

Heritage Statement

**Farm Buildings at Tharbies Farm
Rook End, High Wych, Hertfordshire
CM21 0LL**



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Advised by AHP (Architectural History Practice)

February 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement sets out the history and significance of the buildings at Tharbies Farm and assesses the impact of the proposals on that significance. It meets the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021), paragraph 194, that “in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”

The Statement has been prepared by Ashdown Developments Limited, with advice and design input from Andrew Derrick BA AA Dipl Cons IHBC, a Director of AHP. The Significance Assessment was carried out in January 2021 following site meetings and research. The conclusions of the Significance Assessment have significantly influenced the design of the proposal. The evolution of the proposal is discussed in detail in the Design & Access Statement. The Impact Assessment was subsequently completed in January 2023 following the completion of plans.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying planning documentation.

2. HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Tharbies Farm lies in an area that has evidence of occupation in Medieval, Roman, and Late Iron Age (Area of Archaeological Significance no. 309 East Herts Local Plan). The site is documented as 'Ferrbyes' in 1654 so can be associated with the family of Robert Ferby, documented in 1425. It is later referred to as Tharbees, and currently Tharbies.

The farmyard lies approximately 150m to the east of Tharbies Farmhouse and is separated by the single-track lane running through the settlement of Rook End. The oldest surviving structure in the farmyard is the South Barn, a 17th Century timber framed Threshing Barn, included in the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) grade II. The earliest detailed map evidence of the South Barn is the Sawbridgeworth Tithe map of 1839 (fig 1). The barn is a simple cruciform shape and likely consisted of a rectangular barn, with midstreys to the north and south sides. A second square barn is shown to the north and a pond to the west. The pond is noteworthy as it is spring fed with constantly running clear water. The presence of this spring is likely key to the historical occupation of the site.

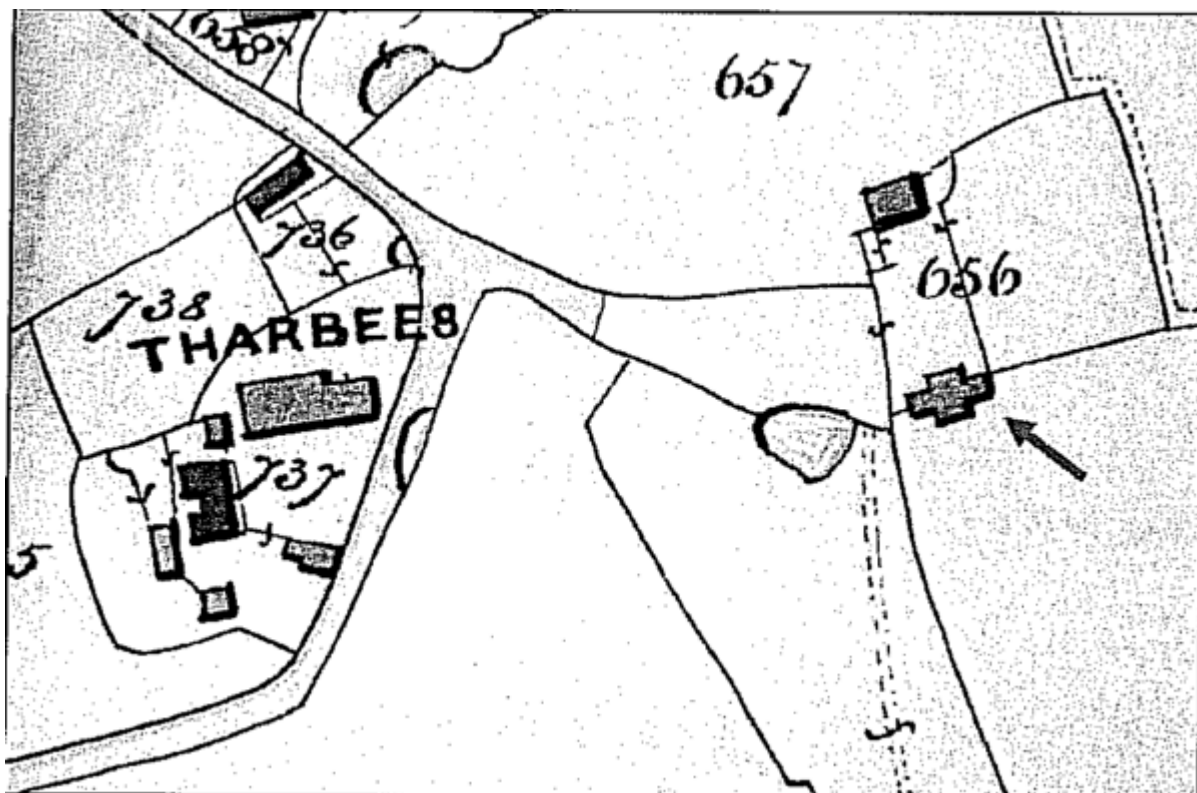


Fig 1. Extract from the 1839 Tithe Map showing 'Tharbees' and its farmyard/barns to the east. The Listed South Barn is marked with an arrow

The first accurate representation of the farmyard comes from the 1879 OS map. By this stage, the North Barn appears rectangular with a midstrey on the south elevation. There are various additions to both North and South Barns, with attached linear buildings forming a rectangular courtyard between the two historic barns. Another small detached linear structure has appeared to the north east.

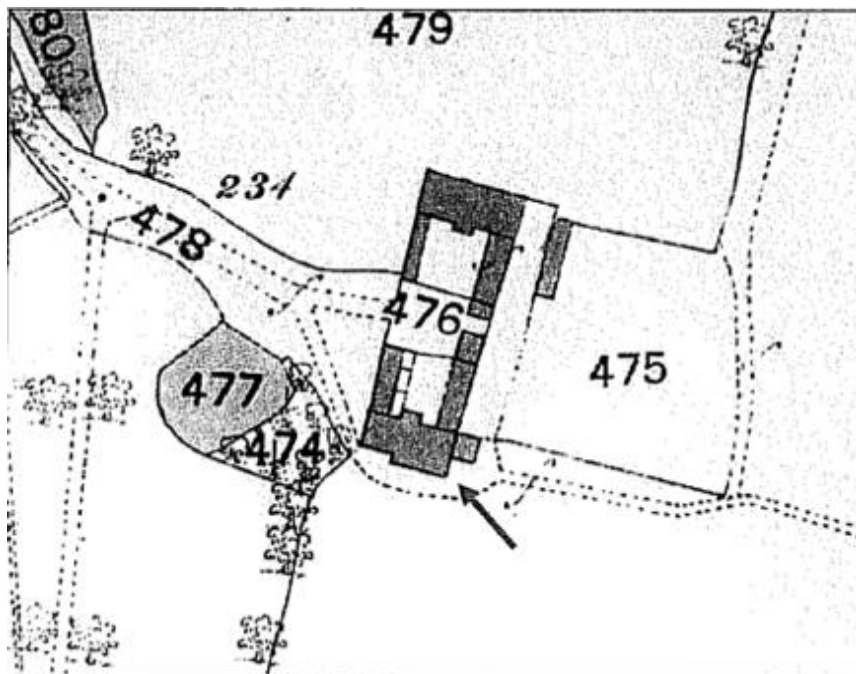


Fig 2. Extract from the 1879 OS Map

The 1898 OS map is very similar in appearance but with a pump within the courtyard, and the land to the east now split into two distinct farmyard areas

