



MLArchitecture

Knowle Farm

Bowerchalke

Wiltshire

SP5 5BP

Planning Statement

July 2026

Project No. 518

Purpose of Application

This Planning Statement has been prepared by ML Architecture on behalf of Mr. T Mann of Knowle Farm in regard to amending the use of the Listed Thatched Threshing Barn at Knowle Farm.

Full Planning (Ref: 18/03311 FUL) and Listed Building Consent (Ref: 18/03539 LBC) were granted permission and consent in June 2018. These applications gave consent for the threshing barn to be used for wedding receptions and local community events. Conditions of the consent stipulated the number of events and also limited of how late certain events could continue. See below the list of the relevant conditions of this application.

Condition 4 *The use hereby permitted shall be limited to no more than three events per calendar month in total. No more than two of the events in any calendar month shall be held/be ongoing beyond 1900 hours.*

Condition 5 *No event shall continue beyond 2300 hours.*

Condition 6 *Any event going on beyond 1900 hours shall not be held within 12 days of any other event which extends beyond 1900 hours*

This application proposes to vary **condition 4 & Condition 6** to increase the number of events and amend the time at which events must finish by. No variation is proposed to condition 5.

Introduction

The following sections describe the existing site and how the buildings at Knowle Farm are being used as part of the working farm. The historical significance of the threshing barn is then discussed in further detail.

Following this, the current use of the barn (as permitted by previous applications) is then discussed along with the proposed amendment to condition 4 & 6 of the 2018 application described above. The justification for the proposed variation is then reviewed in relation to the relevant Planning Policy.

Finally, the conclusion reflects on the points discussed and summarises the position.

Existing Site

Knowle Farm is a working farm located in Bowerchalke in the centre of the Chalke Valley. Although Knowle Farm sits within the Broad Chalke Parish, it is very much part of the village of Bowerchalke (Fig. 1). The farmhouse and farmyard is located close to the centre of Bowerchalke with the farmland extending to the hills on the south and east of the site. Access to the farm is from the valley road and down an attractive tree lined drive. This leads to the farmhouse on the west and the historic farm courtyard on the east. There is also a track into the farm yard from the east from Howgare Road. This track / road is part tarmac. Modern farm buildings have been constructed on the southern side of the farm yard which accommodate farm machinery, storage and livestock.

