



**Donald Insall Associates**  
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

**Barrington Downs Farm**

Historic Building Report for Samuel Morse

April 2021



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## 1.0 Summary of Historic Building Report

### 1.1 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates was commissioned by Samuel Morse in February 2021 to assist in developing and refining proposals for the residential conversion of former agricultural buildings at Barrington Downs Farm, Barrington, Aldsworth, Gloucestershire, GL54 3PT.

The investigation has comprised historical research, using both archival and secondary material, and a site inspection. A brief illustrated history of the site and building, with sources of reference and bibliography, is in Section 2; the site survey findings are in Section 3. The investigation has established the significance of the buildings on the site, which is set out in Section 4 and summarised below.

The specific constraints for this site are summarised below. This report has fed into the design of revised proposals for the site, by Yiangou Architects, so that they comply with these requirements. Section 5 provides a justification of the scheme according to the relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance.

### 1.2 The Buildings, their Legal Status and Policy Context

The barn (referred to in this report as Building A) at Barrington Downs Farm is a Grade II listed building in Cotswold District. It is also in the setting of Barrington Downs farmhouse, another Grade II listed building. The listed barn adjoins three other historic agricultural buildings, which together comprise the application site. The building immediately to the east of the main barn structure – Building B – is specifically mentioned in the list description, and forms part of the listed building. A third structure – Building C, possibly a cart shed and granary – is also mentioned in the list description and should be considered part of the listed building. The attached shelter shed – Building C – is not listed in its own right, but is within the curtilage of the other buildings, and should be considered to be curtilage listed. Alterations to a listed building generally require listed building consent; development within the setting of a listed building requires local authorities to assess the implications of proposals on built heritage.

The statutory list description of the listed building is included in Appendix I, and extracts from the relevant legislation and planning policy documents are included as Appendix II.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to have *'special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan applicable to the Site comprises the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031.

The Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 has policies that deal with development affecting the historic environment, and these require that for proposals that affect a designated heritage asset or its setting, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation.

The courts have held that following the approach set out in the policies on the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 will effectively result in a decision-maker complying with its statutory duties. The Framework forms a material consideration for the purposes of section 38(6). At the heart of the Framework is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development' and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment. The Framework states that heritage assets are 'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'. The Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as:

*A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).*

The Framework, in paragraph 189, states that:

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*

Section 4 of this report – the assessment of significance – meets this requirement and is based on the research and site surveys presented in sections 2 and 3, which are of a sufficient level of detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals.

The Framework also, in paragraph 193, requires that:

*When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 194 that:

*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.*

Section 5 of this report provides this clear and convincing justification.

The Framework requires that local planning authorities categorise harm as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'. Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset', the Framework states, in paragraph 195, that:

*... local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

*a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*

*b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*

*c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*

*d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

Guidance on the meaning of 'substantial harm' is given in paragraph 18 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (2019), as follows:

*In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.*

The courts have also considered the meaning of substantial harm in *Bedford Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2012) which defined substantial harm as 'an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced'.

Where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework states, in paragraph 196, that:

*...this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

### **1.3 Summary Assessment of Significance**

A detailed assessment of significance with guidance on the relative significance of elements of fabric and plan form and the extent to which these elements may be altered is included in Section 4.0 of this report. The following paragraphs are a summary explaining why the listed building is considered of nationally-important architectural and historical interest.

The historic farm buildings at Barrington Downs Farm, which form the subject of this application, comprise a well preserved post-enclosure farmstead built in open countryside to manage mixed farming on newly-enclosed former common land. The buildings are all constructed in local limestone, in an idiom that was used over a long period of time. This has led to the main barn being misdated by Historic England in the list description as mid-late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when in fact it was probably built in circa 1760. There is no surviving fabric which can be reliably dated to before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and the barn cannot have existing before the land was enclosed in 1760. It also explains why the farmhouse appeared to be not as old as the barn, which makes no sense, unless the barn is properly attributed to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The principal building is a threshing barn, for the storage and processing of the arable crop, and there are also good examples of other buildings necessary for the effective practise of mixed farming: cowhouse/stable, hayloft, granary and shelter sheds and enclosures for livestock. The roofs were probably all originally of Cotswold slate, and this covering survives on Buildings A and B.

The buildings are organised in an L shape, with Building A (the barn) and Building B on an east-west axis, and Buildings C and D on a north-south axis. A set of stone tallet steps joins the two ranges, and provides access to the upper floors of Buildings B and C. The buildings enclose two sides of the former farmyard, at the south east corner of which stands the Grade II-listed 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse, now much extended. Within the farmyard drystone enclosure walls survive.

Two additional buildings between the farmhouse and the main barn are shown on the OS maps, but these were demolished after the survey for the 1921 OS map. The central section of the open-fronted stockpens was demolished after 1882 and then rebuilt again before 1921.

The buildings are significant as good examples of post-enclosure farm buildings, typical of the area and period. The complex has some unusual features, which add to the significance of the buildings concerned. These include the division of the main barn, the pigeon house, the planform of Building B, the shared two-way tallet steps, and the reuse of openings from an earlier domestic building. There is also an impressive collection of graffiti, inscribed by the farm workers over a period of 200 years.

The buildings are not in a uniformly good state of repair, and there is considerable opportunity for a sensitive programme of repair and reuse to better reveal the significance of Buildings B and C in particular.

#### **1.4 Summary of Proposals and Justification**

The proposals have been changed and refined to ensure that they are consistent with conserving the character and historic fabric of the buildings on the site.

It is proposed to carefully convert the buildings to residential use, retaining their overall form and appearance and making minimal changes to them. The main barn – which our research has shown is mid-18<sup>th</sup> century rather than mid-17<sup>th</sup> – would be converted to one unit, with the majority of the building open to the rafters and a very small section of mezzanine to the south-east. This would be less than an eighth of the overall area of the barn. The stable and hayloft would be similarly carefully converted with



the missing hayloft re-instated. Barn C – possibly a former granary and the building on the site most in need of repair – would be converted to additional guest accommodation with two bedrooms (one on the ground floor and one on the first floor) and two en suite bathrooms. The open fronted stock pens would be reused as additional guest accommodation with the stockyard walls retained.

The buildings are sensitive because of their special architectural and historic interest. However, without any beneficial use they are at risk of their conditioning worsening, particularly Barn C which is already in a poor condition. The proposals are necessary to provide the buildings with a sustainable use which preserves their character and functional relationship to one another, and conserves the farmstead as a whole for its historic, social and evidential value.

## 2.0 Historical Background

### 2.1 The Barringtons, and Barrington Downs Farm

The parishes of Great Barrington and Little Barrington, lying between Northleach in Gloucestershire and Burford in Oxfordshire, have a complicated history, including a part of the parish being formerly a detached part of Berkshire. The boundaries between the two parishes are difficult to determine with certainty, and may have changed over time. In the medieval period there were several manors, including Little Barrington, possibly derived from the estate held at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 by William Goizenboded – the smallest of the four Barrington estates noted in the survey. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century the manor was a possession of the Clinton family, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century was held of the Clintons by members of the Vampage family. When John Vampage died without issue in 1548 the manor was divided between his three sisters. By 1779 the manor was reunited under the single ownership of Thomas Ellis, who in that year sold it to Giles Greenaway.

Twenty years before, in 1759, Little Barrington was enclosed by Act of Parliament, creating individual fields out of the old open fields, pastures and commons. The land was divided between the two manors, with the 600 acres of common downland of Barrington Downs, south of the Windrush becoming part of Little Barrington Manor. As elsewhere, the process of enclosure led to the establishment of new post-enclosure farmsteads, to exploit efficiently the newly enclosed land. One of these was Barrington Downs Farm, its new fields formed out of the old village common downland. The farm and its buildings seem therefore to have been established soon after enclosure, in the 1760s.<sup>1</sup> The assertion in the Historic England list description that the barn dates from the mid-late 17<sup>th</sup> century cannot be correct, because at that time the field system would have been completely different, and farmed in common, and therefore there would have been no place to build, and no need for, a large threshing barn here.

