

Appendix 1 - Design & Access Statement of October 2020 accompanying applications 20/02450/FUL & 20/02455/LBC.



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Appendix 1 Pre-application meeting notes 8/7/2020 ref.349/4.02/RW



Existing View along Larkins Lane of the listed boundary wall to Meadow Larkins



Site Location Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement accompanies a planning application for improvements and extensions to the house called Meadow Larkins on Larkins Lane in Old Headington Conservation Area. The house which we are planning to upgrade is a converted stable and is cited in the Conservation Area Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the area's character (p.55). The large rubble stone wall which forms the boundary between this site and Larkins Lane is a listed structure to which we are planning to make some sensitive limited alterations. The site sits directly to the north of the listed threshing barn of Mathers Farm. For these reasons, we have sought specialist pre-application advice from the council's Conservation Officer as well as the standard planning advice. The pre-application feedback received from the officers is minuted in the meeting notes attached in the appendix. Separate elements of the feedback and how they have been addressed are referenced in the relevant sections of this statement.

This statement makes the case to rescue this poorly adapted barn and transform it into a high-quality family home better suited to modern living, with a much lower carbon footprint, and with a coherent architectural response to its historical context.

2.0 THE SITE

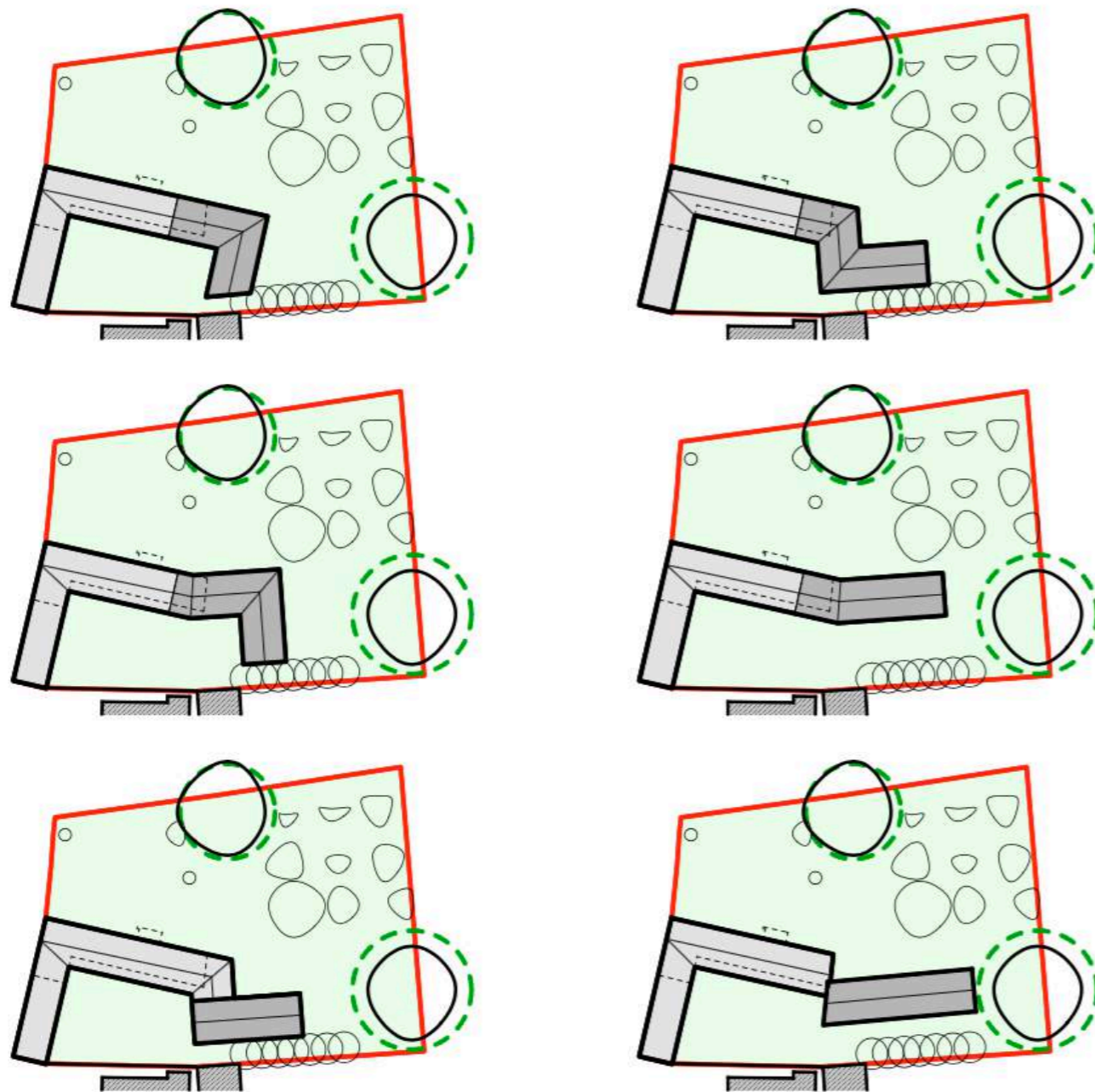
The site sits to the east of Larkins Lane where it descends steeply away from the heart of the village. It is largely hidden from view by the listed wall but the access through that wall, made at the time the stable was converted to a dwelling, allows a limited view through the site to the paddock beyond. Within the site there is the converted stable which links to the ruins of a cowshed of which the listed wall was once one side. These buildings, the garden court they contain to the south and the driveway to the north, comprise the western half of the site. The eastern half is an area of garden where there used to be an orchard, some trees of which remain, all of which are relatively recently planted; this is not an ancient orchard. It has been established that this part of the site does fall within the domestic curtilage and is not agricultural land. The documents proving this are included in this submission; this was accepted to be the case by the council when a previous planning application was made to develop the site in 2018.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

