

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In respect of:

CHANGE OF USE AND CONVERSION OF OFFICE INTO FOUR TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENTS

At:

FRASER HOUSE, WADHAM CLOSE, SOUTHROP, LECHLADE, GL7 3NR

On behalf of:

Ms A Kamara

February 2022



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement accompanies **applications for planning permission and listed building consent** for the change of use from office use to residential use and associated works required to facilitate the conversion of the building into four two-bedroom apartments. The building in question is a historic former barn, sited within a modern cul-de-sac and surrounded by modern residential development of ‘agricultural’ character.
- 1.2 The site comprises the former barn, now an office known as Fraser House, a gravel area in front of the building accessed from Wadham Close, and a strip of private garden to the rear. The eastern elevation is hard up against the boundary whilst there is a narrow access strip on the western side of the building. Wadham Close is accessed from Lechlade Road, just south of a triangular area of public green.



Fig.1 Location plan

- 1.3 Southrop is a small village on the eastern edge of the Cotswolds. It sits between Oxford to the east and Cirencester to the west, and south of the A40 which runs east-west. The River Leach runs north-south through the village at its eastern edge.
- 1.4 The report describes the heritage significance of the site and provides an assessment of the impact of the proposals in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF, July 2021) and to meet the council's local validation checklist for applications affecting heritage assets.
- 1.5 The report was commissioned by the applicant, Ms A Kamara, and has been prepared by Elaine Milton BSc (Hons) MSc DipArchCons MRTPI IHBC.
- 1.6 The significance of the site was identified using the guidance contained within the Historic England documents *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008), *Statements of Heritage Significance: Historic England Advice Note 12* (October 2019) and *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (December 2017).
- 1.7 Information on the history of the complex has been drawn from several sources including historical map regression. A list of the sources used in the preparation of the report is presented on p29.

2.0 Heritage Designations

- 2.1 Fraser House is a historic barn which was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* at **Grade II on 23 January 1952 and amended on 5 February 1987**. It is therefore deemed by Historic England to be a designated heritage asset of national importance and of special interest. The list entry for the property reads as follows:

'Barn in depot of Hinton and Gale Ltd. (previously listed under The Green, House and Barn) 23.1.52 II Barn with separate lofted sections to each end. Early C19. Random rubble limestone; stone slate roof. Five-bay barn at centre with north porch; lofted section to each end with dividing walls to barn part. Central parapet gabled porch on north side with doorway having timber lintel and plank doors. Barn doorway on south side refitted with sliding doors below lean-to door hood. Stone steps to lofts at each end on south side with projecting stone slab landing, west loft with segmental arched doorway, east with timber lintel; doorway below each. Square barn vents. Parapet gabled ends to building. Interior: collar and tie beam truss roof.'



Fig.2 Plan showing listed buildings (marked with blue triangles)

- 2.2 The building is within the Southrop Conservation Area, which was first designated by the local planning authority on 9 November 1982 and reviewed on 17 July 1990. The

conservation area covers the historic core of the village centred on the village green and the main village streets that radiate northwards, eastwards and westwards from it. Fraser House is at the western edge of the conservation area.



Fig.3 Southrop Conservation Area designation map

3.0 Description

- 3.1 Fraser House is a rectangular-plan two-storey former barn with a two-storey rear projection at right-angles to the barn. The principal (south-east) elevation of the former barn faces towards Wadham Close.



Fig.4 Principal (south-east) elevation

- 3.2 The barn is constructed from limestone rubble with ashlar stone quoins. It has a steeply pitched roof covered in stone slates and with stone coped verges at either end. There is a single iron patten plate at the left-hand side between the ground and first floor.
- 3.3 The front elevation has a full-height, slightly off-centre, glazed entrance with a projecting tiled canopy. To the left of this opening is a set of external stone mounting steps that are built up against the building. Immediately to the left of the steps is a wide opening with a black timber lintel. A large modern window, divided by two vertical mullions infills the opening.
- 3.4 On the right-hand side of the entrance, is a two-light wooden casement window and a deeper two-light glazed opening. To the right of the opening is another short set of external stone steps which lead up to a large threshold stone slab which acts as a canopy for the large opening below.

- 3.5 At first floor there are four two-light casement windows and two two-light door-sized casement windows.
- 3.6 On the rear of the building (north-west elevation) is a two-storey gabled projection with a steeply pitched roof and stone coped gables. The ridge of the projection is set below the main ridge.