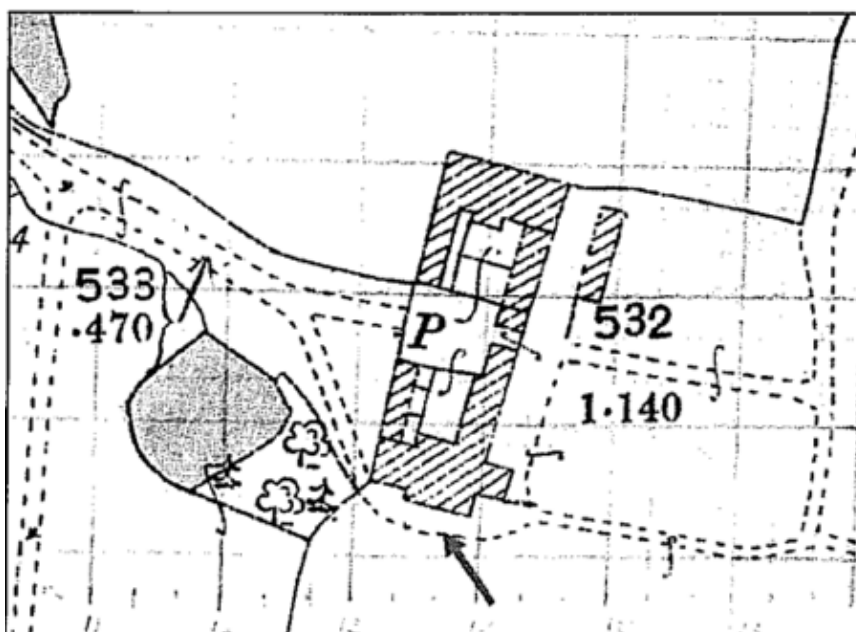


Fig 3. Extract from the 1898 OS Map

By 1921, the buildings to the west of the farmyard incorporating the North and South Barns appear little changed. A further building has appeared to the north east of the site creating a distinct secondary courtyard with the structure identified on the 1898 map. This new structure is indicated as open sided (dashed) onto the courtyard on this map but appears enclosed on all later maps.

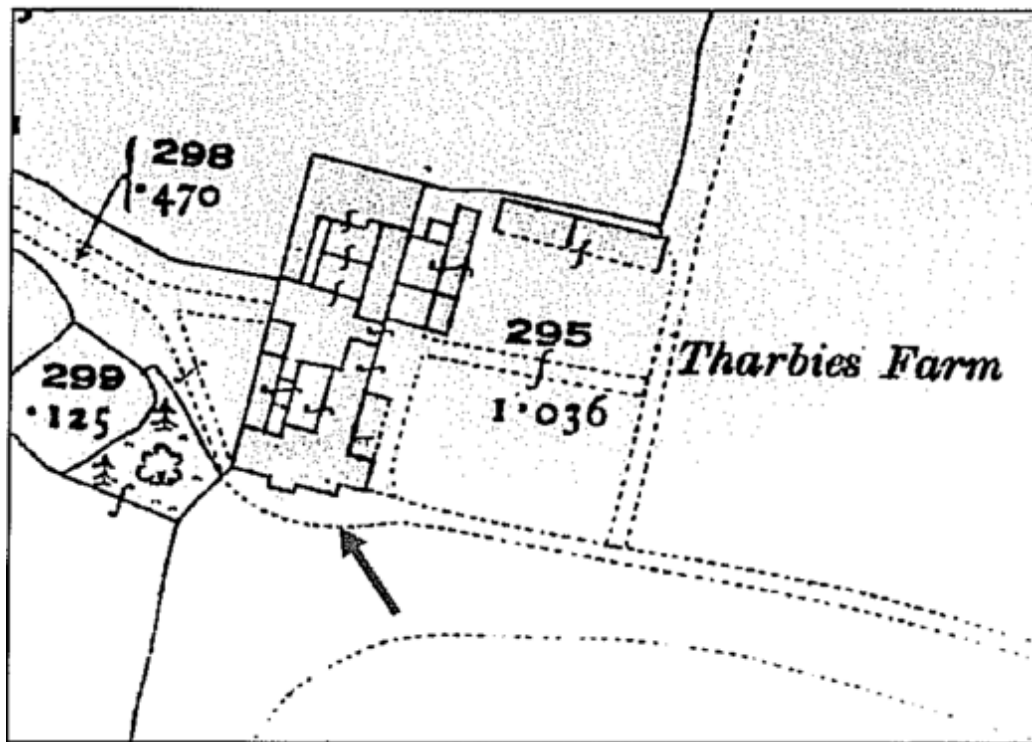


Fig 4. Extract from the 1921 OS Map

The nature of the multiple linear buildings that appeared in the late 19th/early 20th century is explained by the unusual development of the farmstead through this period. Tharbies started life as an arable farm, as evidenced by the Threshing barn from the 17th century, but from the mid 19th century, it evolved not as an agricultural farmyard, but as a thoroughbred stable yard. The series of linear buildings were in fact stables.

Tharbies Farm was acquired by a prominent local family, the Barnard's in 1844. William Barnard was a wealthy maltster who acquired several local farms around Sawbridgeworth and High Wych. The development of the stables at Tharbies Farm appears to have been driven by his son, Sir Edmund Broughton Barnard (1856-1930), who was a prominent local politician and horse trainer. He was awarded an OBE in 1920, followed by a knighthood in 1928 'For Valuable Services to Local Government'. It was reported that at the end of the 19th century Sir Edmund had between 100 and 150 racehorses stabled at Tharbies with his own private racecourse, built for training purposes, shown clearly to the south east of the farmstead on the 1923 OS map, figure 5.

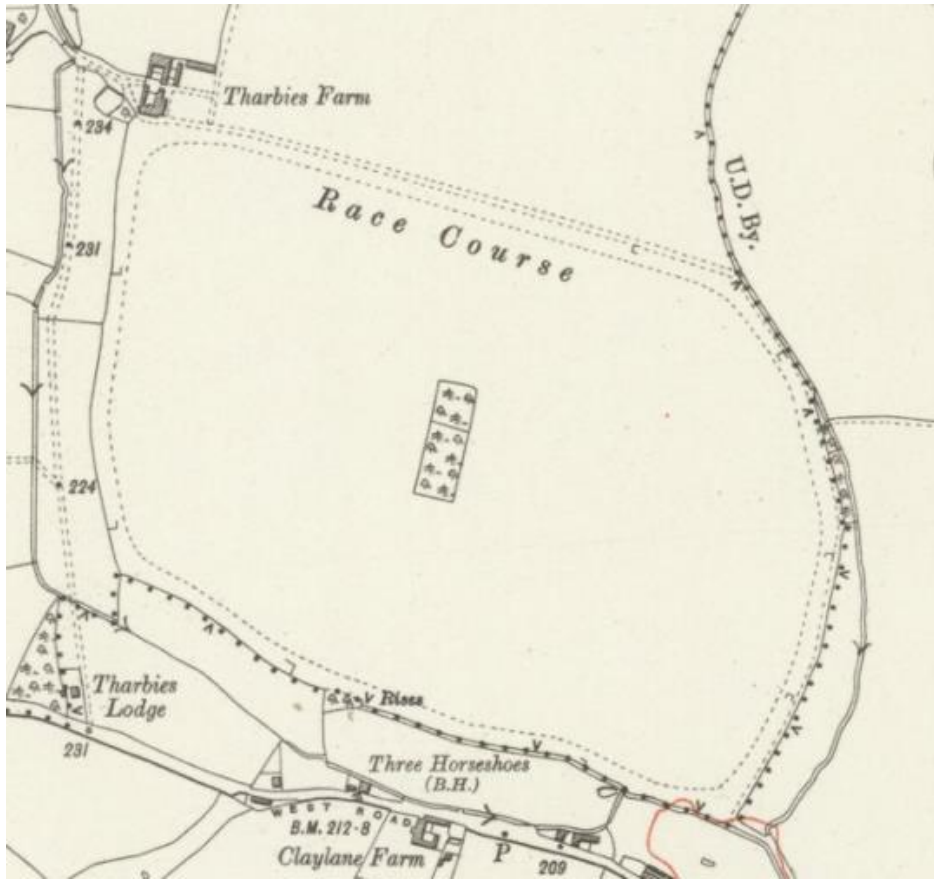


Fig. 5 Race Course on 1923 OS map. Note Tharbies Farm in the north west corner.

