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The Barn, Larks in the Wood, Pentlow, Essex, C010 7JU

Heritage Statement & Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared following the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” (July 2021), BS: 7913 and Historic England’s Good Practice in Planning Advice Notes 1, 2 and 3. NPPF states that protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework’s drive to achieve sustainable development (as defined in Paragraphs 7-14). The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the core objectives (Paragraph 8c) that underpins the planning system. This is expanded upon principally in Paragraphs 189-208 but policies giving effect to this objective appear elsewhere in the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.2 This report concerns those heritage assets which might be affected by proposed changes to The Barn, Larks in the Wood, Pentlow, Essex, C010 7JU. This is to inform development works for the building, to ensure that any works commissioned are consistent with, and appropriate for, the fabric and values of the place.

1.3 This report has been prepared by Charlotte Evans BA (Hons) MSt (Cantab) on behalf of the homeowner.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to identify heritage assets, both designated and undesignated, and to provide an initial assessment of their cultural significance, which will provide an evidence base to inform the client and the design team and help conserve the assets identified.

1.5 When making a decision on all listed building consent applications or any decision on a planning application for development that affects a listed building or its setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.¹ This report provides a summary of the special interest (significance) of the building (section 4.0), in order to determine the impact of the proposals on that interest (section 5.0).

1.6 This report concludes that the proposals will:

- Result in slight change to an already altered listed building that does not threaten to devalue its significance.
- Have no detrimental impact on nearby heritage assets or their settings.

2.0 Overview

2.1 The Barn, Larks in the Wood, is located together with two other dwellings along a gravel track situated off the country lane running between Pentlow and Cavendish. The property is Grade II listed (listed in 1984). It does not lie within a Conservation Area.

2.2 The timber-framed Barn dates to the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century and was converted into a dwelling in the early 1980s. Historically, the Barn served the Grade II* Listed Larks in the Wood house, which also dates from the same period and was built within a moat.

2.3 The main part of the Barn functioned as a threshing barn and there is a single storey northeast element, dating to the sixteenth to seventeenth century, which functioned as a stables and workshop. The significance of the building primarily derives from its historic fabric, although its rustic appearance, its setting and the contribution it makes to the setting of the Grade II* Listed Larks in the Wood house and its setting are also significant.

1.8 The proposals that form this application are for two modest, single storey extension at the front and rear of the building to form a new porch and a new garden room. Some internal remodelling will also be undertaken, as well as the removal of a carport and restoration of the garden well. Further details on these works are provided in the accompanying design statement and drawings.

3.0 Historical summary

3.1 Pentlow is a small parish and village on the border of Suffolk, about five miles north west of Sudbury. The round towered Church (Grade I listed) is of particular significance within the village.

3.2 Pentlow was recorded in the Domesday Book as *Pentelawa* which is of Norman origin. The most notable landmark in the area, St Gregory and St George’s church, was built by Norman settlers and dates back as early as the 12th century. It is a Grade I listed building and contains impressive Norman carvings.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/decisionmaking/legalrequirements/>



3.3 Pentlow's inhabitants throughout history have mainly been agriculturally employed. Interestingly, the second largest profession of Pentlow during the 19th century was the clothing industry, especially the manufacturing of straw hats.

3.4 To this end, the Barn is an important reminder of the significant agricultural history of Pentlow. Kelly's Directory and White's History, Gazetteer & Directory of Essex, record Larks in the Wood as tenanted by the Orbell family in the 19th century. The farm was then referred to as 'Kings' (see fig.02). Wheat, beans and barley were the chief crops being farmed at the time and the threshing barn and annexed building would have been central to the production of grain and straw.

3.4 Threshing the wheat or corn crop by hand continued to be the predominant way of processing the crop into the 19th century, especially in southern England and East Anglia. The sheaves of wheat were beaten with a flail to separate the grain from the straw, the latter being stored in the bays either side of the threshing floor. The grain and chaff (the husks) were then winnowed to separate them by throwing the grain into the air, the through-draft from the opposing doors blowing the chaff away from the grain. Across the opening was a low board which fitted into slots on the door posts to prevent animals getting into the barn and retain the grain on the threshing floor. The introduction of the portable threshing gear and steam engines in the 1850s lowered the cost of machine threshing and enabled its more widespread introduction. Today, threshing is usually done by a combine harvester which harvests, threshes, and winnows the grain while it is still in the field.

