

## **Proposed conversion of barns to two dwellings at Winston Court, Llanvetherine**

### **Heritage Impact Assessment**

This statement is written by Liz Heron on behalf of the Hodge family to inform and subsequently seek to justify proposals for the conversion of a range of barns at Winston Court into two dwellings. There will be separate Planning and Listed Building Applications for The Threshing Barn/Cart Shed/Fowl House and for the Cider House/Cowhouse. This HIA applies to both.

Liz Heron is a Chartered Architect specialising in the restoration of Listed and conservation-quality buildings. She has carried out many heritage projects over her 40 year career involving the repair, restoration and adaptation of grades II\* and II listed buildings.

Based on CADW's *Conservation Principles and the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016*, the farmstead as a whole will be assessed for its landscape value and for the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value which should be considered in any renovation or conversion schemes.

This statement establishes the historic development of the farmstead and its setting and outlines the historic significance of the barns range, to inform the development of an appropriate heritage-led scheme for the site. It considers the proposals and evaluates the heritage impact that the proposals would have and, where appropriate, identifies potential mitigation.

The Welsh Government's 'Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales' document has been used as a guide in preparing the Statement. This sets out the general principles to consider when planning changes to historic assets and applying for listed building, and states:

*The heritage impact assessment should take into account sufficient information to enable both the significance of the asset and the impact of change to be understood....*

*The basic stages of heritage impact assessment, whatever the size and scope of the project, are:*

- 1. Explaining the objective and why changes are desirable or necessary.*
- 2. Understanding the significance of the historic asset.*
- 3. Identifying the proposed changes.*
- 4. Assessing the impact of the proposals.*
- 5. Setting out the reasoning behind the preferred option, including the design concepts and principles, in the light of the assessment process.*

Winston Court, with attached Former Stable & Cartshed, is Grade II listed (CADW ID 24193) as a well-preserved 17<sup>th</sup> century house with very fine 17<sup>th</sup> century plasterwork which is characteristic of later 17<sup>th</sup> century work in Monmouthshire.

The Farm Range, which is the subject of these applications, comprising *Fowl House, Cartshed, Barn, Cowhouse and Cider House at Winston Court* (CADW ID 24194) is Grade II Listed as a good linear farm range, and for important group value with the farmhouse and stable at Winston Court. The association with Crawshay Bailey is also of interest.



1. The range of barns with the Cider House on the right

The proposed works are to repair, conserve and carefully re-purpose the range of barns on the south side of the farmyard, without changing their character or their value to the overall landscape.

### **Location and Setting**

Winston Court lies to the West of Llanvetherine village and is approached along a farm track that runs North off the B4521, ending in a green lane.

The farmyard lies between the house and its outbuildings on the north side and the Barn and Cider House range on the South side.

The site is gently sloping with a paddock to the south falling away towards the brook. The topography of this part of north Monmouthshire comprises undulating fields and coppices of trees. It is a settled landscape with many narrow lanes. It is also a visible landscape with good scenic quality.

### **Historical Significance of the barn**

As a group, the buildings are typical of the substantial farmsteads developing at this part of Monmouthshire over the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and often on the site of much earlier buildings.

Winston Court farmhouse has existed on the site since the sixteenth century. The earliest available map of the farm is the 1840 Tithe map where the farm is called Great House. At this time it was tenanted by Benjamin Edwards and the landowner was Mrs Anne Dinwoody who is buried in Llanvetherine Churchyard.



2. On the Tithe Map, Winston Court was called Great House

The tithe map shows the farmhouse standing alone, without its later range of outbuildings. The Cider House and Threshing Barn extend into further buildings to the north creating an L-shape.

In 1845 *'one fifth part of the remained expectant'* of Winston's Court Farm was sold by auction. The purchaser would take possession upon the deaths of two females then aged 88 and 63. At that time the farm consisted of *a dwellinghouse and other outbuildings and 78 acres of rich arable meadow and pasture land.*

A series of tenants occupied the farm in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 1851 census records Fredrick Woodcock, his wife Betsy, their four young children, a sister-in-law and two servants.

