farmyard, but also with rear panoramic views to the south towards Calne; however, these views are largely screened by three trees on the southern boundary



of the garden. Views to the south include some pasture but other than in views to the southeast; foreshortening again means that the built-up part of Calne features prominently in the background. The masterplan for the proposed development suggests that the views to the southeast will remain largely unobstructed.

To the west, the farmyard is well-screened by high mature hedges. From the farm entrance, the sloping topography leads to a significant degree of foreshortening with limited scope to appreciate the existing farmland; views along the access road and its wide grass verge with strong hedge boundaries. The Porte Marsh Industrial Estate features prominently in the background and the vista allows almost no associative views with the wider farmland.

To the north and east, views are almost entirely blocked by the industrial sheds and yards of the Penn Hill Industrial Estate, which wraps around the northern and eastern sides of the farmyard and act as a significant dissociative element with regard to the wider setting and appreciation of the farm with its farmland. Modern garages within the farmyard also act to block views from the farmhouse to the north.

The farm is recorded on the HER and therefore represents a non-designated heritage asset. The significance of the asset is predominantly conveyed by its architectural and historic values with setting making a notable, but less important contribution. As a non-designated and much altered and extended complex of buildings, combined with the adjacent industrial estate, the farm has limited potential to convey an agricultural context. The asset is consequently considered to be of negligible-low significance.

The proposed development will take up the remaining farmland to the north, west and south, although extensive areas of undeveloped land will be retained to the southeast and east.

The Conservation consultee response suggests that the proposals be amended to help preserve some of the agricultural context to the farm buildings through creation of a buffer zone to the south and west. Given the existing screening to the west side of the farmyard, it is unlikely that a buffer zone to this side would provide any appreciable benefit. Wider views do exist to the south but the contribution to significance from the retention of a small area of open ground beyond the existing garden would have limited scope to alter the experience of the asset.

Prior to the construction of the industrial estate and the conversion of farm buildings to offices, the setting would have provided an appreciable contribution to the significance of the asset. However, the present-day contribution made by setting is considered to be slight. This level of contribution to an asset of inherently negligible-low significance means that setting cannot be considered as an important contributor, albeit the loss of the wider setting will effectively remove that contribution entirely; the significance of the asset itself will, however, be largely unchanged.

Although a buffer zone in this location might provide some amenity benefit, it is not assessed as acting to preserve the agricultural context in a meaningful way. It is

consequently the conclusion of this technical note that the introduction of a buffer zone would not result in any appreciable benefit.

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Shaftesbury Centre, Percy Street, Swindon, SN2 2AZ. Tel: 01793 525993. Email: admin@foundations.co.uk