



The Granary, Naas Court, Lydney

Commissioned by: Mr & Mrs Kelvin Legge

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Repairs and Alterations and Change of Use of Building to Holiday Let.

Anderton

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

Prepared by:

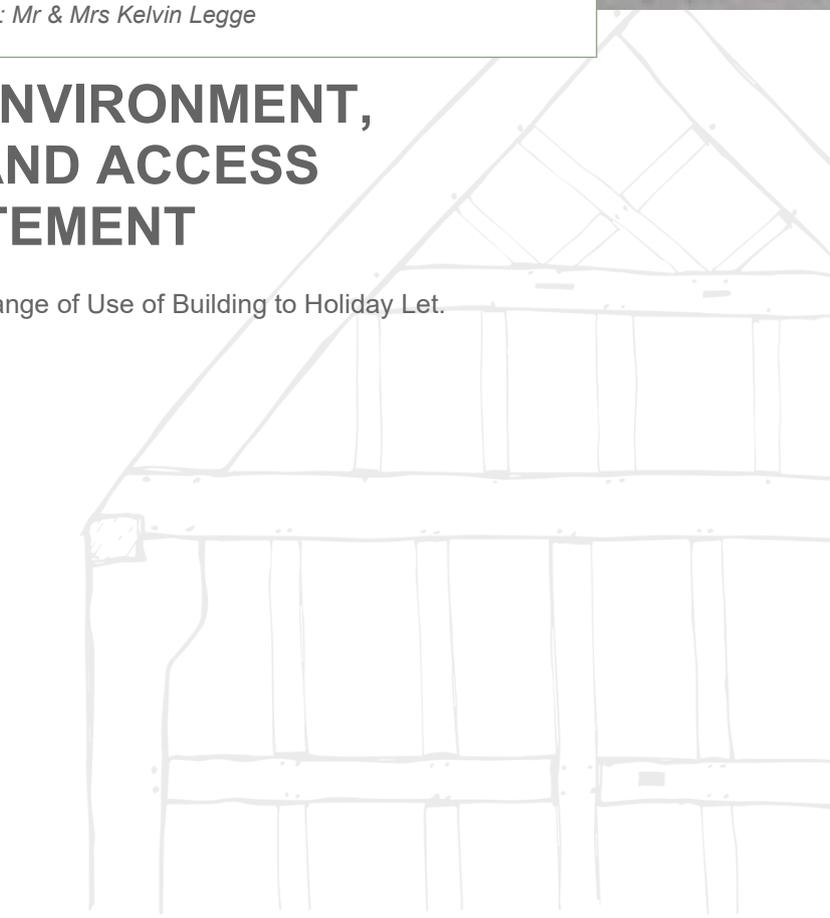
Clara Dauksta MSc., BSc. for
Anderton Planning and Conservation
BSc., Dip TP, Dip. Arch Con., MRTPI

A: Middle Drostre, Llanwern. Brecon

T: 078957 316805

E: sophie@saconservation.co.uk

www.andertonplanning.com



21st October 2021

Contents

1. Introduction and Background	3
2. Site Description	5
3. Statement of Significance	13
4. Proposed Development and Impact on Significance	16
5. General Design and Access Considerations	20
6. Current Guidance and Policy Context	22
7. Conclusion	28

1. Introduction and Background

This document is provided in support of a full planning application and listed building consent application to the Forest of Dean District Council for the change of use of the grade II listed former agricultural building, the granary, to a private bridal suite and holiday let. The change of use is justified within the following document which aims to safeguard the special architectural and historic character of the granary in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the requirements and objectives of relevant local planning policy.

Planning history relevant to the consideration of this proposal is listed as follows:

Planning permission (P0770/11/FUL) was granted in 2011 for alterations and extension to existing dwelling (the farmhouse) and stabilisation of adjoining granary.

Planning permission (P0865/18/FUL) was granted on 13th December 2019 for:

“Repairs and internal additions to effect change of use of the barn and open cart shed from agricultural/storage to wedding/ events venue. Use of adjacent land for vehicle parking (partly retrospective).”

Listed building consent (P0866/18/LBC) was granted on 13th December 2019 for:

“Repairs and internal additions to effect change of use of the barn and open cart shed from agricultural/storage to wedding/ events venue.”

Within the approved applications P0865/18/FUL and P0866/18/LBC, conditions were set out to ensure works to the granary were undertaken to stabilise the building. However, due to the implications and challenges arising from the Covid 19 pandemic it has been impossible to adhere to the programme of works and the passage of time has created additional pressures and urgency to progress straight to the submission of these applications to repair and stabilise the building as part of the overall proposal to bring the building back into an appropriate and sustainable long-term use.

This statement concerns only the granary, however the entirety of Naas Court in Lydney is described in the following extracts to give context to the building within its traditional farmstead setting.

The rationale for intervention will be balanced by proposals that are based on the principles of sensitive conservation and the historical significance of the building.

The Granary at Naas Court Farm is statutory designated Grade II listed under the listing description for the original farmhouse, and was listed in March 1983. There are a two further listed building designations which collectively cover all of the buildings comprising Naas Court Farm group. There are a total of 1563 listed buildings in the Forest of Dean District of which 1472 are listed as grade II.



Figure 1 - OS map showing Naas Court Farm and the Granary, the location of which is denoted by the arrow

2. Site Description

Setting and Outline History

Naas Court Farm lies on Naas Lane in the hamlet of Naas; the name of all three was, until the later-19th century, spelt differently, generally as Nass. That name is derived from a low cliff on the bank of the estuary of the River Severn called Nass Point just to the south. Naas was already a manor by the late Saxon period and just before the Norman Conquest was held by Earl Harold; after the Conquest it was acquired by William FitzOsbern and, after he had rebelled, passed to the Crown. A Walter of Nass held the manor in the early 14th century and Thomas and Catherine Rigg did so a century later; a hall and farm buildings recorded in a deed of 1443 probably relate to Naas Court, which was probably the manor house.

