



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

(including Heritage Assessment)

In respect of a planning application for the erection of a detached holiday let (following removal of existing building), erection of new cartlodge and the siting of 4no. holiday pods at:

Perkins Farm, Tan Office Lane, Mendlesham Green

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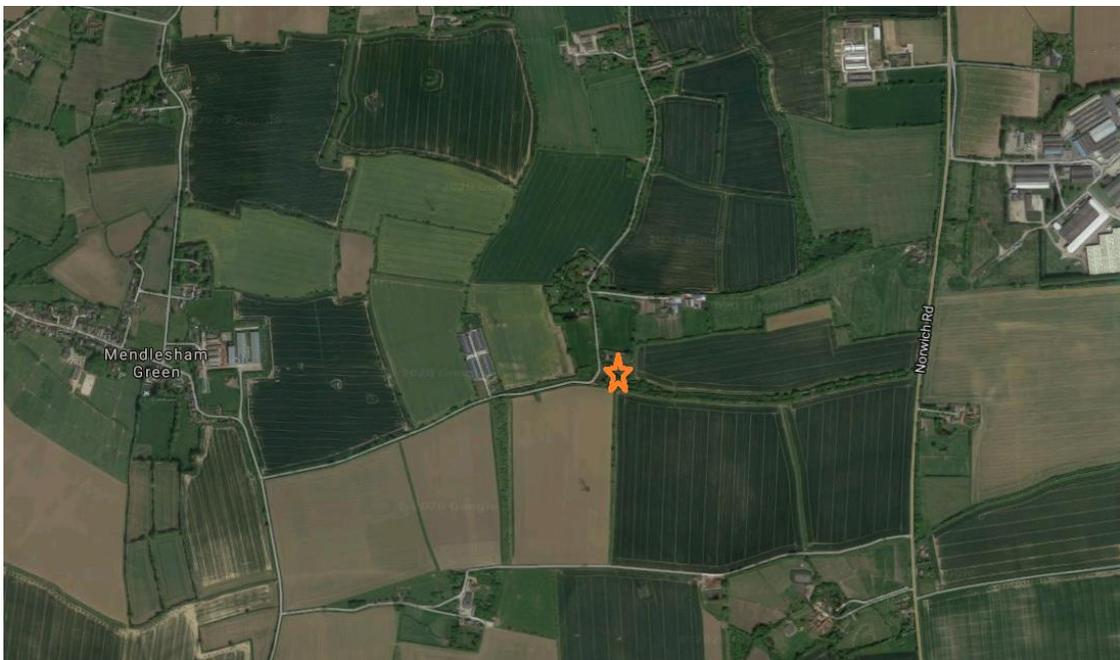
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1. Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Horsup and is submitted in support of an application for planning permission for the erection of a detached holiday let, new cartlodge and four holiday pods at Perkins Farm, Mendlesham Green. As part of the proposal, the existing building that lies to the north of the farmhouse would be removed.

1.2 It will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.

1.3 The extract below shows the location of the site relative to nearby development.



1.4 The application is supported by plans prepared by Roger Balmer Design and follows engagement with the Council through the pre-application process. The advice provided by the Council (as set out in their letter from Daniel Cameron dated 25th September 2020 under Council reference DC/20/03592) will be referred to wherever relevant throughout this statement.

2. Site and Surroundings

2.1 The site is identified in red on the Site Location Plan submitted with the planning application.

2.2 Perkins Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building which the listing describes as;

“II Farmhouse. Early C17. Timber framed, the front roughcast-rendered, the right gable end cased in colourwashed brick with a weatherboarded gable. Thatched roof. 2-cell, lobby entry type. 2 storeys and attic. 2 windows, small-paned casements of 2 and 3 lights, mostly C19, the lower left window a C20 metal replacement. Small original ovolo-mullioned upper window above doorway. Plank door. Stack has good axial sawtooth shaft. Full-width one-storey rear lean-to. Interior. Largely unaltered since C19. Left room has widely-spaced studding and blocked windows with ovolo mullions. Chamfered floorbeam with lamb's tongue stops, the joists plastered over. Early C19 fireplace surround with original lintol behind. Right room has less of the structure visible. Unchamfered floorbeam, plastered ceiling with simply-moulded borders. Good original newel stair with thick treads. Upper floor not examined. A very good intact example of its type”.