By 1871 the tenant was James Tucker farming 140 acres, his wife Mary, their two children aged 2 and 2 months, two farm servants, a domestic servant and a nurse for the children.

By 1891 the tenant was Isaac Griffiths, his wife Ann, their five children and a farm servant. However in 1898 Isaac Griffiths was selling his household furniture and outdoor effects at auction.

In 1901 the tenant was Thomas Jones aged 24, his wife Mary, baby daughter, Thomas's brother who worked as a carter on the farm and a 14 year old domestic servant.

In November 1901 the Abergavenny Chronicle records that two vagrants sleeping in the French Barn at Winston Court accidentally set fire to it, completely destroying the barn and its 40 tons of hay. The farmhouse itself was only saved by the prompt action of the fire brigade.

Thomas and his wife were still at the farm in 1911 with five children aged from 8 to 10 months and a domestic servant. The number of rooms, ten, was recorded in this census.

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Winston Court was purchased by Mr Crawshay Bailey (1789–1872) and formed part of his extensive estates in the locality. Crawshay Bailey was an English industrialist who became one of the great iron-masters of Wales. His mother, Susannah, was the sister of Richard Crawshay, the Ironmaster based at Cyfarthfa Castle near Merthyr Tydfil.

By the 1870s his estates across South Wales were estimated at over 12,000 acres with an annual income of over £11,000, making him one of the great landowners in Wales.

His only son was borne by a servant, Sarah Baker, and Crawshay Bailey's will referred to him as his 'reputed son'. The son took no interest in his father's industrial activities but concentrated on the landed estates in Monmouthshire.

However there is a discrepancy in the reading of the date stone on the barns. The listing states 1865 which would have referred to Crawshay Bailey senior, but the date stone is clearly 1885.



3. The inscription on the date stone

This was after the death of Crawshay Bailey in 1872 at the age of 83 when most of his vast wealth and estates were inherited by his son, also named Crawshay. Crawshay Bailey Junior was known *for his kind and liberal disposition* (report of ploughing match, Abergavenny Chronicle 1881).

This second Crawshay Bailey died unexpectedly in 1887 at the age of 46 in Dublin, where he had been living as a recluse in poor health. There is some mystery surrounding his death as he had suddenly left home and family in 1885 to go to America and had no further contact with them. 1885 was the very year that these barns were completed.

The census taken in 1939 at the start of the war records the farmer at Winston Court being Percy Evans, aged 32, his wife Kathleen, Agnes Evans aged 58, presumably a lodger as she is recorded as having 'private means' rather than sharing domestic duties and William Hodges aged 70 a general farm hand.



**Buildings appraisal**

The main portion of the barns is an impressive 19<sup>th</sup> century linear farm range, whose north front faces onto the farmyard. The range is constructed in rubble stone with brick dressings, under a slate roof.

Starting from the East end, the East gable contains datestone inscribed '*ERECTED BY CRAWSHAY BAILEY 1885*'.

**Fowl House:**

Attached to the east gable wall is a lean-to lofted fowl house with vitrified brick quoins. The entrance doorway has vitrified brick jambs, cambered red brick arch and boarded door. Above is a cambered loft window with red brick dressings which has a centre mullion and internal shutters.



4. The east end with the fowl house and cart shed

Internally the roof structure is 19<sup>th</sup> century with the remains of a boarded loft floor.



5. The loft of the fowl house

**Cart Shed:**

The east end of the main building comprises the two-bay Cart Shed with loft above.



6. The open fronted cart shed and the wall of the threshing barn with extensive rebuilding above the vent slits.

At the front there is a central cast iron pillar supporting the floor above. There are similar pillars in milking shed opposite.