To the north of the farmstead and, formerly to the east, there were linear ponds, probably indications that the site was moated. The nearby barn is known to have had a base cruck roof and this, together with the surviving structural evidence of that building, suggests it is of medieval date. Naas passed by way of the Baynham family to the Vaughans and between 1658 and 1668 John Vaughan sold the manor to William Jones, owner of Nass House and tenant of Nass Court; William Jones acquired large tracts of land in the area and was probably responsible for the construction of Nass House in the circa 1660's. That had clearly become the main house in the township. The Nass estate passed down to other members of the Jones family until 1916 when it was put up for sale.

Nass Court Farm was predominantly pastoral and in 1803 was described in the Gloucester Journal as a dairy and grazing farm well known for its cheese; in 1818 the farm comprised of 216 acres. At the time of the tithe apportionment for Lydney parish, in 1840, Nass Court Farm was owned by the Rev. Edward Jones and tenanted by Thomas Bailey; described as 'Nass Court farmhouse, Barns Stabling Outbuildings yards and Garden', it was the farmstead for a farm of over 235 acres. According to the 1841 census, Bailey lived with his wife Mary and their 12 children, ranging in age from 3 months to 20 years: also on the farm with four servants. The detailed plan of the farmstead on the tithe map is virtually identical to that shown on the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1878-9 and published in 1880. Both show the farmhouse on the west side of an irregular quadrangular courtyard with the large threshing barn alongside the lane to the east.

By the time the Nass Court Farm was put up for sale in 1916, the main farmhouse was Nass House; it is unclear when the owners – the Jones' family – had last lived there; Thomas Williams had lived at Nass House and farmed Nass Court farm in the 1860's and it is possible that he was a forebear of the Gilbert Williams and his brother who tenanted Nass House and Nass Court Farm in 1916 on a Lady Day tenancy of £360 a year. The house at Nass Court was stated to be 'a farmhouse now occupied as two cottages to which good gardens are attached, with corn room, root and coal houses adjoining the house'; nearby was a 'mill-house of two floors, with corn grinding plant, loose box, yard with open shed, sheep-dipping tank, and feeding stalls for 10 cattle'. The sales details continued: 'adjoining "Nass Court" Farmstead and standing beside the road is an ancient, massive, stone-built Barn of fine proportions, with eight buttresses, porch entrance and with a noble oak roof, resting on seven Gothic principals – the main timbers being 14" x 10". It is 102 ft. 9 in. long and 34 ft., 6 in. wide'. Unfortunately, that fine roof was soon removed and replaced with the present steel-trussed structure, probably soon after the sale.

The estate was bought by another of the tenants, John Biddle, around 1920 and the family continued to own and farm the land until around 1990. Nearby Nass House was occupied by the US Army in the Second World War and a military camp established base on it – which extended as far as Nass Court Farm – there still being a surviving water tower on the opposite side of the lane. Parts of the camp were used after the war for temporary housing until the 1950's. By the later-20th century, Naas Court and the farm buildings were in an extremely poor condition. The Farmhouse, Barn and North Shelter Shed were all listed in 1988 and the listing details noted that the wing of the Farmhouse was derelict by 1983.

The present owner purchased Naas Court in 2010 and the buildings at that time were in a very poor state of repair. Since then significant repairs have been carried out and numerous planning and listed building consent applications submitted, some of which have been fully implemented, others only partially.

The owner started on a long-term campaign of sympathetic repairs to the farmstead which began with the farmhouse following planning and listed building consent approval in June 2011. Many of the ancillary buildings including the north barn and cart shed have also been repaired and sensitively restored. Most recently the main 'tithe' barn was 'converted' for use as a wedding venue following planning and LBC approval in December 2019. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) attached a condition to that approval requiring certain repairs to be undertaken to the granary building attached to the farmhouse, in accordance with a programme of works.

Due to a combination of the Covid 19 pandemic, funding and bad weather the condition of the granary has deteriorated dramatically, and the parameters and scope of work set out in the conditioned programme have changed. However, work has been carried out during the last year to stabilise the building in a manner that accords as practicably as possible with the approved programme and under the ongoing advice of the applicants appointed Structural Engineer (as endorsed by the LPA Heritage Advisor). As a result, the applicants now propose to progress with a more comprehensive scheme to repair and convert the granary to a private bridal suite and holiday let. This will be a more efficient/economic approach and forms part of the applicants overall long-term strategy to retain ownership and occupation of the site for the benefit of his family, using the remaining buildings to the north (Mill house and north barn and cart shed), that will be subject of a further application in due course (c. 2022/23).

Statutory Listing

The statutory list description records Naas Court Farm as:

LYDNEY NAAS LANE SO 60 SW (west side) 7/112 Naas Court GV II Manor house, now farmhouse. C16 with substantial C19 and C20 modification. Sandstone rubble, double roman tile plain gabled roof, two gable stacks. *An L-plan, plus gabled attached wing to left; the wing in two storeys, probably granary or dairy, derelict, simple chamfered beams, heavily overgrown (September 1983).* Main block 2-storeys, 3-windowed, various C19 and C20 sashes, and pair of glazed C20 doors, but first floor centre is 3-light stone casement to Tudor form in Tudor Rose stops, moulded mullions and 4-centre heads to lights under square label. Nothing significant remains within.

Naas Court Farm is Grade II listed and was first listed as such in March 1988.

There are 3 separate listings applicable to the site, each building is either listed in its own right or listed as a curtilage building.

