

24th July 2026

Our Ref: SWLC.LPC237

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Town and Countr Planning Act 1990
The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Alterations to dwelling, incorporating previously converted
residential units as additional living space at
Lower Hook Farm, Hook Street, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 8EF

Please find enclosed a full application to amalgamate the converted separate residential units to the rear of the above house, for use as additional living space as part of the resulting single planning unit. In association, I have also enclosed a duly completed associated Listed Building Consent application for the related works required to assimilate the accommodation as part of the one property.

The aerial photographs inserted below shows the extent of the farmhouse and its related residential curtilage/outbuildings. Immediately behind the house is a two storey, previously detached agricultural building, which has been converted as two self-contained residential C3 units. The ground floor is known as the Brew House and the first floor as the Cheese Room.



LPC (TRULL) LTD
TRULL, TETBURY
GLOS, GL8 8SQ
Tel: 01285 841433
www.lpctrull.com



My clients have recently acquired the property from Mrs Matthew's father, who, until they took over had rented out both the adjacent units as separate residences. It is understood that Council Tax for the independent use has been paid separately for many years. This is perhaps a moot point as my clients are keen to introduce a new chapter of use to augment the accommodation in the main house providing one open plan hub for the home, and remove the shared use of their private space.



View of rear elevation (North)



View of front including link to house



Photograph of link between buildings from the north and south.

4

The planning records show that the grant of permission was conditionally restricted by condition (duplicated at 9 and 10) for holiday accommodation only. However, it is understood that this condition has been breached for well over 10 years, so that the independent use has become lawful.

The enclosed application provides the simplest route to make good the site's usage. In that regard it is proposed to improve the existing link between the house and former barn so as to create an interior link, thus tying the barn to the house. The existing rather poor quality flat roofed infill between the house and barn will be reroofed with a standing seamed metal sheeted roof, and its northern face will be articulated/set back from the central gable to the main house. So as to improve the rear aspect in full it is also proposed to replace the modern porch to the other side of the gable, with a similar flat roofed addition. The current porch, as the photographs below show, clashes with the house's walling material and has been built with an uncharacteristic, staggered alignment. The replacement will square the built form, lessening the awkward nature of the addition, and seeks to harmonise the finishes, by matching the rebuilt link in terms of roofing and use natural stone for the walls to match the house. This can of course be conditionally controlled.



Lower Hook Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building. The Historic England listing description is inserted below.

SU 08 SE LYDIARD TREGOZE HOOK STREET

5/39 Lower Hook Farmhouse 17.1.55

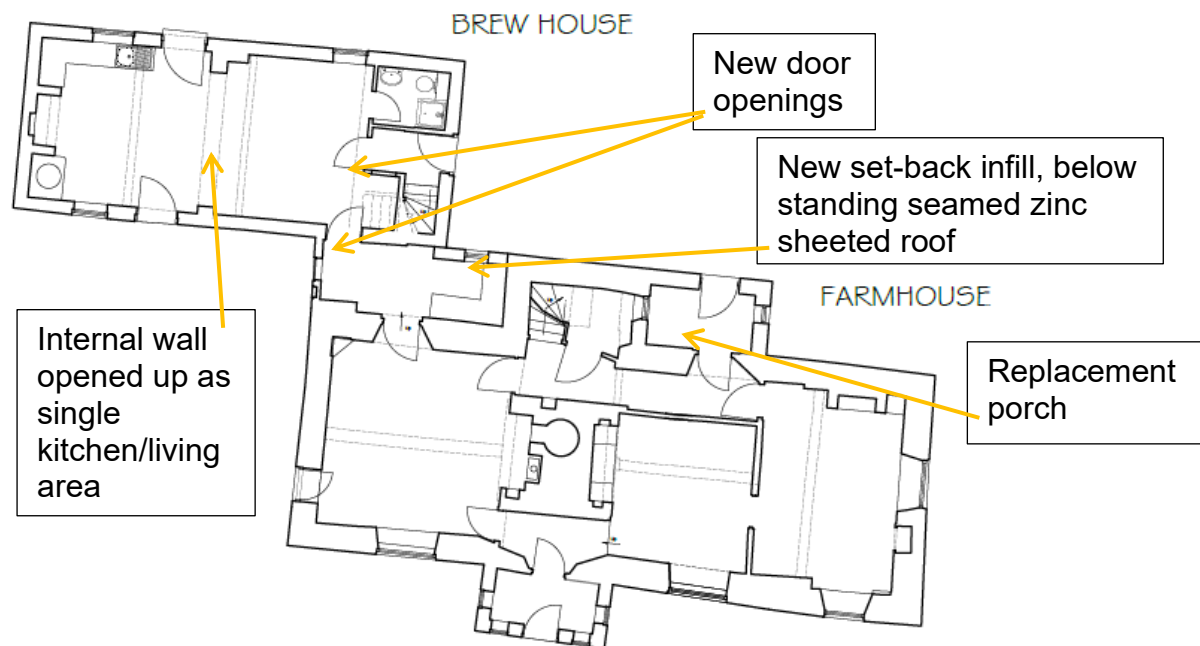
Farmhouse. Late C17 - early C18. Rubble stone, concrete slates, 2 hipped dormers. 2-storey and attic. 4 bays, lobby entry. 2 reception rooms to right of entrance 1 to left, and rear stair projection. Central stack with diagonal flues. 5-panel door, upper panel glazed, within fluted doorcase and entablature. C19 timber casement windows. Chamfered beams internally.