2.3 The pre-application response identified the site as;

“The site does form part of any conservation area nor does it form part of any landscape designation. No Tree Preservation Orders are noted within the site. A public right of way does run from east to west along the southern boundary of the site and is noted as a restricted byway, meaning that it is available for use by those on foot, horseback and bicycle, but not powered vehicles.

The site is located in flood zone 1, at the lowest probability of flooding from pluvial or fluvial sources and provided the site area is under 1ha, any future applications would not require a flood risk assessment. That being said, three ponds are noted on site and parts of the site are well treed. It is therefore considered that a preliminary ecological appraisal should accompany any application made in order to ascertain whether any of the ponds on site provide habitat for Great Crested Newts or whether bats utilise the trees within the site for roosting or nesting.

Should this determine that protected species are present on the site, it will also identify what other reports are needed to support any future applications”.

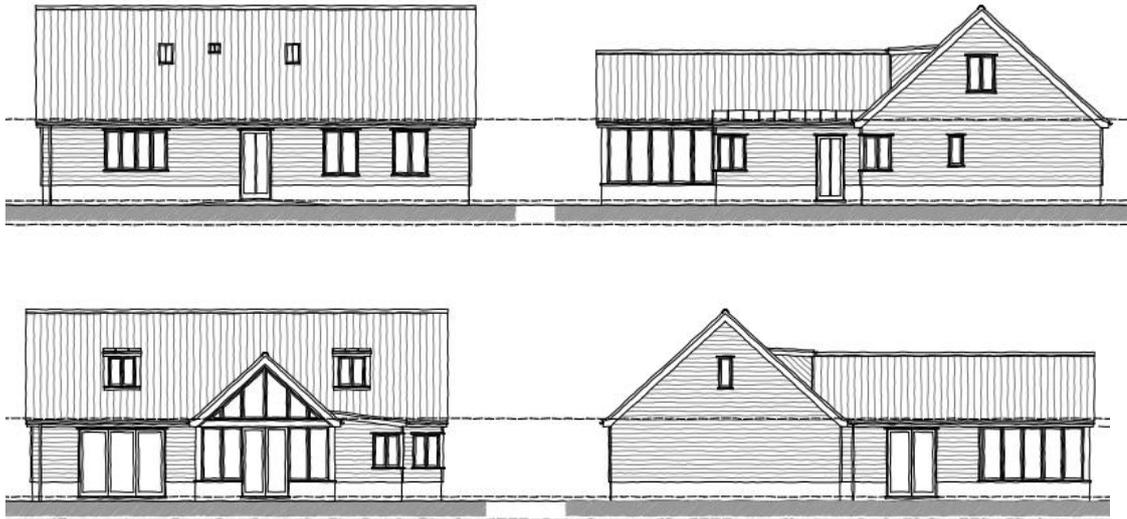
2.4 Perkins Farm lies to the east of Tan Office Lane and in a rural setting within the countryside. Some distance to the east is the A140, separated from the site by agricultural fields, with agricultural fields also found to the south, north and west of the property.

3. The Proposal

3.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for three distinct elements, being;

1. The erection of a one and a half storey holiday let building in the area of the site that currently contains a storage building;
2. The erection of a new cartlodge to the south-west of the dwelling;
3. The siting of 4no. holiday pods on land to the east.

3.2 Detailed plans support the application. The new holiday let building would be suited to the north of the farmhouse and is shown in the extracts below.