The Buildings at Naas Court

The main farm buildings are grouped around a roughly trapezoid-shaped farmstead, which widens towards the south. The Grade II listed Farmhouse is on the west side, opposite the Grade II listed main 'tithes' barn, both of which have been sensitively repaired and restored. The entire farmstead is under single ownership. The owner is steadily restoring each building under phased works with the objective to improve the site as a whole and bring each building back to use with a viable sustainable future, all retained under the same ownership. This approach allows the group value of the whole farmstead to be maintained and results in a no loss approach to the existing buildings that have been documented within the farm setting for over 100 years. Clear visibility from one building to another allows visitors to continue to read the historical setting of the traditional farmstead without any obstructions or areas sectioned off as a result of disjointed/separate ownership and related curtilages.

The granary is linked to the south of the main farmhouse and forms an integral part of the courtyard. The granary contributes to the complete setting of the courtyard and the overall character and significance of the site.

Each of the phased improvements to Naas Court will only enhance the character, setting and significance of the other historic buildings on the farmstead and the overall group value of the site.



Figure 2 - Aerial view of Naas Court highlighting the courtyard configuration and the location of the Granary in relation to the other buildings on site

The Farmhouse

'The Grade II listed farmhouse is a two-storey stone-built structure probably of a later-17th to early-18th century date with a later west wing and an even later north wing and pent roof extension of the north side which are probably of the 19th century. The entrance front of the house has a fine three-light stone-mullioned window on the first-floor level which looks to be of later-16th century date – but this is probably re-set in its present position. The main portion of the farmhouse was the first of the buildings to be carefully restored, because it is now the family home of the present owner and the focal point of the whole former farmstead. Not all of what had been the original building had remained in residential use by the 19th century.

A projecting cross-wing to the south had been converted into a granary; it has a medieval stone-mullioned window and a corbelled first-floor stack – with traces of a fireplace within – possibly a late medieval chamber block with a heated chamber on the upper floor above an unheated undercroft; it was then converted into a granary. Attached to the south of this wing is a ruinous addition of uncertain date.' (Associates, 2018)

The ruinous addition of uncertain date described above is deemed to be the second, most southerly part of the cross-wing.



Figure 3 - Image taken from Naas Court's social media showing the farms deteriorated condition prior to its current ownership

The Granary



Figure 4 - North elevation of the Granary with the medieval stone mullioned window 2021, large sections of the upper part of the wall have recently been repaired.



Figure 5 - East elevation showing double gable end of the Granary with the northern gable still standing, however the southern gable is largely missing, 2021



Figure 6 - South elevation of the Granary, 2021



Figure 7 - West elevation of the Granary showing the timber mullioned windows with iron bars on ground floor, 2021

Outline Condition

The Granary's decline was likely fairly gradual at first, and presumed to have begun at the point where the building became vacant due to no longer having a viable use. In recent years however this has exacerbated to the point in which there has been major loss of building elements. The chimney stacks which are visible on photographs from twenty years ago are no longer in situ, having been carefully dismantled in accordance with advice from Mann-Williams due to their structural condition and danger to public safety. The majority of the roof and roof timbers have deteriorated and are no longer extant, and large sections of the external walls have been carefully dismantled to avoid danger from collapse (as per Mann-Williams advice). Typically vacant buildings lack in regular maintenance which often results in blocked rainwater goods or deteriorated weatherproofing elements which enables a build-up of debris and water saturated elements to provide the perfect conditions for invasive plant growth. The statutory listing described the granary as heavily overgrown in 1983, some forty years later and the building has considerably deteriorated.

The photograph of the southern gabled wall below highlights the vast ivy cover ten years ago, along with the large structural crack at the top of the wall and the breezeblocks inserted to support the large opening at the southernmost point of the ground floor wall. This photo is taken from around the time the farmstead was bought by the current owners, but the majority of this wall is no longer standing (notable on figure 5).



Figure 8 - Photograph of the east elevation taken from 2010 structural survey in which the southern gabled wall was still standing

The careful erection of scaffolding around the building's perimeter provided a safe area to work in, to consolidate and reset displaced stonework in situ, in accordance with Mann-Williams advice and plans. This particularly focussed on areas with structural cracking on the north elevation before reconstructing on a like for like basis in accordance with the structural engineer's guidance and recommendations. The current and ongoing work has been undertaken as a matter of urgency to avoid further loss of fabric and manage the risk to health and safety.

Factors that make the granary vulnerable are the lack of weatherproofing elements, continuous saturation, growth of vegetation and the movement of visitors to the wedding venue. People on site who are unfamiliar with the ruinous granary pose a significant health and safety risk and therefore the stabilisation and consolidation of the granary is of utmost importance.

The granary is in need of weatherproofing to prevent further deterioration, however rather than constructing temporary structures as per previous guidance (requiring additional funding and time) the applicant is intending to implement the permanent roof structure imminently (prior to/during the course of obtaining consent). This will be covered with a high quality, durable tarpaulin fixed to the timbers to provide protection from the weather and allow the fabric to finish drying out. This will also crucially reintroduce significant lateral restraint to the wall heads. This will serve the primary objective of allowing the building to continue drying out into the autumn and winter, and will also provide a dry but well-ventilated environment in which to continue work on the building using appropriate materials. The construction of the permanent roof, matched to the original, is proposed as part of this scheme and will result in a beneficial solution securing the buildings future and the farmstead setting as a whole. The installation of roof timbers at this stage also serve the critical purpose of helping to stabilise the building by tying the walls in at this higher level/wall plate. The existing remains of the first floor remain in situ and the spine wall has been rebuilt to wall plate level to support the east elevation. The internal birdcage scaffold is also tied in to the east elevation for restraint and stability.

To date, the following works have been carried out in accordance with advice, specifications and recommendations set out by the applicants appointed structural engineer (Steve Swinnbank of Mann-Williams) and these have addressed the urgent works required to stabilise the fabric and prevent further collapse:

North Elevation.

Horizontal stainless steel helical ties resin bonded into stonework (as per Mann Williams specification).

Stonework repair has been built back across fracture (as per Mann Williams specification).

The stonework around the window has been carefully reset, lintols replaced and the stonework above rebuilt to match exactly the appearance of the existing wall.