By 1946, a further structure had appeared in the north east courtyard. This is the 5-bay steel framed Dutch barn that currently occupies the site (fig 6).

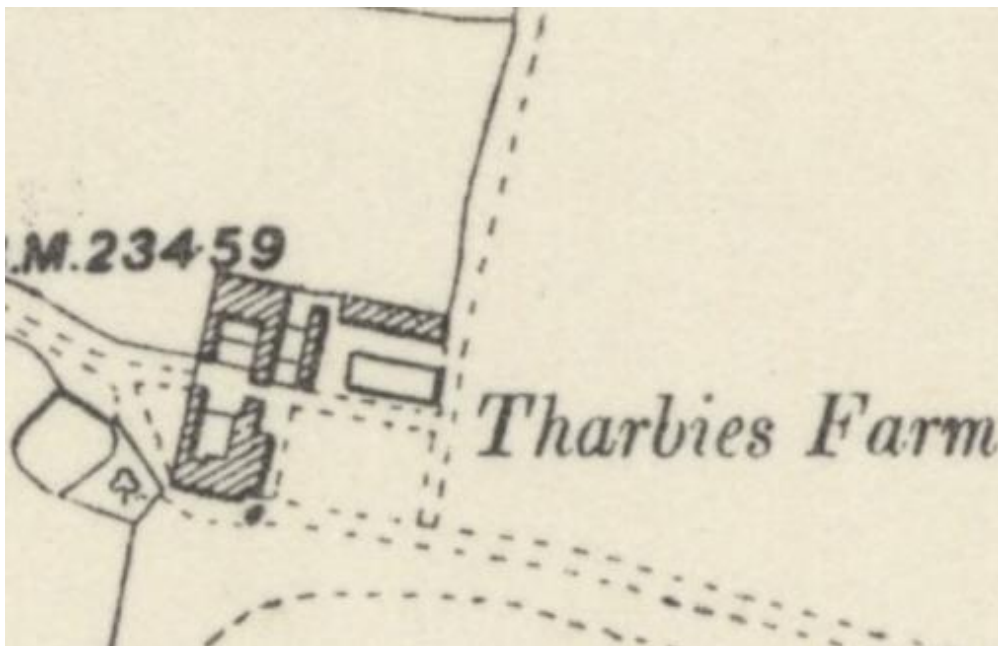


Fig 6. Extract from 1946 OS Map

In the mid 20th century, the farm was converted back to agricultural use. Two further barns were added to the south east of the farmyard, the curtilage listed buildings to the north east were infilled, and the linear stables between the North & South barns were demolished and replaced with cow sheds. This can be seen in the 1975 OS map with the extent of the farmyard structures shaded in blue.



Fig 6. Extract from 1975 OS Map

Little changed in the layout of the farmyard until 2008, when the cow sheds between the North and South Barns were removed and replaced with a large modern steel framed indoor cricket school. This modern building blocked the historic entrance to the farmstead between the North and South Barn. More recently, the barn edged red on the 1975 map has been removed due to fire damage, and the modern concrete framed barn immediately to the north of it has been converted to residential use under Class Q Permitted Development Rights. The current layout of the farmyard is shown in Fig 7 as an aerial photograph. You will note the presence still of the historic North & South Barns, with the large cricket school between them, as well as the roof forms of the north east barns that incorporate the curtilage listed structures seen on the 1946 OS map.



Fig 7. Aerial View of Tharbies 2022. The listed/curtilage listed structures marked with arrows

3. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

In 2008 English Heritage published a document entitled 'Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance' which identified four principal heritage values which are intended to prompt comprehensive thought about the wide range of heritage values that might be attached to a place, and to allow their contribution to its overall value or significance to be assessed.

- EVIDENTIAL VALUE derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity
- HISTORICAL VALUE derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present
- AESTHETIC VALUE derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the place
- COMMUNAL VALUE derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for who it figures in their collective experience or memory

Adopting Historic England values approach, this Significance Assessment assigns the following significance rankings to each building: High, moderate, low, or no value.



Fig 8. Site Plan indicating building reference names

3a. BARN 1 – South Barn (Grade II listed)



Fig. 9 Photo of the listed South Barn from S, 2023

The South Barn is a Grade II listed building, the list description for which states:

SOUTH BARN AT THARBIES FARM AT SOUTH END OF RANGE NEAREST ROAD.

Barn, C17. Tall timber framed weatherboarded facing S. Steep pitched roof, half-hipped at ends. Projecting central porch with half-hipped roof and overhanging gable. Clapsed purlin roof structure with collars and inclined queen struts. Long curved braces from posts to tie beams. Roof now covered in slates. Modern building extending to N not of special interest.

Since listing the slates have been lost and replaced with corrugated iron sheeting. The building is unused and unoccupied and is now in a declining condition, although its internal oak frame with inclined queen strut trusses is in remarkable condition given its years of neglect. The condition of the timber structure is assessed in detail in a separate report entitled 'Schedule of Repairs to Listed Building'. The timber frame is complete except for the lower half of the northern wall that has been replaced with modern fletton bricks. The Barn is included in the East Herts Heritage at Risk Register.

- **EVIDENTIAL VALUE:** High. Traditional oak framed threshing barn, typical of the area, and key to understanding the arable farming history of the site. The scale, completeness, and quality of internal timber frame, with its inclined queen strut trusses, are key to its significance.
- **HISTORICAL VALUE:** High. 17th Century example of a threshing barn broadly in its original state. Threshing the corn crop by hand was the predominant means of processing the crop until the 19th century. Threshing barns often had opposing doors either side of the threshing floor as was the case here. Historical association with Tharbies Farmhouse.
- **AESTHETIC VALUE:** Moderate/High. An elegant example of a threshing barn with strong proportions. Very dominant position at the head of the farmstead. The loss of the northern midstrey, and poor external finish currently detract from the appearance of the building.

- COMMUNAL VALUE: High. The building is a dominant feature from footpath High Wych 042 and is a striking example of a traditional threshing barn. Its presence has communal value for the understanding of local arable farming traditions.

OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE VALUE – The heritage value of the South Barn is HIGH as denoted by its inclusion in the National Heritage List for England. This traditional timber framed Threshing barn is the oldest surviving original structure in the farmyard. The building has lost the midstrey to the north that can be seen on the earliest Tithe map from 1839, but the rest of the structure is in place. Externally the building needs restoration, but the internal oak frame with its inclined queen struts is in remarkably good condition.