3.5 Barns were commonly extended with lean-tos (also called outshots) for cattle. From the late 19th century, many barns were converted into cow houses and fodder processing and storage buildings. It is likely that the Barn at Larks in the Wood was adapted in the 19th century, commensurate with it being reroofed at this time (see listing description²).



Fig.01 Tithe Map c.1840 showing The Barn at Larks in the Wood. Essex Place-names Project (Essex Society for Archaeology & History), 2008/2015 (e-book www.essex.ac.uk/history/esah/essexplacenames)

² <https://historicalengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1232804>



| Place-name | Alias | Eld no | Gd ref | x | y | type | acr. | rd. | rch. | land use | Owner | Occupier | Farm | Other information |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|-----|-----|-------|------|-----|------|----------|------------|----------------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| Cats Croft | | 174 | TL | 804 | 449 | field | 1 | 2 | 35 | grass | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Pond | | 174a | TL | 804 | 449 | | 0 | 0 | 7 | | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Pond Piece | | 175 | TL | 804 | 450 | field | 4 | 2 | 3 | arable | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Homestead, pond | The Farm, 1777, C&A | 176 | TL | 805 | 450 | hldg. | 1 | 1 | 12 | | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | Larks in the Wood, 1875 ^{os} |
| Garden | | 177 | TL | 805 | 450 | gdn. | 0 | 0 | 22 | grass | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Little Home field | | 178 | TL | 806 | 452 | field | 11 | 1 | 27 | arable | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Green Yard | | 179 | TL | 806 | 450 | field | 1 | 0 | 13 | grass | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Wash Pasture | | 180 | TL | 805 | 448 | field | 3 | 2 | 21 | grass | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Great Home field | | 181 | TL | 807 | 449 | field | 17 | 2 | 19 | arable | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Newlands | | 182 | TL | 810 | 450 | field | 13 | 2 | 36 | arable | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Drift | | 183 | TL | 810 | 451 | | 0 | 1 | 12 | | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| New Broke up | | 184 | TL | 810 | 453 | field | 14 | 3 | 30 | arable | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Wash Ley Pasture | | 185 | TL | 808 | 451 | field | 4 | 1 | 11 | grass | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Pond | | 186 | TL | 808 | 451 | | 0 | 0 | 8 | | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |
| Second Wash Ley Pasture | | 187 | TL | 808 | 452 | field | 4 | 1 | 2 | grass | Howe, Lord | Orbell, Joseph | Kings | |

Fig.02 Land surrounding Larks in the Wood farmed by Joseph Orbell and then known as 'Kings Farm'. The name 'Larks in the Wood' appears from 1875.

