

**Former Charcoal Store, Furnace Barns,
Furnace Lane, Newent, GL18 1DD**



Heritage Statement | October 2023



Robinson Wild
CONSULTING



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement (“the Statement”) was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Martin (“the Client”). It was prepared by Esther Robinson Wild BA (Hons) PgDip MA (Archaeology of Buildings) MCIfA FSA, Historic Environment Consultant at Robinson Wild Consulting.
- 1.2 It was commissioned to accompany a planning application in respect of a proposal for the conversion of an agricultural barn to two residential dwellings at Furnace Barns (fig.1, “the site”), Furnace Lane (“the wider site”), Newent, Gloucestershire, GL18 1DD. The Statement should be read in conjunction with other documents accompanying the application, notably the planning statement, drawings, design specifications, and other material prepared and collated by McLoughlin Planning Ltd.
- 1.3 The former Charcoal Store (“the building”) is situated within a complex of buildings in various uses, including commercial (Smiths Funeral Services) and held in separate ownership from that of the Client. The Client’s area of ownership extends to those buildings collectively known as ‘Furnace Barns’.
- 1.4 The Statement presents a summary of the developmental history of the site, focusing on the building, and its wider setting, and an assessment of significance. It also provides an overview of applicable legislation, and national, and local planning policy and guidance against which the proposal will be considered by Forest of Dean District Council. It is based on a site visit undertaken on 5th June 2023. The Statement has been prepared in accordance with The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (2017).
- 1.5 The building is statutorily listed at grade II (National Heritage List for England (“the NHLE”) List Entry Number: 1078600. See Appendix 2 for the List Entry Description). It is on the Forest of Dean District Council’s *Listed Buildings At Risk Register 2017-2019*. The NHLE list entry description assigns a date of construction in the seventeenth century or earlier. However, there is no evidence provided to support this, and the research undertaken for this Statement has not elicited evidence for it. It is likely that it is considered of seventeenth century date due to it being situated on a documented site of a charcoal blast furnace that operated from c.1640 to c.1751.
- 1.6 A comparison of the 1842 tithe map with the Ordnance Survey of 1884 suggests that the footprint of the building had increased, to almost double its width, in the intervening period. On the 1884 Ordnance Survey, it is shown as a large rectangular building with a footprint mirroring the extant. Curiously, an estate map of 1775 also shows a large rectangular building, identified as the charcoal store by D Bick (1980), suggesting that the 1842 tithe map may be inaccurate. This may be possible as there were two standards of tithe map based on their accuracy: ‘first class’ and ‘second class’ maps. First class maps were considered sufficiently accurate to serve as legal evidence of boundaries and land plots. About one-sixth of the whole were certified by the Tithe Commissioners as first class (Tithes - The National Archives). It is not clear what standard the Oxenhall map is.
- 1.7 Based on the available evidence, specifically, the extant building that is demonstrably of a single phase of construction with no evidence of extension or significant alteration, it is possible that the 1842 tithe map is accurate and that it shows an earlier building on the site that was replaced by the extant. Further investigation of the building may be required to

test the hypothesis of mid/late nineteenth century construction date. A more informed assessment of significance would thereby follow.

- 1.8 Considering this in more detail, there is no available documentary or map evidence for the building being formerly in use as a charcoal store. The ascription of building type appears to be based on what should have been there following a strict application of ironworking complex typology (G&T Consulting Ltd 2006) rather than the evidence for what may or may not have been. It appears that the size and location of the building have influenced the ascription, with the former seen as reflecting the requirement to store large quantities of fuel, and the latter, being its construction into the slope of the land at the same or higher level as the furnace which is understood to have been situated to the south and adjoining the building considered to be the former Blowing House. It is likely that there would have been a charcoal store on the site, however, there is currently not enough available evidence to substantiate the ascription of that building type to the extant.
- 1.9 Comparisons have been made with former charcoal stores in Cumbria. Two statutorily listed charcoal barns¹ located in Cumbria have been reviewed as part of the research for this Statement and based on the photographic evidence, it can be concluded that other than being large barns, there are no further shared essential characteristics with the building. Specifically, there appear to be no determinant or essential characteristics that would necessitate a separate classification of the building type of charcoal store. It is concluded that the comparison has been drawn based on deemed former use rather than distinctive or essential building characteristics.
- 1.10 Following the demise of ironworking in the Forest of Dean, agriculture – farming and forestry were encouraged. There is evidence for the site being given over to agricultural use after the cessation of ironworking, a use that continued into the late twentieth century. Attendant with that use was the addition of new buildings on the site, including most latterly, the agricultural barn that is the subject of the proposal (constructed between 1974 and 1989), and the alteration and extension of the structure understood to include the former Blowing House² to the south of the building. Buildings have also been constructed on the west side of Furnace Lane for commercial use (Smiths Funeral Services).
- 1.11 The building is distinct from the Cumbrian examples due to the presence of two strings of regularly spaced ventilation holes to the east, west and south elevations. These are not later interventions to the fabric but rather are a feature of a commensurate date as that of the construction of the building. Ventilation holes are a characteristic determinant of traditional agricultural use. Traditionally farm buildings were built as permeable structures with plenty of ventilation so that moisture was able to evaporate easily without detriment to the structure.
- 1.12 The building is one of three designated heritage assets within a 250m radius (“the assessment area”) (fig.11). The other designated heritage assets are statutorily listed buildings which are considered to have a historic relationship with the building and consequently, Historic England have assigned group value to all three. Although situated

¹ Charcoal Barns to west of Duddon Iron Furnace (NHLE List Entry Number: 1336077) – Early C18; Outbuilding Formerly Charcoal Storage Barn to the North West of Newland Blast Furnace (NHLE List Entry Number: 1096783) – Late C18 or early C19;