3b. INDOOR CRICKET SCHOOL



Fig 10. Cricket school viewed from the access to the W, 2023

The Indoor Cricket school was erected in 2008 and is a modern steel framed, steel-clad sports hall. It has since been part clad in weatherboarding to soften its appearance. Its position blocks the original entrance to the farmstead, and it is crudely attached to the listed South Barn and the Heritage North Barn.

- **EVIDENTIAL VALUE:** None. There is nothing about the structure of the building that relates well to the traditional farmstead.
- **HISTORICAL VALUE:** None. Modern building and form that damages the significance of the heritage buildings it is attached to and is detrimental to their setting.
- **AESTHETIC VALUE:** None. A utilitarian structure, unsympathetic in scale and materials. There has been an attempt to soften the building with timber cladding but the job is unfinished. Its position blocks the original entrance to the farmyard, obstructing views into and out of the farmstead.
- **COMMUNAL VALUE:** No historic communal value. Currently an active community asset, but very underutilised as not served well by its location.

OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE VALUE – The cricket school building has **NO HERITAGE VALUE**. Indeed, its existence damages the significance of the heritage assets on site and contributes negatively to their setting. In particular, its mass and crude abutment to the heritage assets is detrimental to the historic environment. The building also blocks the original access to the farmstead, blocking views in and out of the site.

3c. BARN 2 – North Barn (Non-designated Heritage Asset)



Fig 11. The North Barn viewed from the E, 2023

The North Barn is a traditional oak framed agricultural building that is visible on the first map of the site, the Tithe map from 1839. However, it appears square in shape on this map. By the time of the 1889 OS map, the building had adopted its current rectangular form, with a midstrete to the south, which is currently not present.

The building appears to be constructed of two distinct three bay barns attached together to create one six bay barn. Historic maps indicate that this happened in the second half of the 19th century. The two barns themselves significantly pre-date this, but they are difficult to precisely date.

The barn is sat on a brick plinth, with a weatherboard exterior, and a roof currently covered with corrugated iron. The lower half of the East elevation has been replaced with fletton bricks, with a large modern window opening above. The remainder of the historic timber framed structure still exists.

- **EVIDENTIAL VALUE:** Moderate/High. A traditional oak framed agricultural barn in the local vernacular tradition. There is evidence of the re-use of timbers, and possibly an entire three bay barn that has been relocated, which was common in this period.
- **HISTORICAL VALUE:** Moderate/High. It appears on the earliest 1839 Tithe map and was added to in the late 19th century. Both its constituent barns significantly pre-date this alteration.

- **AESTHETIC VALUE:** Moderate. It is a good example of a traditional timber farm building. However, as a marriage of two different structures, the proportions are somewhat unbalanced. The building is currently used as the reception to the cricket school with modern internal finishes. The timber frame is still present underneath and can be observed in Photos 6 & 7 of Appendix 2.
- **COMMUNAL VALUE:** Moderate. The barn is visible from the highway and public footpath High Wych 042 and contributes positively to the setting of the historic farmyard. Its presence has communal value for the understanding of local arable farming traditions.

OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE VALUE – The Heritage value of the North Barn is MODERATE/HIGH. It appears on the earliest Tithe map from 1839 and is considerably older. It is well preserved, although its exterior needs restoration with a replacement roof covering. It does not have the internal elegance of the listed barn, but it is a good example of an agricultural timber barn in the local vernacular tradition.

3d. BARN 3 – Dutch Barn with modern wings (curtilage listed)



Fig12. The Dutch Barn viewed from the W, 2023

The Dutch Barn first appeared on the 1946 OS map. It was a late addition during the period when the farmstead was used as a stable yard before the addition of the mass of modern barns and cowsheds in the later 20th century. The barn is a classic barrel-vaulted steel framed barn, typical of the early to mid-20th century.

- **EVIDENTIAL VALUE:** Moderate. A traditional agricultural Dutch barn typical of the early 20th century. Although there is little architectural finesse, the building contributes to the group value of the farmstead and provides evidence of continued development into the 20th century.
- **HISTORICAL VALUE:** Low/Moderate. Dutch barns were typically used to store hay or straw which would have been used in the stables. The building is present in the 1946 OS map so is curtilage listed. The wings to the north and south are later additions.
- **AESTHETIC VALUE:** Moderate. The barrel-vaulted roof is dominant in the skyline and its silhouette contrasts with the angular roofs of the adjacent buildings making a positive contribution to the wider setting.
- **COMMUNAL VALUE:** Low/Moderate. The building dominates the skyline in views from the road and public footpath High Wych 042. Its height serves as a landmark in the wider landscape.

OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE VALUE – The Heritage value of the Dutch Barn is **LOW/MODERATE**. The Steel framed barrel vaulted building can first be seen on the 1946 OS map so is curtilage listed. Its significance lies in its group value and how it helps us to read the evolution of the farmstead through to the 20th century. Its barrel-vaulted silhouette contributes positively to the skyline and the setting of the other heritage assets.

3e. BARN 4 – Redundant Storage Shed incorporating the Stable Block (curtilage listed)



Fig13. Barn D viewed from the SW, 2023

The redundant storage barn sits in the north east corner of the farmstead, on what was previously a secondary courtyard of stable buildings. The open fronted stable block that can be seen in the 1921 OS map is still present within the current barn. The structure of this stable block is rare as it is supported on cast iron columns. The row of columns along the open fronted elevation shows evidence of a rain canopy that would have provided shelter for the horses. The remainder of the building is modern, and has no heritage value

- **EVIDENTIAL VALUE:** Moderate/High. The stable block is the key remaining evidence of the evolution of the farmstead as a stable yard with its associated racecourse in the late 19th/early 20th century. It also evidences the use of iron construction in agricultural buildings/stables at the start of the last century. Finds like this are relatively rare.
- **HISTORICAL VALUE:** Moderate. The open fronted stable block is first visible on the 1921 OS map and is the key remaining feature from that period of the farm's evolution as a stable yard.
- **AESTHETIC VALUE:** Low/Moderate. The external appearance of the building is very underwhelming looking like a modern low pitched agricultural shed. However, the cast iron stable block is very well preserved within.
- **COMMUNAL VALUE:** Low/Moderate. The building has communal value as the last surviving element of the stable yard and racecourse at Tharbies Farm, developed by the Barnards, a prominent local family.

OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE VALUE – The Heritage value of Barn 4 is MODERATE. Externally, the building is underwhelming looking like a late 20th century agricultural building with a low-pitched roof. However, it incorporates the curtilage listed open stable block that can first be seen on the OS map of 1921 and evidences the evolution of the farmstead as a stable yard from the mid 19th century. The cast iron columns and steel trusses are well preserved and show evidence of a rain canopy from its stable era. It is rare to find a surviving cast iron columned agricultural building in this area, and its rarity adds to its significance.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

The Grade II listed South Barn on the site is of primary significance followed by the North Barn, a non-designated heritage asset. The north eastern stable block with its original cast iron supporting columns is of moderate significance but is a rare find in this area and provides the only remaining evidence of the use of the farm as a stables with private racecourse. Of lower significance is the barrel-vaulted Dutch barn which contributes to the group value and evidences the continued evolution of the site into the 20th century. All four of these heritage assets should be preserved in the new scheme. The removal of modern mass, including the cricket school, would enhance the significance and setting of these heritage assets.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Conservation principles, policy and practice seek to preserve and enhance the value of heritage assets. In relation to development affecting a designated heritage asset the NPPF states in paragraphs 199 and 200 that:

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

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF, however, also advises Local Planning Authorities that.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

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

THE PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE (PPG)

This seeks to provide further advice on assessing the impact of proposals explaining that what matters in assessing the level of harm (if any) is the degree of impact on the significance of the asset. It states:

'In determining whether works to a listed building (or its setting) constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.'