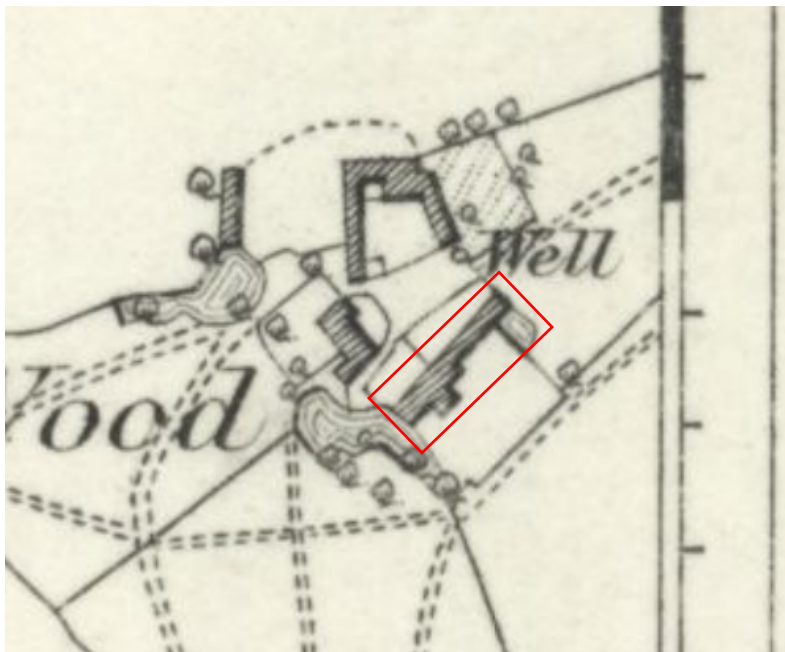


Fig.03 The Barn at Larks in the Wood as shown on OS map (Essex Sheet V, surveyed in 1876 and published in 1880)

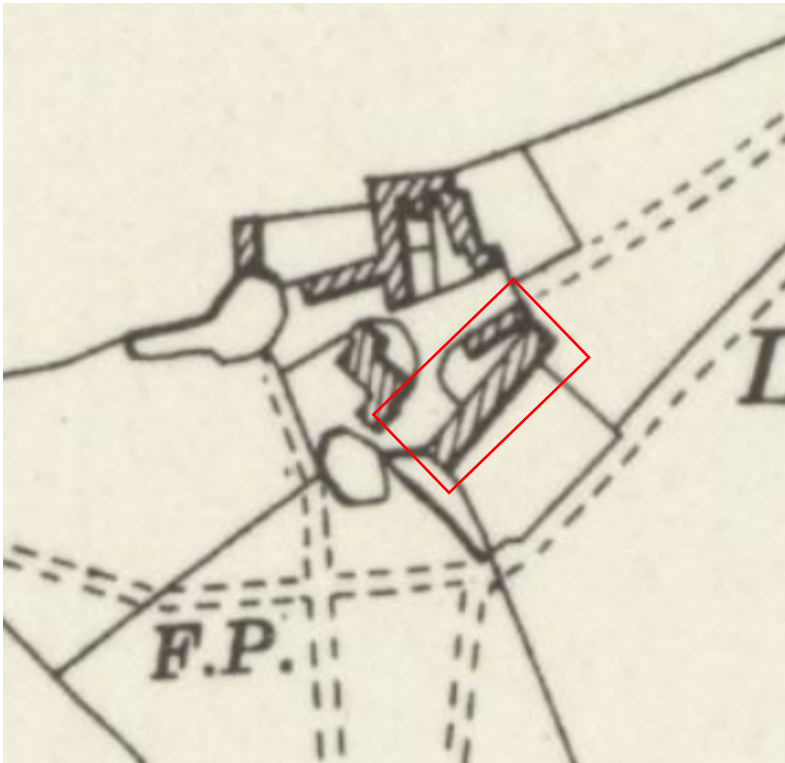


Fig.04 The Barn at Larks in the Wood as shown on OS map (Essex Sheet nIV.SE, published 1925). Another building appears to adjoin the Barn at the north.

4.0 Significance

4.1 NPPF defines significance as: Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

4.2 This assessment of significance has been carried out to meet the requirements of the NPPF and in line with Historic England's guidance in GPA2, GPA3 and Conservation Principles.

4.3 The levels of significance we are using (based on ICOMOS guidelines) are as follows:

- Exceptionally significant: internationally significant aesthetic, cultural, evidential or communal significance; exceptional areas/elements such as primary elevations or workmanship; nationally and/ or internationally important associations with people or events; unique and intact elements of highest quality; unquestionable group value
- Highly significant: nationally important historic or architectural features; high quality of workmanship; potential for nationally important archaeology; largely intact and/ or rare examples of a particular building type or technique; important positive group value.
- Significant: Formal, heritage or aesthetic significance, architectural character or notable features, including areas with potential for significant enhancement; some group value; surviving decorative features of historic or architectural interest
- Low significance: Little or no architectural or heritage significance or area of lost significance
- Not significant: Of no heritage interest
- Detrimental: Features or areas that detract from a building's significance.

