

Saltham Barns
Runcton
West Sussex

Planning, Design and Access Statement
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Photographs and photograph location plan.

Background/Proposal

Saltham Barns were converted to commercial use in 1980 and have proved to be popular and successful small business units, with several tenants on the site. It is a previously developed commercial site, that has ample potential for expansion.

The proposal is to construct a linked extension on the side of Unit C2, which will provide covered cycle and bin store to serve the site, along with a work unit (Class E), which includes a disabled W.C.

Originally the proposal was for a permanent building with full foundations. The prepared flood risk assessment demonstrated that the site was not at risk of flooding due to climate change. However, whilst the full modelling details of the recently published climate change maps are not known, it does show that the site is at risk of flooding in the long term. (If the site does flood in the long term, so will the main built-up area of Runcton and all of the homes in the surrounding area, unless new flood defenses are introduced.

Accordingly, the applicant is proposing a sectional building that sits on a concrete pad and which can be removed in the future, should the site become at real risk of flooding. The building is designed to be capable of being dismantled and moved and to have a life span of 40 – 60 years. As such it is proposed that the initial grant of planning permission is for 30 years.

Bearing in mind the implications of the recent climate change flood risk map, this approach is sensible and will ensure the areas potentially affected can continue to function and remain viable in the short to medium term. There would then be no need to ensure buildings remain safe for at least 100 years.

Planning Policies and Proposals

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The overall planning policies of relevance to this application have been set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (Framework).

The Framework seeks to achieve sustainable development, which has three dimensions, namely:

- economic objective;
- social objective; and
- environmental objective

The Core principles of the Framework are to adopt a pro-active approach. It actively promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this mean that where a development accords with an up-to-date Local Plan it should be approved without delay.

In relation to the economy the Framework states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight (my emphasis) should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strength, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

Planning policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and to enable rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

In addition, the specific locational requirements of different sectors should be recognized and addressed.

In relation to the rural economy decisions should enable:

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

It states that the use of previously developed land and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

This positive approach to rural businesses is to promote a strong rural economy. As stated in the Framework significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.

In relation to making effective use of land paragraphs 117 and 118 of the Framework states that planning policies and decisions should promote effective use of land for homes and other uses. They should encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land and should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Regarding design paragraph 130 of the Framework seeks to ensure that new development is designed to a high standard and is sympathetic to local character and history, whilst not preventing appropriate innovation or change.

Concerning transport the Framework states that significant development should be focused in locations which are or can be made sustainable. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and that this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Finally, in relation to flood risk, where appropriate applications should be supported by specific flood risk assessments. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where in the light of the FRA it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

Chichester District Local Plan: Key Policies 2014 - 2029

Policy 1 of the Local Plan sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the wording set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. In effect, where a proposal accords with the development plan it should be approved unless material considerations dictate otherwise.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan sets out the development strategy and settlement hierarchy. As you would expect it steers most development to the larger settlements and some development to smaller villages. It also acknowledges that there will be development elsewhere and in relation to the countryside it states that development will be restricted to various stated circumstances including that which supports rural diversification in accordance with policies 45 and 46 of the Local Plan.

The Plan identifies the challenges facing the Plan area and that to address them, amongst other things, the Plan needs to:

- Make provision for new development to meet the future employment needs of the area.
- Provide land and premises that enable local businesses to grow and flourish.
- Support and diversify economic activity.

The Plan's employment vision is for an environment where people can:

- Find a range of jobs that match different skills and pay levels and meet their aspirations for employment;
- Use their entrepreneurial flair to start and grow creative, innovative and competitive businesses;

The economic objectives for realising this vision include:

- Encouraging and supporting opportunities for business innovation, creativity, diversification and adaptability.
- To encourage employment opportunities, for creative and innovative businesses.

Chapter 6 sets out the strategy of the Local Plan as including developing a strong and thriving economy, improving employment opportunities for all skills and diversifying the economy.

With this in mind Policy 3 states that sustainable growth of the local economy will be supported through the provision of:

- A flexible supply of employment land and premises to meet the varying needs of different economic sectors.
- To provide a wider range of local employment opportunities in the rural parts of the District.
- Supporting and facilitating proposals and initiatives which contribute to implementing the priorities identified in the Economic Development Strategy for Chichester District.