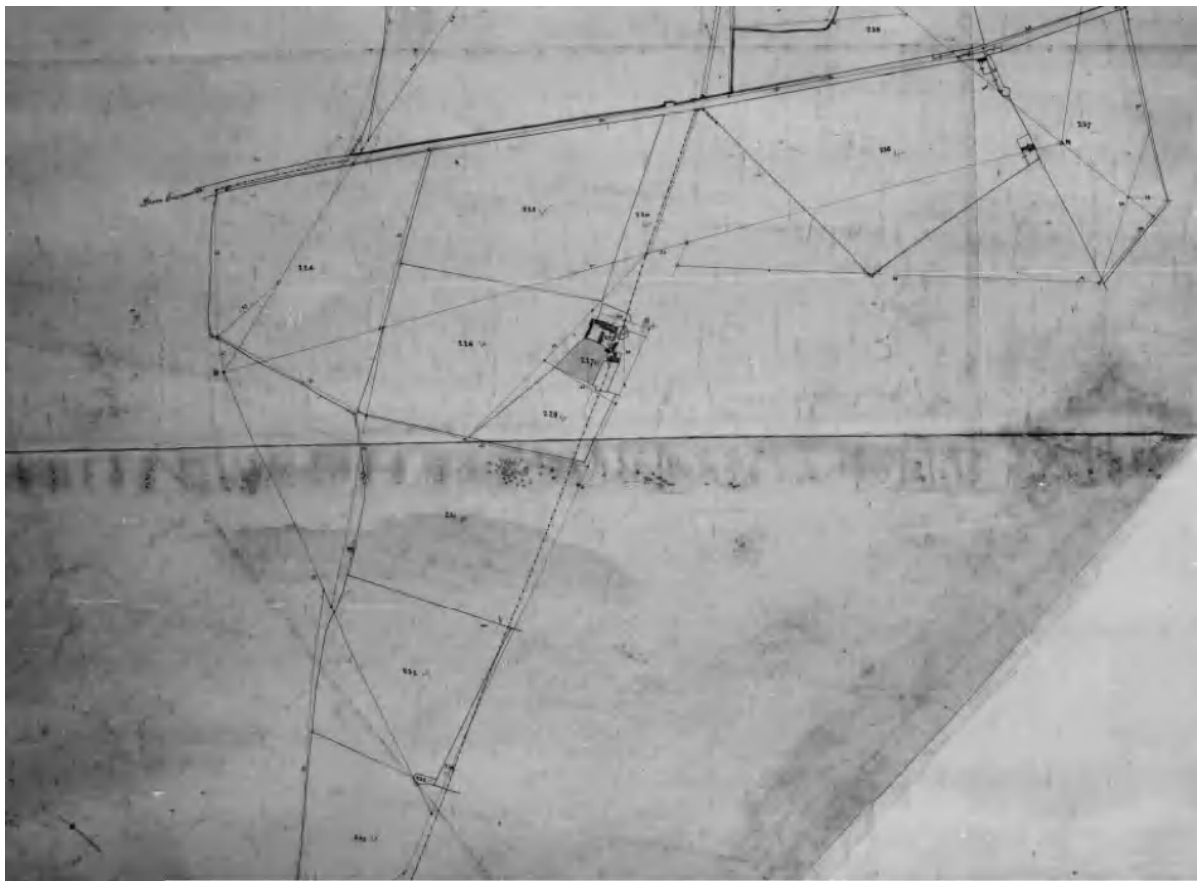
In 1841 the farmstead at Downs Farm was surveyed for the tithe apportionment record [Plate 2.1]. At this time it was the possession of Charles Greenaway (son of Giles, who bought the manor in 1779), and was occupied by John Tovey. Tovey had probably been at the farm since 1831 when the previous farmer, Thomas Tuckwell, had sold up.<sup>2</sup> Members of the Tovey family remained at Barrington Down until 1885.

The farmstead shown on the 1841 tithe map is easily reconciled with the buildings as they stand today. The large barn had, at this time, virtually achieved the footprint it has today, with both porches and all three outshuts added on the south side. The eastern outshut is clearly shown lining up with the front of the eastern porch, while the central outshut is recessed. The western outshut is also shown as being recessed, indicating either a surveyor's or draughtsman's error, or that this outshut was rebuilt to its current form some time later. The stable is just as it appears today, and the third building, at right angles to the others –

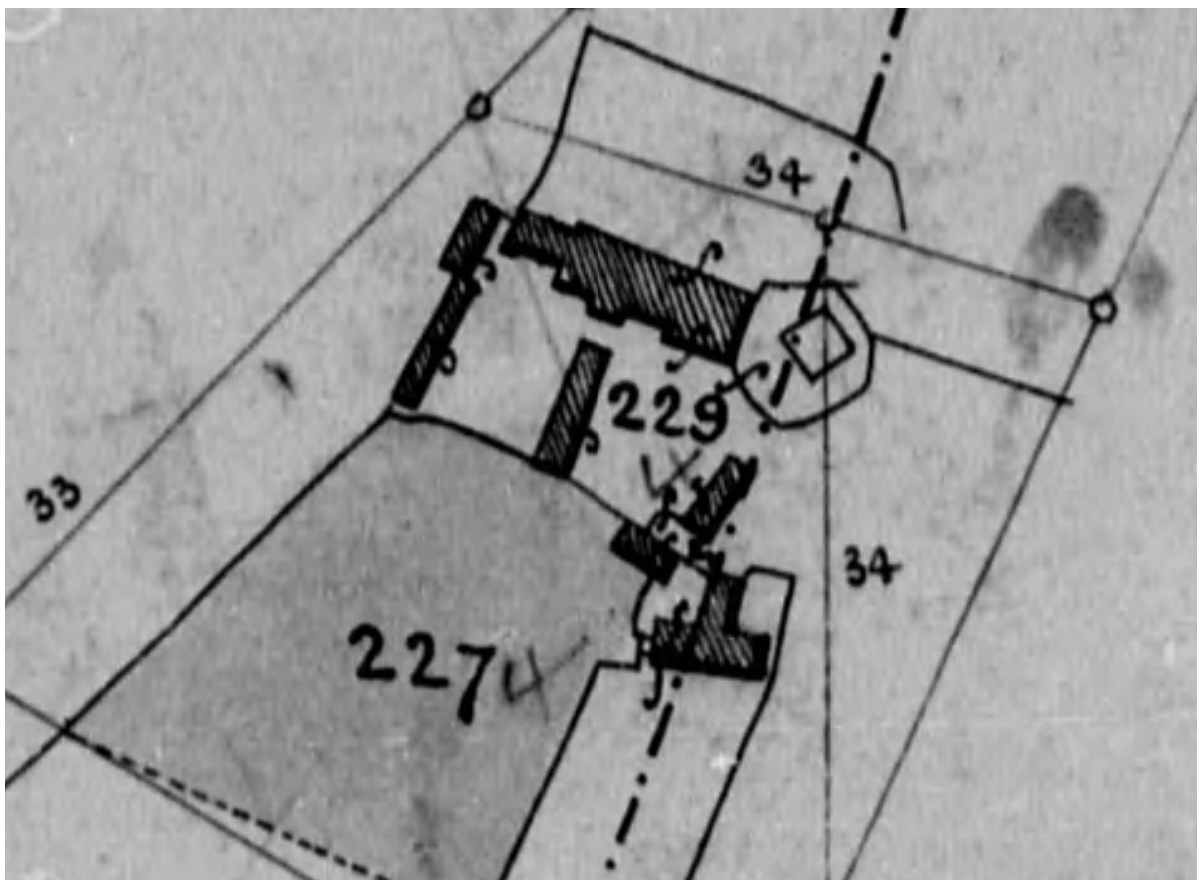
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1 The Victoria County History assigns Barrington Downs Farm, and Downs Cottages, to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

2 *Oxford Journal*, 2 April 1831.



2.1 Detail from the 1841 tithe map, showing Barrington Downs Farm (TNA).



2.2 Enlargement from the tithe map, showing the study buildings in more detail (TNA).

possibly a cart shed and granary – is also present. The tallet step is not marked, but as it provides access to lofts of both buildings it must then have existed. The long open shed on the west side of the yard was also in existence in 1841, and there was another long range that mirrored it, running in line with the west porch of the main barn.

The next representation of the farm is in the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 25 inch map, of 1882 **[Plate 2.2]**. This depicts the buildings almost identically, but with the inclusion of the tallet step which was missing from the tithe map. In addition, however, there am additional lean-to is shown against the east gable end of the main barn, and a new small building to the north of the barn. The second edition map, of 1902, shows that a number of changes had taken place over the previous two decades **[Plate 2.3]**. The north-south range at the west end of the farmyard is shown as being divided into two separate buildings, and it has gained a new building (pigsties) at its southern end, while the second long north-south range has been replaced by a small building close to the large barn. To the east of this, the shallow building at the edge of the yard has been replaced by a deeper building, and there is a second new building to the east, behind the house, which also appears extended at its north-east corner. The third edition map of 1921 shows almost the same layout, but with the demolished section of the western range reinstated **[Plate 2.4]**. This map also omits what was probably the stub of an older building immediately to the south of the western porch of the barn.

The 1978 large scale OS map shows that little change had occurred to the historic farmyard over the previous sixty years, the only development within the old farmyard being the addition of a new building to the south of the barn. The two steel-framed buildings that stand to the north of the barn were already in existence at the time that this map was made.

## **2.1 Sources and Bibliography**

British Newspaper Archive  
ancestry.com – census returns  
thegenealogist.com – tithe records

### **Published Sources**

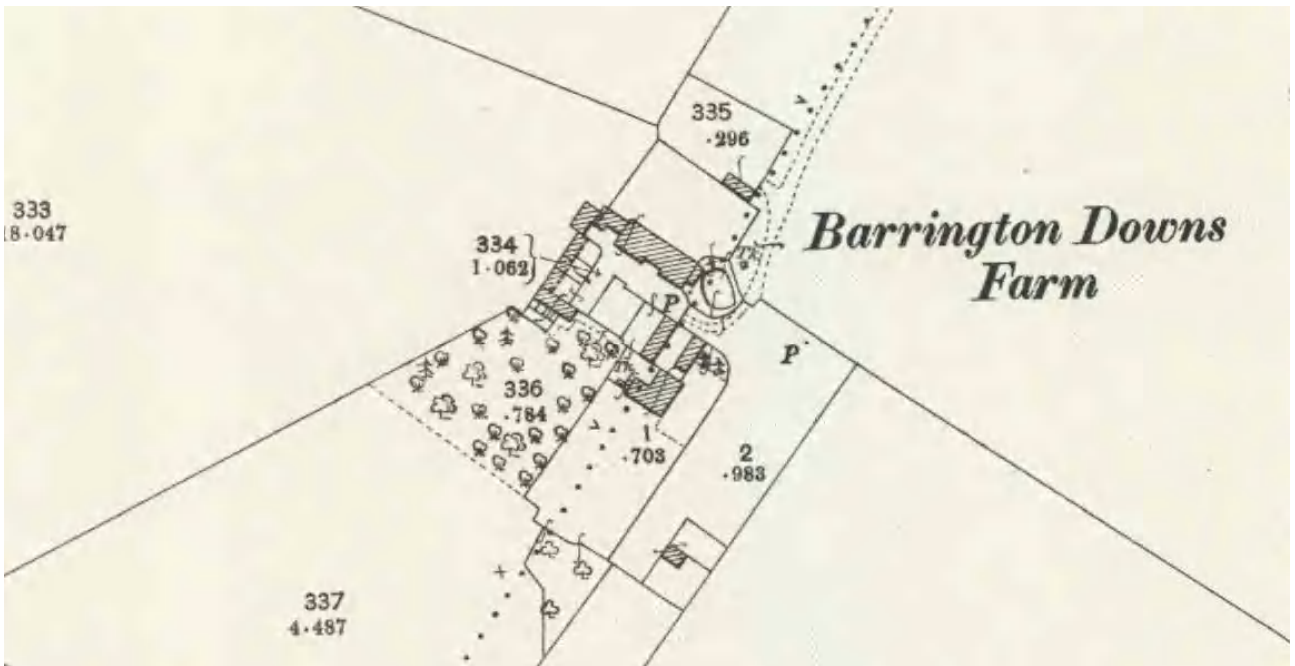
R. Brunskill, *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain* (1987)  
C.R. Elrington (ed), 'Parishes: Great and Little Barrington', in *A History of the County of Gloucester: Volume 6*, (London, 1965), pp. 16-27. (Victoria County History).