Fig.5 Rear (north-west) elevation

- 3.7 The gable of the rear projection has a two-light timber casement windows at first floor. On the ground floor, there is a large opening with a painted black timber lintel and an infilled opening incorporating a single door, timber. On the side (westward facing) is a two-light casement window.



Fig.6 Rear elevation – projecting wing

- 3.8 At ground floor, on the rear elevation of the main building, are four windows on the right-hand side of the rear projection. Two of the windows are two-light casement windows, one a narrow single window and the fourth window, a large three-light window.



Fig.7 Rear elevation – right-hand side

- 3.9 At first floor, there are three windows (aside from the window in the projection, described above) on the rear elevation. Two are two-light timber casement windows and one is a single-pane glazed window.
- 3.10 The south-west elevation has a single-storey extension across part of its elevation. The extension is constructed in the rubble stone with a stone slate roof. It has three timber casement windows facing westwards.

- 3.11 To the right of the single-storey extension the walls are partly rendered with a single door set into the gable and with a red tiled step. Over the door is a modern tiled canopy porch supported on a timber corner post.



Fig.8 Porch on side (south-west) elevation

- 3.12 The south-east elevation is constructed from rubble stone with stone quoins at the corners. There are no windows at ground floor and a single two-light casement window at first floor.

Immediate environs of Fraser House

- 3.13 In front of the building there is a large area of bonded resin gravel with a curving section of wall partially enclosing the area at the front.
- 3.14 On the left-hand side is a stone wall, whilst the boundary on the eastern side is a combination of close-boarded fence and shrubbery. At the rear, the site is bordered by a close-boarded fence with a hedge behind the fencing on the garden side.



Fig.9 Front elevation as viewed from Wadham Close

- 3.15 South-east of Fraser House, at the junction of Wadham Close and Lechlade Road, is a one and a half storey historic stone cottage, Berries, which has a stone slate roof and stone eyebrow dormer windows. Its rear garden runs back and borders Fraser House on its eastern edge.



Fig.10 Berries, Wadham Close

- 3.16 To the west of Fraser House is a modern L-shaped building (formerly offices and now a residential dwelling known as Wychwood House), designed in an agricultural idiom and constructed of stone with a tiled roof.



Fig.11 Wychwood House

- 3.17 To the rear of Fraser House is The Farriers, a cul-de-sac development leading off Wadham Close. It comprises new houses of traditional appearance and constructed in natural stone.



Fig.12 The Farriers

- 3.18 To the south of Fraser House and across the road (Wadham Close) is a semi-detached pair of stone cottages which front onto Lechlade Road. Their rear gardens are enclosed by stone walls, the northern most wall running alongside the pavement on the south side of Wadham Close.



Fig.13 Junction of Lechlade Road and Wadham Close

4.0 History

- 4.1 Originally known as Leach, after the river, the village of Southrop was so-called from the early 13th century. It is sited by a crossing point of the river where a bridge called Vedyng was recorded from 1379. The manor house and the church were built close to the river and the village grew up around.
- 4.2 The village consists mainly of cottages and small farmhouses of the 17th and early 18th centuries, and the area was one predominantly of arable farming. Some substantial stone farm buildings survive, including a range of barns near the church at Manor Farm.
- 4.3 Aside from the manor house, the only other large house is the Pines, although it has been reduced from its original size. A group of new houses was built in the southern part of the village in the 20th century.
- 4.4 St Peter's Church is listed Grade I and dates from the 12th century. In terms of 'outside influences', the manor passed to Wadham College, Oxford in the 17th century and remained with them for over three centuries.
- 4.5 The 1840s tithe map illustrates that there was formerly an L-shaped farmhouse (pink denoting residential) attached at the westerly end of the barn. The farmhouse is still present on the Ordnance Survey map of 1881.