3.3 As can be seen, the proposed building is of simple and modest form and would provide a building that is subservient in scale to Perkins Farmhouse. It is proposed to be constructed of timber weatherboard facades on a red brick plinth and with pantiles to the roof.

- 3.4 Internally, the building provides three bedrooms (one at ground floor and two at first floor) with associated living space.
- 3.5 The proposed holiday pods are to be sited to the east of the house in an area of land that lies adjacent to the garden of the dwelling. The proposed pods would be positioned against the backdrop of existing and new trees and would offer holiday accommodation in a setting away from any other residential properties.
- 3.6 The new cartlodge would be sited off the southern access to the property, and would provide covered parking and storage ancillary to the house. As with the holiday let building, the cartlodge is proposed in a traditional form and would utilise a similar palette of materials. The elevations are shown below.



- 3.7 In presenting these matters in a comprehensive manner, the applicants consider that the application shows how the existing dwelling and the new uses/buildings would be successfully consolidated on the site and how the respective elements work together in a cohesive manner.

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. Planning law continues to require that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration and should be taken into account for decision-making purposes. The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers to interpret the NPPF.

4.2 The development plan for Mid Suffolk District Council consists of the saved policies of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998, the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and its Focussed Review (2012). The following policies within these documents are considered to be relevant to this proposal.

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy and the Core Strategy Focused Review

- FC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- FC1.1 - Mid Suffolk Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development
- CS5 - Mid Suffolk's Environment

Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998

- GP1 - Design and Layout of Development
- HB1 - Listed Buildings and Their Settings
- H15 - Development to Reflect Local Characteristics
- H16 - Protecting Existing Residential Amenity
- RT16 - Tourism facilities and visitor attractions
- RT19 - Static Caravans and Holiday Chalets
- SB2 - Development Appropriate to its Setting

4.3 Where relevant to the consideration of this proposal, these policies will be referred to within the 'Planning Considerations' section of this report.

5. Planning Considerations

- 5.1 Given that the holiday lets (by which is meant both the new building and the pods) and the cartlodge bring about differing policy considerations, these matters are addressed separately below.

Holiday Lets

- 5.2 The proposal seeks permission for the use of the site for tourism uses, providing a variety of accommodation types including the new holiday let building to the north and pods of differing sizes on land to the east. The proposal seeks, therefore, to deliver variety in the size and type of accommodation provided.

- 5.3 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF identifies that;

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”.

- 5.4 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF deals directly with the rural economy and states that;

“Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship”.*

5.5 This site is outside of any village settlement boundary and for planning purposes is, therefore, considered to be in the countryside. Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy confirms that tourism is one of the categories of development which is permitted in the countryside.

5.6 Policy RT16 addresses tourism related development and reflects the aims of the NPPF, providing that;

“Tourism facilities and attractions will be supported provided that the design, scale and layout of the proposal does not detract from the character or appearance of its surroundings, adversely affect residential amenity or create a traffic hazard.

Where development has to locate in the countryside, proposals should not detract from neighbouring rural amenity, the landscape setting or adversely affect wildlife habitats.

In particular, the district planning authority will support proposals which:-

- extend the tourist season and the range of tourist attractions;*
- provide local employment opportunities;*
- bring about environmental improvements or conserve important heritage, wildlife or landscape features;*
- in appropriate circumstances, bring about the reuse of farm or other rural buildings”.*

5.7 Policy RT19 of the Local Plan addresses proposals for static caravans and holiday chalets. It states;

“Static caravans and holiday chalets will only be permitted where there are no adverse effects on the character and appearance of the landscape, existing residential amenity, highway safety, agriculture, forestry, wildlife conservation and where essential services can be provided

In the countryside where permanent residential use would not be permitted but holiday use is acceptable, conditions will be imposed limiting the period of occupancy to ensure that the accommodation remains available for holiday use”.