4.4 Barns are usually the oldest and largest buildings on the farmstead, but those that survive are only a small proportion of those that are documented. Those of early 16th century and earlier date are of exceptional rarity and importance, even rarer being those that survive in the context of medieval houses and other buildings. Although the Barn at Larks in the Wood contains fabric dating from the late 15th / early 16th century, the original form of the building has been drastically altered and adapted over the centuries, so whilst this fabric is important and should be retained intact, the building itself is not considered to be an exceptionally rare and intact example of its type.



4.5 The size of barns, and structural evidence for historical development and internal subdivision, can reveal differences in the size and wealth of farms and how buildings have changed in response to national and local trends in agriculture. This can for example be indicated by the construction of an additional barn, the enlargement and adaptation of earlier barns to house more harvested corn and evidence for internal partitions for animal housing and other functions.

Assessment of significance of The Barn, Larks in the Wood

4.4 Archaeological / evidential value.

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. (Historic England Advice Note 12).

No excavations of note have been found in the vicinity of the Barn, although this is not to say that they do not exist. The presence of late fifteenth century building work on the site, and therefore associated footings, suggests that the likelihood of significant archaeological remains that are early than the post-medieval period is low, although at present, this is unknown. Currently, the archaeological value of the site is considered to be low.

4.7 Architectural value.

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. (Historic England Advice Note 12).

The Barn at Larks in the Wood displays some attractive features typical of many agricultural buildings, notably the double height opening (threshing doors) on the north-west elevation of the Barn, as well as the corresponding double height internal space and the use of modest materials, characteristic of the area, such as red pantiles, brick and weatherboarding. The original internal arrangement of the complex is now illegible. By and large, the building is an amalgamation of various build phases over a period of approximately 500 years and whilst it does not display any rare examples of its kind in planning or detailing, there are certainly areas / elements which display some architectural character. On balance, the architectural value is considered to be 'significant'.

4.8 Artistic / aesthetic value.

Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture. (Historic England Advice Note 12).

The Barn does not display any artistic or aesthetic features which are thought to be significant in heritage terms. The artistic value is therefore 'not significant'.

4.9 Historical value.

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity. (Historic England Advice Note 12).

In many areas, the barn was the principal or only building on the farmstead until the 19th century.

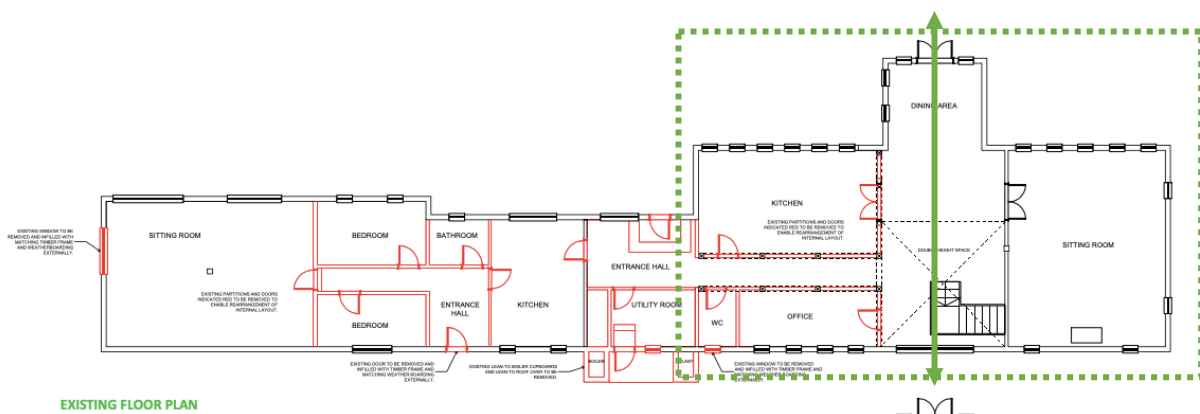




Fig.05 Existing floor plan of the Barn showing the original threshing barn outlined in green. The green arrows denote the original arrangement of opposing doors to the threshing bay where the harvested crop was beaten out on the threshing floor and then separated in the cross draught.