East Elevation

The stainless steel helical ties have been installed (as per Mann Williams specification).

The previously collapsed stonework has been rebuilt up to wall plate height to tie in the loose ends of the remaining walls. The gable has not been rebuilt.

Two large pattress plates have been bolted through the wall to provide temporary support where the stonework has delaminated to the left and right sides of the ground floor door opening.

South Elevation

Missing/collapsed upper storey has been rebuilt.

Lintols have been reinstated over first floor windows.

Stone arch has been reset.

West Elevation

Helical ties have been installed to stitch the wall fracture.

We have avoided carrying out further work to this elevation as the walls are in good condition.

General

The spine wall has been rebuilt to tie in with the external walls, all as per Mann Williams specification.

Retention scaffolding was erected while the main repairs were carried out, but this has since been removed due to the internal birdcage scaffold being erected, all as per Mann Williams original specification.

Current/ongoing work: fixing of new oak wall plates and roof trusses (as described above) to tie in and stabilise the walls and provide a durable and secure weatherproof cover to protect the fabric from water ingress.

3. Statement of Significance

Naas Court has historical accounts linking back to the 14th and 16th century, the building described within this document is thought to be found within these accounts under a variety of names – the granary, dairy or corn room.

In the early and mid-19th century rural landowners in the UK were some of the wealthiest class in the wealthiest nation, growing nearly 10 million acres of cereals. However, by the late 19th century the days of wealth and prosperity in farming had passed and the social and physical landscape changed substantially. The problems were primarily market driven, however improvements in shipping and mechanisation of foreign agriculture brought about the dramatic decline of British corn and grain production. From 1872 to 1900 the area under wheat in the UK reduced by 50% (The Field, 2018). The large numbers of buildings on these traditional farmsteads, each with harvesting, storing and production facilities that made them unique for their working purpose became largely redundant or had to be adapted to find new uses that conformed with contemporary life.

Historic England's conservation principles help to determine a method for assessing the heritage value of a place. Understanding the heritage value of the Granary from the outset has helped to shape the proposals so that they are sympathetic and do not cause harm to its significance. Historic England sets out this approach in their 2008 document, Conservation Principles, stating the four values that aim to provide a consistent methodology for substantiating a buildings significance (Historic England, 2008). These are used beneath in relation to the Granary.

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

The history of the Granary is not accurately known however, there are many features within the building that provide scope for visualising past ways of life associated with traditional farmsteads. The granary represents a building constructed for a particular use that is no longer required on the modern farm in the UK due to the decline of corn and grain production in the UK.

In Historic England's document National Farm Building Types it states - 'Barns are usually the oldest and largest buildings on the farmstead, but those that survive are only a small proportion of those that are documented. Those of early 16th century and earlier date are of exceptional rarity and importance, even rarer being those that survive in the context of medieval houses and other buildings.'

The granary attached to the main farmhouse at Naas Court, with associated medieval windows, is therefore believed to be of significant value. The double gabled buildings with chimney stacks (no longer in situ (stack to south elevation, and remainder of roof structure, dismantled in accordance with Mann-Williams advice -due to danger and risk of collapse) but visible on historic photographs) on north and south elevations have a storeyed combination configuration that denote various former uses; granaries were often constructed above ground level to prevent the risk of rat infestation and are described as sometimes being incorporated with the farmhouse; detached kitchens being sited close to the house and served by chimneystacks and large fireplaces; these detached kitchens often originated as dairies and were constructed in the 16th and 17th centuries (Historic England, 2013). The open well is possibly representative of another former use unfortunately not deciphered within this document. The various remaining built elements of the granary provide scope for visualising its past uses and how it must have adapted over the years.

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – they tend to be illustrative or associative.

Illustrative - the single ownership and preservation of the whole of the farmstead as one entity grants visitors to the site the capacity to identify the buildings with their past uses and working lives over the centuries. The buildings illustrate the development of a typical Forest of Dean mixed farm producing corn, dairy and grain. The buildings testify the development of the Forest of Dean farming from the 16th century onwards.

Associative - the design of the farmhouse in many ways shows the aspirations of the owner with the projecting cross-wing configuration and stone mullion window, the large chimney stacks on both the northern and southern elevations, iron bar secured window openings and traces of fireplaces on first floor indicating heated chambers, denotes the farm's wealth, success and productivity.

'Granaries were a common building type on arable farmsteads, typically found in association with cart sheds or in combination ranges. Most examples are of 19th-century date, earlier examples being of great rarity... The size of the granary provides an indication of the arable acreage of the farm.' (Historic England, 2013).

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

The Granary displays the architecture of various barn types with its particular features. The large door on the first floor of the east elevation is likely to be a threshing/ winnowing or loading door. Threshing bays are where harvested crops were beaten out on a threshing floor, the grain was then separated in the cross draught, the process being known as winnowing. The small opening on the west elevation is likely to be the opening to provide the cross draught.

Some of the windows on the northern and southern elevations of the granary have vertical iron bars, these bars are likely to have been inserted into the openings during the medieval period as a way of keeping intruders out (Historic England, 2017). Plastered and lime-washed walls internally and a strong load-bearing floor construction are often associated with granaries where these building methods were implemented to prevent loss of grain.

The materials used include local stone, clay tiles and timber framing for the roof, all of these reinforce the traditional vernacular of the local area of the Forest of Dean.

The views within the setting of the farmstead are likely similar to the views seen during the farm's successful era, the open arrangement and uses for the barns provides an open configuration which means the farm is still viewed as a whole entity and has not been sectioned off with different uses and owners for the various buildings.