- 5.8 The new detached holiday let building and the holiday pods bring about slightly different considerations in terms of their respective impacts, so are considered in turn below.
- 5.9 In respect of the new holiday let building, whilst policy RT19 does not specifically address the issue of constructing a new building for use as a holiday let, it sets some broad principles for the circumstances that need to be taken into account when considering the delivery of caravans and chalets for such use that can equally be applied here.
- 5.10 The principle of converting existing buildings associated with, or within the curtilage of, an existing dwelling to provide holiday let accommodation has become a regular feature of modern planning proposals over the last 10 years. The changes introduced by the first version of the NPPF in 2012 made clear that rural tourism proposals are sustainable and can play a big part in supporting rural communities and existing businesses/services in rural areas. This is no different within the Mid Suffolk area to anywhere else, with a number of recent proposals for new holiday let accommodation being found throughout the district.
- 5.11 The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry has been significant. Many commentators suggest that 'normal' life in a post-coronavirus environment will not resume until a vaccine for the virus is developed and widely distributed. The pharmaceutical industry has already indicated this may take up to 18 months to complete. That has major implications for the hospitality and travel sector.
- 5.12 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) anticipates that there will be a two per cent reduction in global GDP for every month of country lockdown and this would further delay the revival of the hotel and leisure market. Furthermore, in a recent newspaper article (25th June 2020) relating to the impact of Covid-19 on the hospitality industry, the author identified that;

A number of pub operators with sites at some of Britain's most popular tourist spots believe a recent spike in staycation bookings will prove 'critical' in their recovery from Covid-19.

Though outbound travel to destinations across Europe is expected to resume from 4 July – with the Government apparently poised to confirm travel corridors to up to 10 countries in the coming days – a recent surge in online activity demonstrates unprecedented demand for a British bolthole once lockdown restrictions are eased.

According to figures released by Rest Easy Group – the parent company of brands such as Snaptrip, DogFriendlyCottages.co.uk, Big-Cottages.com, LastMinute-Cottages.co.uk and LateRooms.com – web traffic increased by up to 381% at peak hours across its portfolio after Boris Johnson announced the easing of lockdown measures on Tuesday 23 June.

What's more, the group has also revealed an increase of 69% in traffic and 172% in bookings compared with this time last year - with more than 50% of staycation reservations made for July.

Two fifths of these bookings were made by couples or families, while 58% were from groups of three or more adults.

"It's no secret it's been a tough few months for the travel sector worldwide, so we welcomed the news from the Government that staycations will be allowed to go ahead from 4 July and it seems the public did too," Matt Fox, CEO and co-founder of Rest Easy Group, said.

"During the past three months, we have seen a steady increase in bookings for mid-to-late 2021, but the Prime Minister's announcement sent a flood of new traffic to all our brands as people get excited about travelling again in 2020."

- 5.13 The applicant is, thereby conscious of an increasing need for such facilities, with the Chief Executive of holiday firm Kuoni identifying recently that;

"It's clear from the conversations we're having with customers and booking patterns that many people will opt to stay closer to home within the UK this year, as they see overseas travel in the near future as being too risky".

- 5.14 It is also well reported that UK campsites are currently experiencing a surge in bookings as more people plan staycations, with local establishments now seeing tourists starting to return to the area, and many news reports highlighting the desirability of the Suffolk countryside for people coming out of London during the pandemic. That position also aligns with reports from Auto Trader, who recently confirmed that;

“interest in online adverts for caravans was up nearly a fifth compared with the same time last year”.