Fig.14 1840s Tithe map

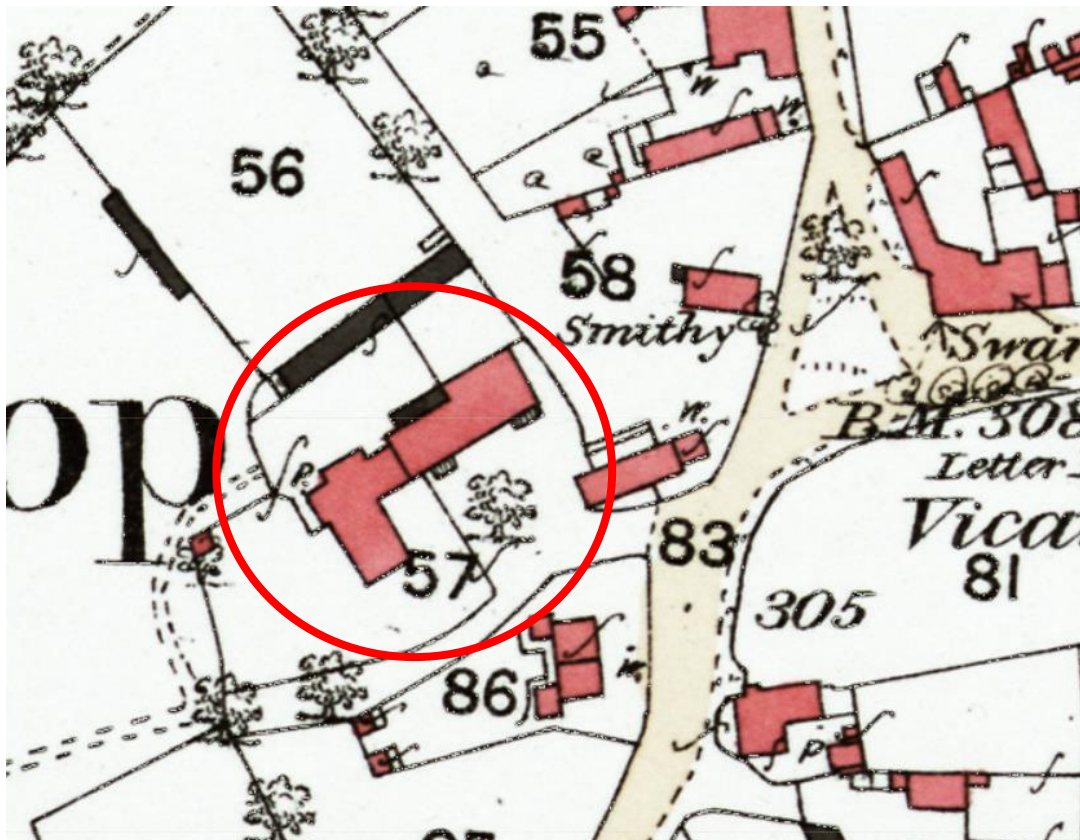


Fig.15 Ordnance Survey map of 1881

- 4.6 The farmhouse still appears on the OS map of 1921 but has gone sometime after that.
- 4.7 Fraser House was originally listed in 1952 as ‘The Green, house and barn’ which suggests that the house was demolished sometime after it was listed and the listing subsequently amended (in 1987).

Recent planning history

- 4.8 Applications for planning permission and listed building consent (references 14/04688/FUL and 14/04689/LBC) were approved on 18 December 2014 for ‘Change of use from an office to a single private dwelling’.