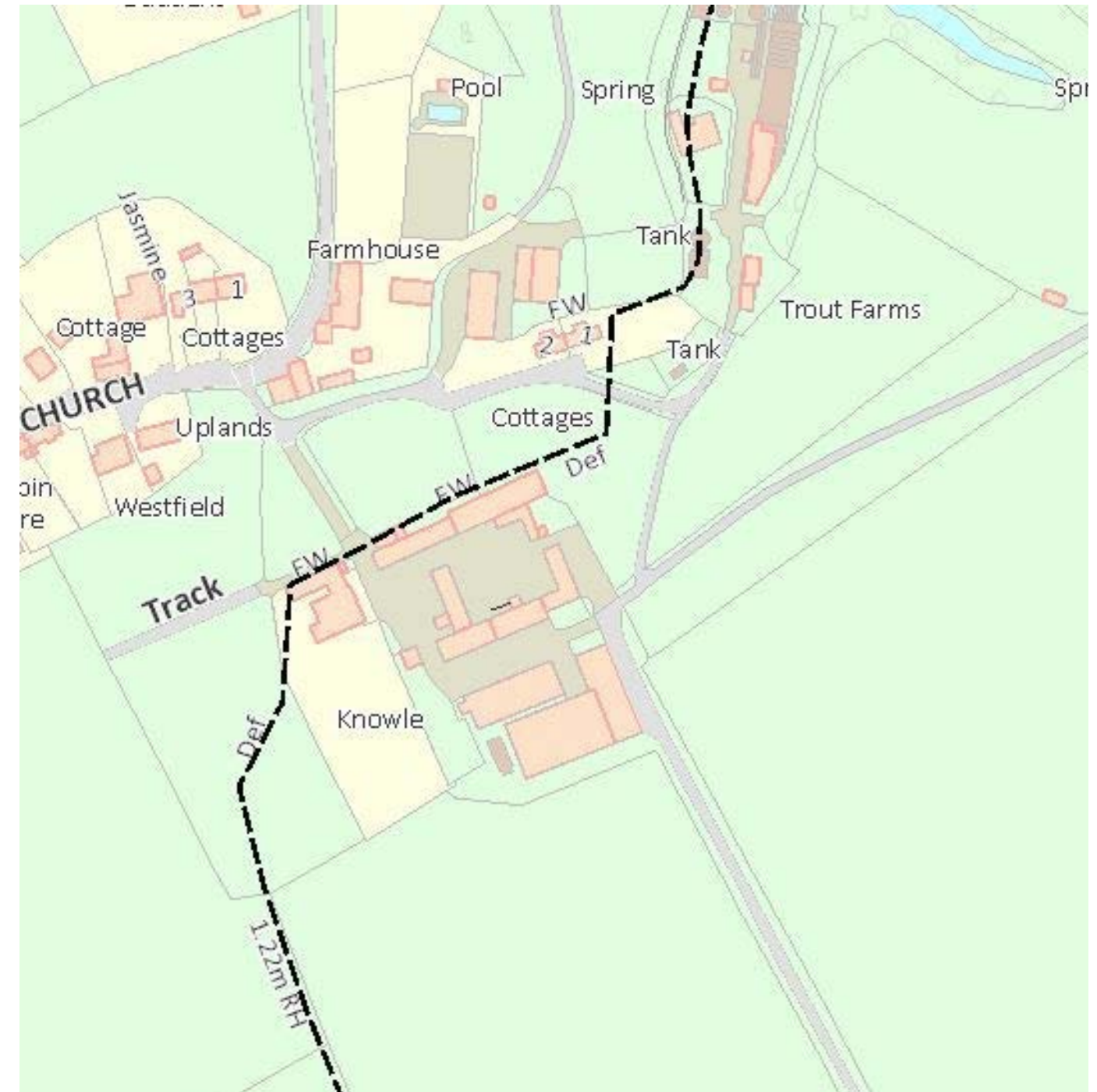


Fig. 1 – Black dotted line indicating parish boundary. Image Wiltshire Planning Explorer

Existing Buildings On The Site

The historic farm buildings form an attractive complex of a traditional farmstead with a mixture of brick and flint, timber and thatched buildings.

The two large thatched barns date from the late 17th / early 18th centuries. It is likely that the Granary and some of the attached buildings are of a similar period or built soon thereafter. One of the trusses in the northern threshing barn has a date of 1690 on the tie beam.

As shown on the historic maps above (Fig. 3 & 4) the stables attached to the northern thatched barn appears to have been built between 1886 and 1901.

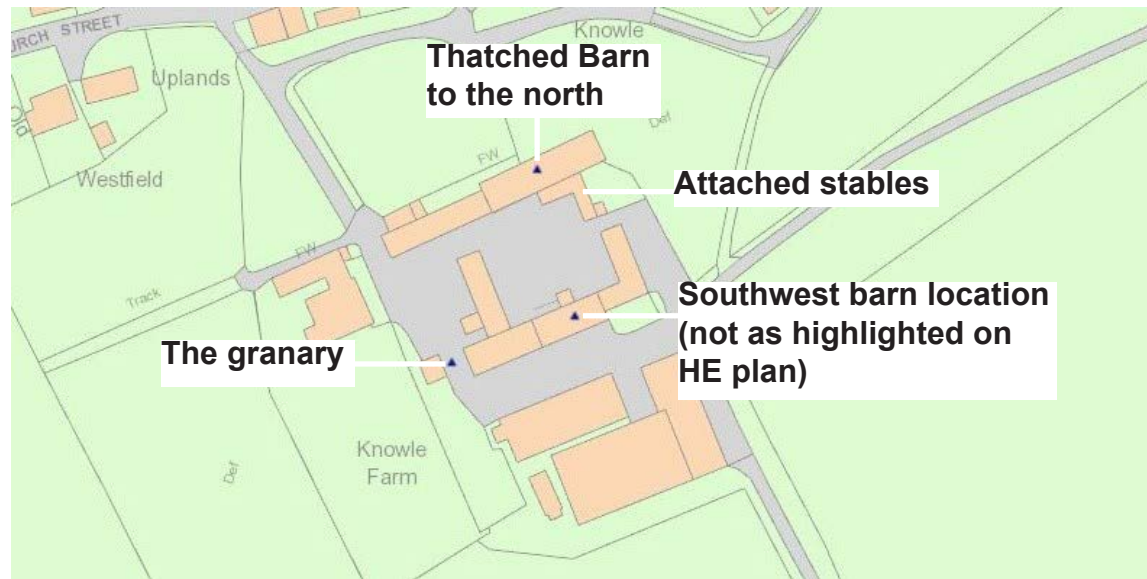


Fig. 2. - Historic England map extract

Listed buildings

There are three listed buildings on site which are as follows:

- The Granary on the west side of the farmyard, Grade II, List entry 1283887.
- The thatched barn to the north of the farmyard with attached stables, Grade II, List entry 1146168 (to which this application relates)
- The thatched barn to the southwest of the farmyard, Grade II, List entry 1146169