No mention is made to the linked barn but even if its status is ancillary, as a curtilage Listed structure and not part of the main building, its import is believed to be clear.

The Proposal

The application proposal, as a whole, seeks to amalgamate the barn as part of the single residence, providing the main replacement open plan kitchen, upgrading the existing link, in association with the internal doorway and the similar visual enhancement of the existing porch. Similarly, it is also proposed to improve the detached garage to the side of the house so as to lessen the apparent untraditional form and enhance the aesthetics, also improving the house's setting.

The plan changes proposed are shown for ease of reference using the plan extracts inserted on the following page, indicating the ground floor plan changes, the elevation changes and changed garage structure.



With regard to the existing wall to be removed in the barn my client has made a trail hole in the stud framed plaster boarding by removing the existing switch box and the following photograph shows the apparent modern blockwork construction in the low part of the centre of the wall. I am advised this is evident to the side of the image too, and sitting at the base of the wall indicates it is a modern construction.



The two photographs below show the point of the new internal doorway, positioned to the left of the sink mirror and in the righthand view inside the barn, up against the stair walling. The other new internal doorway connecting to the stairs is at the back of a modern cupboard construction, through the door to the left of the image above.

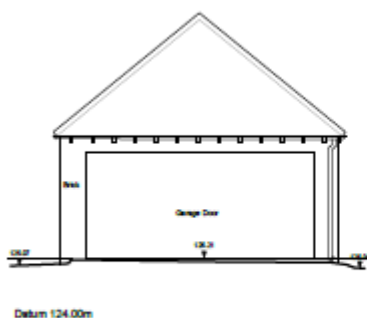




Existing rear elevation

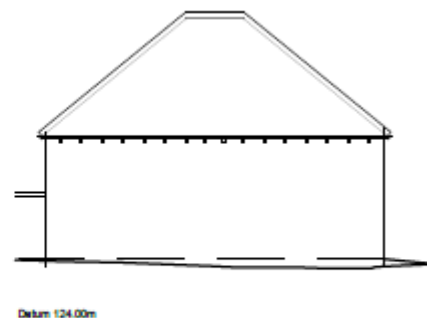


Proposed rear elevation.



SOUTH ELEVATION

Proposed garage details



WEST ELEVATION

The existing garage can be seen in situ on the next page as part of the view from Hook Street to the south west. It is a crude mono-pitch roofed structure, set in front of the house's hipped roof, which is reflected by the new roof proposed, using tiles to match the house, and which can of course be conditionally controlled.



Heritage Assessment

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:

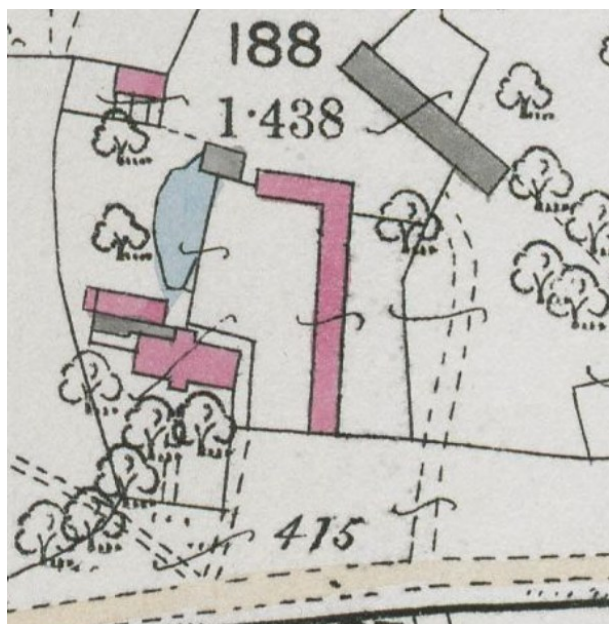
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- The desirability 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.