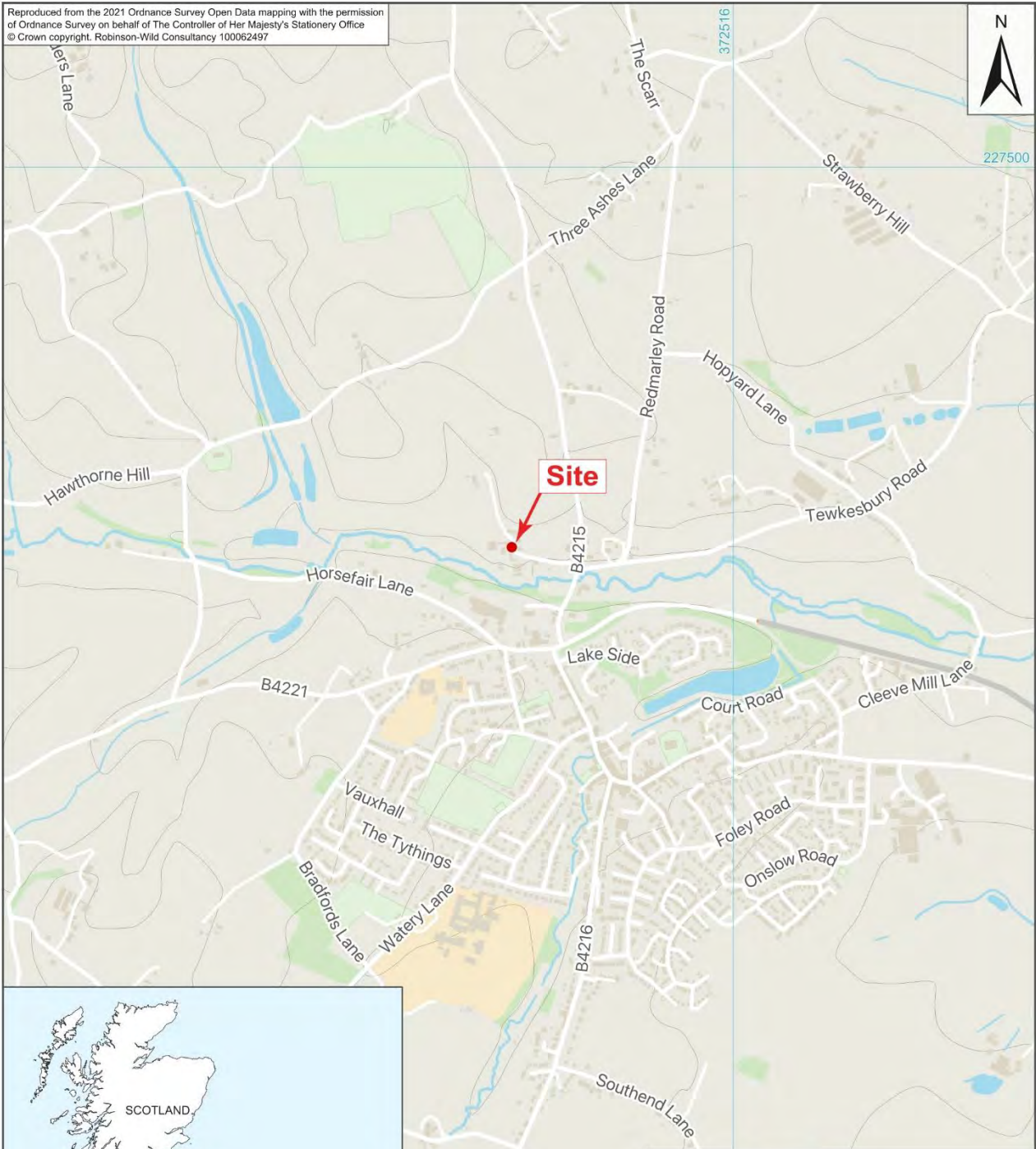
² Contained a furnace and a pair of bellows that were powered by an adjacent water wheel

close to the building, they are in separate ownership and are not considered in any detail herein.

- Farm Building (Former Blowing House) about 48m west of Oakdale House. Grade II (NHLE List Entry Number: 1078599), c.20m to the south
- Oakdale House, Grade II (NHLE List Entry Number: 1341932), c.55m to the southeast

- 1.13 The proposal is summarised in Section 5.0. It is more fully detailed in the Planning Statement. Section 5.0 also includes an Impact Assessment. In accordance with paragraph 018 of the Planning Practice Guidance. Historic Environment, the Impact Assessment has considered the proposal in the context of the potential impact on the significance of the building, and the setting of the other identified heritage assets.
- 1.14 It concludes that the proposal will have a **Neutral** impact upon the significance of the building and the setting of the other identified heritage assets. Other than being situated within the same site boundary, and formerly in agricultural use, there is no notable nor significant interrelationship between the barn, which is c.34 – 49 years old, and constructed of modern materials, and the building. It also has no significant interrelationship with the other identified heritage assets. Its conversion is considered to have no discernible impact on their significance or setting.
- 1.15 The proposal will not negatively impact the experience or understanding of the historicity of the identified heritage assets, and it is considered that the special character, interest and setting of the buildings will not be harmed by the proposal.
- 1.16 On this basis, it is considered that there is no harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets associated with the proposal. Therefore, it is concluded that there are no axiomatic reasons arising from historic environment considerations to refuse planning permission.

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Project Title:
Furnace Barn, Furnace Lane, Newent

Drawing Title:
Site Location

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Drawn by:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
1:15,000	AN	28.09.2023