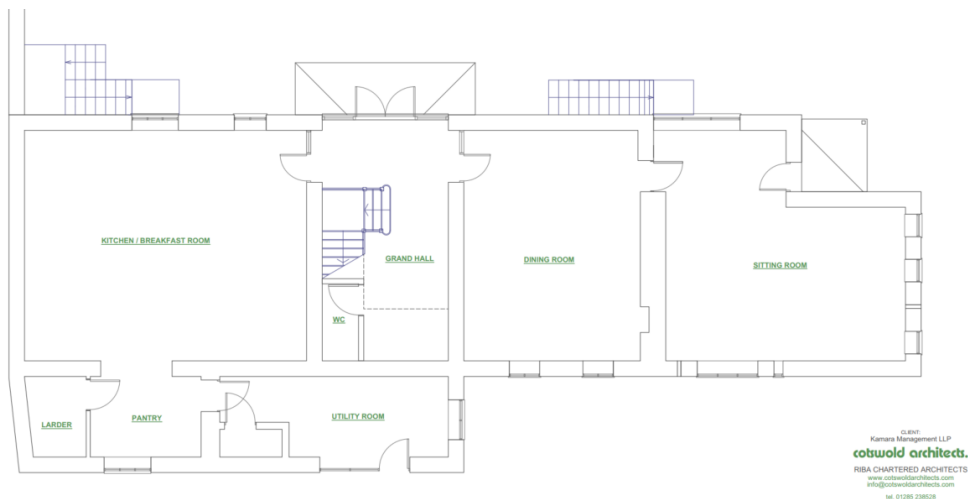


Fig.16 Existing ground floor plan in 2014

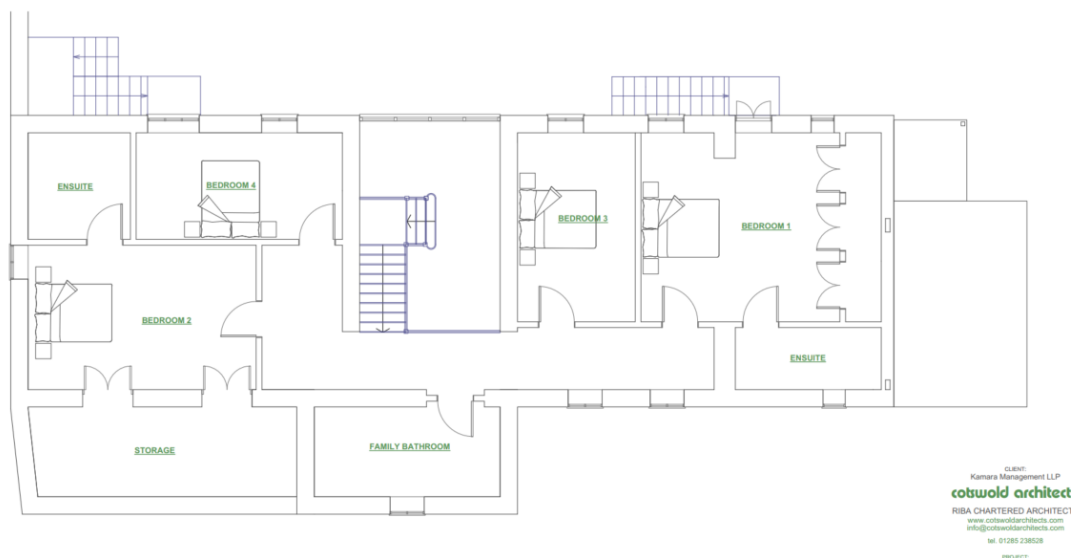


Fig.17 Existing first floor plan in 2014

4.9 The Design and Access statement accompanying the 2014 applications said:

*‘The building has previously been converted into offices, **with a modern interior**. A large residential development has taken place to the rear of Fraser House and the area is now predominantly residential. There is a tarmacked parking area to the front of the property and a courtyard to the rear. Fraser House is bounded by dry stone walls. The adjacent barn, known as Wychwood, has recently been granted planning permission for change of use from offices to residential’.*

5.0 Assessment of Significance

- 5.1 Fraser House, listed as *'Barn in depot of Hinton and Gale Ltd'*, is a Grade II listed building of special architectural and historic interest **as a good surviving example of an early 19th century Cotswold barn**, albeit no longer in its original use. The significance of the building lies in its age, composition and architectural features.
- 5.2 The building is constructed in attractive rubble stone with ashlar stone quoins and with a stone slate roof. It has irregularly placed openings which illustrate the former function of the internal spaces of the barn, such as the door-sized openings at first floor (now windows) evidencing former access for the storage of materials at first floor level. The two sets of external stone steps and the large double-height opening are features that contribute to its interest.
- 5.3 The architectural interest of the building has been compromised, however, by the insertion of numerous modern domestic windows and the infilling of openings with glazing, or in the case of the rear, a combination of glazing and boarding. The rendering of part of the western elevation detracts from the appearance of the barn.
- 5.4 The interest of the building has been further compromised by the demolition of the farmhouse which it once served and the fact that it is now surrounded by modern residential development.
- 5.5 Notwithstanding the erosion of its interest, the building continues to make a strong positive contribution to the Southrop conservation area as an imposing attractive building constructed in local vernacular materials. Its former agricultural associations also contribute to an appreciation of the importance of agriculture to the development of the village, and that such barns would have once been more commonplace in the village.

6.0 Proposals

- 6.1 The current application seeks planning permission and listed building consent to convert the former barn (currently offices) into four two-bedroom apartments.
- 6.2 The apartments would mainly be accommodated within the existing envelope of the building with a small extension on the rear proposed for one of the ground floor units (i.e., unit 2).
- 6.3 There would be two apartments on each floor. They would be accessed from the existing entrance hall and staircase. The main entrance would therefore be the existing double height opening on the principal elevation.



Fig.18 Proposed front (south-east) elevation

- 6.4 There would be minimal changes to the elevations. On the front (south-east) elevation there would be one additional ground floor timber casement window to the left-hand side of the entrance.
- 6.5 On the rear (north-west) elevation there would be a single-storey garden room to serve one of the ground floor flats measuring approximately 6m x 2.5m. It would be set back from the elevation of the existing projecting wing and would be largely glazed with a standing seam copper roof and a natural stone plinth. In order to access the garden room from the flat, two ground floor windows would be converted to doorways by removing the windows and the stonework below cill level.