The supporting text to this policy states at paragraph 6.8 that the Local Plan places strong emphasis on promoting enterprise and creating an environment which will encourage local businesses to grow.

Chapter 16 states that to support a thriving and adaptable local economy there is a need to maintain a flexible supply of employment land and sites, although opportunities for new sites are limited. It is therefore important to make the best use of the existing stock of employment land and floorspace. This means retaining suitable employment sites and encouraging their refurbishment and upgrading to meet modern business needs. This is catered for in policy 26 where it states that proposals should not be of a scale that would cause unacceptable harm to the enjoyment of the countryside.

Policy 45 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development which requires a countryside location and which meets an essential small scale local need. Planning permission will be granted for sustainable development in the countryside where it meets the following criteria:

- 1) It is well related to an existing farmstead, or group of buildings or close to a settlement.
- 2) The proposal is complementary to and does not prejudice any viable agricultural operations on a farm;

3) The proposal requires a countryside setting.

The supporting text to this policy advises that in order to protect the landscape, character, quality and tranquillity of the countryside it is essential to prevent inappropriate development. At the same time, it is necessary to provide for the needs of those who manage, live and work in the countryside to continue to do so.

The Council will support the conversion of existing buildings and the re-use of previously developed sites for small scale employment generating uses which are accessible, well designed and well related to existing development.

Policy 8 of the Local Plan deals with transport and accessibility in an overarching way. It seeks to ensure that new development is well located and designed to minimise travel by car. It does not address the rural areas, although its supporting text at paragraph 8.4 it states that the more rural parts of the district face different transport challenges and has a high reliance of car travel to access key services and facilities, with limited public transport.

Policy 39 states that all development should provide for the access and transport demands they create. It should be located to minimise additional traffic generation and movement and should not create or add to problems of safety, congestion, air pollution, or other damage to the environment. It encourages development that can be accessed by other modes of transport.

[Chichester Local Plan Review 2025 – Preferred Approach December 2022 \(DLP\)](#)

Policy S3 states that the role of the Manhood Peninsular is as a home to existing communities, tourism and agriculture.

Regarding business and meeting employment needs the DLP advises that the strategy of the DLP is to develop a strong and thriving economy. This will be delivered through supporting local services in rural areas. It acknowledges that employment sites will be lost through permitted development conversions and so is looking to allocate additional business floor space. Also existing employment sites will be safeguarded and their intensification encouraged. This is encompassed in policy S8.

Regarding the Manhood Peninsular the DLP advises that the local economy is heavily dependent on tourism, agriculture and tourism with a relative lack of employment opportunities. With this in mind policy S18 states that proposals will be supported where they facilitate the economic and social well-being of the area. Also where they contribute to greater safeguarding of property from flooding and enable the area to adapt to change. Support is also given to proposals which provide a means of supporting the regeneration of the Manhood Peninsular.

Policy DM9 states that at existing employment sites permission will be granted for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of new floorspace, where there is no materials change in noise, vehicle movement or is of a scale that would not cause unacceptable harm to the enjoyment of the countryside. Existing employment sites will be retained to safeguard their contribution to the local economy.

Merits of the scheme

Need

The demand for small business units in this location is reflected in the fact that since the business units were first formed in 1981 they have been fully occupied by small local businesses.

Unit B is occupied by Earth Catering, who have occupied the premises for several years. The business comprises a wedding and event catering business, which provides food, plates, cutlery, etc. for weddings and other events. The venues they provide this service for include:

Chidham Barns, Chichester
Northlands Farm and lakes – Chichester
Weald and Downland Museum
Pitland Barns – Funtington
Stokes Barn – Arundel
Grittenham Barn – Petworth
Cissbury Barn – Petworth.

This is in addition to marque weddings and other one-off venues within the Manhood Peninsular, Chichester District and the western half of Arun District.

They work with local suppliers for their food and drink supplies, who include:

Pasquale – Chichester
Munneries – West Wittering
Parkers – Ford
Hennings wines – Pulborough

The company has grown in popularity and demand and is now needing additional space for cooking and staff. They do not want to move from Saltham Barns for a number of reasons:

The site is centrally located in relation to their client base and suppliers.