- 5.15 It is anticipated that there will be a point of recovery for the tourism sector, and the Government can help with the recovery of the market by introducing measures that encourage the renewal of tourism initiatives. The business and personal leisure travel market will return only once both employers and individuals feel that it is safe to do so again from a health perspective, and as the global lockdown concludes, people will be less interested in spending money on material possessions and instead are likely to spend on holidays, travel and experiences.
- 5.16 In that respect, the applicants consider that the proposal would deliver desirable and well used facilities that would bring people into the local area and help to support businesses and services that rely on such trade/investment.
- 5.17 Turning now to the specific impacts of the proposals, the proposed holiday let building sits a short distance away from the main dwelling. There can be little contention that the existing building is lawful given that it can be evidenced in aerial images and maps dating back many years. It has been consistently retained on the land throughout that period having previously been used as a storage building associated with the farm. The siting of the holiday let has, therefore, been chosen such that it results in the direct removal of the building from the site, and where the holiday let would be visible from the farmhouse without directly affecting views from it.
- 5.18 The submitted block plan shows the footprint of the building to be removed. The images below show the scale and form of this building from the west (front) and east (rear) respectively.



5.19 Whilst the pre-application advice looked at converting the existing building to a holiday let, the advice provided by the Heritage Officer in response identified that;

“No harm to a designated heritage asset, if the option of converting the garage to a holiday let is pursued, because this would not result in fragmentation, providing that suitable restrictions could be and were imposed upon its continued use. The other works would also not be harmful, subject to similar restrictions as appropriate and further details”.

5.20 The same position would arise here. The proposal does not result in fragmentation of the site subject to suitable controls being available to secure the use of the building relative to the

main dwelling. Furthermore, the proposed building is more architecturally pleasing than the resultant converted building would/could be. The applicant considers, therefore, that the siting and scale of the proposed building are in context with an ancillary building within the grounds of the main house. The proposal would accord with policy RT16 in this regard.

- 5.21 The use of the building (and, indeed, the holiday pods) can be controlled by a suitably worded conditions that will ensure the use of the building and pods for holiday use only. The Council have used, and continue to use, planning conditions to control the use of such buildings, and this appears to be wholly appropriate to this scenario also.
- 5.22 On this basis, the LPA have certainty over the use of this building and can, if so minded, grant planning permission in the terms requested in the confidence that the proposal is not intended for occupation other than as holiday accommodation associated with Perkins Farmhouse.
- 5.23 The proposal would not impact on the amenity of any neighbouring properties. The building would lie some distance from any neighbouring property. Furthermore, the building would sit comfortably in its setting, being located well away from the road and visible in only limited views through the hedged boundaries. There is opportunity to further improve the landscaping on the site and provision is made for new hedge and tree planting within the site, as demonstrated on the submitted site plan. This would bring with it biodiversity enhancements through the use of native planting.
- 5.24 The proposal would not affect residential amenity, and the existing accesses provide safe and convenient access to the land that can readily accommodate the proposed development, with visibility for a significant distance in either direction. The level of traffic generated by this use would not be significant and there are no known highway capacity issues which would preclude this use in this location.
- 5.25 In respect of the holiday pods, the land is currently underused, being maintained as a copse, and the proposal offers a more efficient use of land where the proposal will offer significant economic and social benefits, offering holiday accommodation in a rural setting which will deliver additional income for rural facilities nearby. The variety in the provision offers

flexibility on the choice of accommodation provided, and enabling the business to attract custom from a variety of sources.

5.26 The application does not involve the loss of agricultural fields or land set aside for forestry and so will have no impact on those uses.

5.27 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three objectives to achieving sustainable development;

“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

5.28 The tourist accommodation proposals are considered to encompass all three of these objectives.

5.29 Economically, there are clear and demonstrable benefits resulting from the delivery of much needed tourism accommodation, as expressed earlier in this statement. Those occupying the units would be highly likely to support other local communities and facilities through expenditure at facilities and services. There would be significant direct and indirect employment resulting from this facility, offering and supporting rural jobs. The proposal meets not only the provisions of the NPPF in this regard but is also wholly compliant with policy RT19.