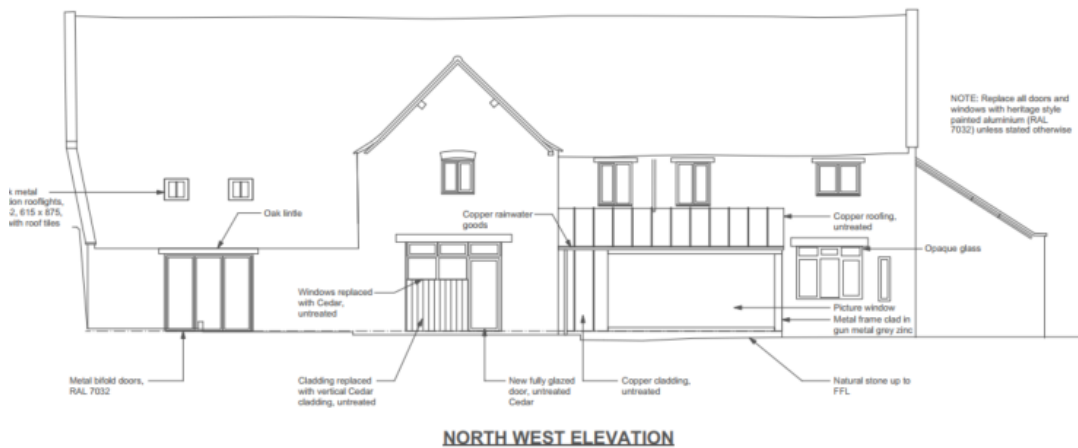


Fig.19 Proposed rear (north-west) elevation

- 6.6 In respect of the large opening in the rear wing, the existing boarding, windows and single door would be replaced.
- 6.7 The door to the left of the projecting wing would be removed and the opening enlarged and bi-fold doors installed and two new conservation-style rooflights inserted into the catslide roof above.
- 6.8 On the south-west elevation, two rooflights would be installed in the single storey pitched roof and one window would be infilled.

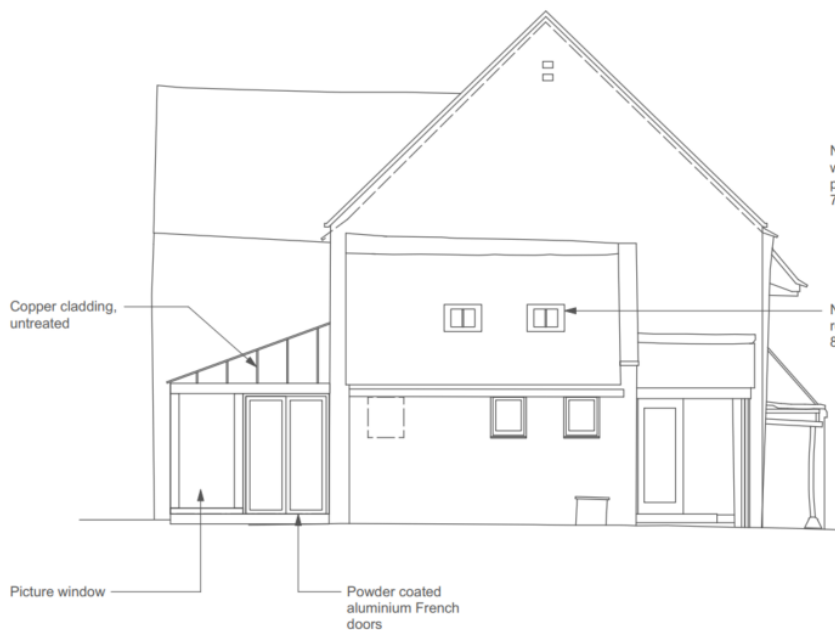


Fig.20 Proposed side (south-west) elevation

6.9 No alterations are proposed to the south-east elevation.

6.10 Internally, there would be two flats at ground floor (units 1 and 2) and two at first floor (units 3 and 4), although unit 3 would have a utility/boot room on the ground floor to the rear of the entrance hall. Each flat would have two bedrooms.