Figure 9 - the northern elevation has a stone mullioned window with iron bars, the window is believed to be medieval. The historic window illustrates the materials, craftsmanship and architectural taste of the period from which it dates



Figure 10 - The timber window on the southern elevation also with iron bars

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who related to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

The farmhouse will have been embedded in varying degrees in the local history and past generations of the local community. However much of this communal value has been lost in recent generations with the decline of arable farming. The new use for the Granary and the entire farmstead aims to provide local employment which, rather than turning the farm into private domestic dwellings, will provide and sustain a degree of local, community value.

4. Proposed Development and Impact on Significance

The proposals seek to repair this grade II listed building, undertaking good quality, sensitive repairs using the original construction materials salvaged from the building itself or sourced locally, and other appropriate and breathable mortars, materials and finishes as required. The principal impact will be to improve the poor condition of the building elements and to reinstate the granary with a viable future use. Much of the historic fabric is currently at risk due to the lack of roof coverings which is providing the perfect habitat for disproportionate plant growth and the continued problem of water ingress. The approach to the required work is based on informed and sensitive repairs executed using materials and techniques appropriate to the buildings fabric and character. Alterations are proposed only where necessary and justifiable to facilitate its future use and take into consideration the overall heritage value and significance of the Granary building.

It is deemed that the Granary has the capacity for adaptive reuse, the current, existing form of the building is uncomplicated with few remaining internal walls. These attributes provide a flexible platform for reuse and minimise harm to the original fabric and the wider landscape setting.

The proposed residential use as a holiday let/bridal suite directly corresponds and compliments the existing uses at Naas Court and therefore provides a viable use that is consistent with the conservation of the building and courtyard and forms part of the wider strategy and objectives for the site as a whole. It also ties in with the Forest of Dean District Council's wider plans for increasing tourism in the district.

Responding to the sudden rapid deterioration of the granary, the proposals comprise generally; the re-construction of fallen walls; re-pointing of stonework with open joints in lime mortar; application of new lime render to external walls, to match remnants of extant render found; renewal of roof structures, roof coverings and rainwater goods; renewal of box gutter between the two gable roofs; re-building of stone chimneys; renewal of windows and doors to all existing openings. These will create a new watertight envelope that will secure and safeguard the future of the building.

Please refer throughout to the following plans and drawings:

FDH Architects Ltd:

2102/02	Proposed plans elevations and section
2102/03	Proposed elevations and section
2102/04	Site Location and Block Plan
2102	Door Schedule
2102	Window Schedule

Mann-Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers:

9985/001/P1	Ground floor, as existing
9985/002/P1	Elevations, as existing
9985/011/P1	Ground floor, as proposed
9985/012/P1	Ground floor, indicating proposed first floor over
9985/013/P1	Eaves level as proposed
9985/014/P1	Roof structure, as proposed
9985/021/P1	Elevations indicating proposed works
9985/032/P1	First floor details
9985/033/P1	Eaves and roof level details
Report: Summary Condition of Granary and Structural Repair Concept	

The following is set out by the architect and briefly describes the work to stabilise the external walls.

East elevation

- North gable of east wall to be rebuilt in coursed rubble stonework in lime mortar to match existing incorporating original quoins. Former openings reinstated in new works with new oak lintols and stone sill to first floor opening. Subsequent phase to honour and express vertical joint between two gables.

West elevation

- A proprietary stitching system has been installed to the structural crack to SW corner in accordance with the Engineer's details. Coursed rubble stonework to north gable and random rubble stonework to south gable of west wall to be repaired and repointed in lime mortar. Lintols to existing openings to be inspected and replaced in oak as necessary to match existing.

South elevation

- Decayed stones to south wall to be replaced to match existing and wall repointed in lime mortar to match original throughout. Stone lintol to first floor window to be reset.

North elevation

- Temporary s/s flue serving wood burner to farmhouse to be replaced with stone chimney stack in location of original in finished scheme. North wall rebuilt in coursed rubble with lime mortar incorporating original quoins and masonry window surround.

The following are minor alterations set out by the design team to improve the buildings capacity for its change of use.

Curtilage

- Creation of small rear garden to the south, the boundaries of which will utilise the existing stone walls that will be repaired and re-built to match the western boundary, to a height of approximately 1.2m. The garden will be simply landscaped with a natural stone path and appropriate vegetable and shrub planting to encourage pollinators and support biodiversity.

External Fabric

- Very few alterations to the external fabric of the granary are proposed that are not akin to the original. New timber windows and doors will be installed in a traditional heritage style in oak to match existing and/ or those that were specified for the main farmhouse. Where there was previously a door entry into the granary on the ground floor from the courtyard this is to be replaced with a full-length window. The full-length window will be usable only as an emergency fire exit, to ensure guests of the granary do not enter the courtyard whilst weddings are happening. The new Juliette balconies to the large openings on the first floor are to be created in ironwork, this approach is in keeping with the original ironwork elsewhere on the building. The lime render as noted on earlier photographs of the granary will be reinstated, as it was previously, to protect the rubble stone from prevailing weather.

There are changes proposed to the ground and first floors of the granary including – the laying of new breathable internal floor (Limecrete) surfaces and the inclusion of new internal timber partition walls to create rooms in line with the proposed design (bedroom, bathrooms, living and dining area). New partition walls internally will be constructed in a manner that allows for future

removal; this follows conservation principles that prevents unnecessary and permanent harm to the original fabric of the building.

Justification for Proposals Affecting Features

The existing ground floor separating wall in the southern half is to be partially removed to provide a large opening allowing for an open living/ dining area appropriate with contemporary living. Projections from the separating wall will be left to both external walls which will retain legibility of the building's former arrangement.

The photograph beneath shows the hearth on the ground floor south wall, with the slightly projecting buttressing walls, these are to be brought back in line with the main breast that supports the above chimney stack. The fireplace is a mix of materials including much smaller, shale stone, the local grey stone and red brick. It is believed due to the intermittently random construction of the fireplace that various alterations have transpired over the years and therefore the proposals to reduce the buttressing walls are justifiable and do not negatively or disproportionately impact the historical feature within the granary, or its overall significance.