2.3 Barrington Downs Farm, shown on the first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (National Library of Scotland).



2.4 1902 second edition of the 25 inch OS map.



2.5 1921 third edition of the 25 inch OS map (National Library of Scotland).

## 3.0 Site Survey Descriptions

### 3.1 The Buildings

The historic buildings of Barrington Downs farm comprise a farmhouse, and various former agricultural buildings, some of which form the basis of the current application for restoration and reuse. The buildings that constitute the application site are as follows:

- Building A: A barn of eight bays
- Building B: An attached stable of three bays
- Building C: A stone building of three bays – possibly a granary and cartshed
- Building D: An open-fronted shelter shed of eight bays
- In addition, some historic yard walling projects from building D, and there is a set of double stone tallet steps, between and shared by buildings B and D.

Despite the list description's assertion that the main barn may be mid-late 17<sup>th</sup> century, our research demonstrates that it cannot be so. An assessment of the fabric has also revealed no pre-18<sup>th</sup> century fabric in situ. All the buildings postdate the enclosure of 1759, and were extant by 1841 when the tithe map was made. This is described in detail in Section 2.0 above. The text below describes the buildings and their development, and considers the dates of the buildings, and the relationship between them.

#### 3.1.1 Building A

The largest of the buildings is a barn, built on an approximate east-west axis, with two large doorways on the north side, and lower doorways within porches on the southern side of the building. The barn is divided into two by a stone wall to roof level. This wall, which is part of the original construction, divides it into a threshing barn of five bays to the north, and a barn of three bays to the south. The southern part of the building may originally not have had a door on its north side - its original purpose is not certain. The entire building is roofed with local limestone slates.

The barn is constructed of limestone rubble, and is visible on its north, east and south sides. The north side has large doorways with segmental arches to each of the two internal volumes **[Plate 3.1]**. The taller western doorway, to the threshing barn, has a timber spandrel panel within the arch, in the soffit of which are large holes for the original harr-hung doors (now removed) **[Plate 3.2]**. Marks on the soffit of the arch show where a similar panel has been removed from the east doorway. Each doorway has dressed stone jambs and voussoirs, and there are also dressed stone quoins on the corners, at each end of the elevation. There are a number of triangular ventilation holes in the north elevation: five to each side of the threshing floor in the western part of the barn, and two to the east of the door in the eastern part of the building. At each end the gable-end wall rises above the roof, and is capped with flat coping. Areas of fresh mortar show parts of the masonry that were repaired in 2011. The two buttresses on either side of the western door were built at this time, using reused stone from an unknown source.



3.1 Building A, north elevation (DIA).



3.2 Building A, north elevation, detail of west door (DIA).



3.3 Building B, east elevation (DIA).



3.4 Building A, south elevation, from the south east (DIA).



The east elevation is plain, with an owl hole just below the apex **[Plate 3.3]**. The gable has kneelers and coping. On the south side the eastern end wall of a later outshut adjoins the dressed stone quoins at the corner of the original structure. The roof slope of the outshut is slightly shallower than that of the main roof.

The south side of the building has a lower eaves line, owing to the outshuts to either side of and between the two porches **[Plates 3.4-3.5a]**. The western porch has dressed stone door jambs and quoins, and has gable details exactly the same as the east elevation of the original building: it is almost certainly part of the primary phase, and appears to be unaltered. The double doors are modern. The eastern porch is not only taller but different in detail. It does not have dressed quoins, and its roof overhangs the gable. There is a rectangular window above the double doors and above that a slit opening to a pigeon loft, with slate landing perches. The detail differences in the eastern porch suggest that it was a later addition

The three outshuts appear to have been built at three different times. The western outshut has a slightly shallower roof pitch than that of the main barn, while the central outshut has a continuation of the main roofline, but shares the eaves height of the western outshut. Thus its front wall is set further back. The eastern outshut shares the same eaves line, but like the western outshut is built forward to the front of the porch, from which it is separated by a doorway. The different treatment of building line and roof pitch suggests that the central and outer outshuts were not built at the same time, and the evidence of the tithe map suggests that the western outshut may have replaced an earlier (wooden?) structure on a different building line after 1841. It is possible that the eastern outshut was built first, at the same time as the eastern porch, and that the central outshut was added between the two porches some time later. The western outshut may have been rebuilt in stone last, sometime between 1841 and 1882. It is accessed from outside through a doorway in its eastern end wall. This doorway has fine quality dressed stone jambs, possibly reused **[Plate 3.6]**. A large hexafoil on the left-hand jamb was applied after the stones were assembled in this building **[Plate 3.7]**.



**3.5** Building A, south elevation (DIA).



**3.5a** Building A - eastern porch and pigeon loft from the south west (DIA).



**3.7** Building A, detail of hexafoil (DIA).



**3.6** Building A, from the south west (DIA).

## Interior

The western part of the building is a threshing barn of five bays, with a central threshing floor and storage bays to each side **[Plates 3.8-3.9]**. The walls are of rubble limestone, with the remains of lime plaster on the lower parts of the wall, between floor and head height. The wall between the eastern and western parts of the barn extends to the apex of the roof and is part of the primary structure. The doorway at the bottom of this wall, beneath a lintel made from redundant railway sleepers, is a 20<sup>th</sup> century insertion. The south wall is pierced by a number of ventilation holes. These holes appear as triangles on the exterior of the buildings, but are square within. The window on the north wall to the east of the porch is probably not an original feature, but was likely inserted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The floor to the storage bays is rammed earth, while the threshing floor is of blue brick, now quite degraded – probably a 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement for the original floor. It has a collar and tie beam truss roof of elm, with two rows of threaded purlins **[Plate 3.10]**. While largely original, the roof was repaired using metal plates, new rafters and one new tie beam in 2011. On the south side of the space an arch, with dressed stone jambs and voussoirs, identical to that on the north side, gives on to the unceiled porch. On both sides of the porch there are doorways, leading into the later outshuts. Both doorways are conceivably parts of the primary structure, with jambs that are structurally integral with those of the main archway. If they are primary, however, they must originally have been exterior doors. The eastern doorway has the initials 'BB' and the date 1783 scribed into one of the jamb stones: this may be the date of the doorway's insertion and (therefore, probably) the date of the central outshut **[Plates 3.11-3.12]**. Immediately beneath this stone is a candle niche: one of several in the building. There is another round the corner, on the south wall of the main space. There are some graffiti in this area, commonly found in such buildings: 'tally' marks and interlocking 'V's.

The eastern part of the building comprises a two-bay storage area with rammed earth floor to the right of the entrance bay, which is floored in (probably 19<sup>th</sup> century) blue brick, so worn in places that the fireskin has come away altogether, making it hard to tell what the material is at first glance **[Plate 3.13]**. The roof is as per the western part of the building, albeit there has been a greater replacement of original material at this end of the barn: several of the main structural timbers are recent replacements **[Plate 3.14]**. On the west side of the space is the full height wall separating this part of the barn from the larger part of the building. This wall is skinned in ashlar stonework to height of approximately 1 metre, and this ashlar finish extends to the returns at the north and south ends **[Plate 3.15]**. This is certainly a primary feature, but its purpose is uncertain. It was possibly done to make this part of the wall easier to clean (without brushing loose stone and mortar out of the wall in the process), to remove the nooks and crannies in which dust could settle, or to reduce the tendency for the wall to shed grit and dirt when struck; it may have been some combination of all of those. The finish is certainly related to the original use of this part of the barn, and it makes sense as a requirement for threshing and/or winnowing, which would not normally take place next to a wall. There is no clear evidence of the original southern door that would have been necessary for this operation, but it is possible that this was lost when the porch and pigeon house were added. The ashlar section of the wall is broken by a 20<sup>th</sup> century opening into the western part of the barn **[Plate 3.16]**. To the north of this opening there is an unusual piece of graffiti: a deeply carved comet-like image **[Plate 3.17]**. The inner skin of the gable wall, on the east side of the space, has been rebuilt in cement block, probably in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**3.8** Building A - the western part, from the north east (DIA)



**3.9** Building A - the western part, from the south west (DIA).



**3.10** Building A - the roof of the western part, looking west (DIA).



**3.11** Building A, western part, doorway in east side of south porch (DIA).



**3.12** Detail of carved initials and date (DIA).



**3.13** Building A, east end. General view looking west, showing brick floor section (DIA).

The opening into the porch on the south side does not have any of the structural niceties that characterise the arched opening in the south side of the western part of the barn, and elsewhere **[Plate 3.18]**. Specifically, there are no dressed quoins on the eastern corner. This invites the suspicion that prior to the construction of the porch there was a blank wall on the south side. The porch is accessed through an opening with a timber lintel at its head, and is ceiled to create a pigeon loft in its upper part. The floor of the porch is stone flags, probably dating from its construction **[Plate 3.19]**. The top left hand jamb stone of the doorway contains the scribed initials 'I (J) B' and, beneath, the name 'John Gray' and the date 1777 **[Plate 3.20]**. If this stone is not reused it gives a possible date for addition of the porch and pigeon loft. At the upper level the pigeon loft is accessed through the barn wall via a doorway, the frame of which survives (the door has gone). Inside, the walls have numerous nesting boxes built into them **[Plate 3.21]**.