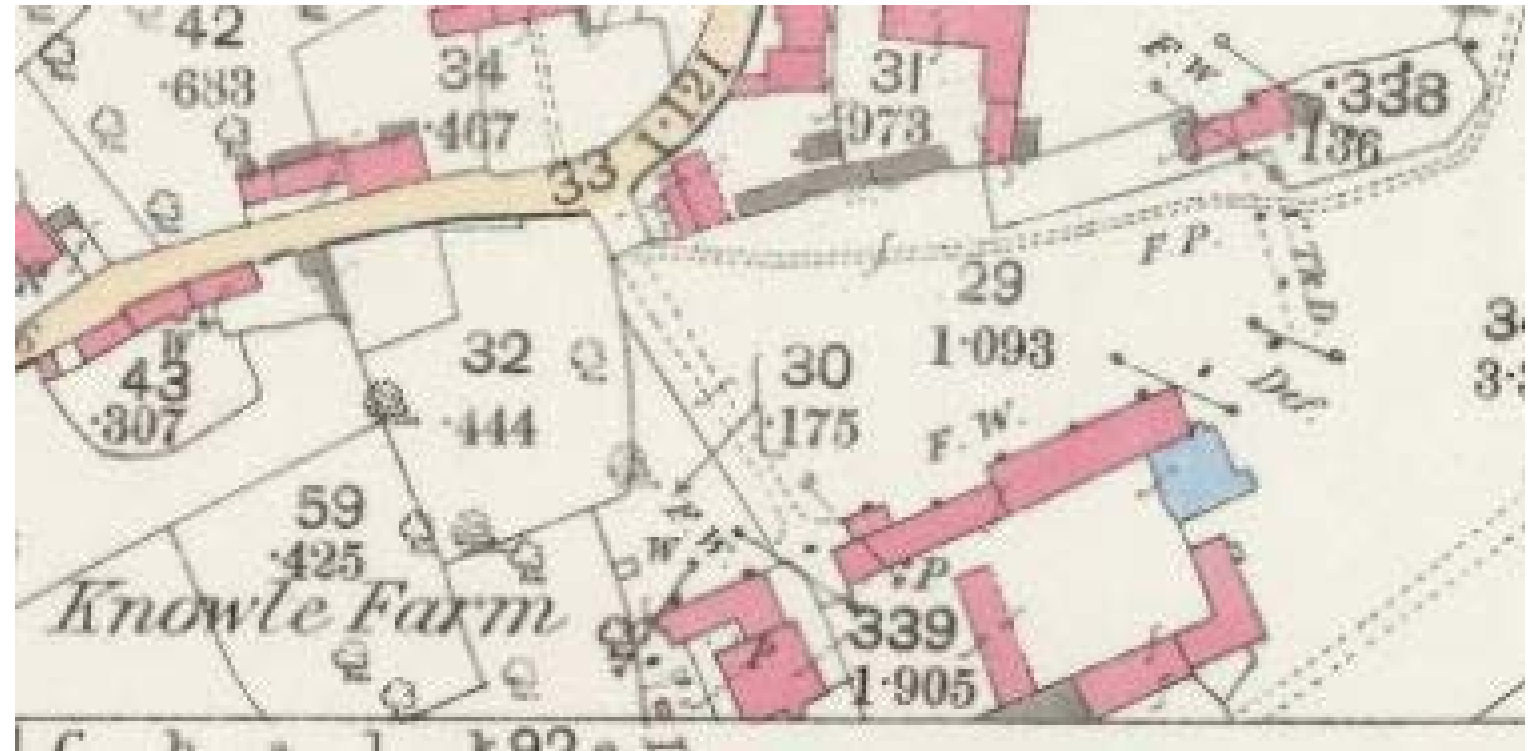


Fig. 3. – 1886 OS map of Knowle Farm, (25 inch) NTS, Copyright – National Library of Scotland