The conversion of the stable to a dwelling and the new opening in the listed wall were granted permission in the 1970's. The planning application in 2018 to develop the eastern half of the site with three new houses went through extended pre-application inquiries prior to the submission and key responses in the officers' feedback to both the pre-app and the full application are included with this submission. The application was withdrawn when officers gave their opinion that it could not be recommended for approval and an archaeological investigation would be required to be completed before any planning decision could be made. The feedback has helped inform the new site strategy generating the proposal to extend the house. The requisite initial archaeology investigations have now been made, in line with the brief of the city's Archaeology Officer, as covered below.

4.0 HERITAGE

Because of the location in the Conservation Area, the listed status of the street wall and the proximity of the listed barn, we have commissioned a full heritage assessment by Donald Insall Associates, which is included within this application. This is a thoroughly researched and carefully considered assessment of the site and its historic context. It was the starting point for the design strategy and it has informed key parts of the design process, including the treatment of the existing stable and which parts to preserve and which to replace, the decision to re-roof the ruin of the cowshed but keep it as exposed stone internally, and the location, materials and style of the new accommodation wing.



A selection of the alternative site strategies

5.0 DESIGN

5.1 PRINCIPLE

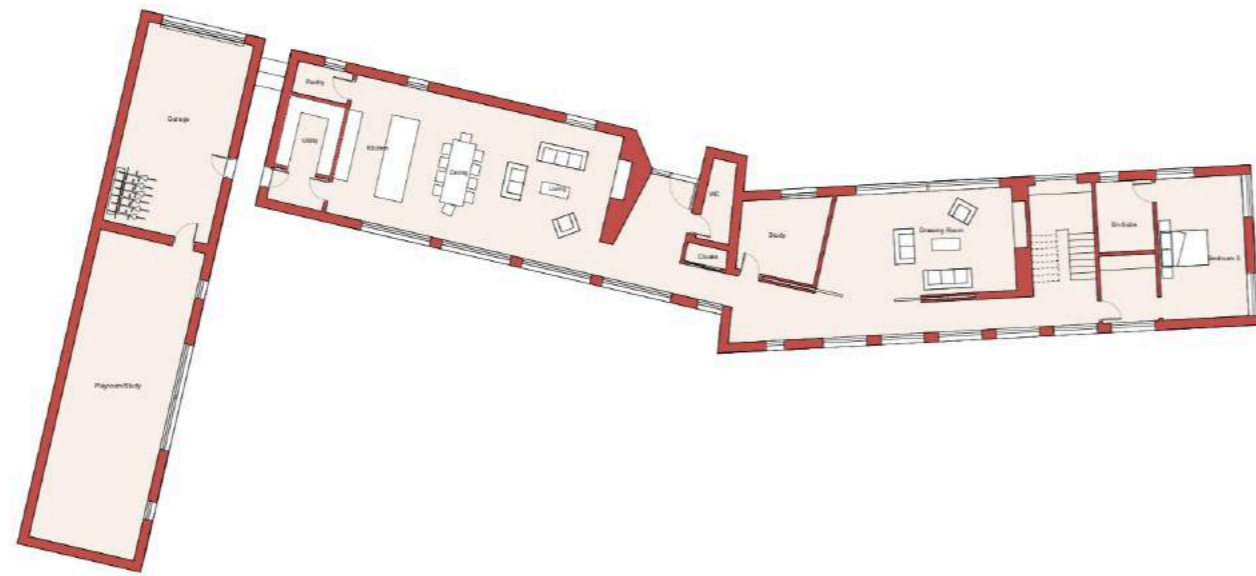
The size and location of this site make it appropriate in principle for more housing as is strongly encouraged by national and local government, and as planning officers acknowledged in the last pre-application process. However, what the last planning application proved was that there were other parameters relating to conservation and context which worked against dense development of the site, such as the value of the historic green setting and the view from the road.