The western outshut has a cobblestone floor, and a softwood roof structure, indicative of a later 19<sup>th</sup>-century date **[Plate 3.22]**. The central outshut has a modern concrete floor, and an elm roof. It is accessed by a late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century plank and batten softwood door. The eastern outshut is accessed externally, through the door in the southern elevation, and could not be inspected.



**3.14** Building A, eastern end, soffit of northern entrance arch, and roof structure within (DIA).



**3.15** Ashlar wall construction to the north of the opening between the two parts of Building A (DIA).



**3.16** Building A, east end, detail of 20<sup>th</sup> century opening in the wall between the two parts of the building (DIA).



**3.17** Detail of graffito (DIA).



**3.18** Building A, east end. Entrance to porch, with pigeon loft above (DIA).



**3.19** Stone flagged floor in the southern porch of the eastern part of Building A (DIA).



**3.20** Detail of jamb stone with name and date (DIA).



**3.22** Building A, western outshut, from the north east (DIA).



**3.21** Building A, east end. View up from ground level into the pigeon house, showing nest boxes built into the gable wall (DIA).

### 3.1.2 Building B

This is a stone-built structure of three bays and two storeys. Its east wall is the west wall of the barn, proving that it was constructed at the same time or later. The north wall – of rubble limestone – is plain, with dressed stone quoins **[Plate 3.23]**. The west wall is gabled, with coping stones, as per the original parts of the main barn **[Plate 3.24]**. Its lower part is obscured by double tallet steps, which rise to a loft door with quoined jambs and a timber lintel **[Plate 3.25]**. The south wall contains a central entrance on the ground floor, flanked by windows **[Plates 3.26-3.27]**. The doorway has high quality chamfered jambs, and a matching stone lintel; it is fitted with a ledge-and-brace timber door that is likely to be its original **[Plate 3.28]**. The windows sit beneath timber lintels and have stone cills with a chamfered central part **[Plate 3.29]**. These cills (designed to have matching jambs that are not present) and the frame of the door (reconstructed to a narrower opening than was originally intended, and with a broken top left hand corner) are reused from an earlier building. On the left of the south elevation is a shallow projection, roofed beneath the eaves of the main structure and at 90 degrees to it. The purpose of this projection is not certain, though it may have contained a manger, which could be filled from the hayloft from an opening in the wall above.

Inside, the building has a floor at its west end, but bearing timbers for transverse beams in the wall, with disturbed masonry above, other sockets in the wall, and joist sockets in the surviving transverse beam show that the floor originally extended across the whole building **[Plates 3.30-3.32]**. The externally blocked windows at ground floor level show their frames internally, divided into two by a horizontal bar, they are plain, and probably 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The ceiling structure is oak, and on the north wall, at the west end of the building there are the remains of a hayrack **[Plate 3.33]**. The floor is partly laid with stone setts, which are likely to be the originals, and partly with blue-brick pavements dating from the late-19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century **[Plate 3.34]**. The floor has been badly undermined by animals in places. The small projection in the south-west corner is accessed through an opening with a timber lintel and well made quoins, the latter (along with the lack of a straight joint in the west wall) suggesting that it is part of the primary phase. It has a small window in its eastern return, with some sign of masonry disturbance below, and there is a window opening into the main part of the building beneath the apex of the roof **[Plate 3.35]**.

The hayloft above is accessed through a doorway from the tallet steps outside **[Plate 3.36]**. There are carved images of horses on the northern jamb **[Plate 3.37]**. The boarded floor within extends half way down the building – on the right the opening to the southern projection is visible **[Plate 3.38]**. The well-made roof has collar trusses and two rows of threaded purlins. The deep principals have a pegged mortice and tenon joint at their apex, and the rafters meet at a ridge board **[Plate 3.39]**. This roof is constructed entirely of oak, and appears to retain all its original timber, albeit the south-western principal has broken at its joint with the collar, allowing the collar to fall away. The short upper collars are nailed in, and are probably a later modification.

The building was built as a cowhouse, or a stable, and certainly fulfilled the latter role when a notice was carved into the exterior, on the right-hand corner of the projection: 'Aug 4 1941/Stable cleaned out'. It is roofed in limestone slates.





**3.23** Building B from the north west, showing the north and west elevations (DIA).



**3.24** West elevation of Building B (DIA).



**3.25** The southern tallet steps, from the south - building B is on the right, Building C on the left (DIA).



**3.26** Building B, south elevation, from the south west (DIA).



**3.27** Building B, south elevation (DIA).



**3.29** Building B, south elevation - detail of window cill (DIA).



**3.28** Building B, door in south elevation (DIA).



**3.30** Building B, interior looking south west (DIA).



**3.32** Inside of door to building B (DIA).



**3.31** Building B, south wall, showing empty sockets in the wall, and timber bearer for now-removed transverse beam (DIA).



**3.33** Hayrack at west end of north wall in Building B (DIA).



**3.34** The floor in the north western corner of Building B (DIA).



**3.38** Inner side of opening through to the southern projection, on the south side of the hayloft of Building B (DIA).



**3.35** Building B - High level opening into southern projection (DIA).



**3.36** The hayloft of Building B, looking south east from the doorway (DIA).



**3.37** Graffiti of horses on the jamb of the door to the hayloft in Building B (DIA).



**3.39** Building B, roof detail (DIA).

### 3.1.3 Building C

This is also a stone-built structure of three bays, oriented at 90 degrees to Building B. It has a coped gable with kneelers at the south end (a refinement related, perhaps, to its visibility from the farmhouse), but while it has neatly cut quoins at the north end, it has no gable kneelers on the gable at that end **[Plates 3.40-3.41]**. This gable is also covered by the roof, rather than being coped. These differences suggest that the building was constructed at a different time from Building B, and the stonework of the north east corner of the building suggests that the tallet step already existed when it was built. Thus, this building is later than Building B, albeit it incorporates some reused material from an earlier building or buildings.

On the ground floor there is a blocked doorway, offset from centre on the north elevation. The doorway and lintel are obscured by 20<sup>th</sup> century corrugated steel and could not be inspected. The west elevation is blank, and there is a second opening in the south elevation. This small window, now blocked with corrugated steel, is within a larger blocked doorway, offset to the west **[Plates 3.42-3.43]**. This doorway was similar in size to the one at the east end, and appears to be a primary feature. On the east side the building is accessed via a primary doorway with carefully cut stone jambs **[Plate 3.44]**. The door and frame are probably 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the door handle may be reused from the original door **[Plate 3.45]**.

The loft above is lit at north and south ends by stone-framed windows. The window at the north end is a chamfered mullion window of two lights, originally glazed, and with holes for ferramenta **[Plates 3.46-3.47]**. It is a domestic window, probably of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and would not have been glazed in its second, agricultural context. The window at the south end is similar, but is of only one light **[Plate 3.48]**. Access to the loft is via a doorway at the top of the tallet steps. A portion of the roof here has a shallower pitch in order to give adequate height to the doorway, but it is not certain how closely this relates to the arrangement in place before the recent replacement of the roof structure. A much-decayed bead-edged boarded door lies on the floor inside: it is probably the original **[Plate 3.49]**. To the right of the doorway a small area of stone slating survives, protecting the top of the gable wall **[Plate 3.50]**.

The ground floor of the building could not be inspected internally, except through a small gap at the top of the door **[Plate 3.51]**. The timber framework of the ceiling appears to be original, but two unconverted timber Samson posts beneath the transverse beams are almost certainly later additions. Upstairs, the 'original collar and tie beam trusses' noted in the list description are no longer present (or were never here to begin with; see below for other inaccuracies in the listing). The current corrugated steel roof is supported on a lightweight softwood collar truss roof structure of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century **[Plate 3.52]**. It is unlikely, however, that the original roof had tie beams, as these would have been a serious impediment to the use of the loft. The list description is also incorrect in describing this small building as having been of five bays, and must – as far as it relates to this building – be taken with a pinch of salt.

A chute running from the loft to the ground-floor space, and the remains of wall finishes in the loft space suggest that the building may have functioned as a granary. The large doors at north and south ends would (prior to the insertion of the Samson posts) have allowed a cart to be driven in at one end, loaded, and driven out through the other. The lower part of the building may have been used as a cartshed – the adjacent field was recorded in the tithe apportionment survey as 'Cart House Garden'.



**3.40** The south elevation of Building C, from the south west (DIA).



**3.41** The north elevation of Building C (DIA).



**3.44** East elevation of Building C (DIA).



**3.42** Window within former larger opening in the southern elevation of Building C (DIA).



**3.43** Straight joint and lintel showing the former extent of the doorway (left side) in the south elevation of Building C (DIA).



**3.45** Detail of door handle (DIA).



**3.50** Remaining area of stone slate on northern gable wall of Building C (DIA).



**3.46** Stone mullion window in northern gable of Building C (DIA).



**3.47** Window in northern gable of Building C, from within (DIA).



**3.48** Window in southern gable of Building C (DIA).



**3.49** Former door to the first floor of Building C (DIA).



**3.51** View into the ground floor of Building C from the gap above the door in the east elevation. The chute is in the centre, and the reveal of the window in the south elevation is on the left (DIA).