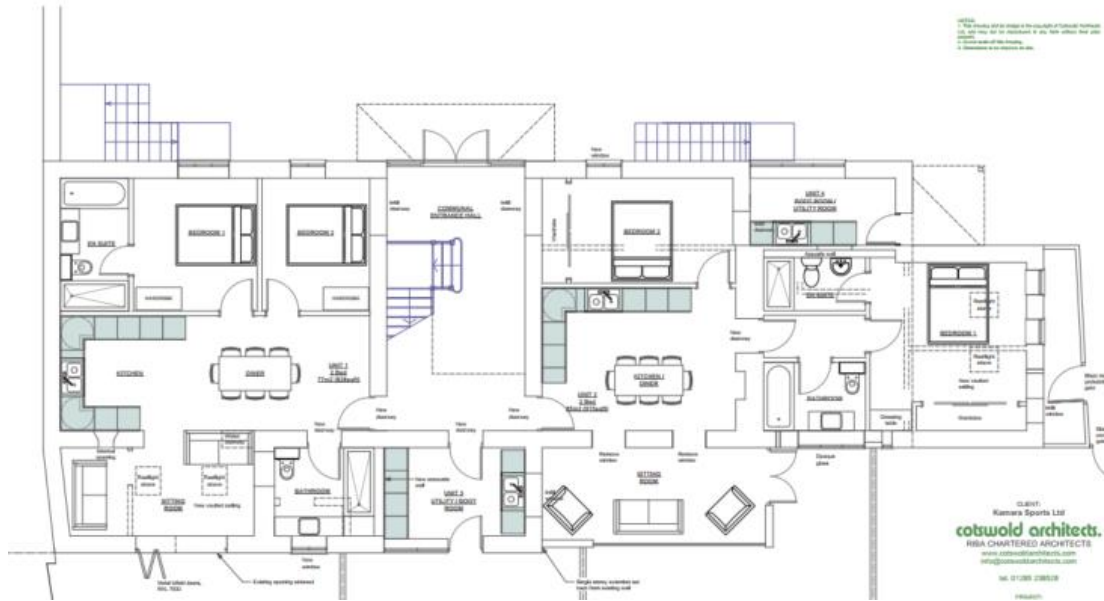


Fig.21 Proposed ground floor

6.11 The two flats at first floor would be arranged at opposite ends of the building and would be accessed by the existing stairs within the entrance hall.

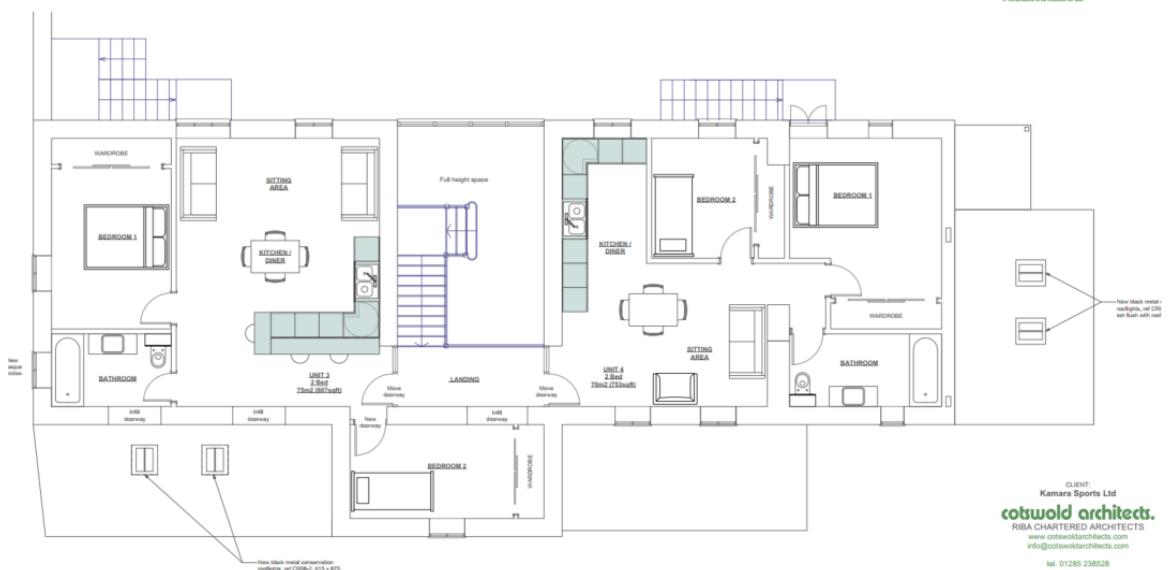


Fig.22 Proposed first floor plan

- 6.12 The existing office partitions would largely either be removed or modified and new partitioning installed at both ground and first floor.
- 6.13 It is proposed to replace all the windows and doors with ‘heritage-style’ aluminium windows and doors painted a grey colour (RAL 7032), including the proposed bi-fold doors on the rear (north-west) elevation.
- 6.14 The rear garden would be divided into four to create a garden for each of the flats. The gardens would be separated by close-boarded timber fencing.