The principal purpose of the barn was to store and process the harvested corn crop, and after threshing, store straw before it was distributed to yards and buildings for farm animals. This function could also be combined with others, such as storing grain, carts and farm equipment and housing livestock and their fodder. The original portion of The Barn at Larks in the Wood was likely used as a threshing barn (rather than being a ‘combination’ barn) until it was extended to house animals and provide space for other agricultural work. The fabric of the Barn is a visible record of this historical use and change over the centuries. Its location and setting, which includes Larks in the Wood farmhouse, further alludes to its historical purpose and prominence, particularly given that agriculture formed such a significant part of industry in the area. The conversion of the Barn to residential use has resulted in the loss of the historic internal arrangement of the Barn however this has not diminished its overall historical value, which is considered to be ‘significant’.

5.0 Impact assessment

5.1 A heritage impact assessment (HIA) is a “practical assessment of the magnitude of the impact from proposed change on the significance of a heritage asset or historic building.” - BS7913:2013. The purpose of heritage impact assessments is to gain an understanding of the effect of developments and changes on the historic asset, and how the impact of change might be mitigated.

5.2 This report is intended to be used as a baseline study for understanding the significance of the site and surrounding heritage assets. A study area of 500m around the site is considered to be an appropriate boundary for the assessment. Heritage assets outside of this boundary will not be affected by the proposals.

5.3 Current proposals are detailed in the accompanying application documents and comprise:

- A new entrance porch
- A new garden room
- Some internal remodelling, including the removal of modern partitions
- Removal of existing store/car port and restoration of garden wall

5.4 The works will be carried out sympathetically with particular regard to the character and materiality of the surroundings.

5.5 Impact of proposals on the Barn at Larks in the Wood (Grade II listed building):

| | Changes | Impact | Justification |
|-------|---|------------------------------|--|
| 5.5.1 | A new entrance porch will be added to the north-west elevation of the Barn | Minor change = slight impact | This change will provide a modest extension and create a greater architectural cohesion along this elevation than the existing boiler storage cupboards. The porch will read as a modest extension, rather than a domestic porch and will utilise materials commensurate with the Barn itself, creating visual order. The porch will be an extension of the existing annexe and the loss of existing fabric will be minimal. |
| 5.5.2 | A new lean-to single storey extension (garden room) is proposed to the south-east elevation (rear aspect) to create additional living space with a south facing aspect and improved connectivity to the rear garden | Minor change = slight impact | This change will provide another modest extension to the Barn’s annexe, respecting the footprint of the existing building, and will not involve the removal of any sections of the existing south-east elevation (which will be retained in situ). The proposed materials are in keeping with the rest of the building and therefore will ensure this extension reads as a cohesive part of the complex. |
| 5.5.3 | Removing partitions enclosing the existing kitchen, office and corridor between to open-up the space to the double height space | Minor change = slight impact | The removal of the corridor and the opening up of the kitchen area will enhance the ability to appreciate the historic fabric of the Barn. |
| 5.5.4 | Formation of new rooms in the extension (master bedroom, ensuite, dressing room office, cinema and WC) | Minor change = slight impact | The new rooms are located in the annexe which itself was partitioned in the 1980s when the building was converted to residential use. The new rooms will be formed in timber stud walls lined with gypsum plasterboard, insulated to improve acoustics. Existing |