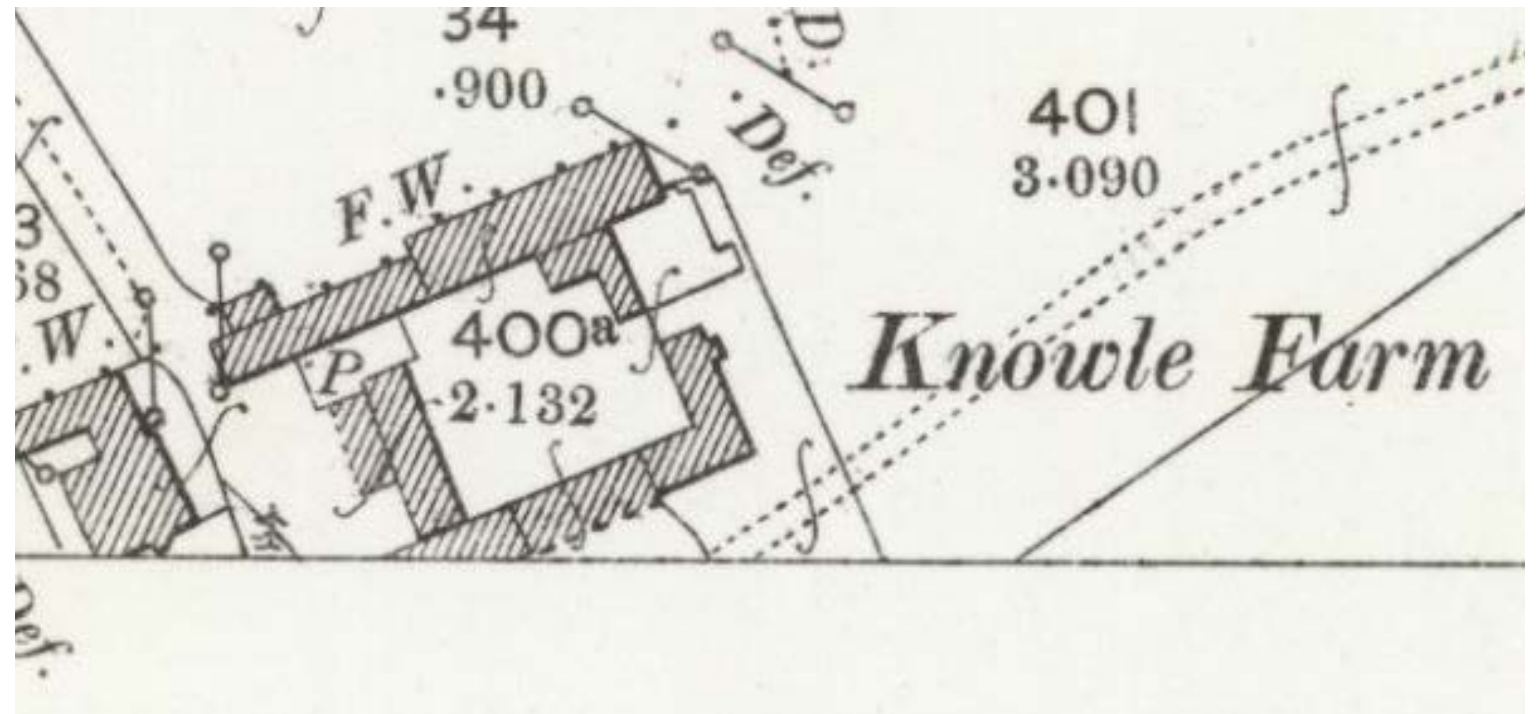


Fig. 4. – 1901 OS map of Knowle Farm, (25 inch) NTS, Copyright – National Library of Scotland

Existing Buildings On The Site

There are single storey historic stables (building 2) attached on the southern side of the northern threshing barn (building 1) to which this application relates. These stable buildings now have consent to be converted into toilet facilities as per the permissions (18/03311/FUL and 18/03539/LBC).

There are brick and flint buildings to the west of the northern threshing barn. These are redundant stores and some stables (building 7) which remain in use. These buildings have a usable attic area which is accessed via a central staircase.

The western side of the courtyard is formed by a single storey timber building which houses the Shoot Room (building 6) and a redundant store. At the south west corner is a timber framed thatched barn (building 5) which is a Grade II Listed Building. This is used as a carpenter's workshop. Adjacent to that is a run of single storey brick and flint buildings with a mixture of double clay Roman tiles and corrugated sheeting to the roofs.

Building 3 on the adjacent site plan was a redundant store building which was given Planning (17/11530/FUL) and Listed Building (17/11835/LBC) consent in January 2018 for change of use and repair to be used as light industrial (catering kitchen). The adjoining forge (building 4) then received Full Planning (PL/2023/03290) and Listed Building Consent (PL/2023/03377) in June 2023 to be used as office facilities.