Figure 1: Site Location

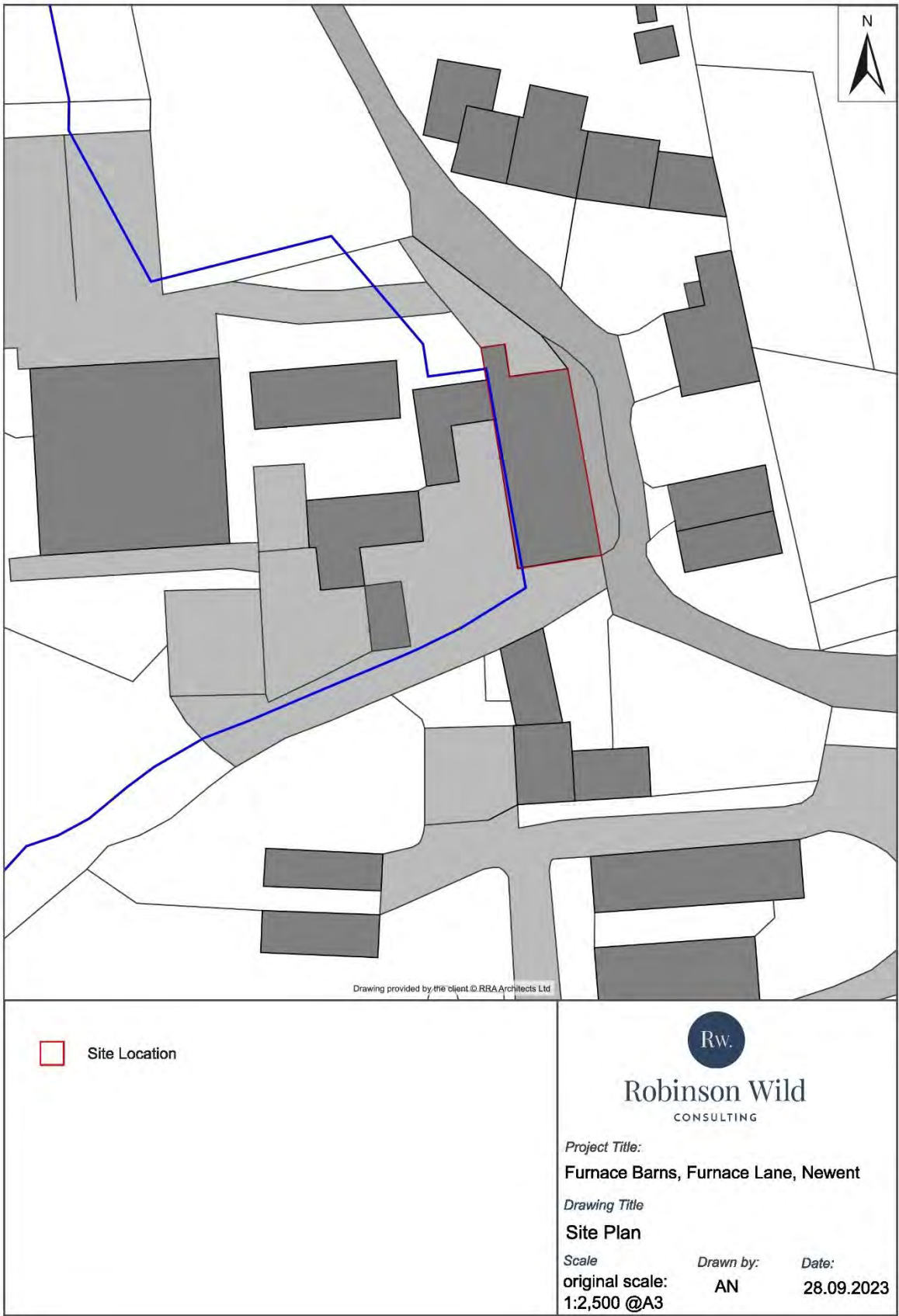


Figure 2: Site Plan

2.0 LEGISLATIVE, PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE CONTEXT

2.1 Legislation

- 2.1.1 The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act* (1990) (“the Act”) contains legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas. The Act sets out the legislative framework within which works or development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas must be considered by local planning authorities, upon which it imposes a general duty in the exercise of planning functions.
- 2.1.2 Sections 16(2) and 66(1) direct the local planning authority when considering whether to grant consent for any works or development to a listed building or within its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

2.2 Planning Policy

- 2.2.1 The policy context is the ***National Planning Policy Framework*** (“the NPPF”) (March 2012, revised July 2018, updated February and June 2019, revised July 2021, updated September 2023) and the Forest of Dean District Council’s ***Local Plan*** which is comprised of several documents including the ***Core Strategy*** (February 2012) and the ***Allocations Plan*** (June 2018). The relevant policies, relating to the historic environment, heritage assets, and design of development, against which a proposal for alteration and/or development would be assessed are discussed below.
- 2.2.2 The ***NPPF*** sets out the land-use planning principles and policies which should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. Central to the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three interdependent overarching objectives, these being economic, social, and environmental. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities are required to take account of viability, design, well-being and the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, amongst others. This then should allow for any proposal to be considered in the context of the overarching objectives which lead to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 2.2.3 Section 12 sets out the policies relating to achieving well-designed places. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and that planning policies and decisions should ensure that development is visually attractive as a result of good architecture and is sympathetic to local character and history. It directs (paragraph 134) decision-makers to give significant weight to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design. Further, they are directed to refuse development that is not well designed, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.
- 2.2.4 The ***Planning Practice Guidance. Design: process and tools*** (“the Design PPG”) (March 2014, revised October 2019) is a supplementary guidance document to the NPPF. It provides advice on the key points to take into account on design. It describes local design guides and design codes and their purpose (paragraphs 005; 008), and the role of Design and Access Statements in achieving well-designed places (paragraph 012).

- 2.2.5 To be read alongside the *Design PPG* is the *National Design Guide* (“the NDG”) (October 2019, amended January 2021) which sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. There are ten characteristics which include context (C1 - 2), identity (I1 – 3) and built form (B1 – 3). Of these, C1 – Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context; C2 – Value heritage, local history and culture and I1 – Respond to existing local character and identity are the most relevant within the NDG when considering proposals for alterations and/or development which may affect a heritage asset, including within its setting.
- 2.2.6 Section 16 ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ sets out the policies relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It directs that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
- 2.2.7 The NPPF defines ‘Heritage Assets’ as “A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.” The definition extends to both designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets, the latter being those which are identified by a local planning authority as having local interest, and sometimes recorded as being of such through local listing.
- 2.2.8 The *Planning Practice Guidance. Historic Environment* (“the Historic Environment PPG”) (April 2014, updated February 2018, revised July 2019) is a supplementary guidance document to the NPPF. It provides advice on conserving and enhancing the historic environment, and viable uses for heritage assets. It sets out the approach to assessing harm to heritage assets and details what is meant by the term public benefits in the context of development, amongst others.
- 2.2.9 The policies and guidance direct the decision-makers to ensure that an applicant has evaluated and understood the significance of a heritage asset and any contribution that setting makes to its significance when developing any proposal, and that any harm which may arise as a consequence of the impact of a proposal on significance is justified. It is recommended that an understanding of the significance of a heritage asset and its setting is obtained at an early stage in the design process to help inform the development of proposal which avoid or minimise harm (PPG Paragraph 008).
- 2.2.10 Paragraph 194 (NPPF) is prescriptive in stating that “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.”
- 2.2.11 The emphasis throughout is on assessing the impact on significance with Paragraph 018 of the PPG stating,
- “What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”
- 2.2.12 Paragraph 018 further contemplates that a proposal may have no impact on a heritage asset’s significance,
- “Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset.”

- 2.2.13 Paragraph 199 (NPPF) directs the decision-makers to give great weight to the asset’s conservation when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.2.14 Paragraph 202 (NPPF) states that where a 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 optimum viable use of a heritage asset may not be the most economically viable one. Nor need it be the original use.
- 2.2.15 Paragraph 020 (PPG) defines what is meant by the term public benefits and states that they may be anything that delivers economic, social, or environmental objectives. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be of a private benefit. Heritage benefits may include sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting.
- 2.2.16 The PPG acknowledges (Paragraph 002) that “Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets.....”