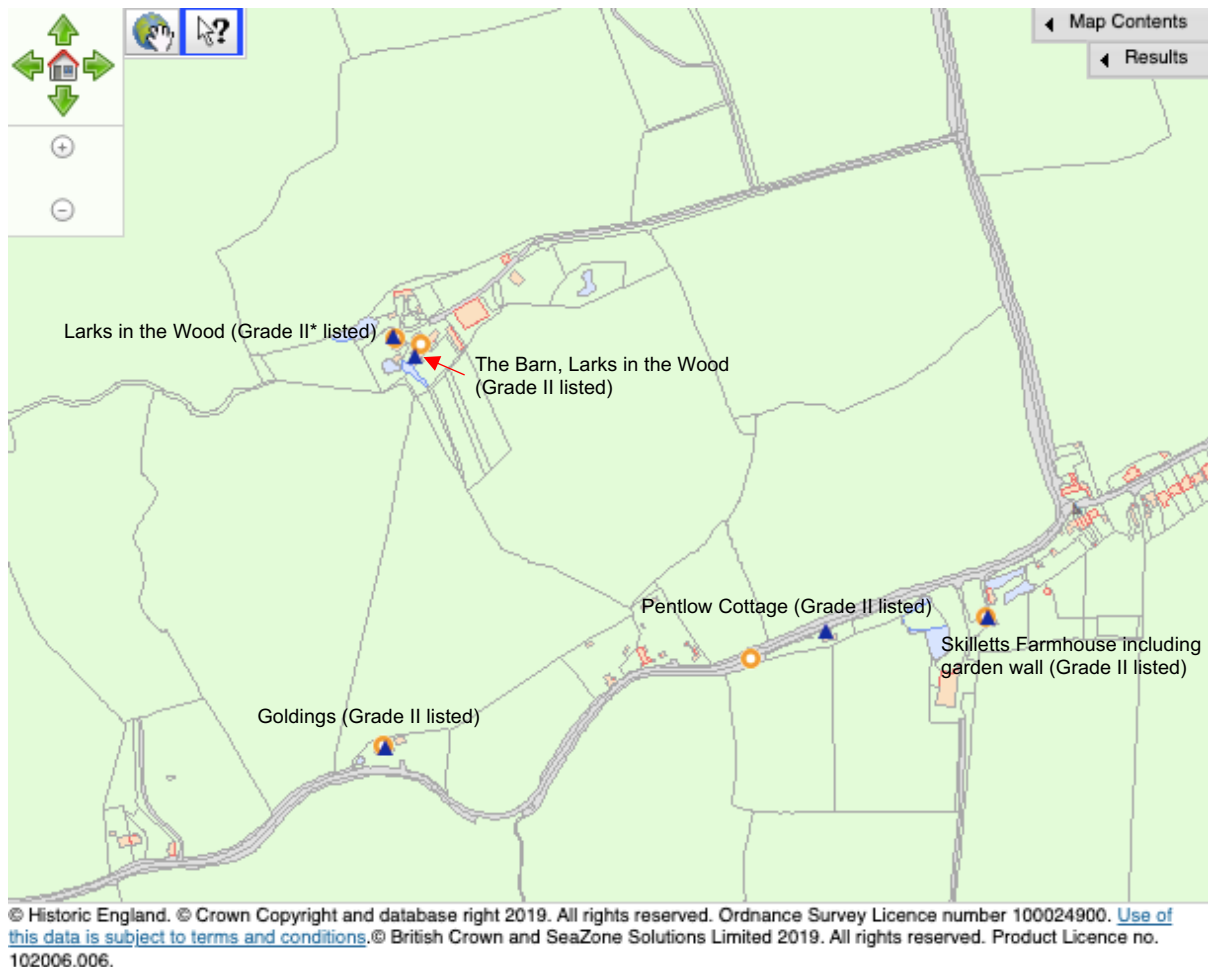


| | | | |
|-------|--|---|--|
| | | | level changes throughout the ground floor will be retained but adjusted to suit the position of new rooms and corridors. Given their location, these internal changes will have no impact on historic fabric. |
| 5.5.5 | Existing first floor bathrooms and ensuite replaced with modern finishes and fixings | Negligible change = neutral/slight impact | These changes will be minimal and aesthetic only. Existing drainage runs will be used to avoid any alterations to the existing fabric. |
| 5.5.6 | Removal of existing store/car port and restoration of garden wall | Negligible change = neutral/slight impact | The existing wall is historic, and the removal of the carport would allow more of its fabric to be appreciated. The removal of the carport will also enhance the setting of the Grade II* listed house, Larks in the Wood. |

5.6 In summary:

- The changes are in keeping with the scale of the building and proportioned sensitively.
- Traditional, matching materials and detailing will be used to ensure the additions are in keeping with the rural character of the existing farm buildings.
- The proposals will help to maintain the building in long-term use and make some changes which will better reveal the significance of the listed building.
- The very minimal harm sustained from the loss of historic fabric can be offset by the positive benefits that the scheme will deliver.