**3.52** Roof of Building C, looking east (DIA).

### 3.1.4 Building D

At right angles to the main barn, and attached to the south end of Building C is a range of shelter sheds **[Plates 3.53-3.56]**. The range has a rear wall of limestone rubble, while it has an open front, supported on timber piers on padstones. It is divided into three by low walls beneath two of the trusses, and each section opens on to its own rubble-stone-walled yard. The shelter shed was probably built in one episode, some time after the construction of Building C, which it adjoins **[Plate 3.57]**. However, it is not in its original condition, having undergone a number of repairs and modifications: the most intact part of the building is its southern section. Map evidence indicates that the central section of the shed was removed, only to be reinstated later, and the northernmost enclosure does not appear until the 1902 map.

The roof comprises seven tiebeam trusses, but only the three in the southern part of the range are complete, with their original chamfered purlins and rafters **[Plate 3.58]**. In the central part of the range the roof and its supporting posts are later 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the same is true of the northernmost section. Between the two, however, one original truss (with the assembly mark 'III' clearly visible) sits above the dividing wall **[Plates 3.59-3.61]**. This wall is a 20<sup>th</sup> century block- and brickwork construction, while the southern division is the rubblestone original.

Projecting eastwards from the building are three undateable, but historic drystone walls, creating a separate stock enclosure in front of each section of the building **[Plates 3.62-3.63]**.





**3.53** Building D and its enclosures from the east (DIA).



**3.54** Building D, north end (DIA).



**3.55** The central part of Building D, looking south (DIA).



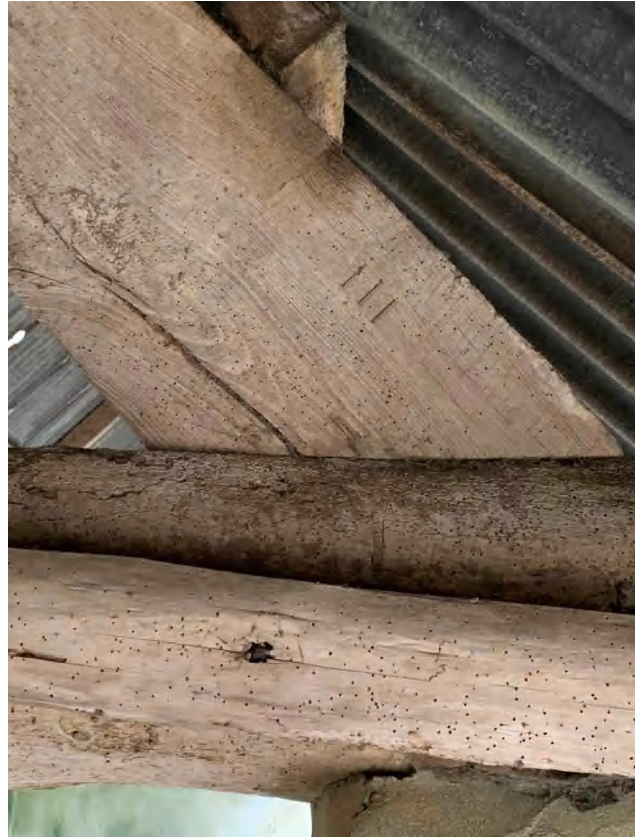
**3.56** The rear (west elevation) of Building D (DIA).



**3.58** The roof of Building D, looking south from the central part into the southern three bays (DIA).



**3.57** Part of the northern end wall of Building D, showing its junction with Building D, and with the drystone enclosure wall (to the left) (DIA).



**3.60** Original truss, showing assembly mark (DIA).



**3.59** The roof of the northern part of Building D, from the central part (DIA).



**3.61** Building D, looking south, showing the northern dividing wall, and modern roof structure (DIA).



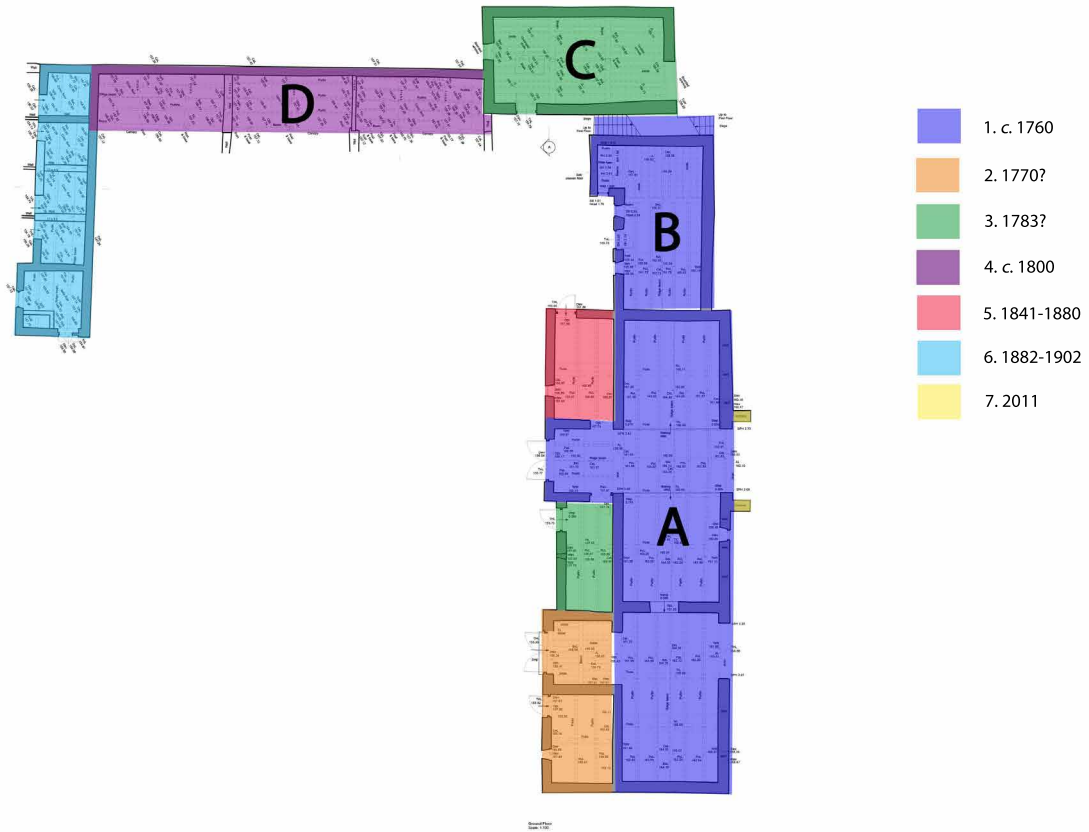
**3.62** The enclosures in front of Building C, from the north (DIA).



**3.63** The northern part of the enclosures, from the south east (DIA).

### **3.2 Building phasing**

With the exception of the construction of the buttresses on the north elevation of the barn which were added in 2011, all other dates can only be approximate. A putative building sequence, based on the relationship between the buildings, their style, means of construction, and their materials, is also offered. Reference to map evidence can give a date range for two of the later phases. The following diagram is a suggested phasing based on the best evidence. It assumes that Building A was the first structure on the site, and that Building B was constructed at the same time, or only very shortly afterwards. The inscribed date in the fabric of the eastern porch suggests that this was an early addition, and the assumption is made that the eastern outshut was added at the same time. It must be borne in mind, however, that the dated stone may have been reused. Because of some details of its construction, Building C may have come next, though it is equally possible that it predated the eastern porch and outshut. The central outshut may have been the next phase, with a possible construction date of 1783. Building D is given its own phase, but could easily belong to the same phase as the central outshut. Irrespective of the uncertainty about precise sequence, most of the buildings are likely to have been constructed between 1760 and c. 1800, albeit some of them made use of reused material salvaged from buildings that can dated to well before 1760. The final phases are established from map evidence, and in each case the largest date range is used. Not noted are later adaptations to buildings, including the partly rebuilt parts of Building C, and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century roof of Building C.



Barrington Downs Phasing plan

## 4.0 Assessment of Significance

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of significance of the historic former agricultural buildings of Barrington Downs Farm, so that the proposals for change to the buildings are fully informed as to its significance and so that the effect of the proposals on that significance can be evaluated.

The assessment begins with a general summary of the building's history and significance; then the various elements of the site are assessed according to a sliding scale of significance, reflecting the extent to which they contribute to the listed building's special architectural and historical interest.

This assessment responds to the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework to 'recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance'. The NPPF defines significance as;

*'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological (potential to yield evidence about the past), architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.*

### 4.2 Assessment of Significance

The barn (Building A) at Barrington Downs Farm is a Grade II listed building, adjoining three other historic agricultural buildings, two of which are part of the listed building. Together, these historic buildings and their curtilage comprise the application site. All four buildings are constructed of local limestone rubble, and date from the early years of the establishment of the farm in c. 1760. Thus the barn is not as old as is estimated in its Historic England list description (this description, which is included here as Appendix 1, dates the building erroneously to mid-late 17<sup>th</sup> century). The building immediately to the east of the main barn structure – Building B, a cow house or stable – was built at the same time as the main barn, or shortly afterwards. A third structure – Building C, possibly a cart shed and granary – was probably constructed shortly after Building B, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The attached shelter shed – Building C – is late-18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Together, the buildings comprise the principal and essential buildings of a post-enclosure farmstead, and are significant for what they can tell us about farming practices at Barrington Downs Farm in particular and in the Cotswolds in general, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings are good examples of high quality agricultural buildings in the local vernacular, using local building materials. The stone for the buildings probably derives from a quarry on the farm itself, and most of the timber used for roof and floor structures is likely to have been derived from oak and elm trees felled locally.

The principal building on the site is the threshing barn. Built in c. 1760, this building is significant as a good example of one of the many such buildings erected during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to provide the additional crop storage and processing space necessary for the new and more efficient farms of the post-enclosure landscape. It is quite typical in its form, with large doorways on one side, and porches and a catslide roof over later outshuts on the other, but is unusually large, comprising eight bays in total. It is also unusual for having been built as two separate functional spaces, divided by a solid wall to roof apex level. The most significant parts of the building are its primary structure, with later additions being somewhat less significant. Of high significance, however, is the pigeon loft added to the building soon after it was built. This addition has significance as a well-preserved example of a facility dating from the final years of popularity of the keeping of pigeons for food and for their manure.