Figure 11 - The hearth on the south wall internally, proposals to reduce the walls to bring back in line with the chimney stack above have been carefully considered and justified

The ironwork that supports the brick arch above the ground floor fireplace on the east wall (Figure 12) is to be raised in height from its current position and rebuilt to match using the existing arched brickwork. This is to allow the siting of an oven into the recess and provide adequate height above. Bricks were more popularly used in the 18th century and therefore it is presumed that the fireplace is a later addition to the granary. The adjustment of the height of the ironwork is deemed acceptable and understood that it will not significantly harm the heritage value of the granary due to the marginal loss of some later addition bricks. The bricks will be repurposed and used elsewhere on site.



Figure 12 - The ironwork and brick arch are to be raised to provide improved head height in the kitchen of the holiday let/ bridal suite

A window opening that is located on the right-hand side of the first floor of the south elevation requires complete rebuilding due to the area of wall having collapsed. It is proposed to rebuild the opening to match the dimensions of the window on the left-hand side. The previous window opening has been recorded through photographs, surveying and drawing up. The change is not thought to harm the buildings overall significance or heritage value in a way that is not balanced out by the improved suitability of its future use.



Figure 13 - Area of wall that is missing (on right hand side of photo) to have window opening reinstated to the same dimensions as the adjacent window on the left-hand side

The original floor beams to the first floor are to be reinstated. This is only after the new structurally stable floor has been installed. This will allow the original beams to still be legible for historic value even though they are no longer structurally sound to support the new first floor.

The Context, Setting and Contribution of the Site

Farmsteads are integral to rural landscapes reflecting how the landscape has developed over the years. The granary is situated in a key location as you enter the courtyard, connected to the main farmhouse on the southern side and therefore the conservation and sympathetic repair of the building will enhance the character of the largely intact traditional farmstead.

The granary makes up one part of the farm at Naas Court and therefore the reinstatement of this building helps to preserve the overall historic form of the site.

5. General Design and Access Considerations

Use

The proposed use of the building will be as a residential dwelling for a holiday let for use throughout the whole year and for use as a bridal suite during the months of April to September. Its use as a bridal suite is however of no consequence as the nature of use and occupation will be the same – i.e. it will be occupied and used as accommodation for the duration of a wedding.

The proposed use is considered to be entirely compatible and suited to this location and the existing built context. It is also complementary with the use of the site as a wedding/events venue and as the applicant's family home.

Amount

The application is for the conversion of the granary building to a single residential dwelling for use as a holiday let throughout the year.

Layout

There are no alterations to the layout of the site as a result of the proposed development save for the provision of a small garden area to the south of the granary that will be enclosed using low stone walls. Internally, there are minor alterations proposed to create a useable living space and include the installation of partition walls to create separation of space for bathrooms and bedrooms etc as required to facilitate its proposed use. There will be no alteration to existing parking arrangements as guests will utilise the existing car park area to the south of the site.

Scale

The consideration of scale in built terms is not relevant to this application as there are no alterations to the scale or form of the existing and original building. The approach to the whole building is one of conserving existing fabric and repairing damaged or missing elements to match exactly the form and scale of what existed originally.

Landscaping

The landscaping and layout plan submitted with this application provides details of a garden enclosure of natural stone walling along the west and southern boundaries and appropriate planting to compliment the character and grain of the site. The existing wall of the west cart shed will provide a high degree of privacy and shelter from the activities of the courtyard during wedding events – albeit that during these times the granary will only be let to guests attending the wedding. There will be no impact on any existing trees, hedging, shrubs or surface treatments.

Appearance

The external appearance of the building will change from the existing insofar as the submitted scheme proposes reinstating the external plaster finish (for which there is much evidence remaining on the building). This will differentiate the granary from the other buildings on the site, notwithstanding the majority of the farm group were likely to have been limewashed historically, to protect the stone from weathering. It is considered that the finish will enhance the character and appearance of the building. Oak will be used for all windows and doors, and the roof will be of clay tile, in keeping with the vernacular building type and style.

Access

Vehicular access to the site will be via the existing car park area to the south of the farm group which will lead to the private garden area to the south of the granary. Access is level across the site and stone paved footpaths will lead from the parking area to the entrance door in the west elevation.

Ecology

Please refer to the Ecological Appraisal dated 14th August 2021 (Clarke Webb Ecology Limited) submitted with this application, Appendix 1 of which details the Bat Mitigation Strategy that will be enacted and form part of the required EPS licence required.

Sustainability

The various ways in which the proposed development contributes to the overarching objectives of sustainability are intrinsic throughout this statement. In summary the proposal will:

- Utilise an existing building resource in situ with low embodied carbon and a low carbon footprint in comparison to new build.
- proposed repair and re-use as a residential dwelling will conserve a valuable heritage and cultural asset for the benefit of future generations.
- secure an appropriate and suitable use for the building that will help support local services and build a resilient and self-sustaining local economy.

6. Current Guidance and Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework July 2021

The following extracts from the NPPF set out the current updated national context for decision making relevant to the proposed development:

Supporting a Prosperous Local Economy

Para. 84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

85. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

The proposed use will result in a net gain for the local community and local economy as it will provide an additional rural tourism use and will be entirely complimentary to the existing use of the barn as a wedding/events venue. Its use will contribute positively to a sustainable and resilient local economy as visitors staying at the Granary will likely use local services and goods, and visit local attractions and facilities. The proposed use is appropriate to the general location of the site, and the scale, character, position and context of the building.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Para 190. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place

Para. 197 encourages LPA's to take account of "*the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*". It is considered that the proposals for a mixed use as subject of this application will allow the significance of the heritage asset to be sustained, as explained throughout section 4 above.

As stated, the identified significance of this asset will be sustained and conserved overall. Where there is 'less than substantial harm' it is considered that this is outweighed by the substantial benefit to the building arising from the proposal for its conversion to residential use. Furthermore, the proposed outcome for the building provides a small scale but wide-ranging benefit to the local economy as explained in section 4 and elsewhere in this statement.