But if a larger development with additional housing units may not be viable, what should be possible, and what should be supported given the site's size and sustainable location, is for the existing house to be considerably enlarged to maximise the site's potential for housing without causing harm to the context.

That is what the applicants wish to do and that is what this proposal comprises. The owners have bought the site to make it their family home, but the existing stable conversion needs complete rehabilitation and is too small for the family, so they wish to upgrade the house and sensitively extend it to provide them with the house they need, to make good the damage done by the 1970's conversion, and to create a cluster of new and old built elements of very high design quality which increase the positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

5.2 SITE STRATEGY

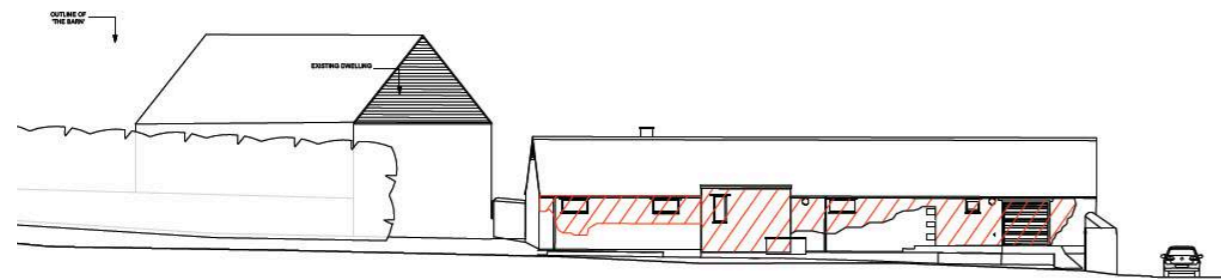
The primary question in developing the design was where to locate the new accommodation. Different site strategies were investigated, some of which are illustrated here. The previous planning application had shown that new development on the northern part of the orchard area would probably not be acceptable because it would block the existing views from Larkins Lane through to the paddock beyond. Building within the courtyard to the south of the existing stable conversion was not viable because of the limitations on space and height there. The conclusion was that the right place to build the extension was on the southern part of the orchard where any development would not maintain the openness of the site when viewed from the entrance and would not require the removal of the orchard trees. At the same time there was sufficient space for the requisite accommodation, and the lie of the land meant a two-storey building would stie well below the listed barn to the south and, with careful design, not have a negative impact on it, nor on the amenity of the occupants. This is covered more fully below.