7. The iron post supporting the front of the cart shed

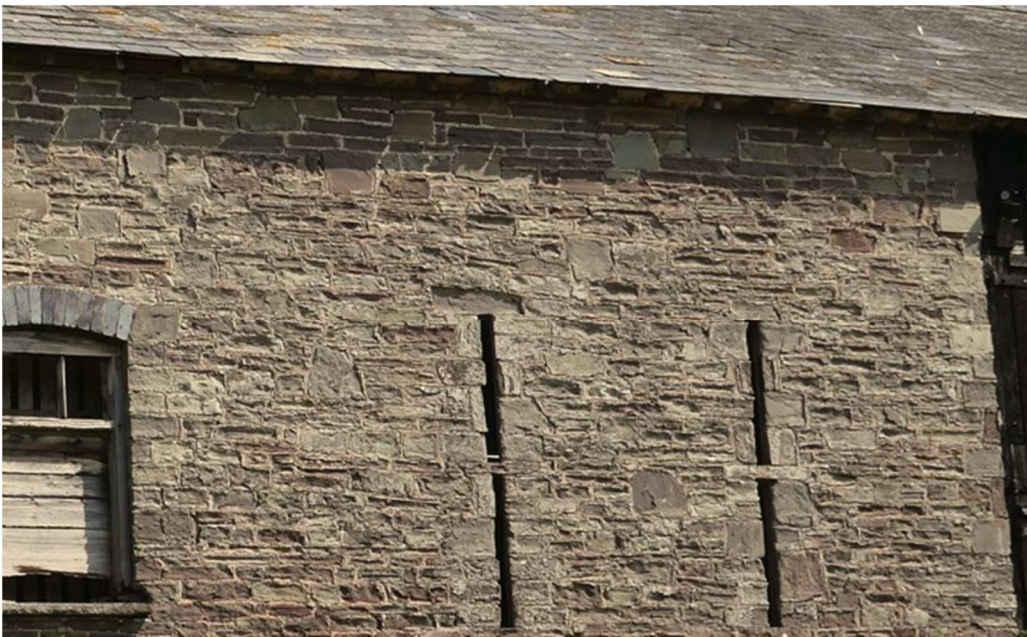


**Threshing Barn:**

At the centre of the range is the Threshing Barn with a central threshing floor/cartway and cart doors on north and south sides.

The north and south flanking walls have ventilation openings, with two tall narrow slit vents either side of the cart doors, quoined in stone externally with slim central cross stones and sills externally. These have stone lintels and red clay brick quoins internally.

Although the range of barns is described as having been erected by Crawshay Bailey, it is more likely that the existing buildings were renovated and upgraded at that time. The stonework is extensively wind-scoured, the windows appear to be later insertions and the height of the walls has been increased.



8. The wind-scoured walls with later stonework at the top.

The style of very tall vent slits with brickwork inner quoining is also more characteristic of 18<sup>th</sup> century barns.



9. Interior view of the south wall.

The centre threshing barn door has boarded head panel and boarded double-doors (single door to left and half doors to right).

The additional panel at the top of the cart doors is unusual and also matches the level of the top of the original stone walls.



10. The panel above the cart doors



The roof of the barn is in 5 bays and has typical 19<sup>th</sup> century tie beam trusses, with purlins suitable for the slate roofing which has superseded the earlier lower roof. These trusses have iron braces to the centre rather than king posts.



11. The interior of the threshing barn

**Cowhouse:**

Next is the lofted Cowhouse with a small gable on the north front. Below the gable head is the large loft doorway with cambered vitrified brick arch and boarded door. The ground floor has corresponding doorway and to the right a similar but wider boarded door. The amount of rebuilding appears greater here.



12. The north wall of the Cowhouse



13. The south wall of the Cowhouse



**Cider House:**

On the west end of the range is an older building, the Cider House, which has lower walls and roof and does not align with the main range.



14. The frontage of the Cider House has had extensive rebuilding

The ground floor has a cambered stone arched window incorporating louvres and three small overlights. It appears from the loose stonework below that this was originally a doorway.

To its right is the broad cart entry with stone voussoired arch and boarded double-doors.

Above the doorway is a square mullioned loft window with internal shutters. The west gable has stone steps leading to a boarded loft door.