Buildings B and C both date from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and are significant as good examples of some of the smaller agricultural buildings required on a modern mixed farm of the period. Building B was built as a stable or cowhouse, and is significant for its unusual planform, and the high quality of its roof joinery. Some original flooring remains, but the majority of the flooring is of lesser significance, being a later replacement. Building C was probably built as a granary, over a cartshed, and contains window frames from a 17<sup>th</sup> century domestic building. Its principal significance lies in its basic form and original function. The stone tallet steps, which give access to the first floors of both buildings are significant as an usual and economical response to the problem of accessing the dry upper parts of two separate buildings.

Building D was built as a shelter shed for animals in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is typical of structures, and its significance has been diminished by alterations carried out to the structure over the years, and the limited survival of its original fabric north of the southernmost bay.

This special interest is manifest in the fabric and plan form of the buildings, which have the following hierarchy of significance.

Of the **highest significance** are:

- The primary structure of the threshing barn, including the ashlar lower wall on the western side of the eastern part of the barn, candle niches, and ventilation and owl holes in the north and east elevations
- The open volume of Building A, particular its western part, with storage bays to either side of the central threshing floor
- The eastern porch and pigeon house in Building A, including the internal stone-built nesting boxes, and the stone-flagged floor
- The stone two-way tallet steps between buildings B and C
- The relationship that the buildings have with each other, and with the former farmyards to north and south
- Historic graffiti in the buildings, especially those with initials and dates, hexafoils, the 'comet' and images of horses in Building B.

Of **high significance** are:

- The outshuts to either side of and between the porches on the south side of the Building A

- The brick threshing floors of Building A
- The primary structure of Building B, including its roof structure, and the surviving part of its first floor
- The primary structure of Building C and its original openings, including the reused domestic stone windows.
- The southern bay of Building D.

Of **moderate significance** are:

- The much rebuilt northern bays of Building D
- The drystone enclosure walls in the yard, which have been rebuilt over the years.

Of **neutral significance, neither contributing to or detracting** from the significance of the whole are:

- The modern roof structure of Building C, and the modern parts of the roof on Building D
- Modern timber doors on the south side of Building A.

**Factors which detract** from the building's significance are:

- 20<sup>th</sup> century corrugated tin roofs on Buildings C and D
- The poor condition of Building C (in particular).

The wider setting of the buildings is rural, bounded on all sides by arable fields. The immediate setting comprises the former farmyard to the south, with the farmhouse and further former farm buildings to the south and east. The relationship of the buildings to this former yard is highly significant, as this was the focus of the farm, and each the buildings is oriented the space. On the north side of the barn the setting is laid to grass, and harmed to some degree by two later 20<sup>th</sup> century prefabricated steel barns, which interrupt what was once an open outlook on this side.

## 5.0 Commentary on the Proposals

### 5.1 Description of the Proposals and their Impact on the Buildings

The proposals are set out in the Design and Access Statement and on the drawings which this report accompanies. They are described in detail below, with the impact on the listed building set out in italics.

#### 5.1.1 External

On the main north-east elevation the threshing door openings would be glazed, and doors hung externally so that they could be closed. The triangular ventilation holes would all be retained and glazed.

On the south-west elevation the openings would all be retained and glazed, including the rear threshing doors which would be glazed with recessed glazing with doors hung externally.

On the first floor of the stable, two additional narrow windows would be added to provide light to the first floor. The proportions would directly replicate historic examples found elsewhere on the barn.

The tallet steps would be retained and carefully repaired.

The south-east gable would have two additional glazed slot windows at ground floor level, and one vertically proportioned new window at first floor level, within the area which has been rebuilt in blockwork.

On the north-west gable the existing hayloft opening would be retained and glazed.

The former granary, which is suffering from cracking and movement, would be carefully repaired. The existing openings would be glazed, with doors hung externally. The former cart entrance in the end gable elevation would be opened and glazed.

The open-fronted stock sheds would be retained and carefully converted to two additional guest bedrooms (one each in the extreme north and south of the sheds) with the central pen being converted to two en suite bathrooms to serve each of the bedrooms. The fronts of the bedrooms would be glazed with sliding doors whilst the central pen front would be infilled with vertical timber and provided with one new window per bathroom. Overall the form and character of the buildings would be retained, whilst there would be alterations consistent with a new use. The stockyard walls would be retained.

Two new metal flues are proposed in the roof of the main barn to allow wood-burners to be installed.

#### 5.1.2 Internal

Building A would be sensitively converted to the main living accommodation. The whole of the floor area of this part of the building would be retained as one open space, open to the rafters. Areas of



historic brick flooring from the threshing floor would be lifted and then relaid/ reused. A new opening is proposed in the south wall to the outshut to connect the main living space with the proposed kitchen, which would be housed in the outshut. The historic door from this outshut would be retained but fixed shut.

The southern outshut would be re-used as a utility and small WC. The eastern section of the main barn, which is physically slightly separate from the western part, would be used as the entrance hall, boot room, and small snug sitting room within the outshut with the opening in the wall between the two parts of the barn enlarged. One bay – the most eastern bay, which also happens to be the part of the barn which has been most altered – would be converted horizontally, with a mezzanine bedroom over a library area and stairs to access this. The mezzanine would cover approximately one bay – an eighth – of the overall part of the main barn.

Above the library there would be a bedroom, the bathroom for which would be within the pigeon loft area.

Building B, the former stable, would be converted to a bedroom and en suite bathroom on the ground floor, accessed by a new door in the western end of the main barn to allow internal access. The upper part of this space, where there is evidence of a continuous hayloft across the whole space, would be converted to another bedroom and bathroom.

Building C, the former cart shed/ granary, would be converted to two further bedrooms with en suite bathrooms, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor.

Building D, the open fronted stock pens, would be converted to two further bedrooms and two bathrooms as described above.

### **5.1.3 Conservation Officer Comments**

The Conservation Officer has offered comments on the previous proposals, which are included below, with a response to each point to demonstrate how the proposals have been altered to take account of the concerns raised.

Conservation Officer Comment	Response
<p>The threshing barn and farmhouse at Barrington Downs Farm are both Grade II Listed Buildings. The historic ranges to the west of the barn, including a barn and shelter shed, are attached structures and also form part of the listing. The Local Planning Authority is statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the buildings, their setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest they may possess, in accordance with Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.</p>	<p>This is noted and all agreed.</p>
<p>Barrington Downs Farm is a fairly isolated farmstead off of the main road to the east of the village of Aldsworth. The farmhouse dates to the C18 with C19 alteration. The barn, subject of this application, pre-dates the farmhouse. The building dates to the mid to late C17. It is constructed in local rubble stone, with dressed stone quoins, and a stone slate roof set within verge copings to the gable ends. It is a large threshing barn, with a long rectangular plan form and two sets of large opposing entries. Those to the south side are set in high projecting gable porches, with cat slide lean-tos flanking these. Those to the north side are flush and set within segmental arched head openings. To this aspect there are also numerous triangular ventilation holes. Within the larger porch entry is a pigeon loft, lined with pigeon holes. To the interior are collar and tie beam trusses. Some cobbled floor surfacing survives. There has been some structural intervention with wall repairs and two buttresses dating to a 2011 consent. Unfortunately a gable appears to have been re-built at high level with blockwork to its inner skin. Generally the building and its roof are in a reasonable state of repair.</p>	<p>Our research has helped answer this question and shown that the barn doesn't pre-date the farmhouse and was built at the same time, c. 1760. It is nonetheless a group of buildings worthy of protection due to their special architectural and historic interest and therefore, as functionally redundant buildings, in need of a sustainable and viable new use to ensure investment is made into the fabric.</p>
<p>It is very commonly accepted that residential conversion is an appropriate new use for an historic barn. There are very many barns across the District that have undergone residential conversion. Even the most sympathetic of conversion schemes have an avoidably dramatic and detrimental impact on the historic character of barns as agricultural structures, even in the simplest upgrading for habitation. But some level of harm is of course accepted as being outweighed by the public benefit of securing a long term use for the building, and its associated long term maintenance and repair.</p>	<p>This is noted as a positive approach, and one we agree with. Without a use which means that someone is prepared to keep the buildings in good order they will rapidly become derelict and important historic fabric will be lost.</p>
<p>Some barns, however, stand out as being of particularly high sensitivity to alteration. This is often where the barns are early and have numerous features of interest. The threshing barn at Barrington Downs dates potentially to the mid C17, pre-dating the vast majority of C19 and C18 barns that are commonly converted. This introduces some rarity value and additional historic significance. Its features of note include the double porch entry, the expansive natural stone tile roof slopes, and internal features such as the pigeon loft and cobbled flooring. It is relatively unaltered from its state as a functional early historic agricultural building.</p>	<p>We have show that this barn is not a particularly early example, although we agree that it does have features of particular interest. The threshing barn is in fact part of the 'vast majority' of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century barns, which in this comment seems to indicate conversion would be more palatable than if it was a 17<sup>th</sup> century building. We agree with the assessment of the features of note (see Section 4 above).</p>