2.3 Local Planning Policy

- 2.3.1 With respect to local policy, the Forest of Dean District Council’s **Core Strategy** (February 2012) and the **Allocations Plan 2006 to 2026** (June 2018) are the principal (and complementary) documents in the **Local Plan**. They set out strategic objectives which are common to each, and planning policies to guide development. They are the adopted statutory documents against which planning decisions are made.
- 2.3.2 In the **Core Strategy**, the policy that relates to heritage assets is Policy CSP.1 Design, environmental protection and enhancement (strategic objective: providing quality environments),

“The design and construction of new development must take into account important characteristics of the environment and conserve, preserve or otherwise respect them in a manner that maintains or enhances their contribution to the environment, including their wider context. New development should demonstrate an efficient use of resources. It should respect wider natural corridors and other natural areas, providing green infrastructure where necessary.

In achieving the above, the following will be considered:

- The effect of the proposal on the landscape including AONBs and any mitigation/enhancement that is necessary or desirable
- The impact on any protected sites (natural and historic sites and heritage assets and potential for avoiding and/or mitigating any impacts, or providing enhancement, should the development be acceptable
- The requirements of the management plans of the AONBs
- Whether the existing infrastructure is adequate-additional provision will be required where it is not.
- Whether the development is at risk from flooding, whether it can be permitted taking into account any risks, and the sequential approach and any mitigation that may be necessary to ensure the development is safe and flood risk is not increased elsewhere

- The impact of the development on any land contamination or risk to the development from ground instability including the mining legacy-Proposals must undertake appropriate remediation measures and verification works where contamination and/or stability issues are identified
- The potential for the development to cause pollution and any mitigation measures to avoid pollution or make environmental improvements where existing problems occur
- The provision of water supply and the development's impact on groundwater, watercourses and any protected abstractions
- Any potential impact on the sterilisation of mineral resources and consideration of the potential for the prior extraction of those mineral resources ahead of development
- Proposals for waste minimisation and management

Development that is not able to be satisfactorily accommodated in respect of the above will not be permitted”

- 2.3.3 Policy AP 5 Historic character and local distinctiveness of the *Allocations Plan* (purpose: To ensure proposals take account of historic character and local distinctives) considers heritage assets,

“Development should protect and promote the special qualities, historic character and local distinctiveness of the district in order to maintain its cultural identity and sense of place. Development proposals will be required to preserve and where appropriate enhance local character and those aspects of the historic environment together with their settings which are recognised as being of special historic architectural, landscape or townscape quality. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- The built form and setting of the traditional forest settlements
- Protected buildings and structures, including designated and non-designated heritage assets
- Remaining features (buildings, structures and sites) of the industrial history of the area”

- 2.3.4 Policy AP 4 Design of Development references local character and history in the context of design,

“New development will be expected to be of a high quality design making a positive contribution to the design quality of the area in which it is proposed. It should do this where appropriate by:

- Establishing or supporting a strong sense of place,
- Taking account of local character and history in terms of design solutions
- Being visually attractive, employing good architecture and landscaping which respects the amenity of residents and others
- Contributing to environmental enhancement
- The propagation of local distinctiveness by ensuring that the style and nature of materials used in developments demonstrates an appreciation of traditional characteristics, styles and materials that are in use in the locality, making use of such styles and materials where appropriate
- Adopting an inclusive approach to produce safe and accessible environments that will embrace the needs of all different groups in the community”

2.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (“SPDs”)

- 2.4.1 The *Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide* (August 1998); the *Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide – Alterations & Extensions* (2002) and the *Landscape Supplementary Planning Document* (March 2007) are supplementary planning documents which are a material consideration in relation to planning applications.

3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING AND SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The building is situated within a complex of buildings in various uses and in part, in separate ownership from that of the Client. Notwithstanding this, for the purposes of this Statement, references to “the wider site” are made when referring to the buildings situated on Furnace Lane.
- 3.2 Furnace Lane is situated in the southeast corner of Oxenhall Parish, and c.700m to the northwest of the centre of Newent, a market town situated in the Forest of Dean. Newent is situated c.8 miles northwest of Gloucester. Oxenhall is a small parish on the north-west boundary of Gloucestershire and historically characterised by scattered small farmsteads. It has no village, and it is posited that it is unlikely ever to have had one (pp.254-281, Jurica 2010 (Victoria County History)). Furnace Lane is situated just to the north of the Ell Brook which has influenced land use in the immediate area for hundreds of years.
- 3.3 The building and the structure to the south considered to include the former Blowing House adjoining the no longer extant furnace (figs.26-30; plates 14-18) comprises part of the former Newent Furnace, also known as Elmbridge, Ellbridge and Oxenhall, which operated from c.1640 – c.1751.
- 3.4 The name “Oxenhall” means “Nook of land where oxen are kept” (The University of Nottingham 2023). It derives from Old English – “oxa” meaning an ox and Anglian – “halh” meaning a nook of land. In the Domesday Survey, Oxenhall is recorded as “Horsenehal” (The Domesday Book Online 2019) being within the Hundred of Botloe and owned by Roger of Lacy who was the Tenant-in-chief. It had a recorded population of 13 households in 1086. These comprised of 5 villagers, 3 smallholders, 2 slaves and 3 burgesses. It had an annual value of 2 pounds and land resources comprising of ploughland with 2 lord’s plough teams and 5 men’s plough teams (Open Domesday Undated).
- 3.5 The history of the ownership of Oxenhall manor between the eleventh to the mid-seventeenth century is detailed with it being held by many and variously, by Roger Mortimer, earl of March (1358); Humphrey FitzAlan, earl of Arundel (1437); James Butler, earl of Wiltshire (1445); Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland (1485); and the Crown (from 1535) who mortgaged Oxenhall to a group of London merchant tailors in 1544 (pp.254-281, Jurica 2010 (Victoria County History)). Of this group, Thomas Broke owned it at his death in 1546. It then passed into the ownership of several individuals, the details of which it is not necessary to provide herein, to which we get to Francis Finch, later of Ruchock (Worcs.) who owned it in 1631 following the death of his father, Henry, of Little Horwood (Bucks).
- 3.6 There were relatively few dwellings in the southeast of the parish. Most of the land there belonged in the late Middle Ages to a large freehold called Marshall’s, based on a house near Ellbridge. The freehold was broken up when Francis Finch established the furnace at Ellbridge on waste land between the Ell Brook and the lane that became known as Furnace Lane with the works incorporating the nearby Ellbridge Mill. The latter which stood just upstream of the bridge was first recorded from 1444 (pp.254-281, Jurica 2010 (Victoria County History)) and formed part of the Marshall’s farm freehold. The name Marshall’s passed to a farmhouse established at the north end of its land, on Coldharbour Lane.
- 3.7 The Victoria County History (pp.254-281, Jurica 2010) notes that the total of dwellings listed in an Oxenhall manorial survey of 1659 was 45 and c.1710 the parish was said to contain 40 houses. This had risen to 63 in 1831.