15. The west gable wall with external steps

The roof of the Cider House is divided into 3 bays, again with 19<sup>th</sup> century roof structure.



16. The lime washed interior of the Cider House loft





17. There is a lime skirting around the perimeter of the loft to protect the apples.



18. Remains of former pigsty abutting the south wall of the Cider House.

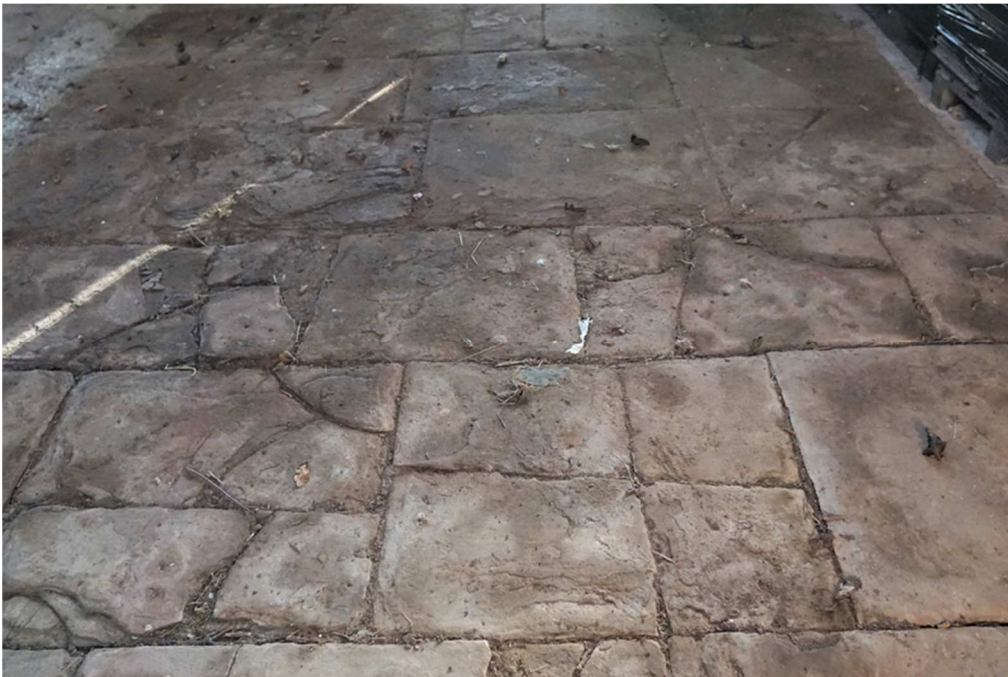
## **Proposed Works**

### **Threshing Barn, Cart shed and Fowl house:**

The works include general minor repairs and renovations to the exterior and structure of the building, laying a Limecrete floor throughout, inserting an upper floor either side of the central cartway and reroofing in mineral slate.

The Cart Shed will remain as an open carport with a corridor to the rear linking to a home office in the Fowl House. The first floor of the Cart Shed will become two bedrooms.

The ground floor of the Threshing Barn will remain as one space with staircases either side serving new first floor areas on either side, allowing the full height to be appreciated in the central section. The central section of the floor is flagstoned but many of the flags are in poor condition.



19. The remains of the flagstone floor

Plumbing, electrics, heating and drainage installations will be provided throughout.

In general, the internal faces of the stone walls will be cleaned down, lined with Steico Flex Woodfibre insulation to follow undulations in the walls and then coated with lime plaster.

All the works carried out will ensure that the building remains 'breathable' to avoid damp and condensation.



Proposed external alterations

- A. Renewal of roof coverings in mineral slate.
- B. Insertion of conservation rooflights where necessary for means-of-escape or safety.
- C. Glazing of vent slits.
- D. Renewal of first floor boarding over cart shed to incorporate window and shutter in place of central door.
- E. Provision of glazing and doors to both cartway openings
- F. Provision of rainwater gutters and downpipes.