Considering Potential Impacts

Para 199. 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.

Para 202. 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. (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021)

FDDC Core Strategy Adopted Version (February 2012)

The following policies are relevant to the consideration of the proposal:

- *Policy CSP.1 - Design and environmental protection*

The design and construction of new development must take into account important characteristics of the environment and conserve, preserve or otherwise respect them in a manner that maintains or enhances their contribution to the environment, including their wider context. New development should demonstrate an efficient use of resources. It should respect wider natural corridors and other natural areas, providing green infrastructure where necessary.

In achieving the above, the following will be considered:

The impact on any protected sites (natural and historic sites and heritage assets and potential for avoiding and/ or mitigating any impacts, or providing enhancement, should the development be acceptable.

It is considered that the relevant and applicable criteria of this policy have been fully addressed and satisfied throughout this statement, and the application is supported by reports from the applicant's ecological advisor and structural engineer. The recommendations of which have been incorporated into proposals for the building.

- *Policy CSP. 7 - Economy*

(strategic objective: develop the local economy including tourism)

Economic development will be promoted throughout the district in accordance with the spatial strategy and its allocations. This will encourage new and more diverse types of employment and supporting infrastructure to be established by making land and premises available. The location of new development must be justifiable in terms of the settlement hierarchy and policy CSP 4. Priority will be given to:

- *sustaining the development of key economic sectors or clusters, including knowledge-based enterprises and tourism.*

AP 1

Sustainable Development

In assessing planning applications the primary consideration will be whether or not the development proposed is sustainable with the overall aim of improving the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Allocations in accord with the CS and the AP and in any completed neighbourhood plans are considered to be able to be implemented in a sustainable manner and planning applications in accord with these will be permitted subject to any other material considerations. Particular reference will be made to the guidance in the CS, AP and NPPF/ NPPG in making the required judgements.

The requirements and objectives of both Policy CSP 7 and AP 1 are met as a result of the proposed use of the building as a holiday let, as explained in response to the NPPF Para. 84 in relation to supporting a prosperous local economy, at Section 4 and elsewhere throughout this statement.

AP 4

Design of Development

New development will be expected to be of a high-quality design making a positive contribution to the design quality of the area in which it is proposed. It should do this where appropriate by:

- *Establishing or supporting a strong sense of place,*
- *Taking account of local character and history in terms of design solutions*
- *Being visually attractive, employing good architecture and landscaping which respects the amenity of residents and others.*
- *Contributing to environmental enhancement*
- *The propagation of local distinctiveness by ensuring that the style and nature of materials used in developments demonstrates an appreciation of traditional characteristics, styles and materials that are in use in the locality, making use of such styles and materials where appropriate.*
- *Adopting an inclusive approach to produce safe and accessible environments that will embrace the needs of all different groups in the community*

It is considered that the proposed repairs to the building and alterations to facilitate its use as a holiday let satisfy the requirements of this policy as explained throughout this statement and detailed on the submitted plans.

AP 5

Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness

Development should protect and promote the special qualities, historic character and local distinctiveness of the district in order to maintain its cultural identity and sense of place. Development proposals will be required to preserve and where appropriate enhance local character and those aspects of the historic environment together with their settings which are recognised as being of special historic architectural, landscape or townscape quality. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- *The built form and setting of the traditional forest settlements*
- *Protected buildings and structures, including designated and non-designated heritage assets*
- *Remaining features (buildings, structures and sites) of the industrial history of the area.*

As explained throughout this statement, it is considered that the proposed repairs and alterations to facilitate the use of the granary as a holiday let will sustain and enhance the character and heritage values of this grade II listed building, its setting and the setting of the other listed buildings forming this historic farm group. The proposed use is entirely compatible with the objectives of this policy. The impacts (or harm) to fabric arising from the minimal alterations proposed will be less than significant, and are outweighed by the overall benefits to the building brought by its re-use as a residential dwelling for holiday purposes, securing a sustainable use that will in turn support its long-term maintenance and protection.

Forest of Dean Supplementary Planning Guidance

Naas Court sits just outside of the Lydney Neighbourhood Development Plan and therefore is not subject to the conditions set out within that document.

Forest of Dean District Council's Heritage Character Assessment 2019

The above document was reviewed, and the following relevant statements extracted.

2 The Purpose of a Heritage Character Assessment

2.1 Heritage assets can often be taken for granted by the people living and working in the area. They are not only important in their own right, but add to the significance and understanding of their rural or urban landscape setting. Consequently, a collective understanding and appreciation of them can provide opportunities to improve economic, social and ecological aspects of the area thus enhancing the overall quality of life, and retaining the unique character and identity of the district.

2.2 This character assessment therefore offers a broad overview of the wide range of heritage assets the whole District enjoys (designated and non-designated), where they are and how they are unique to the area. This assessment should then provide an evidence base for making informed and balanced decisions on whether future development sites will have an impact (negative or positive) on our special historical features and the potential for enhancing/protecting these assets. This assessment does not attempt to cover each and every heritage asset within the district, but seeks to identify and capture a flavour of the general history and characteristics which make this District so special. It forms part of the wider Local Development Plan, which seeks to encourage economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits through high-quality and sustainable development (Forest of Dean District Council, 2019).

13 Employment and Industrial Heritage Stone

13.17 The quarrying of stone has been important since the Bronze Age, being used for monuments and hillforts. The Romans quarried sandstone and limestone and used it for construction. During the medieval period, stone extraction continued with limestone being quarried for lime production and sandstone for building stone, or millstones.