The NPPF explains in paragraphs 201 and 202 the differences between 'substantial' harm and 'less than substantial' harm, advising that any harm should be justified by the public benefit of a proposal.

In cases where there is less than substantial harm, paragraph 202 states:

'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.'

The PPG also seeks to provide a clearer understanding of what constitutes ‘public benefit’, as it is the public benefit that flows from a development that can justify harm. In weighing the public benefits against potential harm, considerable weight and importance should be given to the desirability to preserve the setting of listed buildings.

Public benefits can flow from a variety of developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social, or environmental progress as described in the NPPF, paragraph 8.

They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits. It explains that public benefits can include heritage benefits, such as:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- Securing the optimum viable use for a heritage asset.

HISTORIC ENGLAND ‘CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES’ (2008)

Works of alteration, extension, or demolition need not involve any harmful impact and may be necessary to ensure a building has a viable future. Historic England explains its approach to managing the historic environment and how we experience places stating in ‘Conservation Principles’ (April 2008) paragraph 88:

‘Very few significant places can be maintained at either public or private expense unless they are capable of some beneficial use; nor would it be desirable, even if it were practical, for most places that people value to become solely memorials of the past’.

It also points out in paragraph 92:

‘Retaining the authenticity of a place is not always achieved by retaining as much of the existing fabric as is technically possible’.

It also comments in paragraph 86:

‘Keeping a significant place in use is likely to require continual adaptation and change; but provided such interventions respect the values of the place, they will tend to benefit public (heritage) as well as private interests in it. Many places now valued as part of the historic environment exist because of past patronage and private investment, and the work of successive generations often contributes to their significance. Owners and managers of significant places should not be discouraged from adding further layers of potential future interest and value, provided that recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process’.

Further, in relation to new works and alterations in paragraph 138 states:

New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place.*
- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed.*
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future.*

HISTORIC ENGLAND'S 'GOOD PRACTICE ADVICE NOTES 3: THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS'

Paragraph 19, of this practice note, explains that.

Amongst the Government's planning policies for the historic environment is that conservation decisions are based on a proportionate assessment of the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset'.

From this summary of the national heritage management policy framework, it is clear that there is a complex assessment decision- making process to navigate when considering change within the historic environment.

Central to any decision is the recognition that history is not a static thing, and that the significance of our historic environment derives from a history of change.

LOCAL POLICY

Local plan policies broadly reflect national guidance. Local policy is laid out in District Plan policies HA1, HA2 & HA7, for designated, non-designated heritage, and listed assets. These emphasises the requirement for the LPA to pursue opportunities that preserve or improve the historic environment. Policy HA1 IV also recognises the contribution to sustainable development that heritage conservation makes, as does the re-use of buildings with their embedded carbon footprint.

5. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Fig 14. Proposed Site Plan

It is proposed to demolish the majority of the modern built form, including the indoor cricket school, and re-purpose the four listed/curtilage listed buildings, reinstating a site plan similar the late 19th/early 20th century. This scheme allows for the re-introduction of single storey rear ranges to the North and South barns, converting them into single dwellings. The main site access is reinstated through the middle, as per the historic mapping, recreating views to the east and of the silhouette of the Dutch barn. The northern stable block is converted to one dwelling, leaving 4 of the 7 bays as covered parking, restoring its original open-fronted character. The Dutch barn is converted to three units creating a courtyard in the north east corner of the site, similar to the late 19th century plan.

The heritage impact of the proposals on the four remaining structures is assessed here, along with the impact upon their setting.

5.1 Barn 1 – South Barn (Grade II listed)

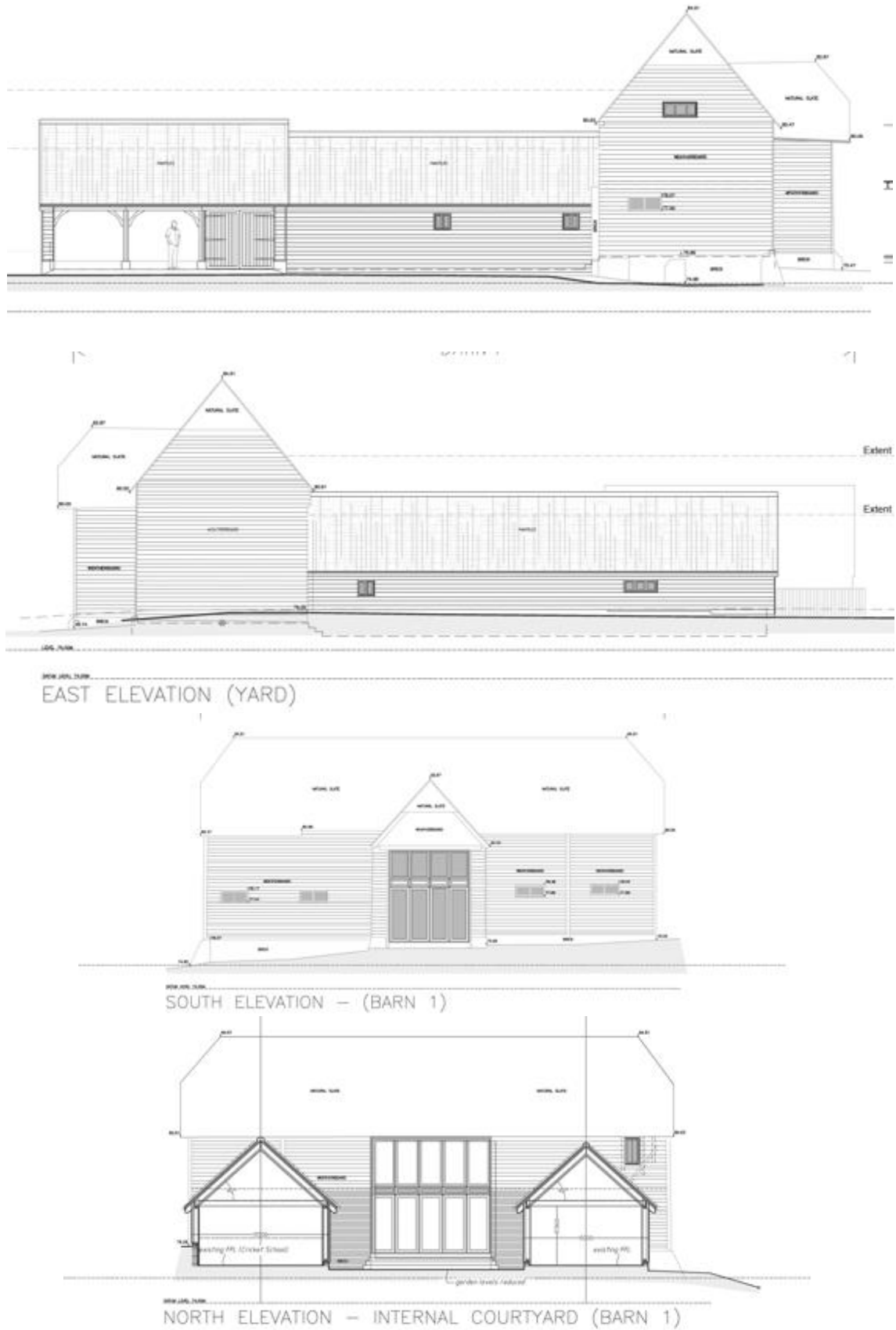


Fig 15. Proposed External Elevations of the Listed South Barn

The listed South Barn will be converted into a detached property with its historic single storey rear ranges re-instated. The modern makeshift doors to the existing midstrey will be removed and the opening will be glazed. The existing ventilation gaps will also be glazed. Only one small additional window will be incorporated into the rear elevation of the listed barn for egress purposes, but this can be achieved without the loss of any historic beams.