They are now really established on the site and the cost of moving would be prohibitive.

Notwithstanding this, there are no suitable commercial properties available to rent in Runcton.

They enjoy the quiet, clean and healthy working environment it provides.

The Directors live in Runcton and can regularly cycle to work

One members of staff lives in Chichester and cycles to work

One member of staff lives in Runcton and walks to work

Additional part time kitchen staff live locally.

The proposed extension would enable them to move their office facilities into the extension; enlarge the kitchen area in Unit B and employ more staff. The proposed building would provide light and airy office space; a staff toilet; secure and dry cycle parking for their staff; and a secure and dry bin storage area.

Overall, the proposed unit would meet their foreseeable needs, thus securing this local business and the direct and indirect employment and service it provides.



Location/accessibility

The site is located a short distance to the east of the main built up area of Runcton. It is accessed by a narrow road that maintained by the applicant and which provides access to the B2166 in Runcton (Some 600m). Chichester is 1.9 miles to the northwest and Bognor Regis is approximately 3 miles to the east.

A bus services runs along the B2166 and the closest bus stop to the site is some 600 metres away, on the corner of Brookside and the main Pagham Road. The buses provide access to North Mundham, Chichester and Bognor Regis. This includes both town centres and Chichester railway station.



There is a good network of rights of way in the locality suitable for pedestrians and cyclists. Just to the north of the application site is a footpath that links Saltham Lane to Runcton Lane.

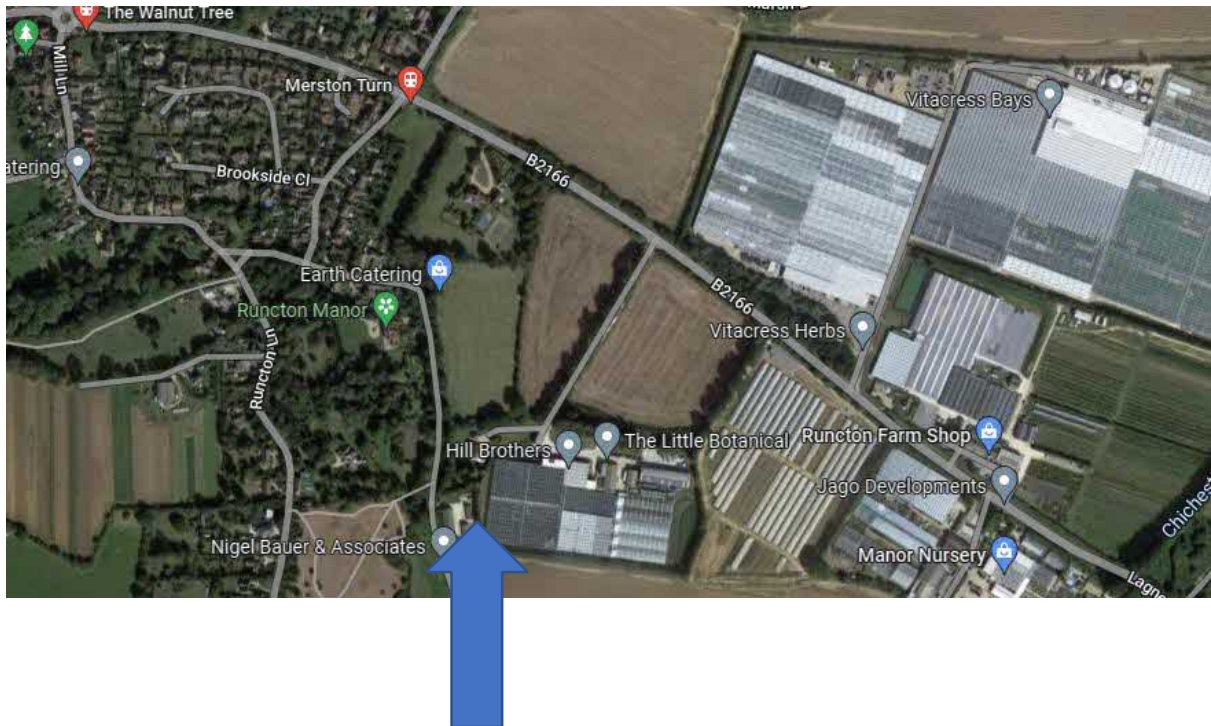
Amount

The existing business units have a floor area of some 600m². The proposed extension will have a gross floor area of 85m², of which 16m² is to provide cycle and bin storage areas to serve all of the units.