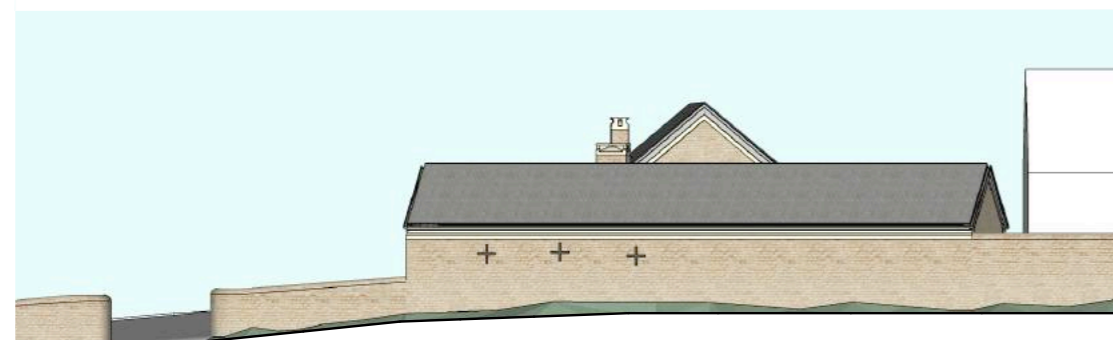
Proposed Floorplan, left to right: reconstructed cowshed, rehabilitated stable, new



Proposed north elevation, left to right: new barn , rehabilitated stable, reconstructed cowshed



Existing north elevation of stable. Red hatch indicates areas of 1970s interventions in stone wall to be



Proposed west elevation to Larkins lane, showing new cowshed roof above listed wall.

5.3 FORM

The proposal has three distinct parts:

1. the stable conversion which is the current house,
2. the ruined cowshed currently partially occupied by the house's garage and service rooms
3. a new two-storey wing, matching the existing in form and material.

1. The stable conversion

The intention here is to strip away the unsympathetic additions made when it was first converted to a home, then to reinstate it in the same overall form so it retains and recaptures its character. So the porch and landscape format windows on the front will be removed and a new recessed entrance porch and narrow portrait-format windows added. The historic gap between stable and cowshed will be reinstated, and the rear elevation recreated as a run of stone columns with glass infill much more in the spirit of the original stable block. The roof will be rebuilt so it can span over a completely clear internal volume which will become the main living space of the house with a strong barn aesthetic and sense of high, open space.

Pre-application advice and action:

Officers accepted the principle of partial demolition and reconstruction while requesting further analysis and consideration of the extent of the replacement of the front wall. This has been carefully analysed through inspection and the indicative line of retention is now shown on the drawings, subject to review during the works depending on what is uncovered.

2. The ruined cowshed and listed wall

The intention here is to make good the damage caused when the roof was removed in the latter half of the twentieth century. A new roof will be built on top of the listed wall and the rebuilt eastern wall. The space beneath will house a generous garage and workshop at the north end and an open annexe space at the other end for ancillary domestic uses. These spaces will leave the listed wall – and all walls – as exposed rubble stone on the inside so with the new tall opening facing the house's courtyard garden the building will have a very strong barn-like character, the listed wall will be stabilised and protected and its character will be expressed and enjoyed on both sides. When the stable was converted to a house the roof was extended over the cowshed ruin and onto the listed wall where a new gable end was added atop the wall. This is backed with blockwork inside. This small gable element will be removed so the original cowshed roof form can be built to the full length it once was.

Pre-application advice and action:

Officers considered the construction of a new barn to take the place of the original cowshed to be acceptable and welcome in principle, subject to further detail being submitted of the proposed capping and eaves detail to sit atop the listed wall. This information is on the application drawings.



Existing View from Barton Lane



Proposed View from Barton Lane (not verified)



South elevation (with boundary wall and hedging not shown). Dashed line shows silhouette of listed barn

3. The new wing

With the existing stable occupied with the main living space, a new extension will be required for all the other rooms in the house – the bedrooms etc. The intention is for these to be housed in a new two-storey wing of a similar form to the stable and cowshed, so they form a cohesive family of three elements sharing the same simple barn-like form, the same materials of coursed rubble Cotswold stone selected to fit the context and natural slate for the roofs, and the same mix of narrow portrait-format windows and much larger fully-glazed barn-like openings. They will be finished with the same restrained contemporary detailing: minimal framing to the windows and doors, and the roofs elevated off the stone walls with a canted stone coping and steel shadow gap.