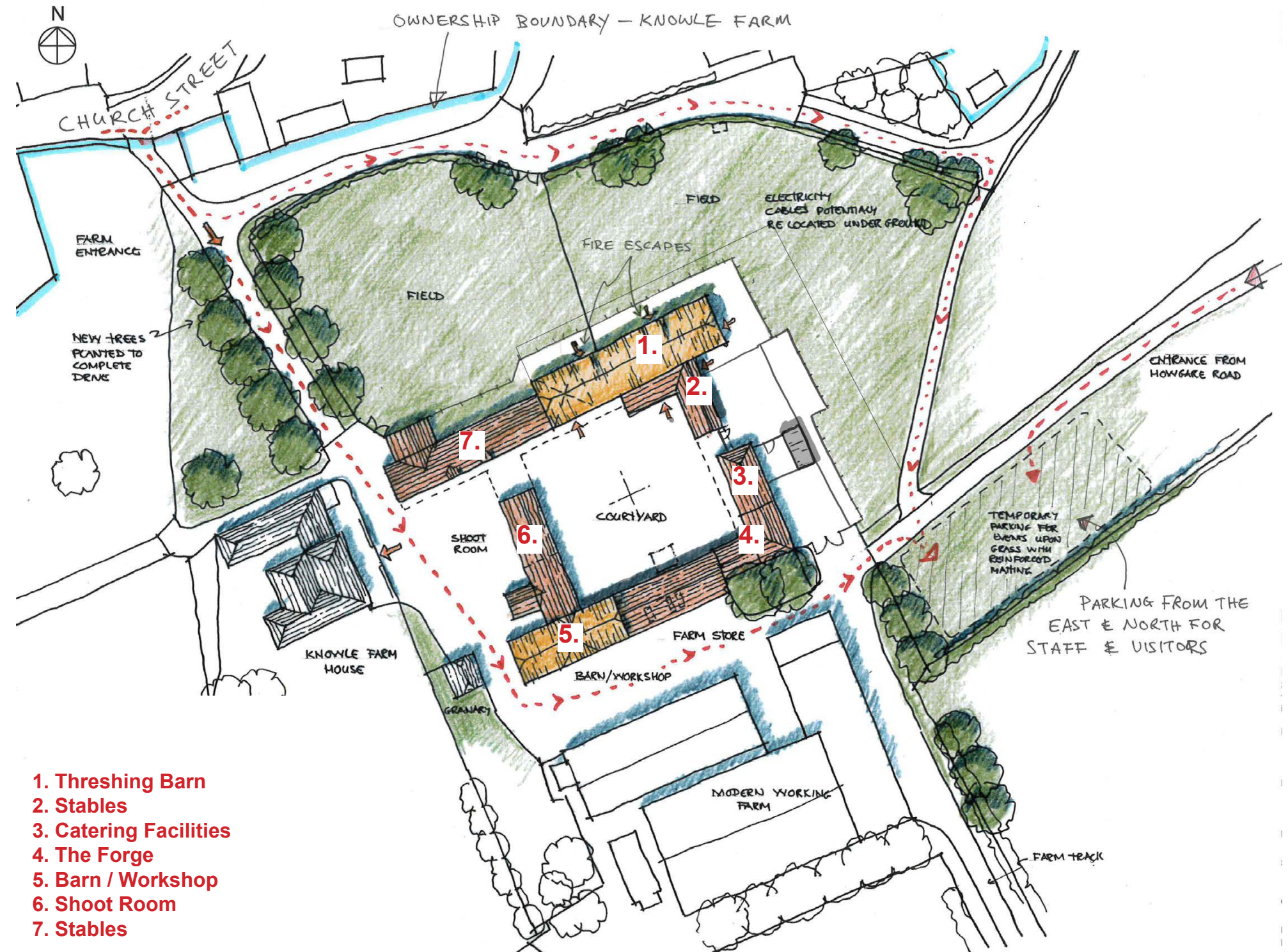


Fig. 5- Existing Site Plan

The Threshing Barn

This application relates to the timber threshing barn which forms the most significant building on the north eastern side of the courtyard. As previously stated, this barn now has consent for wedding receptions, dining and local community use.

This barn has eight bays with two threshing floors; an aisle runs the complete length of the building to the north. The north elevation has two hipped thatched porches with double planked doors.

The first two bays (west / left side) of the building are open (cart shed), a wall / partition has been installed just off the third truss (2/3 bays) and this encloses the rest of the barn. Bay 3 forms the first threshing opening with doors both sides (north & south), bay 4 adjoining the threshing opening is a lowered floor (by 440mm), bay 6 is the second threshing opening with tall planked doors to the north and lower doors to the south that now open into the adjoining store / stable building. The threshing floor to the north of bay 6 has a slight (240mm) raised platform / threshing floor. Either side of the threshing opening are bays 5, 7 and 8 for straw storage. There is a large opening with a pair of sliding timber doors to the eastern gable of the barn (bay 8).

The structure of the barn is a 400mm thick stone perimeter wall running around all four sides, apart from the openings. The stone is local field stone, mainly green stone with some flint. The low wall raises to 1500mm on the eastern side and about 400mm on the western side of the building, tapering along the two long elevations.