Impact of proposals on surrounding heritage assets





Legend

| | |
|---|---|
| ▲ Listed Building (NHLE) | ■ Scheduled Monument (centre point) |
| ■ EH PastScape | ■ Registered Park/Garden (centre point) |
| ○ Local HER record points | ■ Registered Battlefield (centre point) |
| ▲ Local HER record polygons | ■ Protected Wreck Site (centre point) |
| ○ National Trust HBSMR | ■ World Heritage Site |
| ■ Building Preservation Notice | ■ Certificate of Immunity |
| ◆ Designation Decision Records De-listed | ★ Designation Decision Records Non-designated |
| ● Parks and Gardens (Non Statutory Data) | ✦ NMR Excavation Index |
| ✦ Church Heritage Record (Non Statutory Data) | |

Fig.06 Map showing designated heritage assets within 500m of The Barn (information extracted from www.heritagegateway.org.uk [accessed May 2023]).

| Asset name | Designation | Significance value | Summary of impacts | Overall effect |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Larks in the Wood | Grade II* | Medium | Negligible change | Neutral |
| Goldings | Grade II | Low | No change | Nil |
| Pentlow Cottage | Grade II | Low | No change | Nil |
| Skilletts Farmhouse and garden wall | Grade II | Low | No change | Nil |

5.7 The proposed scheme does not threaten to devalue the significance of any of the surrounding heritage assets. The only heritage asset which will be impacted in any way is Larks in the Wood, however the effect of this change will be neutral as the changes will be barely perceptible (only visible on the approach to the farmhouse). Exterior changes to the Barn have been designed to be in-keeping with the architectural language of the original buildings and respect the relationship and hierarchy between the farmhouse and the former agricultural buildings.

5.8 Compliance with Heritage Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

5.9 The Planning Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses; and also the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, in determining applications. The meaning of preservation in this context and for both these designated heritage assets is taken to be the avoidance of harm.

5.10 It is demonstrated in this report that overall, the application proposals will accord with these statutory duties, and will preserve and enhance the special interest of the listed building and its setting.

Assessment of proposals against NPPF (relevant paragraphs 194-208)

5.11 Para 194 In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

5.12 Response: This document forms the baseline for understanding the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposals and includes a statement of significance.

5.13 Para 197 In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

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



5.14 Response: These proposals will have a negligible effect on the listed building and will sustain its significance. They have been designed to contribute positively to local character and distinctiveness. They will have no effect on surrounding heritage assets and will help to maintain the listed building in beneficial use.

5.14 Para 199 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

5.15 Response: The impact of the proposals on the listed building is considered to be neutral / slight, with a negligible effect overall. The significance value of the listed building will not be affected by these proposals.

5.16 Para 202 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

5.17 Response: Although these proposals will result in very slight change to the listed building, this change is not considered to be harmful. However, any perceived level of harm resulting from the proposals can be offset by the fact that they have been sensitively designed to be in keeping with the surroundings and are largely concentrated in the annexe to the main Barn. Overall and on balance, the proposals will have a negligible effect on the listed building.

5.18 Para 206 Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

5.19 Response: The proposals will have no effect on the setting of surrounding heritage assets.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 One of the primary objectives of conservation is to sustain and enhance heritage assets, in the broadest sense, which means maintaining historic fabric, environmental sustainability and financial sustainability. Enhancement, although less well defined in current guidance, includes the removal of negative impacts and uplifting a building or place through good design, both practically and aesthetically. The proposals for the Barn seek to achieve these objectives.

6.2 In accordance with the statutory duties outlined in The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is deemed that these proposals will preserve and enhance the special interest of the listed building and its setting.

6.3 This document concludes that the proposed changes will:

- Result in slight change to an already altered listed building that does not threaten to devalue its significance.
- Have no detrimental impact on nearby heritage assets or their settings.