Proposed internal alterations

- A. Limecrete floor, including reinstatement of central flagstone threshing floor.
- B. Lining of external walls with Steico Flex insulation and lime plaster.
- C. Forming internal openings between barn/cart shed and Cart Shed/Fowl House
- D. Insertion of new upper floor either side of cartway.
- E. Insulation and plastering of underside of roofs throughout
- F. Installation of two staircases.
- G. Partitioning of first floor of Cart shed to create two bedrooms.
- H. Provision of a log burner.

**Cowhouse and Cider House**

The works include general minor repairs and renovations to the exterior and structure of the building, laying a Limecrete floor throughout, renewing upper floor as necessary and reroofing in mineral slate.

Previous openings in the South wall will be reopened to provide additional light and access to the rear garden.

A modern internal partition subdividing the Cider House will be removed. The only other structural alteration will be forming a well for the staircase. The Cider House will become an open plan sittingroom with staircase and master bedroom above. The Cowhouse will become kitchen, utility and toilet with two bedrooms and a bathroom above.

**Proposed external alterations**

- A. Renewal of roof coverings in mineral slate.
- B. Provision of glazed inner doors and boarded outer doors. New windows in existing and amended openings.
- C. Insertion of a means-of-escape conversation rooflight on the south elevation and smaller stairwell rooflight in north elevation.
- D. Provision of rainwater gutters and downpipes.

**Proposed internal alterations**

- A. Limecrete floors
- B. Lining of external walls with Steico Flex insulation and lime plaster
- C. Insulation and plastering of underside of roofs throughout
- D. Installation of staircase.
- E. Partitioning of first floor to create three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

### **Objectives and justifications**

The owners need to find a viable use for the barns that will justify the substantial funding required for the repair and restoration. The restoration will include the renewal of the slate roof coverings

The overall objective is to secure the long-term future of the range of barns by converting them into dwellings. This will allow the applicants to obtain the necessary funding to invest in the buildings. It is appreciated that restoring a Listed Building requires a far greater investment than for other barns due to the use of the very costly conservation materials needed to achieve the correct aesthetic and the breathability essential for the preservation of the historic fabric.

#### **External alterations:**

- A. Renewal of roof coverings. Many of the slates are slipping or held in position by pegs. It is unlikely that many of the existing slates will be capable of re-use. It is possible that they have already been reused when the barns were altered and the roofs raised in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The new roofing will be in mineral slate.
- B. Insertion of means-of-escape conversation rooflights on the south elevation for the bedrooms, plus small conservation rooflights in the lean-to roof of the Fowl house and over the stairs in both barns. These are mainly all sited on the rear or side of the buildings away from the main farmstead frontage.
- C. Vent slits will be glazed with frames at the midpoint of the wall thickness to allow maximum light into the room.
- D. The open front of the Cart Shed will be maintained as a carport. At first floor level on the north elevation the timber screen and central door will be replicated, with an inward opening window behind a timber shutter.
- E. It is intended to provide traditional timber cart doors to the Threshing Barn which can be kept closed when the barn is not in occupation. Inside these will be a timber-framed double glazed screen incorporating personnel doors.
- F. Provision of rainwater gutters and downpipes. There are currently no gutters or downpipes on the South side of the barns but these are necessary to divert water off the stone walls to prevent scouring of the mortar and frost spalling of stonework. Gutters will be spiked off rafter ends. Gutters and downpipes will be matt black painted cast metal.
- G. Cleaning down walls and patch repointing. The farmhouse is limewashed and it is proposed to follow this principle with a bagged lime surface with painted finish to replicate limewash. This will provide a more durable finish than limewash, whilst being fully breathable and will protect the already wind-scoured stone of the south elevation.