The addition of rear ranges will not cause any harm to the historic fabric as the lower northern elevation of the South barn has already been replaced with modern fletton bricks. Two door openings will be created in these brick walls to access the re-instated wings. The central opening to the north elevation, that is currently boarded over, will be opened up and glazed to form access to the inner courtyard.

A self-supported mezzanine will be incorporated into the western bay of the Barn, but the remainder of the listed Barn will remain open exposing the main beams and roof trusses. The stair to the mezzanine has been purposefully located against the modern fletton brick wall so as not to risk any interference with the historic timber structure.

Covered parking will be incorporated into the western rear range at the head of the re-instated entrance. Particular care has been taken to minimise the number of windows in the external elevations of the rear ranges. Windows present in the elevations are small, echoing the existing ventilation gaps on the listed barn.

The building will be finished with traditional weatherboarding, natural slate to the listed barn, and clay pantiles to the reinstated wings.

HERRITAGE IMPACT: Positive. The introduction of the rear wings recreates the historic footprint, reinstates the historic access to the farmstead with accompanying views to the east, and contributes positively to the setting of the heritage assets. The conversion of the listed barn has been designed to be sympathetic to the historic fabric, using existing openings as windows, and without the further loss of historic fabric. The introduction of the rear ranges with bedrooms and other ancillary functions, allows for a light touch conversion of the listed barn, allowing it to be largely left open exposing the fine inclined queen trusses.

The proposals deliver several public benefits. The removal of the cricket school that is crudely connected to the listed barn is a key heritage gain, along with creating an optimum viable use for the redundant barn. The proposals will deliver the restoration of this important heritage asset and secure its future maintenance, allowing it to be removed from the East Herts Heritage at Risk Register.

5.2 BARN 2 – North Barn (Non-designated Heritage Asset)

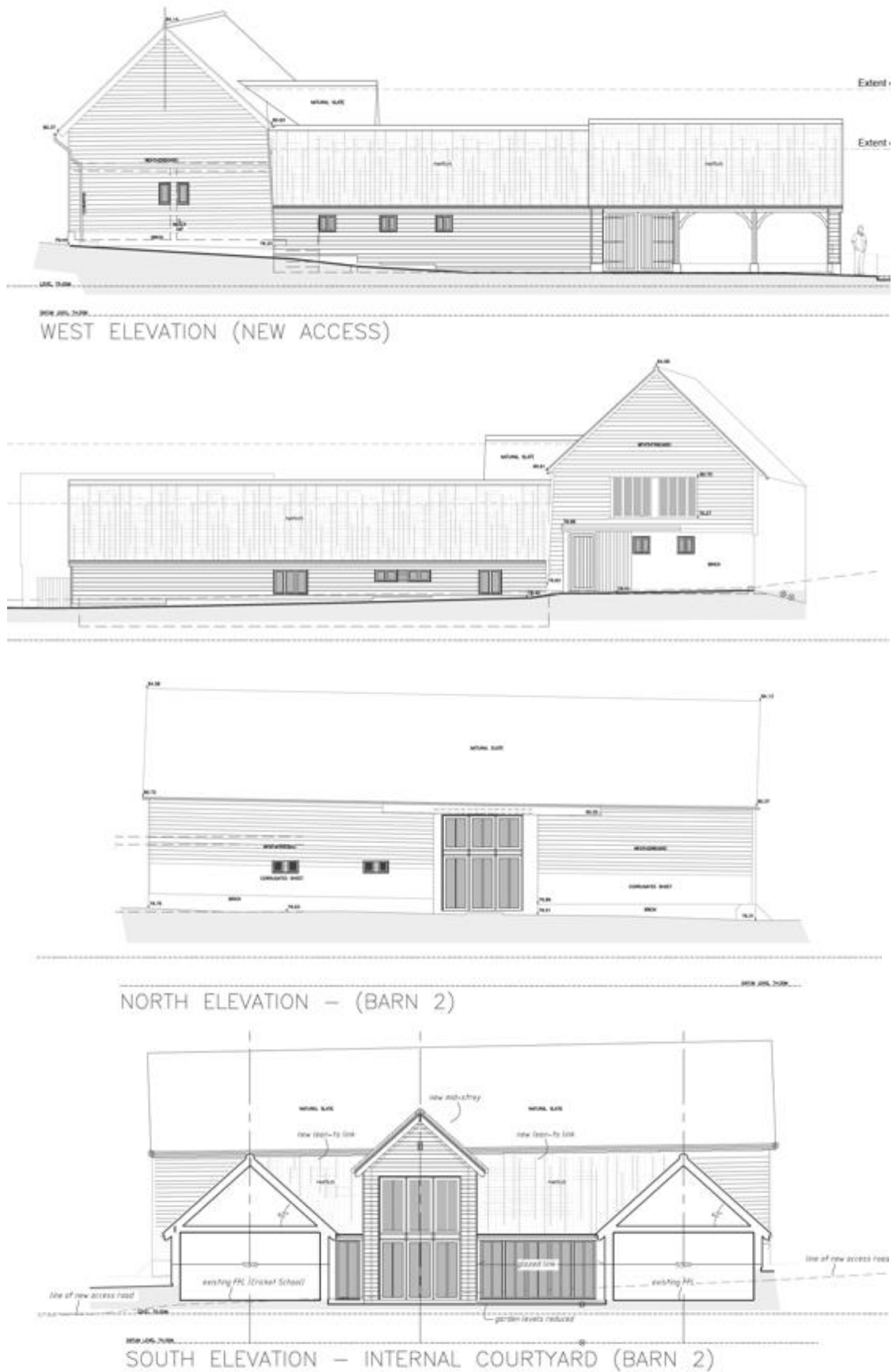


Fig 16. Proposed External Elevations of the North Barn

The North Barn will be conserved in a similar way to the listed barn creating a similar detached property with exposed beams and roof trusses, and an inner private courtyard. The North barn appears to have been created from two independent three bay barns that have been rebuilt as one 6 bay barn. As such it does not have the height or internal elegance of the South Barn, and its internal proportions feel unbalanced. Independent mezzanines are therefore proposed in the east and west bays to bring better spatial balance to the central 4 bays that will remain open.

The midstrey first seen on the 1879 OS map will be reinstated on the south elevation. This will act as a link to the reinstated rear ranges, preventing the loss of any historic fabric that would result from introducing openings to rear ranges. Four historic ventilation gaps, that are currently boarded over, will be exposed and glazed. There is no requirement for any new window openings in the existing barn.