The new barn is located in the south-east corner of the curtilage, spaced off but running parallel with the southern boundary shared with the listed barn. In this location it will not impinge substantially on the glimpsed views through the site from Larkins Lane and will not obstruct the view of the listed barn gable from the site entrance. It will not require the removal of any of the mature trees in the garden. The large leylandii hedge screening this site from the listed barn will be replaced with a new hedge of mixed native species, so the new wing will be largely screened from views from the south. It will be more than 2m lower than the listed barn, it will have a similar large barn opening with stained timber boarding, and there will be no windows in the boarded opening above ground floor, so it will be sympathetic in style and subservient to the listed barn, and not have any negative effect on its setting.

Pre-application advice and action:

Officers stated (by email 9.7.20):

- “Further consideration needs to be given to the design and massing of the two storey extension including the roof form, eaves details and fenestration details. The building should have a more agricultural rather than domestic appearance.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the glazing in the south elevation of the two storey extension particularly at first floor to ensure that there is no actual or perceived overlooking of private amenity space to the south. We cannot ensure that the vegetation on the boundary will always be there.”

In response to this feedback:

- The roof pitch to all three barns has been steepened to match more closely traditional barn roofs.
- The eaves detail to all three barns has been rationalised as described above.
- The glazing to the north elevation facing the garden has been altered from a syncopated pattern of smaller windows in the stone façade to a composition of larger barn-like openings with the windows gathered within them.
- On the south elevation the first floor windows have been removed and replaced with rooflights, and a single large barn-like opening created as described above, so there is no opportunity for overlooking whether or not the hedge is there.

Together, these three elements will create a new family home of a scale to suit the sustainable site, of a high design quality, sympathetic in style and material to the existing buildings on site and in the wider context. The removal of the poor quality additions, the reinstatement of the cowshed, and the addition of the new wing built to a high quality in the same manner will increase the positive contribution made to the Conservation Area.



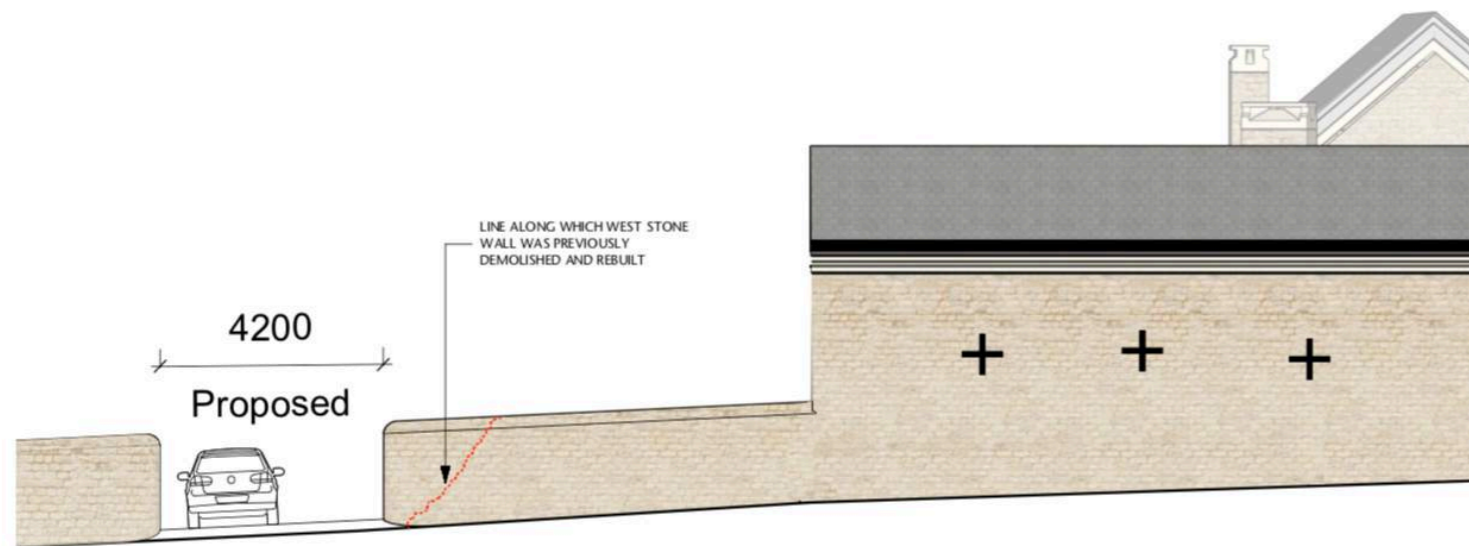
Visualisation of the house from inside the site entrance