**Internal alterations:**

- A. Limecrete floor. The installation of a Limecrete floor on Glapor insulation with underfloor heating will provide a dry, breathable floor.
- B. Lining of external walls with Steico Flex insulation and lime plaster to ensure the continuing air-permeability of the building whilst providing a degree of insulation to reduce reliance on heating systems.
- C. Insulation and plastering of ceilings throughout. Rafters will be battened to provide sufficient space for roof ventilation and the insertion of Thermafleecce or Steico Flex insulation between the rafters. The provision of lime plastered Woodfibre board ceilings between the trusses and purlins will retain the visual appeal of the main structure while providing reflected light to the interior.
- D. New internal openings between Threshing Barn/Cart Shed and Cart Shed/Fowl House will allow the Fowl House to become a useful home office, with a corridor link at the back of the open carport. Keeping the carport open is intended to ensure that these parking spaces are used, rather than all cars being parked in the farmyard.
- E. Insertion of intermediate floor in the Threshing Barn, either side of the central cartway, to provide bedrooms, bathrooms and access to first floor of Cart Shed. Flooring to be softwood boards, ceilings to be lime plaster.
- F. Installation of staircases. In the Threshing Barn there will be staircases either side of the central cartway, maintaining the full height of the barn in the central bay between the opposing cart doors. In the Cider House a late central partition will be removed restoring the original form of the Cider House. A staircase in the corner will lead up to the first floor.
- G. Partitioning of first floor to create bedrooms and bathrooms. Stud partitions with ledged and braced doors will not affect the structure. Where possible the studwork will be set into the framing of the main trusses to highlight their character.
- H. As part of the M & E installation, extractors will be required for the bathrooms as these do not have windows or rooflights. Also sprinkler systems will be required throughout to comply with the safety requirements of Building Regulations.
- I. Heating. Heat exchangers will power underfloor heating systems which will help to keep the barns dry and breathable. Log burners will be installed in the Threshing Barn, Fowl House and Cider House and the black painted metal flues will be on the rear elevation, exiting as close to the ridge as possible to minimise the visible length of the flues. The Fowl House flue will replace the existing flue.



### **Heritage Impact assessment**

As a historic asset, it is necessary to understand the heritage values of the property so that balanced and justifiable decisions can be made about changes to the fabric of the building and the impact of those changes on the building's significance can be properly understood.

There are four component values that are the basis for assessing the significance of the historic asset: evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values.

#### **Evidential value:**

Evidential Value is deemed to derive from those elements of a historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, and especially its historic fabric.

As the documentary evidence and the appraisals of each of the buildings make clear, the whole of the farmstead is of high evidential value. Each building is distinctive in its design which in all cases is appropriate to its function at the time of building. They are of recognisable types found throughout Wales. Externally they are remarkably unaltered, though most have lost their original internal fittings as their use has evolved over time. Most importantly their inter-relationship provides group value to the site and the landscape.

The buildings are of evidential value in terms of their function. Great care is being taken in the design of the conversion to retain all elements of the buildings so that their historic use can be appreciated. The simplicity of the proposed interiors will retain their evidential value.

#### **Historic value:**

Understanding historical value needs a broader understanding of the asset in its context, whereas a good understanding of evidential value can be reached by close physical analysis on site.

Historic value is deemed to be the associative or illustrative ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

The historical value of Winston Court will not be lessened by the proposals. On the contrary, it will be increased through interpretation by this evaluation and the research it involved. In particular the evaluation of the Crawshay Bayley connection and the correction of the date of the renovations of the barn are of great interest.

The historical value is inextricably linked with their evidential value, for example the evidence of the 17<sup>th</sup> century origins gives the farmstead historical value as having existed for over 400 years. Its importance also lies in an appreciation of the development of Great House into Winston Court from the 17<sup>th</sup> through to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Aesthetic Value:**

Aesthetic Value relates to the external appearance and form of an asset and its relationship to its context and setting. It derives from the sensory and intellectual responses that people derive from the heritage asset. This can relate to style and design or it can be the way in a historic asset has evolved and been used over time.

Assessing this aspect of an asset requires an understanding of the present and past forms of the building, complemented by an appreciation of the visual appearance of an asset in its setting. Inevitably understanding the aesthetic value of an historic asset will be more subjective than recording its evidential and historical values.