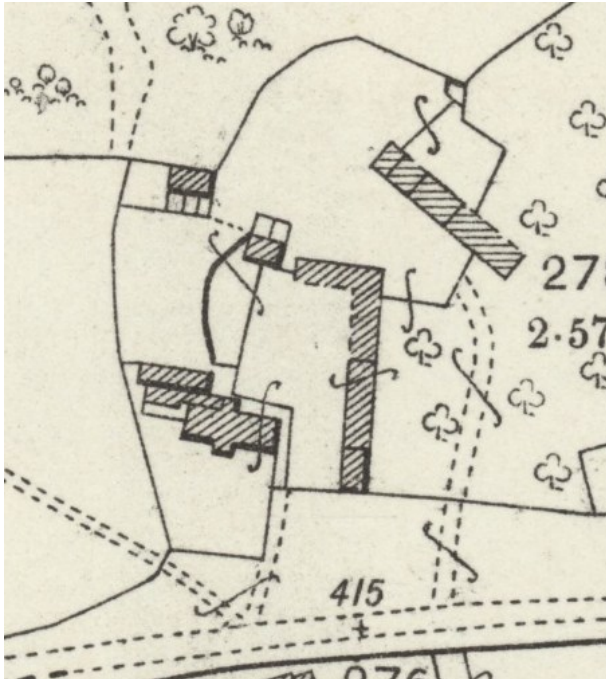
With regard to the building's heritage significance, and in accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, it is proposed to provide a proportionate description of the heritage asset affected by the application development. As a two staged approach the impact of potential change on the significance will 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.

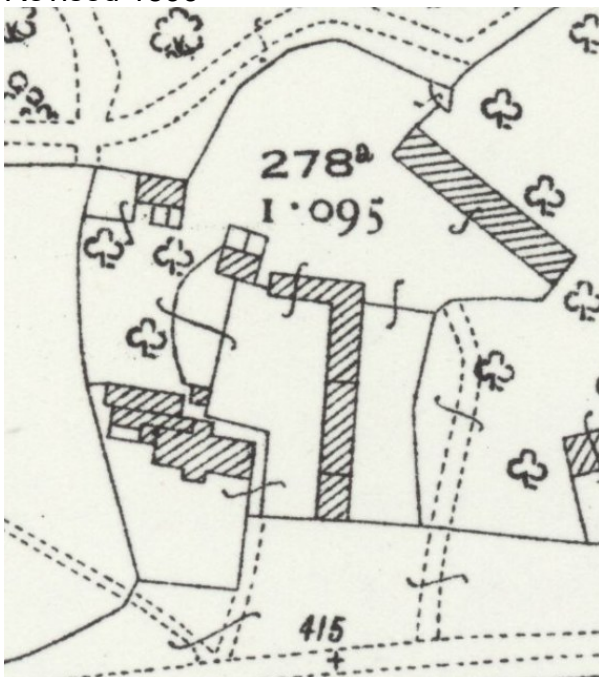
The following mapped images show the site's chronology, indicating that the barn was linked to the house for many years, if not accessed internally and records the outline of an apparently older and larger structure to the south of the barn. The south western remnant corner of the historic structure is shown to the right and also extends along the southern line shown by the old mapping. The floor plan submitted with the 2001 applications referred to earlier showed that the built form indicated below to have run along the southern side of the barn, was not then present.



Surveyed: 1885



Revised 1899



Revised 1922

The historic list description dates the farmhouse, and this appears to have been closely related to the barn, although the use of brick in the main places its construction later (and potentially indicates the rear dormer was a similarly later addition), but of course well before the listing, despite not being mentioned therein. Although the site's farming activities are now largely based in the more utilitarian buildings to the north east, the historical function is still visible as a group, and contextually, and therefore the application building(s) are believed to clearly contribute to the group's historic and illustrative significance.

There have been alterations to the barn internally, both as approved and apparently before then, along with the remaining physical link. The main house appears to have been little altered otherwise and is unchanged internally by the application proposal, bar the removal of the kitchen fittings, and on the first floor of the barn.

The new chapter of use proposed though will achieve the investment to ensure the building's fabric and setting is safeguarded, representing an opportunity to provide a viable use for the listed structure, and removing the substandard dwelling units, 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. That intimate immediate 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 materially 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 structure is of course altered from the originals. 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. The brew house and cheese room names are believed to have been the family names over several generation indicating the historically recognised previous uses and direct relationship.

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 buildings make a positive contribution to the historic built form of this part of the countryside but are not publicly prominent and their aesthetic appreciation 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 as a whole, reflecting the changes resulting from the modern changes made in form and function, as well as the lack of functionality for modern farming and changed context. The introduction of an active new chapter of use as a single planning unit means there will be no significant change to the residential character of the site, whilst retaining the evidence of the farm function. The application as a whole will also take the opportunity in association with the enhanced link, to improve the modern built elements present (porch and garage).

Only modest physical works are required in the conversion scheme, and in the main are focused on changes to the more modern and changed fabric. The impact though is harmful by definition, punching the new doorway through the historic wall, but contextually 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 poorly used 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.