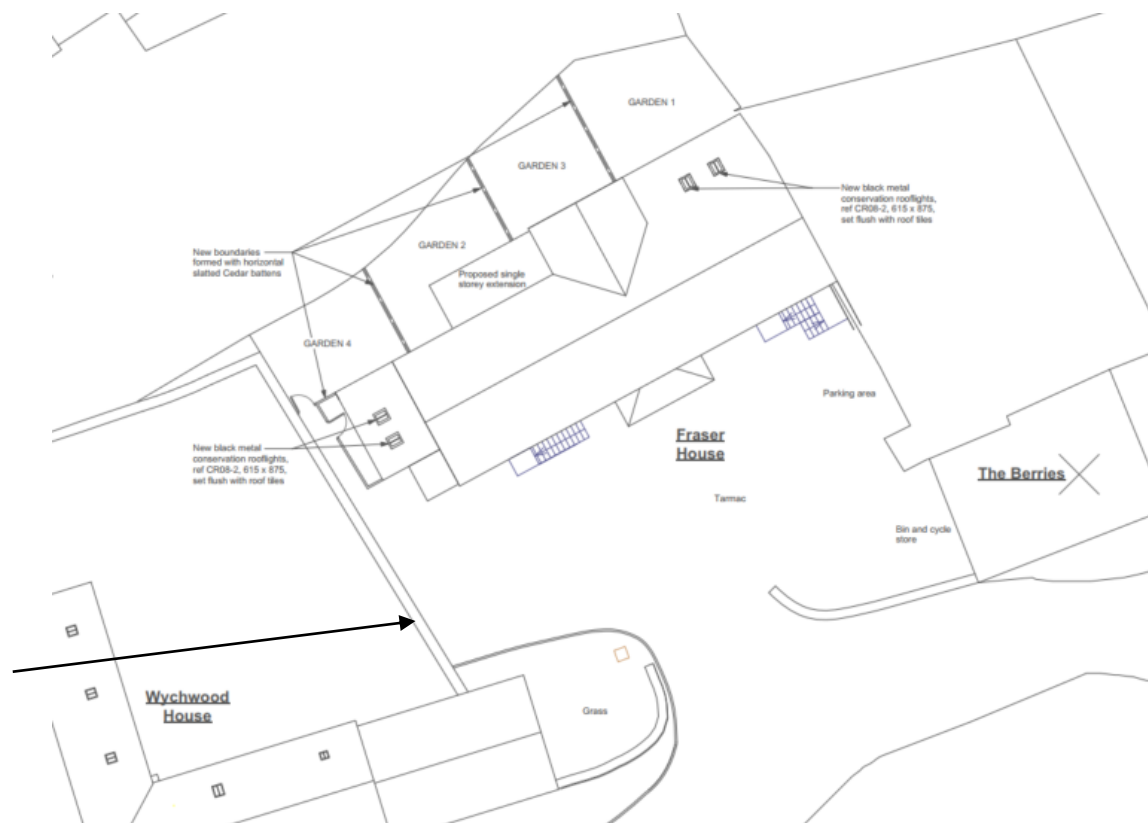


Fig.23 Proposed site plan

- 6.15 Parking would be on the existing forecourt at the front of the building, which would also accommodate a bin and cycle store.

7.0 Policy Context

- 7.1 Statutory duties exist under **section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting to 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. Considerable importance and weight must be given to any harm.
- 7.2 A statutory duty exists under **section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a conservation area that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 7.3 The statutory duties are reflected in the following policies of the **Cotswold District Local Plan (2011-2031) (CDLP)** adopted on the 3 August 2018:
- **EN10: Designated Heritage Assets:** *'...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'*.
 - **EN11: 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 retention of positive features'*.
 - **EN13: The Conversion of non-domestic Historic Buildings:** *'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'*.

- 7.4 National planning policy relating to the historic environment is provided within **section 16 of the NPPF**. It advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 7.5 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF advises 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss to a heritage asset's significance should require clear and convincing justification and needs to be weighed against identifiable public benefits. Substantial harm or loss of a Grade II listed building should be exceptional.
- 7.6 Paragraph 201 of the NPPF advises where proposals would lead to 'substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the proposals should be refused 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 four listed criteria therein apply.
- 7.7 Paragraph 202 advises where proposals would lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 7.8 Paragraph 206 of the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas or the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.
- 7.9 There is currently no up-to-date conservation area appraisal for the Southrop Conservation Area.