<p>Some merits of the scheme are of course noted, including no intention to interrupt the main slopes with rooflights, no subdivision of one of the main threshing barn spaces. So the sensitivities of the building have to some extent been recognised.</p>	<p>This is noted.</p>
<p>But for the reasons set out below, several of the proposed alterations would be very harmful to the significance of this early threshing barn.</p>	<p>The elements discussed in the CO comments as being particularly harmful have been omitted or changed.</p>
<p>It is necessary in this case to re-visit the principle of conversion of the main C17 threshing barn element of this farm complex. This must start with a thorough understanding of the building. Given the high level of significance of this barn, the supporting information within the application is lacking in terms of detailed historical analysis. It would be appropriate in this case to have a detailed report from an historic building consultant setting out the history and evolution of the building, dating its various features and recording their level of survival. For example what is the extent of survival of the roof structure, and how extensive is the historic cobbled flooring through the barn. The report should also cover the ancillary structures, including the shelter range. A phasing diagram is always useful, to date and help understand the significance of the various structures and features.</p>	<p>As noted above the building is not 17<sup>th</sup> century, and therefore there ought to be no need to revisit the principle of conversion as implied here. The principle is the same as for the many 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings noted above.</p> <p>This Report has provided the required thorough understanding of the building. The history and evolution of the buildings and site have been explained.</p> <p>The various features have been dated and recorded. The ancillary structures are included.</p>

	<p>To answer the specific questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The principal elements of the roof structure of the main barn (Building A) are largely original but the rafters have been mainly replaced. In Building B it is largely original although in poor condition. Some elements have rotted away altogether (including about half of the hay loft floor) and modern elements have been added and attached with nails in an apparent effort to shore up the roof. In Building C the roof is a 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement. In Building D the roof is a largely modern replacement.</li> <li>b) There is no cobbled floor as such. There are two small areas of blue brick floor, which may be originally but are more likely to be 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the threshing floors of the main barn (ie the central bay). Either side the floors (the storage bays) are of rammed earth. There is a small area of probably original flagstone in the porch of the main barn (Building A). The floor in the stable (Building B) appears original but has been very undermined by burrowing creatures and is suffering from heave and is close to collapse. There is an area of setted floor in the outshut. There are no other historic floors.</li> </ul> <p>A phasing plan is included in this report.</p>
<p>We would then be better placed to understand the full impact of the proposed works. I am concerned that even basic changes, such as introducing a new habitable floor surface and ceiling linings, and introducing new glazing into the openings, would be proportionately far more harmful in this specific case, due to the high significance of the building. In terms of the long-term repair and maintenance of the listed building, there should be more discussion of optimum viable use than there appears to be within the information currently submitted.</p>	<p>This Report should assist in understanding the impact of the proposals. The building is perhaps not of quite such high significance as if it were a 17<sup>th</sup> century building.</p>
<p>Large new opening in eastern gable end and two narrower openings below the above. Loss of fabric; uncharacteristic openings within this context. Intrusive and harmful to character and integrity.</p>	<p>These openings are within a rebuilt area of gable wall where internally there is modern blockwork. There would therefore be no loss of historic fabric. Nevertheless the form and proportions of the openings have been changed, and are copied from openings found elsewhere in the barn to ensure compatibility.</p>

Loss of boarded door treatment to the south. Replacement by glazed screens would be harmful.	The boarded door is not historic. The glazing would be introduced internally, with boarded doors retained externally to maintain character.
Glazed screens on north side not as recessed as they could be. At least one other 'single size' boarded door also shown removed.	Glazed screens have been further recessed. The single door is not historic.
Internal subdivision to full height in one of the large barn spaces: very harmful, as relatively little open void is maintained.	This is in a very small part of the barn against the modern blockwork wall. Seven-eighths of the overall space would be retained as open to the rafters. The vast majority of open void would be retained. In our view this is a minimal alteration whereby the original character of the building would still be clearly maintained.
Alterations to historic walls – enlargement to doorway in dividing wall. Harmful to the fabric and features, as well as historic layout and integrity. Alteration in wall between hall and boot room not clear.	<p>There is already an opening in the dividing wall between the two sections of Building, which would be enlarged. It is acknowledged that this would result in some small loss of historic fabric but the division between the two parts of the building would still be legible by the retention of the wall nibs.</p> <p>No alteration to the opening between the hall and the boot room is proposed, but two new door openings are proposed between the boot room and the sitting room; and the sitting room and the library. This is because the outshut which would be converted to the sitting room currently is only accessible externally and cannot be accessed internally from within the building. In pursuit of being able to use (and therefore conserve and repair) the outshut, this small alteration is not considered to be unduly harmful.</p>
Opening to pigeon loft relocated: very harmful. Unlikely that the important features of the pigeon loft could be adequately preserved with the proposed use as a bathroom.	The scheme has been changed such that the pigeon loft and its openings will all be retained.
Glazed link between main barn and the attached smaller barn or stable: highly incongruous and very visually intrusive.	This has been omitted.
Infilling of a presumed historic doorway is also noted as harmful. An internal link would be appropriate.	The alterations to the doorway have been omitted and an internal link proposed.
New first-floor opening (stable): large and sits within an important area of blank walling. Falls in uncomfortable proximity to the historic openings below, and very much compromises the historic character of this elevation.	This opening has been redesigned and now consists of two much smaller vertically proportioned openings.

Stone tallet steps: apparent proposed demolition is very concerning.	The steps will not be demolished.
Need for greater understanding of the existing material in the adjacent barn	This has been provided in this report.
Openings in smaller barn should be repaired if necessary but not 'straightened up' or changed in proportion.	Noted and scheme altered accordingly.
Proposed demolition of shelter shed is very concerning. Greater analysis of its timber structures should be provided.	The scheme has been altered so that the shelter sheds will be retained and converted to additional guest bedrooms.
Level of intervention wholly unacceptable, as the form, features and character of this part of the building are not respected.	The scheme has been changed to ensure the form, features and character of the buildings are all respected.
Proposed removal of stock pen enclosures is unacceptably harmful to the historic integrity and character of the farm complex.	The scheme has been altered so that the stock pen enclosures would be retained.
Proposed swimming pool is wholly unacceptable within the context of this significant historic farm complex, as it is completely at odds with the agricultural character of the site.	Scheme has been altered and swimming pool omitted.

## 5.2 Justification of the Proposals

The benefits of the scheme are that a collection of redundant, historically interesting farm buildings would be repaired, conserved and provided with a sustainable new use which would be compatible with their special interest and which would lead to their long-term care and conservation. The amended scheme would achieve this in a way which would have minimal impact on their special interest and which would retain their features of importance. Indeed on the main approach to the site it would not be immediately apparent that they had been converted.

As set out in Section 1.3, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan applicable to this site comprises Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 3 August 2018). Decision-makers must also comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The relevant policies are EN2, EN10 and EN13.

Policy EN2 requires conformity with Cotswold Design Code and that proposals be of high design quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality. This has been carefully considered and the proposals comply/

Policy EN10 requires the conservation of designated heritage assets and the sustaining of their character, appearance and significance. Proposals which lead to harm will not be permitted without a clear and convincing justification which should balance the importance of the asset; the scale

of harm; and the nature and level of the public benefit of the proposal. The proposals carefully conserve and sustain the listed buildings and there is a clear and convincing justification for the proposed works and use.

Policy EN13 considers the impact of conversion of non-domestic historic buildings, and says that alternative uses will be allowed where the conversion will secure the future of the asset which would otherwise be at risk and would conserve its important features. Overall, the buildings would be conserved in a manner that is appropriate to their significance, by carefully converting the buildings to a light-touch residential use, carrying out repairs and conserving their interiors and setting. However, as the proposals would involve some elements of low level 'less than substantial' harm, including the removal of some small sections of original walling. However, the conflict with policy would not be major and is decisively outweighed by the benefits of the scheme.

In terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Act forms the legal basis for decision making where a proposed development will impact listed buildings or a conservation area. For listed buildings it sets out that 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' (s. 16 and 66).

These statutory requirements set a high bar for allowing development that would harm heritage assets. However, the statutory requirements must be viewed in light of the relevant heritage policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As noted by the court in *Mordue v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2015): '*Paragraph 134 of the NPPF appears as part of a fasciculus of paragraphs, set out above, which lay down an approach which corresponds with the duty in section 66(1). Generally, a decision-maker who works through those paragraphs in accordance with their terms will have complied with the section 66(1) duty.*' Although the court was concerned with the previous version of the NPPF and section 66 specifically, the same approach is considered appropriate in respect of the heritage policies in the current NPPF and in respect of the section 16 and 72 duties. It is therefore important to consider the proposed development against the relevant NPPF policies.

Turning to consider the NPPF, as explained above, there are a few small elements of the proposals, comprising the removal of some small areas of original fabric that would result in some harm to the buildings. This would be considerably 'less than substantial harm' in accordance with the terminology of the NPPF.

Whilst the Cotswold District Local Plan makes no provision for harm to heritage significance to be weighed directly against public benefits, the NPPF, which is a material planning consideration, does allow for this. As noted above, the courts have previously held that a decision-maker that properly works its way through the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF will typically have satisfied its statutory duties under the 1990 Act (see *Mordue v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2015)). Paragraph 193 of the NPPF makes clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether the harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. It is considered that the proposals will cause some harm to the buildings and that this harm would be 'less than substantial harm' in accordance with the terminology of the NPPF.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that any less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is considered that in this case, the 'less than substantial' harm to the listed buildings resulting from the proposals would be outweighed by the following public benefits:

- Overcoming the problem of the buildings being redundant and vacant, with no other future use;
- Repairing and conserving the buildings, particularly Building C which is in a poor state of repair;
- Ensuring that further loss of historic fabric (for example where floors are collapsing internally) does not happen;
- Keeping the buildings under one ownership and not fragmenting the ownership of the site;
- Conserving and improving the settings, and keeping small but characterful features such as ironwork;
- Via this report, contributing the knowledge and understanding of the site, and providing a detailed photographic record of the site.

Overall and on balance, therefore, the proposals would comply with the policies of the NPPF.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The proposals would lead to robust and meaningful public benefits, by giving these buildings a sustainable new use and by carefully repairing and conserving their fabric and improving their relationship with their surroundings. The proposals would conserve the significance of the buildings and their setting and, as such, they would meet the tests for sustainable development outlined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), insofar as they relate to the historic environment.