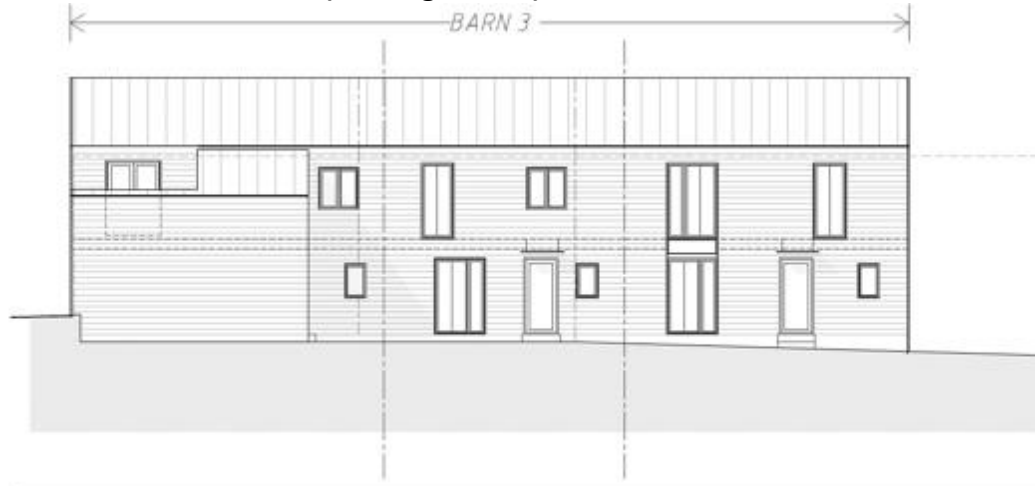
As with the Listed Barn, there will be limited windows to the exterior elevations of the rear ranges. The Western range will contain covered parking that mirrors that of the South Barn, framing the reinstated entrance.

The building will be finished with traditional weatherboarding, natural slate to the main barn and midstrey, and clay pantiles to the reinstated wings.

HERRITAGE IMPACT: Positive. The introduction of the rear wings recreates the historic footprint, reinstates the historic access to the farmstead with accompanying views to the east, and contributes positively to the setting of the heritage assets. The midstrey on the southern elevation is re-instated for historic context and to provide access to the rear ranges. The North barn currently provides reception, office, and W.C. facilities for the cricket school which has resulted in the introduction of inappropriate partitions and surface finishes. The proposed conversion is sympathetic to the heritage significance of the building, will remove inappropriate modern finishes, and will not result in the loss of any historic fabric. The introduction of the rear ranges with bedrooms, allows for a light touch conversion of the barn, allowing the exposed roof trusses to be appreciated.

The proposals deliver several public benefits. The removal of the cricket school that is crudely connected to the North barn is a key heritage gain, along with creating an optimum viable use for the barn. The proposals will deliver the restoration of this non-designated heritage asset and secure its future maintenance.

5.3 Barn 3 – Dutch Barn (Curtilage listed)



BARN 3 NORTH ELEVATION



BARN 3 SOUTH ELEVATION

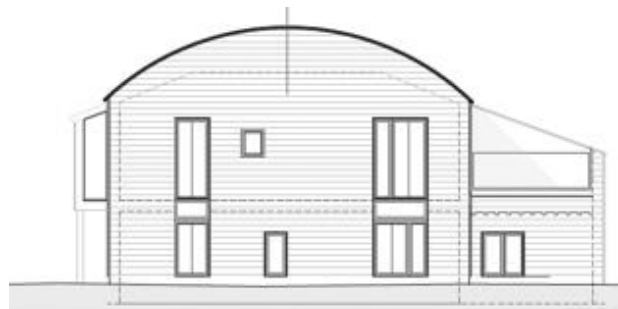


Fig. 17 Elevations of the Dutch Barn

The Dutch barn will have the majority of its modern wings removed and will be converted into a row of three dwellings. In general, the design of this barn will be more contemporary, reflecting its character and lower historical significance. Its agricultural character will be retained with its barrel-vaulted roof, and inserted irregular/barn like window openings.

The dwellings are orientated so that their principal elevation faces into the covered parking courtyard, with enclosed amenity space to the south. The rear elevation has been designed with 'hidden windows' to first floor habitable rooms, with projecting bays that only have glazing to the sides. This design prevents overlooking, introduces some shadow and depth to the south elevation and shades the ground floor doors from summer sun.

The building will be finished with timber weatherboarding and a seamed metal roof. The projecting bays will also be clad in matching seamed metal.

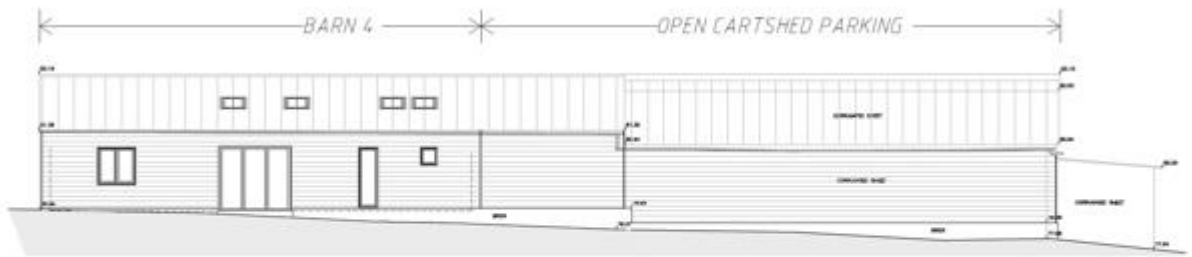
HERRITAGE IMPACT: Positive. Although this building only has moderate historic significance, illustrating the development of the farmstead into the 20th century, it holds group value and adds to the setting of the farmstead with its curved roof line contributing to the interest of the skyline. The removal of most of the modern wings exposing the curtilage listed barrel vaulted barn, is a key heritage gain, allowing the form of the Dutch barn to be better appreciated. This buildings silhouette will once again be prominent in the view as the farmstead is entered through its reinstated entrance and will make a positive contribution to the setting of the other heritage assets on the site.

The proposals deliver public benefits. The Dutch Barn is currently redundant and will be brought back into a viable and sustainable use. The proposals will deliver the restoration of this curtilage listed heritage asset and secure its future maintenance.

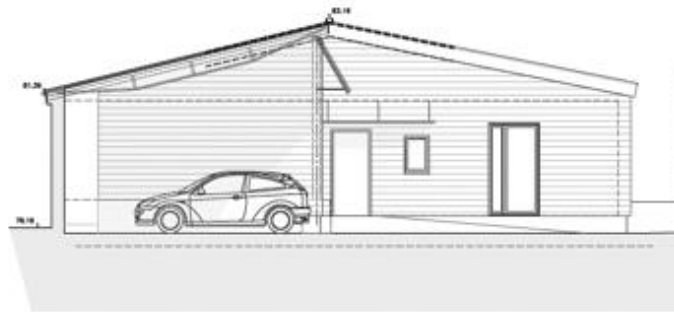
5.4 Barn 4 – Stable Block (Curtilage listed)



BARN 4 SOUTH ELEVATION (COURTYARD)



BARN 4 NORTH ELEVATION (REAR)



BARN 3 & 4 WEST ELEVATION (SIDE)

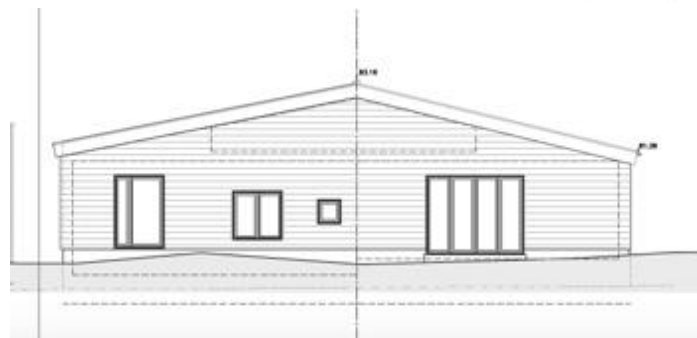


Fig 18. Elevations of the Stable Block

The cast iron stable block will be converted to covered parking and one dwelling. The four western bays of the stable block will be exposed and restored as covered parking, reinstating the original open-fronted character of the stable block, with its cast iron columns shown to full advantage. There is evidence of original brackets on the southern row of columns that would have supported a rain/weather canopy. The canopy will be reinstated on the four open bays for historical context.