8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

- 8.1 Planning permission has already been granted for the conversion of the building from office use to residential in 2014 so the principle of residential conversion has already been accepted.
- 8.2 The proposed scheme for the creation of four flats would have a minimal and light touch impact in terms of the original fabric of the building. The front elevation would have one new timber casement window, which would require the removal of a small amount of stonework. The new window would be of appropriate design and proportions, matching the existing windows in appearance.
- 8.3 The changes to the rear elevation would also be limited and would not affect the legibility of the building as a former barn.
- 8.4 The proposed extension would comprise a simple, single-storey lean-to structure that would be subservient to the host building. It would sit below the existing eaves line of the barn enabling the original form of the building to remain legible. The proposed extension would have a linear footprint, echoing the plan form of the former barn to which it would be annexed. As such, it is considered that the proposed extension would be in keeping with the character of the building.
- 8.5 The proposed extension would be a contemporary structure formed in modern materials with a light-weight appearance, thus preserving the distinction between the new and old.
- 8.6 In respect of access to the proposed extension, the two rear ground floor windows are later insertions and not of historic value. The removal of stonework below the cill to create two doorways would impact on historic fabric but only a limited amount and as such, the proposals would not harm the special interest of the building.
- 8.7 In respect of the changes to the projecting wing ground floor opening, the existing timber boarding, door and windows are modern infills to an original opening and are deteriorating such that they currently detract from the building. The replacement of the infills would enhance the appearance of the elevation.
- 8.8 The enlargement of the existing doorway to the left of the wing would require the removal of some original stonework but only a very limited amount. The new enlarged opening would be in keeping with the character of other openings in the building and as such the proposals are not considered to harm the special interest of the building.

- 8.9 The two rooflights on the rear, and two rooflights on the south-western elevation, would be modest conservation-style units in a position of low prominence, which would sit between the rafters and cause no harm to the interest of the building.
- 8.10 The proposed garden room, the two new rooflights and the modifications to the two ground floor openings, would be largely screened from view from The Farriers by the existing close-boarded fence and mature hedging.



Fig.23 Rear (north-west) view of Fraser House from The Farriers

- 8.11 In respect of the south-west elevation, the proposed window to be removed and the opening infilled would not affect the special interest of the building given that the opening is a later modification and not of interest.
- 8.12 The interior was originally largely open plan, the modern partitions having been inserted when the building was converted to office use. As such, their removal or modification would have no adverse impact on fabric of significance.
- 8.13 The proposed enlargement of an opening on the ground floor of unit 1 between the kitchen-diner and sitting room, would result in the loss of a small amount of original stonework but much of the wall would remain and as such, the plan form of the building would remain legible. As such, it is considered the proposal would not harm the special interest of the building.

- 8.14 The proposal to change the windows and doors to ‘heritage-style’ aluminium windows fenestration painted a grey colour, would be more in keeping with the agricultural character of the building than the existing modern white timber windows. As such, the proposals would be in keeping with the character of the building and enhance its appearance in view of the deteriorating condition of the windows and doors.
- 8.15 The landscape proposals would be limited to the rear of the building and would be concealed from public view. The proposed extension to the wall at the side of the building, would enhance the setting of the building by re-establishing a sense of enclosure reminiscent of the historic arrangement (see fig.15).
- 8.16 In view of the modest changes to the exterior, particularly the front (south-east) elevation, the proposals would preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Southrop Conservation Area.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 Fraser House is a Grade II listed former barn which was built in the early 19th century but much altered in the course of the 20th century when it was converted to offices.
- 9.2 Many modern domestic-style windows and doors have been inserted and the interior subdivided with partitioning. The agricultural character of the building has been further eroded by the loss of the farmhouse and associated barns and the erosion of a rural backdrop.
- 9.3 Despite the alteration and suburbanisation of its context, the barn is an attractive imposing stone barn with stone slate tiles and is still legible as a former agricultural building. As such, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Southrop Conservation Area.
- 9.4 The principle of residential use has already been accepted by the previous approval in 2014.
- 9.5 The proposed scheme for four apartments would result in modest changes to the interior and exterior of the building.
- 9.6 The significance of the listed building would be unharmed and the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.
- 9.7 The proposals would therefore satisfy the requirements of the adopted development plan policies, which seek to protect designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 9.8 Furthermore, the proposals would adhere to the policies within the NPPF, preserve the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings in accordance with the Act and would be in line with best practice guidance.

Sources Used in the Report

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Date accessed: 10/2/2022

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<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=true>

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Mapping Consulted

[Know Your Place - Gloucestershire \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

Tithe map of c.1840 and various OS maps

Date accessed: 10/2/2022