The site benefits from 30 on-site parking spaces, which exceeds the demand from tenants.

Character and Appearance

The site is located on the edge of the built-up area of Runcton a short distance to the southeast of the defined settlement policy area for Runcton. Immediately to the north and east of the site is a large horticultural nursery, with an expansive area of horticultural buildings beyond. To the west the application site abuts Saltham Lane, with low density residential developments and amenity land beyond. More intensive housing developments are located a short distance to the northwest. It is an edge of settlement location where boundary hedges and trees ensure a gentle transition from the main built-up area into the flat, open countryside to the south.

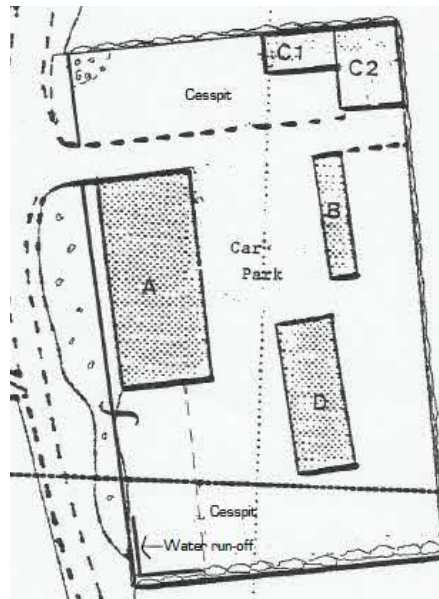


The site comprises a former group of farm buildings and associated yard, which were converted to a small business park in 1980. The central courtyard is partially surrounded by the four buildings which occupy the site. These buildings are all single storey and vary in size, design and appearance. They have a combination of brick, render and steel-clad walls and metal roofs.

The units are occupied by 7 different businesses and benefit from a shared parking area that is not marked out, but can accommodate 30 cars. This parking area has proved to be more than sufficient over the years.

Typically, there are no more than 7/8 full time employees working on the site at any one time during the week. There are a number of staff (approximately 8) who only visit the site once or twice a week.

Existing Site layout



For the past few years the applicant has been under pressure to provide a secure covered cycle store for staff.

The area to be occupied by the proposed building is unused and of little visual or ecological value. It is the logical place to provide cycle and bin facilities, a disabled WC and further workspace.

Units C1 and C2 comprise an "L" shaped building that runs along part of the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. The proposed extension would largely mirror this. It would project some 15 metres to the west of Unit 2 and would enclose and screen the northern yard area from Saltham Lane.

The proposed extension would be lower than unit C and would have horizontal timber clad walls under a shallow pitched roof. The proposed extension would have three windows in its western elevation which would look out into an enclosed area of grass and soft landscaping, with a steep grass verge and Saltham Lane beyond. (See illustration on next page).



From Saltham Lane directly in front of the extension, the extension would be largely screened from the land by the existing and proposed front boundary planting.