The remaining three bays will be converted into a single storey dwelling with open plan living areas in the original stable block. The columns and steel trusses will be exposed internally where possible. The existing building has a series of roof lights down its length. These will be echoed in the conversion with simple roof lights in the northern elevation, which is not on public view.

The building will be finished with horizontal timber weatherboarding and a seamed metal roof.

HERITAGE IMPACT: Positive. The stable block is the key remaining evidence of the evolution of the farmstead as a stable yard in the late 19th/early 20th century. It also evidences the use of iron construction in agricultural buildings/stables at the start of the last century. The removal of modern built form, exposing the open fronted nature of the original stable block and enhanced by the reinstated rain canopy, will have a positive impact on the setting of the other heritage assets on the site.

The proposals deliver public benefits. The Stable building is currently redundant and will be brought back into a viable and sustainable use. The proposals will deliver the restoration of this curtilage listed heritage asset and secure its future maintenance.

6. SETTING

Preamble:

In relation to the proposed development, the importance of setting lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage assets, and how the development impacts this.

In the NPPF Glossary, Setting of a heritage asset is defined as ‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets - goes on to describe how the setting of heritage assets will change over time and that this can be a positive element in our understanding of places and how we experience the historic environment and heritage assets. It cautions that where unsympathetic change has affected the setting of a heritage asset further cumulative negative changes could sever the last link between an asset and its original setting. However, it points out that sympathetic new development has the potential to enhance setting, successfully illustrating the cycle of change that shapes our towns, villages and countryside.

The Advice Note also states that whilst setting is often primarily thought of in visual terms, it can also include other features like tranquillity or remoteness. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the heritage asset and its surroundings evolve. Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.

Tharbies Setting:

Tharbies Farmstead is in a remote countryside location with footpath High Wych 042 running through it. The site is slightly elevated so can be seen in glimpses from the surrounding country lanes. The farmstead forms an integral part of the rural landscape and is experienced by the multiple walkers that pass through the site each day.

The key attributes of the site are the four listed or curtilage listed buildings that remain on the site. The setting of these buildings was harmed by the modern additions to the farmstead in the late 20th century. Changes in farming practices mean the buildings are divorced from the farming land they were associated with and no longer have a viable use as agricultural buildings. Consequently, there has been no investment in maintenance of the fabric of the buildings, and they are currently in a very poor and declining state of repair.

The more recent addition of the cricket school has caused further harm to the setting, as the building is crudely attached to the two most significant heritage assets on site and is unsympathetic in both scale and materiality. The cricket school building is positioned across the original access to the farmstead, blocking views in and out of the site. The current use as a cricket school with up to 200 car trips per day also compromises the peaceful rural setting.

The scheme seeks to reverse the harm caused to the setting by removing much of the modern built form, demolishing the cricket school, and reinstating the original access. The four listed and curtilage listed buildings will also be restored for residential use providing them with a suitable optimal viable use.

The proposals will revert the farmstead back to its historic site plan of the late 19th/early 20th century, and expose curtilage listed buildings from that period that have been hidden by later modern additions. These buildings will be better understood and appreciated as heritage assets on the site and the proposed changes will allow them to make a positive contribution to the setting of the farmstead.

Great care has been taken with the design of the Grade II listed South Barn and the North Barn (non-designated heritage asset), respecting their elevated heritage significance, and their significant contribution to the wider setting. The conversions have been designed sympathetically, to avoid loss of any historic fabric, and utilising existing openings for windows wherever possible. The rural character of these redundant farm buildings is not compromised by their conversion, and their restoration will enhance the setting of the farmstead.

Externally, the scheme has been designed with open landscaped frontages and enclosed rear gardens/inner court yards, to contain residential paraphernalia. Landscaping has been introduced to the site to replace concrete hardstanding that forms the car park for the cricket school. The landscaping is simple and low level introducing a level of softness to the design that is sympathetic to the location and not overtly residential in style. Fencing includes traditional estate fencing, and post and rail fencing to the surrounding countryside, both in keeping with the farmstead setting. A gravel finish will provide a suitable informal surface for hardstanding and parking areas.

Summary:

The impact from the proposals on the heritage setting is positive. The setting of the farmstead will be enhanced significantly by the removal of modern built form, the re-introduction of the original access, and the sympathetic conversion of the four heritage assets on site. The change of use to residential from leisure will provide a lower intensity use, reduce traffic movements, and enhance the setting of the buildings in the rural landscape.

7. CONCLUSIONS

From its origins as an arable farm with a 17th century Threshing Barn and smaller barn to the north, Tharbies evolved in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the introduction of further buildings when the farmstead was converted from arable use to a thoroughbred stable yard with associated private racecourse.

In the mid 20th century, the farm was converted back to agricultural use. The historic barns were infilled, and modern barns added that dwarfed the historic buildings. Subsequent changes in modern farming practices resulted in the redundancy of the farm buildings. Further harm to the setting and significance of these heritage assets resulted from the introduction of a modern cricket school building in 2008. The heritage assets on the site are in a declining state through lack of investment and do not currently have a viable or sustainable use to support their ongoing maintenance.

The proposed scheme seeks to reverse this harm by removing much of the modern built form, and re-purposing the four listed and curtilage listed buildings for residential use, bringing them all into optimal viable use. The development respects the historic grain of the site and setting of the historic assets, in terms of layout, scale and materials. There is a clear positive heritage benefit to each of the four converted barns, and a significant enhancement to their setting.

In heritage terms, the proposals accord with the development plan and as such constitute sustainable development that should be approved without delay.

APPENDIX 1 – Photos of building elevations, 2023



Photo 1 - South Barn from S



Photo 2 - South Barn from E



Photo 3 - South Barn from W



Photo 4 - Cricket School from W



Photo 5 - Cricket School from E



Photo 6 - North Barn from E



Photo 7 - North Barn from N



Photo 8 - Dutch Barn from W



Photo 9 - Dutch Barn from E



Photo 10 - Barn 4 from N



Photo 11 - Barn 4 from SW



Photo 12 - Barn 4 from E

APPENDIX 2 – Photos prior to conversion to Cricket School, 2008



Photo 1 – Cowsheds on site of current cricket school showing original entrance gap, from NE. Listed South Barn to the rear with its prominent half hipped roofline.



Photo 2 – Junction of Listed South Barn to cowshed, from W



Photo 3 – South elevation of Listed Barn showing makeshift midstrey doors. Dutch Barn can be seen to NE



Photo 4 – Junction of Listed Barn to cowshed, from E



Photo 5 – Cowsheds part dismantled. Heritage North Barn to the N



Photo 6 – Internal Photo of Heritage North Barn, from E, showing ventilation openings that are currently boarded over



Photo 7 – Internal view of Heritage North Barn, from W. Eastern gable end has been replaced with fletton bricks, with a large modern window above. Note different truss structure relative to photo 6, indicative of two different 3 bay barns attached together



Photo 8 – Listed Barn Southern Elevation