- 3.8 The earliest available map on which Oxenhall is marked is Christopher Saxton's map of Gloucestershire (*GLOCESTRIAE Sive Claudiocestriae Comitatus*) of 1579 (source: Old Maps Online), not reproduced for copyright reasons). As with Saxton's map, Oxenhall is also marked as "Oxnoll" on Dutch cartographer Joan Blauwe's *Glocestria Ducatus; Vulgo Gloucester Shire* of 1664-65 (Utrecht University (online), not reproduced for copyright reasons).
- 3.9 There have been several studies and investigations undertaken on the wider site and the structure considered to include the former Blowing House situated to the south of the building (Bick 1980; G&T Consulting Ltd 2006; Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service ("GCCAS") 2008; 2011). These have also briefly considered the former layout of the site, and other buildings which may have comprised the complex when the charcoal blast-furnace was in operation from c.1640 to c.1751.
- 3.10 The purpose of this Statement is to inform the proposals for the agricultural barn at Furnace Barns which will be assessed against national and local planning policy. Keeping in mind the prescription for proportionality when understanding the significance of a heritage asset in the NPPF, this Statement focuses on the building and does not go into the detail of the history of the site when operating as a charcoal blast-furnace nor the long history of iron ore production in the Forest of Dean. It does, however, provide a summary of both.
- 3.11 Walters in his Introduction to his MPhil thesis (1993) succinctly summarises the importance of the Forest of Dean Iron Industry in the Roman period (first – fourth centuries AD). He states that,
- “Without its vast iron resource of rich hematites Roman Dean would have been unremarkable. Its iron industry proved to be central to the development of high status buildings³ and a sophisticated communications system involving Roman military-constructed roads and its river boundaries, the Severn and the Wye.”
- 3.12 Walters hypothesises that based on what was then recent evidence, the area was probably an Imperial Estate with the central woodlands reserved as an Imperial Forest for hunting. In the first century, the iron products supplied a mainly Roman military market and during the second century, a rapidly expanding civilian market. Unlike the Wealden iron industry, Forest of Dean ores were moved over considerable distances to the smelting and smithing sites in and outside of the area. He presents evidence for a major recession in the early third century which resulted in the closure of some of the largest and oldest iron-working centres and “from which the industry never fully recovered during the period of Roman occupation.” (Introduction).
- 3.13 Walters presents and discusses archaeological evidence (pp.82-83) for a major self-sufficient iron-working settlement situated to the south of Newent town, surrounded by its own Roman road system and not far west of the Gloucester to Dymock and Stretton Grandison Roman road. It was apparently created for a new, expanding civilian market that opened up in the second century and for around a hundred years, it prospered but then became a deserted Roman village.
- 3.14 Early production of iron ore used a bloomery, a type of metallurgical furnace built of clay, in which oxygen in the iron ore could be extracted by heating with carbon, leaving the

³ Newent is marked as having a site of high status building, villa etc on Walters' map showing Roman military sites, temples, known Roman roads and sites of high status building, villa etc (Introduction)

metal. Bloomeries produced a porous mass of iron and slag called a bloom and were introduced to the Forest of Dean by the Romans and continued to be used until the introduction of the charcoal blast-furnace at the end of the sixteenth century. A charcoal blast-furnace required water wheels, driven by streams, to power the bellows which increased the temperature in the furnaces. As a result, the main streams in the area were targeted as the location for the new charcoal iron blast furnaces. These were able to produce massive quantities of sow or pig iron (p.30, Landscape Design Associates 2002).

- 3.15 In the late twelfth century, Henry II gave the lord of the manor of Newent the right to work a forge on the manor and burn charcoal in the woods to sustain it. That and presumably other bloomery forges operating in the Middle Ages left deposits of cinders in various parts of the parish, apparently adding to others left by Roman iron working. Large quantities of cinders were dug for the use of Ellbridge furnace with Francis Finch, the owner buying deposits found in a field called Cinder pits, probably in Compton tithing, in 1639. His successors, the Foleys, reserved cinders in leases of their lands on Newent manor where sites yielding them included a field called Cinders adjoining Cleeve Mill and Cinder field and Cinder meadow on Nelfields farm. (pp.254-281, Jurica 2010 (Victoria County History)).
- 3.16 The charcoal blast-furnace more recently known as Newent but also as Ellbridge, Elmbridge, or Oxenhall furnace was with others in West Gloucestershire⁴ of national importance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the seventeenth century, the Forest of Dean had the largest concentration of furnaces and forges in Britain (p.30, Landscape Design Associates 2002).
- 3.17 The use of charcoal continued later in the Forest of Dean than elsewhere as there were plentiful supplies of wood for charcoal and a lack of good coking coals. Coke blast-furnaces began to replace charcoal in the mid-eighteenth century as coke burned hotter and produced a more efficient heat which helped make coke pig iron cheaper to produce than charcoal pig iron. Pig iron is crude iron with a high carbon content obtained directly from the blast furnace and cast in molds.
- 3.18 Bick⁵, writing in 1980, stated that of some 16 sites, only the seventeenth century furnace at Gunn's Mill (Abenhall) survived more or less intact at that time. In the same article he states,
- “The surviving buildings at Newent are therefore of particular interest, but the difficulties in assembling a true picture may be likened to a jigsaw with vital pieces missing, and others added from a different puzzle altogether.” (p.29)
- 3.19 There is documentary evidence (Foley of Stoke Edith archives (Herefordshire Records Office))) for a water-powered corn mill owned by Thomas Hooke on the site in 1624. A mortgage redemption of that date describes the premises as a “Mill or Water Corn Mill called Elbridge Mill in Oxenhall with garden and hemp close.” (p.3, Stiles 1972). Conversion to ironworking is suggested in two deeds of 1639, but the first conclusive evidence dates to Francis Finch deeds of October 1645, giving Edward Hooke permission to divert water to a corn mill when not required by the furnace. A document of 1647 refers to “Ellbridge Mill

⁴ Cannop, Bishopswood, Lydbrook, Parkend, Linton, Longhope, Flaxley, Gunn's Mill (p.29, Bick 1980)

⁵ Engineer and first Chairman of the Newent Local History Society and author of several articles on charcoal blast-furnaces in the area.