Visualisation of rehabilitated stable and new barn from the reconstructed cowshed. The roof of the neighbouring listed barn is visible top right



Existing west elevation



Proposed west elevation with alterations to listed boundary wall

6.0 ACCESS

The existing opening made in the listed wall in the 1970's is too narrow. No delivery vehicles can enter the site through the gap. Whether or not this development were to go ahead, there would be a need for this opening to be widened so that delivery vehicles can access the site, turn around and leave in forward gear; otherwise they need to park in Larkins Lane and cause traffic disruption. When the current opening was made in the wall a certain length of wall to the south was demolished as is clear when looking at the quality of workmanship. To make the opening wider, none of the historic wall would need to be affected; only this rebuilt section would be removed and rebuilt to a higher quality to match the original wall.

Pre-application advice and action:

Officers stated there was no objection to the widening of the opening in principle. The proposed line of demolition which will follow the line of the '70's demolition and reconstruction is shown on the submitted drawings.

7.0 NEIGHBOURS' AMENITY

The existing and proposed buildings are set some considerable distance from the neighbouring houses to the north and there is a substantial screen of vegetation along the boundary. The proposals will have no appreciable impact on their sunlight, daylight or privacy.

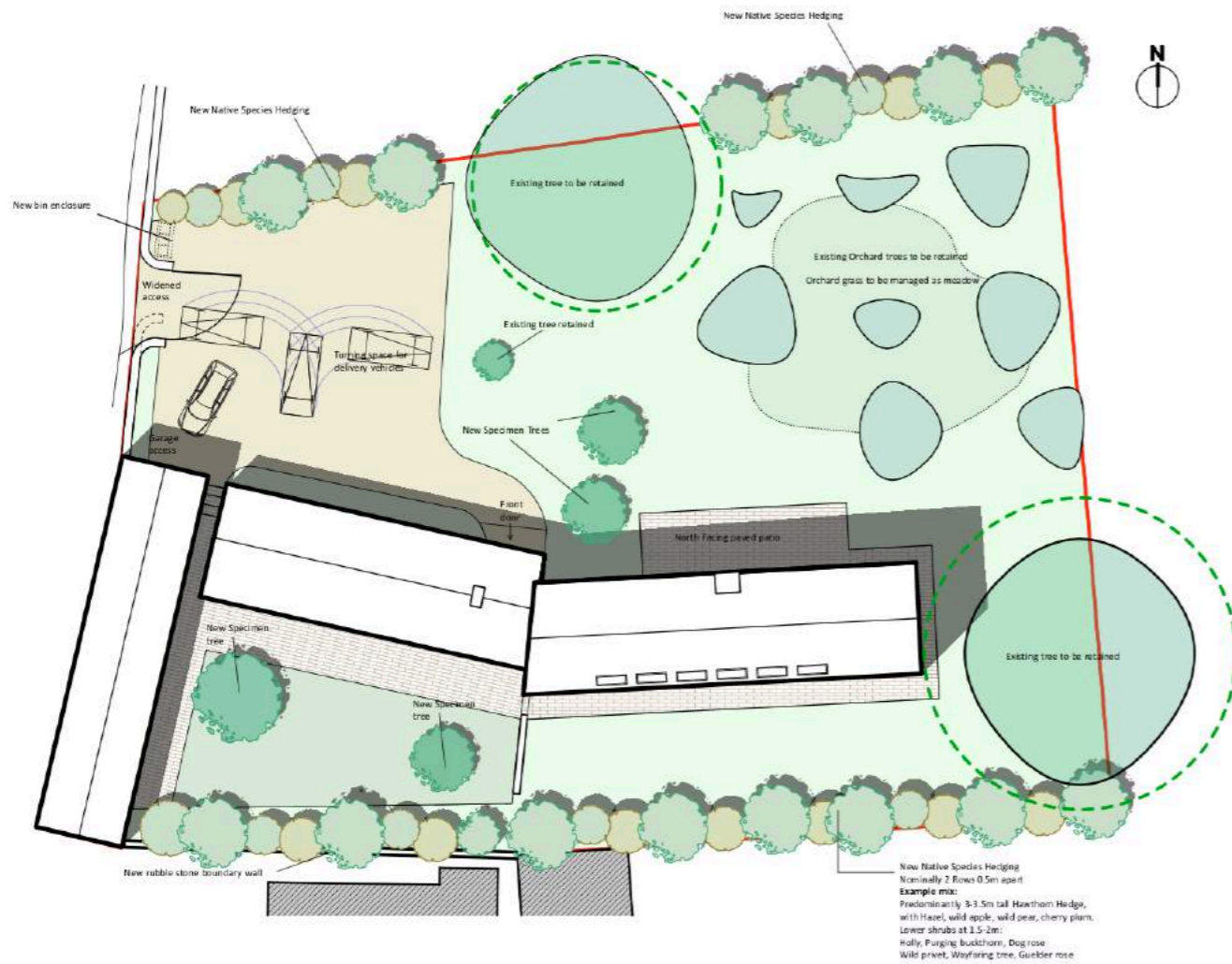
The only elements of the proposal that might have any effect on the houses to the south are the new gable to the barn in place of the ruined cowshed and the new two-storey wing. Since they are to the north of the neighbours they will have no impact on sunlight and daylight, and since there are no windows in the replacement cowshed gable, and only ground floor windows in the new wing, there will be no impact on neighbours's privacy.