Photo 2 – View directly towards the position of the proposed extension



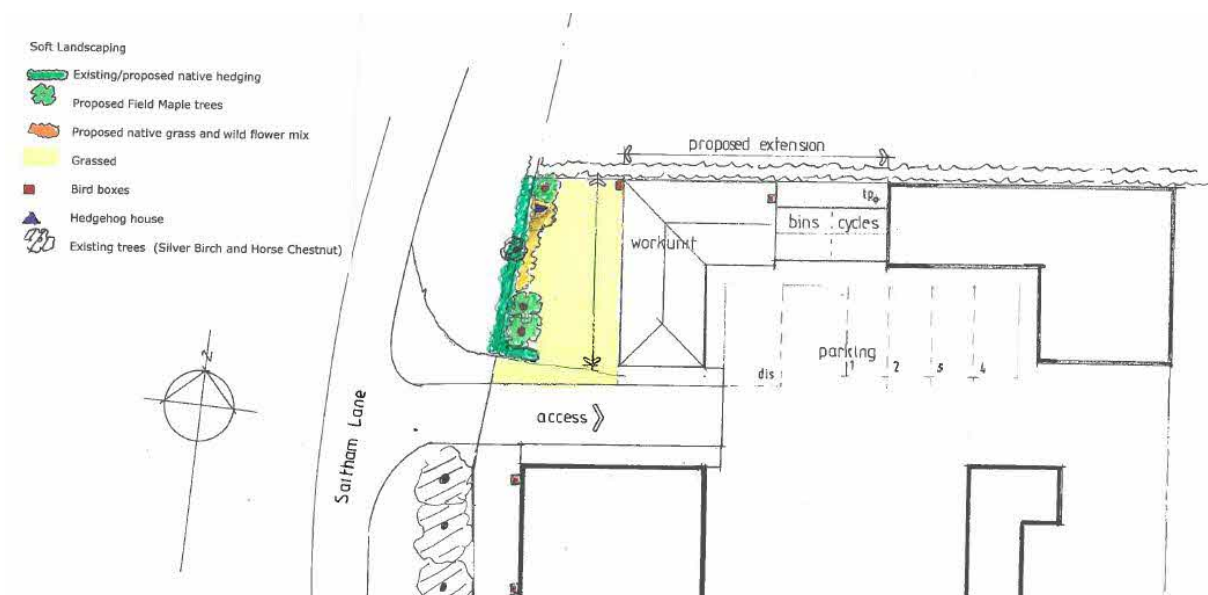
From the site entrance the proposed extension would be partially visible. It would screen units C1 and C2 as well as the parking yard area to the front of unit C2, as well as the proposed additional parking spaces.

Photo 3 – Views into the site from the site entrance.



The area to the west of the proposed extension will be soft landscaped with additional hedge planting, the planting of three trees and the introduction of native grasses and wild flowers. This is detailed on the soft landscape plan on the next page.

Overall, it is a modest scheme and the proposed extension respects the character and appearance of the site and its rural setting. Together with the proposed soft planting it will materially enhance the character and appearance of the site and its setting. This includes the very restricted views from Saltham Lane.



Landscaping/ecology

It should also be noted that the plant and tree species proposed are all locally found and have good ecological value. In addition, the proposal includes four bird boxes and one hedgehog house. As a result, the scheme will reinforce the local landscape character and appearance and will result in ecosystem benefits that will contribute to the wider ecosystem network in the immediate locality.

Traffic/parking

The 7 units between them have just 7/8 full time employees working on the site at any one time during the week. There are a number of other staff (approximately 8) who visit the site once or twice a week. In addition, to this the applicant frequently visits the site. Some of the employee's car share and those who live locally generally walk or cycle. The site is also visited by clients on an ad-hoc basis.

With the proposal two additional parking spaces are proposed to the front of the extension and one of the spaces will be for disabled use.

Cycle and bin storage

Currently there is no secure and sheltered bin and cycle storage on site. The proposal provides both. There will be room for the storage of up to 8 cycles.

Dark Skies

The proposed extension has no roof lights and will be used during usual working hours. As such it will not have a material impact on dark skies.

Flood Risk

See separate flood risk assessment. It concludes that:

10.1.12 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, although Saltham Lane is located in Flood Zone 2 and 3(a).

10.1.13 The site is identified as being at risk as a result of climate change; The Environment Agency has confirmed a modelled flood level of 4.54m AOD in relation to the 0.5% (2115) AEP flood event.

10.1.14 The site is identified as being at 'Very Low' risk of surface water flooding.

10.1.15 The finished floor level should be set at a level of at least 4.84m AOD – 300mm above the modelled flood level of 4.54m AOD (0.5%, 2115 AEP).

10.1.16 Based on an increase in population of the site of up to 6 No. persons, an additional volume of storage totalling 45.20m³ will be required in order to support the development, in accordance with Building Regulations, Document H2, Clause 1.6.1

10.1.17 The completion of the development will not increase flood risk on or off the site.

10.1.17 In conclusion, this development is suitable with regards to flood risk and surface water drainage.

As stated in the introductory paragraph, a new Climate change flood risk map has been prepared by the council. It has not been fully checked by The Environment Agency or others. However, the applicant has amended his proposal in light of its findings. The proposal is now for a moveable structure that can be moved off site long before the normal 100 year life expected from most buildings.