There are nine Elm trusses (some parts Oak), formed with principal rafters, jowled posts and jowled aisle posts to the tie beams, two pairs of butt rafter purlins (contrary to the listing description), hewn rafters up to a ridge plate, raking queen curved struts some straight, straight knee braces and a high-level collar. On top of the stone walls is a large Oak sole plate with timber studs to the underside of the wall plates and aisle plate of the trusses, the studs are clad on the outside with deep Oak weather boards / planks.



Fig. 6– External photo taken from the north east

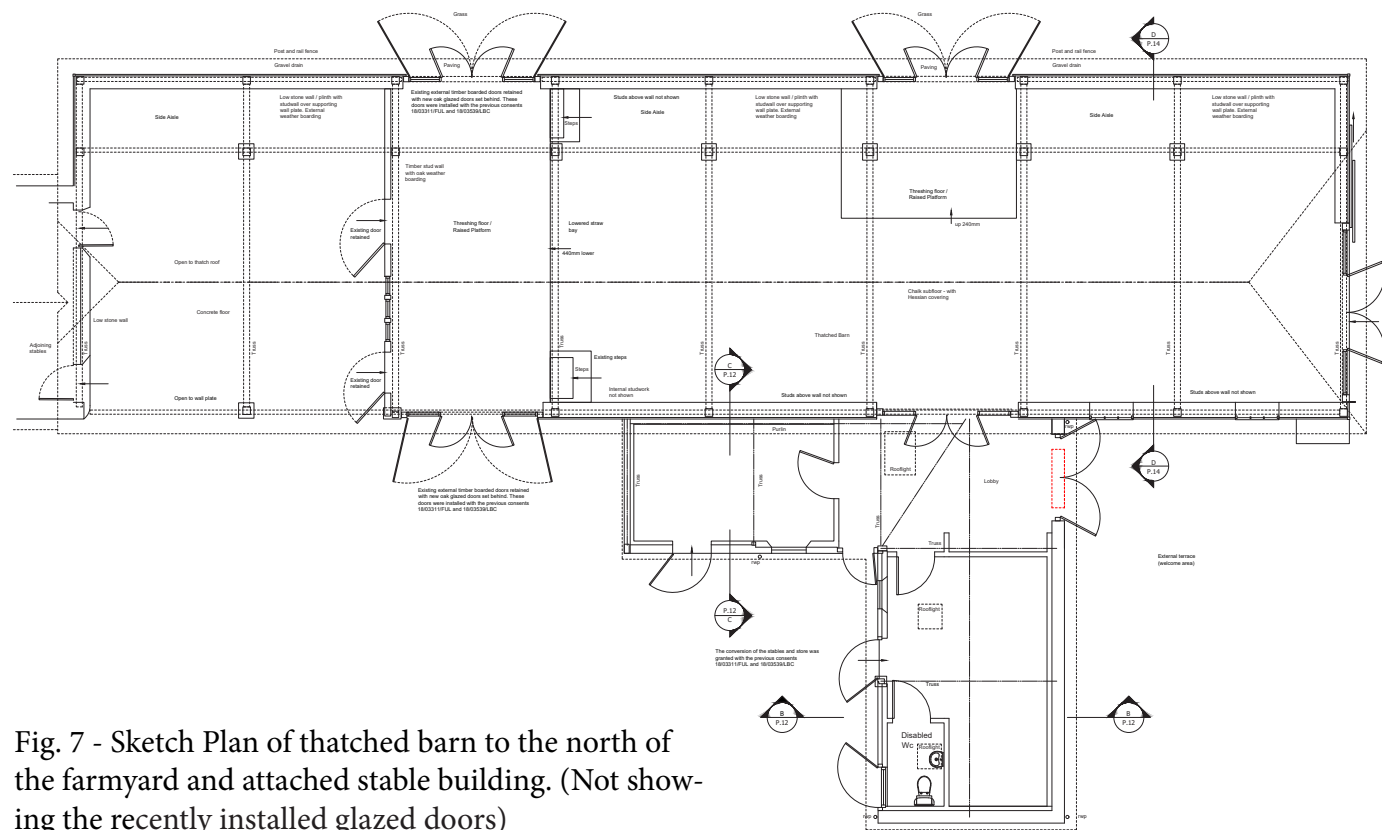


Fig. 7 - Sketch Plan of thatched barn to the north of the farmyard and attached stable building. (Not showing the recently installed glazed doors)

Significance

The barn having two threshing openings, 8 bays and an aisle is a rarity for such an old barn and although two bays have been sub divided off to form the cart bays, the remaining 6 bays and aisle have a large volume and internal expanse.

The thatched threshing barn is seen from key views around the farm as well as when entering the site and as discussed is a fine example of a threshing barn of its type. The buildings significance is further demonstrated by the barn being referred to and shown in the Wiltshire and Swindon Farmsteads Character Statement - 2014 English Heritage, pp. 29 and 42.