The grouping of the agricultural buildings with the farmhouse to form the farmstead is of particular aesthetic value. The farm can also be understood within its wider social and historical context of this dispersed rural area.

**Communal value:**

Communal Value is founded in the meanings that the heritage asset has for the people who relate to it in its current form or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It includes social and economic value, as well as commemorative, spiritual or symbolic value.

It is closely linked to historical and aesthetic values but has the specific aspect relating to how people perceive the heritage asset.

The relatively remote location of Winston Court, set amongst its fields, away from the highway and outside the village boundary means that it has no clearly defined community associated with the built structures. When the farm was operational it would have had some limited communal value to those that lived and worked at the farm, but at present the communal value of the site is low.

Provided the buildings are renovated and repurposed, there will inevitably be communal value for the people living on or visiting the farmstead.

**Assessment of impact**

*Managing Change (2017)* states that an analysis of historic character is a useful base from which to identify historic assets of special local interest and that historic character should be a vital element of any plans for regeneration and renewal.

The assessment can ensure distinctiveness and identity, and also contributes to quality of life and quality of place. Individual historic assets can be a focus for specific regeneration investment.

*Managing Change* recognises that strengthening or complementing character in new development helps to sustain distinctiveness. It also provides opportunities for fostering engagement and developing skills, and supports the well-being of local communities

The barns comprise the original Cider House, believed to date from the 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century and a range of buildings comprising the Threshing Barn, Cowhouse, Cart Shed and Fowl House which were extensively altered and adapted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

These buildings which also include the cow sheds on the opposite side of the farmyard clearly reflect lowland farming in that era with an emphasis on cattle and milking. They were intended to bring the farm up to date with improved functionality and therefore profitability for both the tenant and Crawshay Bailey, although he did not live to see this happen.

Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century the barns have deteriorated as they became redundant to the operation of the farm as it changed from cattle to sheep farming.

It is intended that the conversion will restore the original quality and vernacular detailing, considerably enhancing the heritage value of the barns.

Fortunately due to their 19<sup>th</sup> century renovations, there are sufficient window openings to ensure viability for domestic use without any significant changes to the external appearance of the barns.

Internally the barns have retained few original features in the previous restoration. The roof structures are totally renewed including raising the height of the buildings. The extant internal features of greatest interest are the very tall vent slits in the threshing barn.

### **Benefits**

The proposed works will result in a revitalised range of buildings, securing their long-term future. Although there are no serious structural issues, the Cider House and Fowl House in particular are in need of repair.

Internally any original features will be retained and carefully restored allowing the historic proportions and details to be appreciated. This particularly applies to the Cider House.

The proposed use does not require any significant structural alterations. There are already intermediate floors in all the barns apart from the threshing barn. There are also sufficient window and door openings.

### **Neutral**

The exterior of the barn will be unaffected by the new use and internal alterations will be kept to a minimum.

**Negative**

The floors will need to be replaced to provide insulation and Limecrete but this is offset by the provision of underfloor heating which will provide gentle warmth to preserve the structures. Lime plastering and insulation will cover the existing stone walls but in an era of climate change and rapidly escalating costs of heating, it is essential that a degree of insulation is provided, whilst not compromising the air-permeability of the barns.

**Solution**

All work will be carried out carefully, avoiding damage to historic fabric. Any features of interest discovered during the works will be reported to the Heritage Officer.

**Summary**

This statement provides an assessment of the heritage value of the barn range at Winston Court.

The buildings are no longer fit for modern agricultural use and an alternative must be found to allow for investment to secure their future.

The Hodge family are very keen to maintain the character and quality of the farmstead as a whole and will be making good previous poor restoration work to avoid further deterioration of the historic fabric.

The alterations required for conversion to residential use will be kept to a minimum which will preserve the historic fabric while enhancing the functionality of the barn range and ensuring its survival as a heritage asset in Monmouthshire.

**Liz Heron** B.Sc. B.Arch., RIBA

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