- 5.30 From a social perspective, the use brings significant benefits from the opportunity for people to take holidays in the Suffolk countryside, to recreate and relax and to enjoy the local facilities at their leisure. The proposal would also generate additional/secure existing employment in this rural area, bringing social benefits through the support to local communities and the investment in the local area.
- 5.31 Environmentally, whilst it is clear that any holiday facilities such as this will require travel to and from them, the site is well located for walking and cycling. Significant facilities are available within a short distance of the site, including shops, nearby villages (linked by footpaths), tourist attractions, entertainment, recreation, public houses and the Stonham Barns complex. The provision of new landscaping will deliver significant biodiversity and habitat enhancement, as will the tidying up of this part of the site, providing environmental benefits that would weigh in support of this scheme.
- 5.32 The proposal would make effective and efficient use of land, and would be constructed to a good specification that would minimise waste and energy usage.
- 5.33 Overall, therefore, the proposal complies with all of the objectives of sustainable development and development plan policies aimed at securing increased tourism in the Mid Suffolk district.

New Cartlodge

- 5.34 The new cartlodge is proposed to be sited within reasonable proximity to the house and to provide an area of associated parking within the existing copse of trees to the south-west of the dwelling.
- 5.35 In responding to the pre-application enquiry, the Planning Officer responded as to the principle of the siting of a building of this nature in this location, identifying that;

“The principle of this aspect of the proposed development less contentious. Outbuildings are recognised supporting structures serving a host dwelling particularly in rural environments”.

5.36 The Heritage officer also provided positive comments, stating that;

“I consider that a new garage can be accommodated in roughly the location proposed in principle without detracting from the significance of Perkins Farmhouse. Reference was made on site to this being three to four bays. Careful consideration would therefore be needed to ensure that the size of the garage would still be appropriate to the relative size of the house, bearing in mind its subservient function. Four bays may appear excessive, but the acceptability would also depend upon design, location and scale as well as just the number of bays. Reference was made to the preference for a traditional design. This is not an issue in principle, providing that it fully adopts traditional details and materials but does not try to suggest it is actually historic”.

5.37 The applicants have taken on board the comments made, and sought to design a building that respects the historic significance of the farmhouse and which fully utilises traditional form and materials. It is a simple building constructed of timber weatherboard cladding set over a red brick plinth and under a clay pantile roof. It is characteristic of many such buildings that are seen throughout the Suffolk countryside.

5.38 The layout of the building and the circulation space provides contained and dedicated parking on a site where the main dwelling can readily accommodate a building of this scale. Indeed, it is a regular occurrence that buildings of this nature would be supported by ancillary outbuildings of this nature, as evidenced by the Planning Officer in the pre-application response.

5.39 The proposal thereby constitutes good design, complying with the respective design policies and the aims of the NPPF.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The application seeks planning permission for a use of land that will encourage tourism and offer a pleasant and quiet holiday offer with good access to nearby facilities and services.
- 6.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The consideration is, therefore, whether the development accords with the development plan and, if not, whether there are material considerations that would indicate a decision should be taken contrary to the development plan.
- 6.3 The development plan includes the Mid Suffolk Local Plan and the Core Strategy and it's Focused Review. Specific policy provision is made, through saved policies RT16 and RT19, for tourism accommodation such as this, subject to certain criteria being met.
- 6.4 The site is well located and would be able to accommodate the development without giving rise to impacts on amenity, highway safety issues or a detrimental impact on the landscape. The proposal brings about biodiversity benefits through new landscape planting, and delivers significant economic benefits through a varied accommodation offer that would give those looking to holiday in this area options in terms of the nature of their holiday. However, the proposal is of a scale that would sit quietly in its surroundings and provide a low-key development in terms of its external impacts.
- 6.5 The proposal is economically and socially sustainable, demonstrating clear benefits to local services and facilities, and providing and securing employment.
- 6.6 The provision of a cartlodge to serve the farmhouse is an appropriate and acceptable proposal that respects the character of the heritage asset and which would provide much needed covered storage and parking for the applicants. It has been found to be well-designed and of appropriate scale and layout.

6.7 For all of these reasons, the proposal is found to be in accordance with the development plan, demonstrating the objectives of sustainable development and should, thereby, be supported.