Although some harm has been identified within the proposals, this harm is considered to be 'less than substantial', in accordance with the terminology of the NPPF (para 196). The many compelling benefits offered by the scheme would easily outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' caused and are, therefore, considered a material consideration which overcomes the presumption against proposals set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Furthermore, the NPPF heritage policies are also a material consideration to overcome the in part non-compliance with the local and regional plans.



## Appendix I - Statutory List Descriptions

### **BARN CIRCA 50 METRES NORTH OF BARRINGTON DOWNS FARMHOUSE**

Heritage Category: Listed Building  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1090395  
Date first listed: 28-May-1987  
Statutory Address: BARN CIRCA 50 METRES NORTH OF BARRINGTON DOWNS FARMHOUSE  
County: Gloucestershire  
District: Cotswold (District Authority)  
Parish: Barrington  
National Grid Reference: SP1884009731

#### Details

BARRINGTON - SP 10 NE 7/2 Barn c50m north of Barrington Downs Farmhouse GV II Large double barn. Mid-late C17. Limestone rubble with dressed stone quoins. Stone slate roof. Long rectangular plan with a 3-bay extension to the left gable end. Two projecting porches on the south side. Lean-tos either side of and between the porches. Low double doorways with timber lintels to both porches. Right-hand porch two storeys with single-light window to the first floor, slit-like access to pigeon loft with two stone slate landing platforms above. Single width doorways to lean-tos. Two segmental-headed double doorways on the north side. Blocked pitching window. Triangular ventilation holes. Extension to left gable end with central flat-chamfered doorway flanked by single lights. Flat coping at the gable ends of the barn and extension. Interior; barn with two-storey porch. Three bays with collar and tie beam trusses, some timbers replaced C20. Pigeon loft lined with pigeon holes. Low double-width doorway in wall dividing the two halves of the barn. Adjoining barn 5 bays with original collar and tie beam trusses.

Listing NGR: SP1884009731

### **BARRINGTON DOWNS FARMHOUSE**

Heritage Category: Listed Building  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1090394  
Date first listed: 28-May-1987  
Statutory Address: BARRINGTON DOWNS FARMHOUSE  
County: Gloucestershire  
District: Cotswold (District Authority)  
Parish: Barrington  
National Grid Reference: SP1883609682

#### Details

BARRINGTON - SP 10 NE 7/1 Barrington Downs Farmhouse GV II Former farmhouse (possibly once two houses). C18 with late C19 and C20 extensions. C18 range; limestone rubble with dressed stone quoins. C19 extensions; coursed squared and dressed limestone. Stone slate roof with ashlar stacks. Rectangular plan to C18 main body with C20 extension

to the left gable end, C19 extensions at right angles at rear of main body. C18 main body; 2 storeys and attic lit by two C20 slate-hung 2-light roof dormers from eaves. All other windows 2 and 3-light stone-mullioned casements. All windows with horizontal glazing bars. C20 glazed door with glazing bars within a flat-chamfered surround lower left. Similar but blocked doorway to the right. Cellar under the right-hand end. The right-hand return of the C19 extension forms the present entrance front. Part-glazed C19 door within a round-headed surround with a keystone initialled 'R.H.H.' (Hurst) and 4-pane sashes to the C19 part.

Listing NGR: SP1883609682

## Appendix II - Planning Policy and Guidance

### **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**

The Act is legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment.

Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

*[...] in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State 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.*

Similarly, section 66 of the above Act states that:

*In considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State 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.*

### **Local Policy**

#### **Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 3 August 2018)**

Planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant policies in this Local Plan, which should be considered together, unless material considerations indicate otherwise

#### **Policy EN2**

##### **DESIGN OF THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Development will be permitted which accords with the Cotswold Design Code (Appendix D). Proposals should be of design quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality.

#### **Policy EN10**

##### **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS**

1. In considering proposals that affect a designated heritage asset or its setting, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

2. Development proposals that sustain and enhance the character, appearance and significance of designated heritage assets (and their settings), and that put them to viable uses, consistent with their conservation, will be permitted.

3. Proposals that would lead to harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting will not be permitted, unless a clear and convincing justification of public benefit can be demonstrated to outweigh that harm. Any such assessment will take account, in the balance of material considerations: the importance of the asset; the scale of harm; and the nature and level of the public benefit of the proposal.

#### **Policy EN11**

##### **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS - CONSERVATION AREAS**

Development proposals, including demolition, that would affect Conservation Areas and their settings, will be permitted provided they:

- a. preserve and where appropriate enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area in terms of siting, scale, form, proportion, design, materials and the retention of positive features;
- b. include hard and soft landscape proposals, where appropriate, that respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- c. will not result in the loss of open spaces, including garden areas and village greens, which make a valuable contribution to the character and/or appearance, and/or allow important views into or out of the Conservation Area;
- d. have regard to the relevant Conservation Area appraisal (where available); and
- e. do not include internally illuminated advertisement signage unless the signage does not have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area or its setting.

#### **Policy EN13**

##### **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT: THE CONVERSION OF NON-DOMESTIC HISTORIC BUILDINGS (DESIGNATED AND NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS)**

1. Proposals for the conversion of non-domestic historic buildings to alternative uses will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. the conversion would secure the future of a heritage asset, and/or its setting, which would otherwise be at risk;
- b. the proposed conversion would conserve the significance of the asset (including its form, features, character and setting);
- c. the heritage asset is structurally sound; and
- d. the heritage asset is suitable for, and capable of, conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding which would be tantamount to the erection of a new building.

2. Proposals to extend or alter heritage assets that have been converted, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed works would preserve the significance of the asset (including its form and features), its setting and/or the character or the appearance of the surrounding landscape in a manner that is proportionate to the significance of the asset.

## National Planning Policy Framework

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (February 2019). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset's significance provided.

Paragraph 7 of the Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to 'contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' and that, at a very high level, 'the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

At paragraph 8, the document expands on this as follows:

*Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives:*

*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.*

and notes at paragraph 10:

*10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).*

With regard to the significance of a heritage asset, the framework contains the following policies:

*190. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into*

*account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 192 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

With regard to potential 'harm' to the significance designated heritage asset, in paragraph 193 the framework states the following:

*...great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether the any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 194 that:

*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.*

Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm' to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset paragraph 195 of the NPPF states that:

*...local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

With regard to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, of the NPPF states the following;

*196. 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.*

In terms of non-designated heritage assets, the NPPF states:

*197. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balance judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and world heritage sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 200 states that:

*Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

Concerning conservation areas and world heritage sites it states, in paragraph 201, that:

*Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.*

## **National Planning Practice Guidance**

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published on 23 July 2019 to support the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 and the planning system. It includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

The relevant guidance is as follows:

### **Paragraph 2: What is meant by the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment?**

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent

to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. So where the complete or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified (noting that the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted), the aim then is to:

- capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance which is to be lost
- interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past; and
- make that publicly available (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 199)

### **Paragraph 6: What is "significance"?**

'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

- **archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- **historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In legislation and designation criteria, the terms 'special architectural or historic interest' of a listed building and the 'national importance' of a scheduled monument are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance.



***Paragraph 7: Why is 'significance' important in decision-taking?***

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

***Paragraph 13: What is the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account?***

The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

***Paragraph 15: What is the optimum viable use for a heritage asset and how is it taken into account in planning decisions?***

The vast majority of heritage assets are in private hands. Thus, sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires an incentive for their active conservation. Putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to lead to the investment in their maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation.

By their nature, some heritage assets have limited or even no economic end use. A scheduled monument in a rural area may preclude any use of the land other than as a pasture, whereas a listed building may potentially have a variety of alternative uses such as residential, commercial and leisure.

In a small number of cases a heritage asset may be capable of active use in theory but be so important and sensitive to change that alterations to accommodate a viable use would lead to an unacceptable loss of significance.

It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner, but also for the future conservation of the asset: a series of failed ventures could result in a number of unnecessary harmful changes being made to the asset.

If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative economically viable uses, the optimum viable use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes. The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most economically viable one. Nor need it be the original use. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between alternative economically viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner, subject of course to obtaining any necessary consents.

Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused, and provided the harm is minimised. The policy on addressing substantial and less than substantial harm is set out in paragraphs 193-196 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

***Paragraph 18: How can the possibility of harm to a heritage asset be assessed?***

What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 194-196) apply.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later additions to historic buildings where those additions are inappropriate and harm the buildings' significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It also makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and sets out certain assets in respect of which harm should be exceptional/wholly exceptional (see National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 194).

***Paragraph 20: What is meant by the term public benefits?***

The National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

\*\*\*\*\*OPTIONAL IF UNLISTED/ NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET\*\*\*\*\*

***Paragraph 39: What are non-designated heritage assets and how important are they?***

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.

***Paragraph 40: How are non-designated heritage assets identified?***

There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence.

Plan-making bodies should make clear and up to date information on non-designated heritage assets accessible to the public to provide greater clarity and certainty for developers and decision-makers. This includes information on the criteria used to select non-designated heritage assets and information about the location of existing assets.

It is important that all non-designated heritage assets are clearly identified as such. In this context, it can be helpful if local planning authorities keep a local list of non-designated heritage assets, incorporating any such assets which are identified by neighbourhood planning bodies. (Advice on local lists can be found on Historic England's website.) They should also ensure that up to date information about non-designated heritage assets is included in the local historic environment record.

In some cases, local planning authorities may also identify non-designated heritage assets as part of the decision-making process on planning applications, for example, following archaeological investigations. It is helpful if plans note areas with potential for the discovery of non-designated heritage assets with archaeological interest. The historic environment record will be a useful indicator of archaeological potential in the area.

### **Other Relevant Policy Documents**

**Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (March 2015)**

**Historic England: Conservation Principles and Assessment (2008)**