Recent Employment and Trends

13.49 Tourism is becoming an increasingly important employer within the district with larger companies and individuals making the most of the beautiful countryside, heritage, forestry and the proximity to rivers, public footpaths and cycle networks. The local planning policies acknowledge this and seek to promote tourism in both the town centres, villages and the surrounding countryside. It is clear that its landscape and heritage have extremely important roles to play in pulling visitors to the area. Therefore, the more we understand and sensitively preserve and promote our historical built and natural landscape, the more attractive the district becomes on a national and even international scale.

Historic England Advice Notes

The following publications from Historic England have been reviewed and referenced to aid the proposals for the change of use of the granary:

- National Farm Building Types (2013)
- Farmstead Assessment Framework (April 2015)
- The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings (Advice note 9, September 2017)

Forest of Dean District Council's Listed Buildings at Risk Register 2017-2019

The Granary and all other buildings at Naas Court are, or were, listed within the Forest of Dean's Buildings at Risk Register. There were a total of 17 buildings or scheduled monuments identified as being at risk during 2017-2019. The council were planning a full review in 2020 whereby Naas Court's status would likely be revised, this is not yet updated on their website.

A Building at Risk is classified as a listed building whose poor condition could result in the total loss of the building. The loss of such a building is detrimental to the local area and on a national scale and therefore every effort should be made to safeguard those buildings. The poor condition of a building could be due to a number of factors; neglect is the most common cause; a building being made redundant due to changes in industry is a common cause of neglect, this is deemed to be the case for the granary in relation to the changing requirements on arable farmsteads.

The description below is taken from the Forest of Dean's Buildings at Risk Register - 'The Granary is attached to the Farmhouse and has external walls built from local grey/red sandstone in a random rubble style with lime mortar. The walls are unstable and are in a very deteriorated condition, with structural vertical cracking. The roof and first floor structure have collapsed and access into the building to obtain a full appraisal is not possible due to its potentially dangerous condition. It is assumed the original pitched roof structure would have been constructed of oak trusses with pegged joints supporting purlins, rafters and stone tiles. The Granary is in a very deteriorated condition, and it requires temporary support to stabilise the building and temporary coverings to make it weather tight and prevent further collapse of the structure. The building requires a new roof and reclaimed roof tile coverings to match the existing and a new first floor structure. The external walls require repairs and extensive rebuilding and repointing to stabilise the walls to prevent further deterioration of the structure.' (Forest of Dean District Council, 2019).

The Farmhouse, North shed, attached Cart shed and Tithe shed have all been repaired as set out by the recommendations and actions within the Register and therefore these buildings should have been removed from the buildings at risk register in the updated version, however the Granary (and the Mill House, to be covered in a separate application) still require work to remove them from this register.



Figure 14 - Photograph taken in 2009 from the Buildings at Risk Register of the main farmhouse before repair and the granary with roof still largely in situ and areas of render around the first-floor opening

7. Conclusion

This Historic Environment Statement (also incorporating Design and Access considerations) has been prepared to assess the potential impact on the historic built environment arising from the change of use of the Granary at Naas Court to a residential holiday let and bridal suite. The Granary belongs to a cluster of buildings that are all grade II listed but within contemporary life are now agriculturally redundant. The owner has developed proposals that sensitively adapts the former farmstead, generating new life and the necessary income to finance repairs to the extant buildings within the courtyard setting. Many of the buildings within the courtyard have already been repaired and this phased approach is steadily transforming the farm. Remedial works to the farmhouse and main 'tithes' barn at Naas Court show the quality of repairs to the overall fabric and character of the buildings and the minimal change approach.

The buildings at Naas Court were identified by the Forest of Dean District Council as requiring urgent work in their Buildings at Risk Register to prevent loss of significant, historical buildings to the local area. A large majority of that work has already been undertaken by the client, resulting in other buildings on the site being taken off the register. However, the Granary is still outstanding and therefore the works addressed within this application aim to secure the buildings future and prevent any further loss of historical significance.

All work is to be undertaken on a 'like for like' basis where possible using matching materials, except where changes are required. Any changes to the original fabric or layout will be recorded, and provision for reversing these at a later date, if required, will be made from the offset. The alterations internally and externally will not compromise the architectural integrity of the building.

The Granary is in urgent need of work to safeguard the remaining building elements and to bring this building back into a beneficial use. Much of the historic fabric is currently at risk due to the very poor condition or lack of roof coverings with the continued impact of water saturation. By providing a weatherproof cover over the building imminently and in the manner currently proposed/underway, and by stabilising the remaining structure and fabric, prevention of any further loss is secured. The proposals respond to the significance of the Granary and the wider site and where they result in a degree of harm – these are understood to result in a minor level of less than substantial harm and are outweighed by the beneficial use proposed for the building that is entirely compatible with its historic character, location, context and setting. On balance it is considered that the proposed alterations, repair and reuse of the building, will result in a moderate enhancement to its significance. The comprehensive and sensitive repairs proposed, including the reinstatement of key elements, and the proposed use for the building is entirely appropriate to its historic character and setting within this cohesive farm group.

References

Associates, R. K. M. &, 2018. *A Proposed Restoration and Development Plan at Naas Court Farm*, Lydney: FDH Architects .

Forest of Dean District Council, 2019. *Heritage Character Assessment*, Forest of Dean: Forest of Dean District Council.

Forest of Dean District Council, 2019. *Listed Buildings at Risk Register 2017-2019*, Forest of Dean : Forest of Dean District Council.

Historic England , 2017. *Traditional Windows, their care, repair and upgrading*, London: Historic England.

Historic England, 2008. *Conservation Principles*, London: Historic England.

Historic England, 2013. *National Farm Building Types* , London: Historic England.

Historic England, 2015. *Managing Significance in Decision - Taking in the Historic Environment*, London: Historic England.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021. *National Planning Policy Framework*, London: Crown Copyright.

The Field, 2018. *The Great Depression of British Agriculture: a history*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.thefield.co.uk/country-house/great-depression-british-agriculture-41371>

[Accessed 03 September 2021].