Current Use

As with many other farms, Knowle Farm has looked to diversify by utilising existing assets to contribute to the vitality of the farm.

In 2018 full planning (Ref: 18/03311 FUL) and Listed Building Consents (Ref: 18/03539 LBC) allowed for the main threshing barn to be used as a venue for wedding receptions and local community events.

A separate full application (17/11530/FUL) and Listed Building (17/11835/LBC) was submitted for the old farm store (Building 3) to be utilised as a catering facility i.e. kitchen and food store to facilitate events held at the threshing barn.

In July 2019 full planning was received (Ref: 19/05142/FUL) for the threshing barn to function as a restaurant hosting a maximum of 40 covers for dining at one time. The permission limited the use of the restaurant to the hours 7pm to 9.30pm on Mondays to Saturdays and 12 (midday) to 4pm on Sundays.

Further to this the permission stipulated that the combination (sum) of wedding reception uses, local community events uses and restaurant uses shall not exceed five days in total in any period of seven consecutive days.

In addition to the information above, both the main barn and the adjoining stables are still used for basic storage when needed. The farm is managed by a father and sons and they have always been very open and welcoming to the village. Over the years they have held a number of community events including fireworks and bon-fire nights, harvest festivals, flower shows amongst other local village events.

The rest of the farm is still an active working farm with chickens, sheep, cows and horses.



Fig. 9 - Photograph shows the recently installed glazed oak joinery

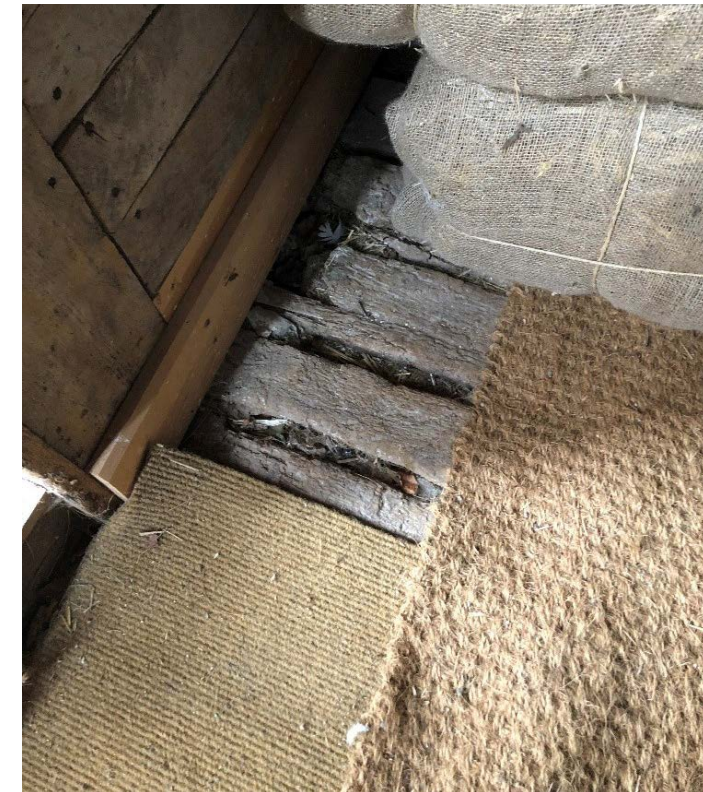


Fig. 10 - Photograph shows a section of the retained timber threshing floor to bay 3



Fig. 12 – Photograph showing the inside wedding setup for promotional photographs

Proposal

The owners of Knowle Farm (Tim & Hugo Mann along with their family) wish to make the most of what the converted barn can offer and the beautiful setting of the farm.

The Mann family have made a significant investment in upgrading and refurbishing the catering/store buildings and upgrading the main threshing barn with new glazed doors, boarding, and associated materials and finishes in accordance with the previous Planning Consents.

The reason for this application is to increase the number of weddings and community events held in the barn. This will enable the both the barn and other buildings on site to be used and managed effectively, creating additional revenue to contribute towards their future maintenance and helping to ensure their continued existence.

Consent is requested to amend condition 4 which limits the number of events for which the threshing barn is permitted to be used. The current permission limits its use to three events per calendar month in total and with no more than two of the events held per month going beyond 1900 hours.

The proposal is to host up to five events per calendar month during the peak 'wedding season' of March to October. This represents an increase from the current allowance of three events per calendar month to five. Further to this it is proposed that up to three events per calendar month can continue beyond 1900 hours which is currently limited to two per calendar month.

Consent is also requested to amend condition 6 which requires that events extending beyond 1900 hours are to be held a minimum of 12 days apart from each other. The proposal is to reduce this period of time so that events continuing beyond 1900 can be held within 7 days of one another.