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

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/adaption of rural buildings at policy CP48 and will be satisfactorily accommodated generally, but in making the optimal viable reuse of the sub-optimal residential units, immediately alongside the house and in breach of the historic conditions, means the changes have not only been made in a sensitive manner, but will enhance the overall heritage setting and residential environment.

Externally the conversion is effectively a repairing and decorative scheme which maintains the heritage interest and built quality. However, upgrading the link and porch in a uniform manner and as a clear evolution to the historic core enhances the existing built aesthetics. 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 barn structure is sub-optimal as 2No residential units, in close proximity to the main house and it is considered likely that, without a viable alternative use it will simply deteriorate. In this instance therefore, securing the optimum viable

ancillary use and returning the barn to a sustainable condition should be afforded significant weight as a public benefit.

Section 12 to the NPPF 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. The sensitive changes to the resulting single planning unit, including the addition of the roof to the existing poor quality garage, fully reflect the tenet of this advice.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

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 use is already well established and is therefore perfectly well suited for more ancillary residential use as proposed. The main changes to introduce an internal link is merely functional rather than involving excessive change.

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 reuse, along with the house and garage is located within the farm courtyard and are all clearly part of the single residential unit. The built grouping 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.

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

The location near Swindon, and the motorway means it is highly accessible generally and is in close proximity of a significant service centre, which offers a great range of services and facilities and has great public transport links, including train station. Furthermore, the site is accessible by existing footpaths

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

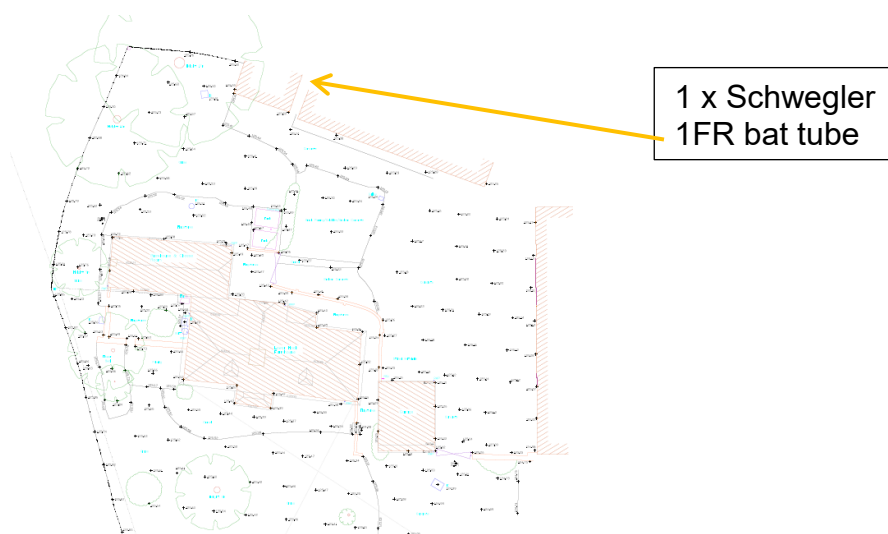
The application building has been used in breach of the original grant of permission for decades and is sub-optimal in terms of the nature of the accommodation and context. The proposed reuse and associated works would provide a new and more preferable ancillary use for the building and would lead to its viable long-term safeguarding.

In summary, the proposal to adapt the barn as part of the main house satisfies all of the relevant criteria to Core Policy 48 as an acceptable rural re-use proposal and is considered to be acceptable in principle.

In terms of the development's highway impact the site would be accessed via the existing access that in part services the farm too. 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 application will remove the two studios so will in fact reduce the potential scale of traffic. There is in any event ample parking and turning space available.

As considered earlier and by reference to CP58, the domestication of the barn is an established position, and the application includes the creation of a single new doorway, the removal of an apparently modern block wall coupled with the enhanced treatment of the link and replacement porch, as well as the intended re-roofing of the garage. Additionally, of course the works as a whole are linked to the applicant's desire to recreate their new home, investing in the property's long term survival. The small negative impact from the loss of historic fabric to create the new doorway is a level of harm that would be 'less than substantial' and is judged to be outweighed by 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 does not include a Protected Species Report as the building is already in residential use. 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 I have indicated below where a new bat tube will be provided on the nearest outbuilding's gable end, and which can of course be conditionally controlled by reference to this statement. The development would benefit from the de minimis exemption for the need to provide 10% BNG.





Schwegler 1FR bat tube

I trust the above over-arching commentary provides a positive and proportionate assessment of the application development, confirming its acceptability, however, if you have any questions to ensure your support please do not hesitate to contact me direct.

Yours faithfully



Simon Chambers
Director

Enc.

Cc Mr and Mrs Matthews