8.0 ARCHAEOLOGY

An archaeological investigation has been carried out in accordance with the city's Archaeology Officer's brief, to determine whether there is any archaeological material of value where the new building works are proposed.

The investigations excavated two trenches, one in the location of the proposed extension, and one in the proposed driveway area. The report made some archaeological findings in the area of the driveway but stated "No significant archaeological features were identified within Trench 1, located within the area of the proposed extension."

The findings in the area of the proposed driveway are documented in the report. As this area is to be resurfaced as a gravel driveway to the same level as the existing topography the proposals will not impact on any archaeological material below grade.



9.0 ECOLOGY

The previous application, and pre-application advice for this application, established the need for an ecological survey of the site and a brief was provided by the OCC officer. The requisite survey has been completed and is submitted herewith, along with biodiversity report and biodiversity enhancement calculations spreadsheet.

10.0 TREES

A tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment accompany this application.

Most of the trees on site, including the large A grade poplar and walnut, are being retained. In total, seven of the lesser value C grade trees are to be removed. Four new specimen trees are to be planted.

A significant amount of new native hedging is to be planted, to both the northern and southern boundaries of the site. The C2 grade leylandii hedge to the southern boundary is to be removed and replaced with native species hedging. The proposed specification of this hedge has been determined in consultation with the neighbour to the southern boundary; it is a very similar specification to the hedge she has planted on her boundary with Barton Lane.

Pre-application advice and action:

Officers stated (9.7.20): “We would encourage the replacement of southern boundary with a new hedge. We would encourage the applicant to discuss and agree that with the owner of The Barn before submitting a planning application.”

This advice has been followed in full.

11.0 PARKING

The parking provision will not change. The garage will be replaced where it is now. The forecourt will be enlarged to allow for delivery vans to enter site, turn around and leave in forward gear rather than stopping in the narrow Larkins Lane and causing traffic disruption.

12.0 ACCESS & ADAPTABILITY

The front entrance steps are to be removed and replaced by a ramp. This ensures accessibility to the house and facilities for both residents and visitors. The floor level of the three barns will be flush to the rear courtyard so there is level access between them.

The ground floor layout includes a bedroom in accordance with Lifetime Homes legislation and a Building Regulations Part M ‘Category 2’ Accessible WC/Shower Cloakroom.

13.0 SUSTAINABILITY

Although this submission is for an extension to an existing dwelling rather than new-build, the proposal is for all parts of the house to comply in full with the city’s requirements for new-build housing in the new Local Plan 2020.