Sustainability conclusion

The proposal will meet the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development.

Economic

The proposed work units will provide valuable employment workspace in a rural area.

The proposal will provide employment and income within the building trades and in new technologies during the construction of the development.

The proposal will make good use of an existing underused “previously developed” commercial site.

Social

The proposal will result in enhanced facilities for the people work within and visit the site.

The proposal will provide additional local employment opportunities.

The users of the proposed extension will support local services and facilities.

Environmental

The scheme will help secure the long term viability of the commercial site.

The scheme will make full and effective use of a long established commercial site.

The proposed cycle store will encourage cycling to work.

The scheme will improve the condition and appearance of the site.

The scheme will improve the biodiversity of the site through planting, bird boxes and hedgehog house.

The construction of the extension will include the use of energy conservation techniques and practices.

The scheme has been designed so as not to result in light pollution.

The scheme will not increase the risk of flooding either on the site or elsewhere.

Conclusion

The scheme readily meets the three dimensions of sustainable development. It complies with the Framework, the local plan policies, the emerging local plan policies and the National and Chichester Design guides.

Additional site photographs and photograph location plan

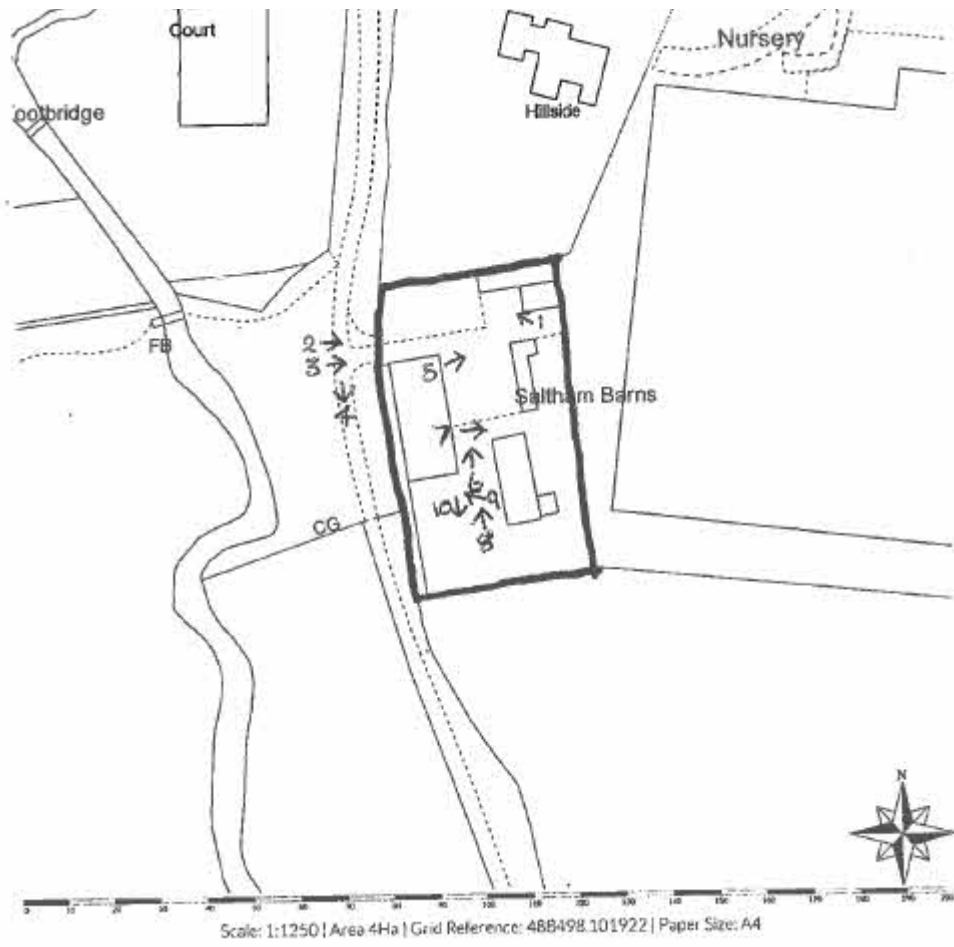


Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