(a corn-mill) part of which is now converted into a furnace for making iron.” (p.29, Bick 1980)

- 3.20 By 1655, Finch had incurred debts of £4,000. To recover his position, he made an agreement with Thomas Foley (1616 – 1677)⁶ of London, under which he, in return for Foley standing security for his debt, mortgaged the furnace and its supply of cinders and charcoal to Thomas Lowbridge of Wilden, Worcestershire, Foley’s agent or partner. Finch was to continue to work the furnace but supply Lowbridge with pig iron to the value of the debt (pp.254-281, Jurica 2010 (Victoria County History)). At that time, Thomas Foley was already an ironmaster having acquired leases on furnaces, forges, and other ironworks on his own and in partnership. In time, his acquisitions stretched across Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and the Forest of Dean.
- 3.21 In 1658, Finch sold Oxenhall manor with his residual rights in the furnace to Thomas Foley. Foley shortly afterwards bought the adjoining manor of Newent (which came with woods, minerals, watercourses, and a market), with which Oxenhall descended in the Foleys and their successors, the Onslows, for the next two and a half centuries. Oakdale House, formerly the Furnace, was occupied by members of the Onslow family, in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth centuries. The estate was sold in 1913, although Furnace House and the adjoining land was not included in the sale as it was the residence of Andrew Richard Onslow who had use of it for his lifetime. He remained there until 1941-2 (Martin, Rees, and Goulding 2015).
- 3.22 For ninety years, the furnace, which was worked on an extensive scale by Foley and his descendants⁷, was a centre of activity in Oxenhall producing fire backs, cannon balls and other items. In c.1710, by which time it was known as ‘Elmbridge’, it was said to produce 20 tons of pig iron each week it was in blast.
- 3.23 The operation of powering and charging the furnace employed resources from an area extending well beyond the manors. Many manor tenants and parishioners were day labourers, and some were charcoal burners. Water for the bellows came from a large pond half a mile to the northeast and three big storage reservoirs were built at Gorsley and supplied the pond by a leat.
- 3.24 Much of Newent’s woodland was managed as coppice to provide charcoal for the iron industry. In 1660, Thomas Foley was using Yartleton woods to supply the furnace and 417 of their 595 acres were described as coppice. Under the Foleys, the commoners came under increasing pressure to give up their rights at Yartleton. Foley also managed other coppices in Newent including 30 a. of Kilcot wood on Kilcot manor and 35 a. in Bouldson (pp.254-281, Jurica 2010 (Victoria County History)).
- 3.25 It is believed that the furnace went out of use c.1751. This may have been for several reasons including changing technology and the move to more efficient coke furnaces, the lifting of duty on imported iron from America in 1750 which caused the market price of pig iron to drop, and the depletion and exhaustion of local resources.
- 3.26 The site is marked on the Oxenhall and Newent estate map of 1775 (reproduced and annotated by Bick 1980, p.30), although the furnace is not marked. The map is the earliest available for the site. No earlier plan or map has been discovered during the research for

⁶ Son of Richard Foley, Mayor of Dudley, and a prominent ironmaster

⁷ An indenture of 1688 mentions the furnace at Newent and the adjoining steelwork and mill.

- this Statement. Rudder's 1779 history of Gloucestershire refers to the furnace as "out of blast for some time." (p.29 Bick 1980).
- 3.27 Bick states that the scale of the ironworks can be gauged from an inventory of 1749 (p.29, citing Hereford Record Office) which includes a casting room, stock taker's room, clerk's house, also founders and stock takers' houses. Notable is the absence of the charcoal store which it is expected Bick would note if it were listed.
- 3.28 He states that he expected the furnace to be shown but it is not. He further states that the scale is small,
- "and by comparison with buildings in the area still extant, errors come to light. The charcoal store C (Bick's annotation) scales 68ft x 28ft, compared to approximate actual dimensions of 75ft x 34ft i.e., 10% low on the longer side, and more on the shorter." (p.29)
- 3.29 Bick discussed the various buildings noted on the estate map and concludes that it is unreliable to the extent that the answer to the questions of where the furnace was situated and the general layout of the site, could only be deduced on probability rather than certainty.
- 3.30 The 1811 Ordnance Survey (source: Old Maps Online (original source: The British Library), not reproduced for copyright reasons) also shows buildings on the site. However, it does not provide the level of detail as that of the 1842 Oxenhall tithe map (fig.3) and apportionment (source: Gloucestershire Archives).
- 3.31 The 1842 map shows several buildings on the site with the building forming part of parcel no.342 with what is now Oakdale Cottage (Smiths Funeral Services) to the northeast. The latter is coloured red which denotes an inhabited building, and the building is coloured grey which denotes an uninhabited building. The building shown on the site of the possible former Charcoal Store is of an upside down and inverted 'L' shape with a small rectangular building, running east – west, to the west. The structure considered to include the former Blowing House is noted as parcel no.341 and also coloured grey. It formed part of the same parcel as Oakdale House situated to the east.
- 3.32 The apportionment (source: Gloucestershire Archives, ref: Oxenhall TRS 224/137) documents parcel no.342 as a 'Homestead'. It was owned by Elizabeth Foley and occupied by Richard Warn, who is documented as the occupier of several parcels. Parcel no.341, which was documented as 'Furnace House, Gardens, Lawn & Stables' was also owned by Elizabeth Foley and occupied by Richard Foley Onslow.
- 3.33 A comparison of the 1842 tithe map with the Ordnance Survey of 1884 (fig.4) suggests that the footprint of the building had increased, to almost double its width, in the intervening period. On the 1884 Ordnance Survey, it is shown as a large rectangular building with a footprint mirroring the extant. Curiously, the 1775 estate map also shows a large rectangular building, identified as the charcoal store by Bick, suggesting that the 1842 tithe map may be inaccurate. This may be possible as there were two standards of tithe map based on their accuracy: 'first class' and 'second class' maps. First class maps were considered sufficiently accurate to serve as legal evidence of boundaries and land plots. About one-sixth of the whole were certified by the Tithe Commissioners as first class (Tithes - The National Archives). Second class maps are considered of variable quality.
- 3.34 Gloucestershire Archives has confirmed (pers. Comms. 12th October 2023) that the Oxenhall map does not have the Commissioners' seal and so it is not a first class map.

However, that does not intimate that it is inaccurate but rather it is assumed that it did not meet the standard required to have veracity in legal matters.