This application does not propose any physical work to threshing barn or the site itself. The application only relates to the amended use of the threshing barn to host additional events. It is therefore, felt that this proposal will not have an affect on the character, appearance or significance of the listed buildings or their setting.

Suggested change the wording to condition 4 is as follows: *events use hereby permitted shall be limited to no more than five events per calendar month during the period 1 March to 31 October inclusive, and no more than three events per calendar month during the period 1 November to 28/29 February. No more than three events in any calendar month shall be held or continue beyond 1900 hours.*

The proposed change to the wording of condition 6 is as follows: *Any event going on beyond 1900 hours shall not be held within 7 days of any other event which extends beyond 1900 hours.*

All other condition relating to the application will remain as is including **condition 5** which states that no event is to continue beyond 2300 hours.

Maintenance costs

As discussed in previous applications the Mann's do not wish to overdevelop the site; however, they do wish for the asset of the beautiful threshing barn to be appropriately utilised, enjoyed, and maintained as a viable small business.

Management and up keep of the farm buildings including the listed barns and the granary is a significant expense. A couple of years ago the Mann's paid approximately £40,000 to redo the thatch ridge on the listed lower barn. It is anticipated in the near future that the northern threshing barn will need the full roof to be re-thatched which is expected to cost in excess of £100,000. This is just one example of the many expenses that come with the maintenance of historic buildings. The hope is that the additional events will help facilitate the ongoing upkeep of the listed threshing barn (to which this application relates) as well as the other historically significant buildings on site such as the lower grade II listed barn and the grade II listed granary.

Policy 48 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy supports the sensitive re-use of existing buildings and assets to meet local needs.

Noise management

Noise from the venue has been carefully managed since the permission was granted to host events in the threshing barn. Principally, a noise limiter was installed when the original permission was given to use the barn for events. The volume of noise that would trigger activation of this was agreed in writing with the local authority prior to installation.

The noise limiter is activated by a threshold of anything over 90db of volume within the barn. The independent report by JTEC Environmental (submitted with the Full Planning Application) found that noise below this threshold within the barn would only result in a volume below 30db at the nearest property once taken into consideration the distance and passage of the noise. The report found that 30db was below the average recorded existing background noise at this property between the hours of 19:00 to 23:00.

Since installation, the limiter has not been activated during any event demonstrating that noise levels have and can continue to be managed successfully during events. This system will continue to be maintained and monitored for the lifetime of the development. Therefore, the additional events proposed by this application will not increase the maximum decibel output and as such will not have an increased adverse effect.

Community benefit

Since hosting events in the threshing barn, the Mann's, have maintained a positive relationship with the local community. The restaurant/dining has been popular with locals. Furthermore, the permitted use of the threshing barn for events such as weddings and dining has had a positive impact on local employment. Its current use has created part time employment for a number of local individuals, including a wedding organiser, a chef, waiting staff, house staff, and cleaning staff. Additional events would give further requirement for employment of staff. The Mann's anticipate that they would have the demand to take on full time employees should the additional events outlined in this application be permitted.

Policy 48 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy supports development which contributes to the rural economy through diversification and community ownership.

Paragraphs 88 and 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework also recognise the importance of supporting a prosperous rural economy, including through the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Traffic management

The impact on traffic in the area arising from the additional events would be marginal. Attendance at events typically averages between 60 and 70 guests and very rarely exceeds 110 individuals. This is fewer attendees than were allowed for in the traffic movement calculations previously submitted. Consequently, the existing on-site parking provision has been found to be more than adequate. The proposal does not increase the number of attendees at any events and therefore, it is not anticipated to have any adverse effect on highway safety or parking.

Ecology

An ecology report was submitted with the previous applications. The proposals contained with this application have no effect on the structure or any ecology of the building or site.

Sustainability

Knowle Farm is fortunate to have a cluster of significant building particular the listed granary and threshing barns. However, as discussed the upkeep of these structures is significant and as such many historically significant building are able to decay.

The proposed use of the large threshing barn will help the farm generate a revenue that will not only help pay for the maintenance of this building but also the other buildings on the site.

Flood Risk

The site is located in the environment Agencies Flood Zone 1 and as such no flood risk assessment is required.

Conclusion

Since hosting wedding receptions and local community events the listed threshing barn at Knowle Farm has been restored and given a new purpose. The events held have had a positive benefit on the local community by contributing to employment and by providing additional recreation within the rural area. Further to this the funds have contributed towards the upkeep of the historically significant buildings on site. The additional events will enable these benefits to be strengthened, securing the long-term use and preservation of this important rural asset.



Fig. 8 - Internal view of thatched barn