- 3.35 Based on the available evidence, specifically, the extant building that is demonstrably of a single phase of construction with no evidence of extension or significant alteration, it is possible that the 1842 tithe map is accurate and that it shows an earlier building on the site that was replaced by the extant.
- 3.36 Considering this in more detail, there is no available documentary or map evidence for the building being formerly in use as a charcoal store. The ascription of building type appears to be based on what should have been there following a strict application of ironworking complex typology rather than the evidence for what may or may not have been. It appears that the size and location of the building have influenced the ascription, with the former seen as reflecting the requirement to store large quantities of fuel, and the latter, being its construction into the slope of the land at the same or higher level as the furnace which is understood to have been situated to the south and adjoining the structure considered to include the former Blowing House. It is likely that there would have been a charcoal store on the site, however, there is currently not enough available evidence to substantiate the ascription of that building type to the extant.
- 3.37 Interestingly, both Bick (1980) and G&T Consulting Ltd (2006) highlight that the building does not completely conform to type or their expectations. The latter state that,
- “The only structure at the Newent site which we can identify with certainty is the charcoal store, which as expected stands on the higher ground, but some 20m north of the main building. However, we would expect the charging house to be positioned near the charcoal store, either directly in front or at an angle;...”
- 3.38 In the context of Bick’s conclusion on the accuracy of the 1775 estate map, G&T Consulting Ltd also question its veracity and state that their interpretation of the site assumes that it “does not accurately locate all the major structures.” (paragraph 6.5)
- 3.39 G&T Consulting Ltd state that the charcoal store “is believed to be the only remaining 17th century store in the district and has similar features to charcoal stores in Cumbria.” (paragraph 3.4). The footnote for the above statement references sources which repeat the NHLE list entry description and do not mention comparative examples extant in Cumbria. GCCASs also state that “Very similar charcoal stores survive in Cumbria.” (paragraph 2.2, 2011).
- 3.40 Two statutorily listed charcoal barns⁸ located in Cumbria have been reviewed as part of the research for this Statement and based on the photographic evidence, it can be concluded that other than being large barns, there are no further shared essential characteristics with the building. Specifically, there appear to be no determinant or essential characteristics that would necessitate a separate classification of the building type of charcoal store. It is concluded that the comparison has been drawn based on deemed former use rather than distinctive or essential building characteristics.
- 3.41 Following the demise of ironworking in the Forest of Dean, agriculture – farming and forestry were encouraged. There is evidence for the site being given over to agricultural

⁸ Charcoal Barns to west of Duddon Iron Furnace (NHLE List Entry Number: 1336077) – Early C18; Outbuilding Formerly Charcoal Storage Barn to the North West of Newland Blast Furnace (NHLE List Entry Number: 1096783) – Late C18 or early C19;

use after the cessation of ironworking and attendant with which was the addition of new buildings on the site and the alteration and extension of the then extant buildings.

- 3.42 The building is distinct from the Cumbrian examples due to the presence of two strings of regularly spaced ventilation holes to the east, west and south elevations. These are not later interventions to the fabric but rather are a feature of a commensurate date as that of the construction of the building. Ventilation holes are a characteristic determinant of traditional agricultural use. Traditionally farm buildings were built as permeable structures with plenty of ventilation so that moisture was able to evaporate easily without detriment to the structure.
- 3.43 In terms of the building's construction materials – red sandstone and yellow/grey Downton sandstone – both G&T Consulting Ltd (2006) and GCCAS (2011) observe these in areas of the structure situated directly to the south and considered to be the former Blowing House of the ironworks. In the respective discussions on the presence and location of the two types of sandstone, the intimation is that they are using the building to assist in dating elements of the structure, i.e. based on an unevidenced assertion that the building is a former charcoal store and therefore the presence of the same sandstone in the structure indicates a commensurate construction date. GCCAS in their 2011 Written Scheme of Investigation identify the red sandstone on the ground floor of what they refer to as the 'main structure', situated at the southwest corner of the structure and interpret it as having been part of the original ironworks.
- 3.44 The use of sandstone in both structures does not constitute sound evidence of construction date. It is understood that red sandstone was readily available being local to the area. It is possible that the building was constructed out of reused stone should the hypothesis on a mid-nineteenth century construction date been borne out through further investigation.
- 3.45 In the intervening period between 1842 and 1884, the small rectangular building, running east – west, to the west as shown on the tithe map had undergone alteration with the footprint by that time extending north - south on its west side. A small building had also been constructed directly to the south with the building lines meeting at the northwest / southeast corners, respectively. Consequently, an enclosed yard appears to have been formed with buildings to the north, east and west sides. The structure to the south had also undergone extension in the intervening period.
- 3.46 The 1903 Ordnance Survey (fig.6) provides more detail on the layout of the site and the footprints of the buildings. By that time, small buildings had been added on the west side of the structure to the south. Just to the southeast of what is now Oakdale Cottage, a long rectangular building running north-south had also been constructed. This had been extended by 1922 (Ordnance Survey, fig.8), and a rectangular building, running north-south, had been constructed just to the south. It is evident from the extant historic buildings on the site, and the wider site that they were formerly in agricultural use, and this is supported by the documentary evidence which records this use in 1913 when the estate was sold.
- 3.47 A recent history of Oxenhall (Martin, Rees, and Goulding 2015) notes that the 1942 War Farm Survey documented that of the associated land, 51 acres were arable, and that store cattle and sheep were kept. Prisoners of War worked on the land picking peas. It helpfully provides a summary of changes on the site which provide an indication of the change in farming methods and focus. These include the construction of the milking parlour in the

cowshed in 1960, the demolition of three large chicken sheds in 1970 and the installation of new units for cows in 1971 after a change to concentrate on dairy farming.

- 3.48 Two barns, including that which is the subject of the proposal, were constructed post-1922 with a comparison of the 1974 (fig.9) and 1989 Ordnance Survey (fig.11) indicating that the latter (fig.32; plate 20) was constructed during the intervening period.
- 3.49 There has been commercial activity undertaken on the wider site since the early twentieth century, with Smiths Funeral Services operating from Oakdale Cottage and the modern buildings just to the northeast and east of the building on the other side of the lane (figs. 35; 40 / plates 22; 27) (Smiths Funeral Services 2023).

Building Description (also provided in the NHLE List Entry Description in Appendix 2)

- 3.50 The building is of four bays and predominantly constructed of roughly squared and coursed red sandstone with yellow/grey Downton sandstone to the top 1.5m section and plinth to lower. The plinth is higher on the west side than the east due to the topography. The east side of the north elevation with its double-height opening is constructed of red brick. The building has square-set buttresses. There are two strings of regularly spaced ventilation holes to the east, west and south elevations. The low-pitched gabled roof is comprised of modern corrugated cement fibre sheets supported by timber purlins and a steel frame erected within the building. It replaced a half-hipped, tiled roof that was removed in 1984. Historic alteration is evident through the application of different materials, i.e. breeze blocks to close off the entry point to the south elevation; repair with brick and the creation of openings.
- 3.51 The fenestration is irregular and variegated with two openings to the east elevation, one opening to the west elevation, and one to the south elevation. There is a single doorway to the west elevation which appears to be of a commensurate date with that of the building's construction. Its siting is suggestive of former agricultural use, providing access to the interior off the farmyard. There is a former, larger entry point, now blocked up, to the south elevation.
- 3.52 The building is on the Forest of Dean District Council's *Listed Buildings at Risk Register 2017-2019* (2019) which provides a 'Condition appraisal', an excerpt from which is provided below,
- "Externally, the roughly course and squared red sandstone walls are suffering from extensive wind erosion and scaling of the stone faces has occurred, lime mortar has eroded away leaving open joints and loose areas of stone and is generally in very poor condition. The external walls require urgent repairs and localised rebuilding/re-pointing to stabilise the walls to prevent further deterioration of the structure."



Figure 3: **1842** A detail from the Oxenhall Tithe Map (reproduced with the permission of Gloucestershire Archives)



Figure 4: **1884** A detail from the Ordnance Survey, Gloucestershire, sheet XVII.SW (source: National Library of Scotland)



Figure 5: 1898 A detail from the Ordnance Survey, Tewkesbury, sheet 216 (source: National Library of Scotland)



Figure 6: 1903 A detail from the Ordnance Survey, Gloucestershire, sheet XVII.10 (source: National Library of Scotland)

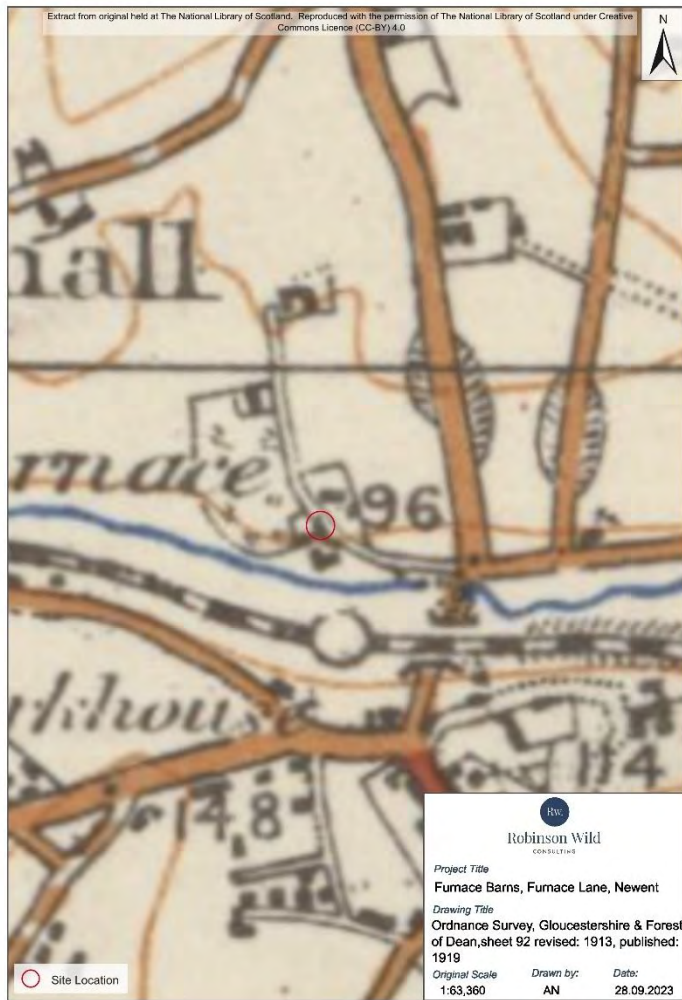


Figure 7: 1919 A detail from the Ordnance Survey, Gloucestershire & Forest of Dean, sheet 92 (source: National Library of Scotland)

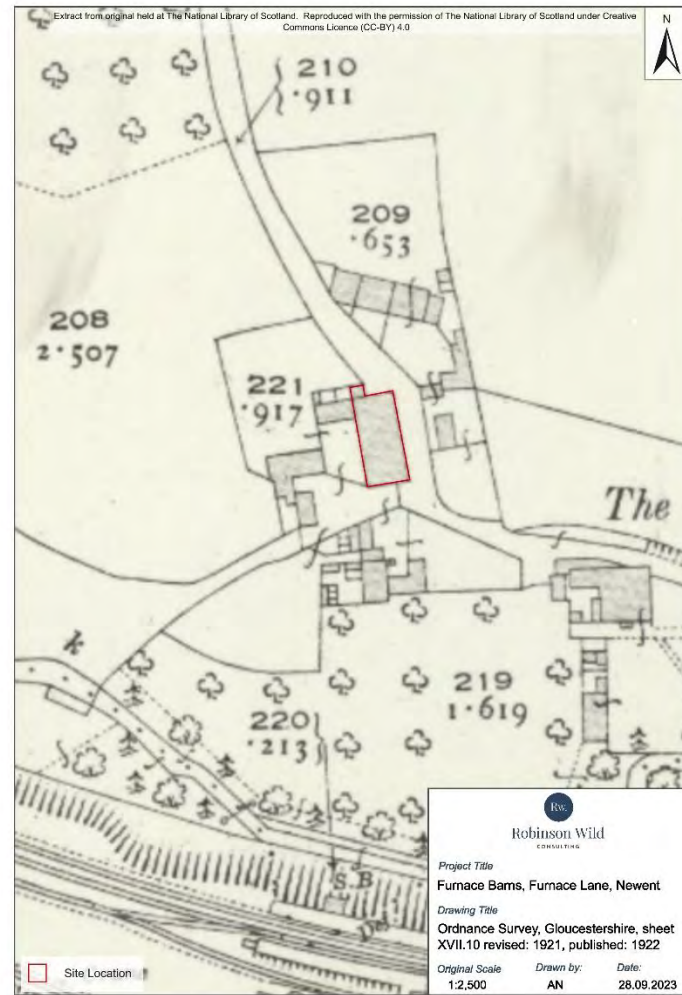


Figure 8: 1922 A detail from the Ordnance Survey, Gloucestershire, sheet XVII.10 (source: National Library of Scotland)



Figure 9: 1967 A detail from the Ordnance Survey (source: National Library of Scotland)



Figure 10: 1974 A detail from the Ordnance Survey (source: National Library of Scotland)

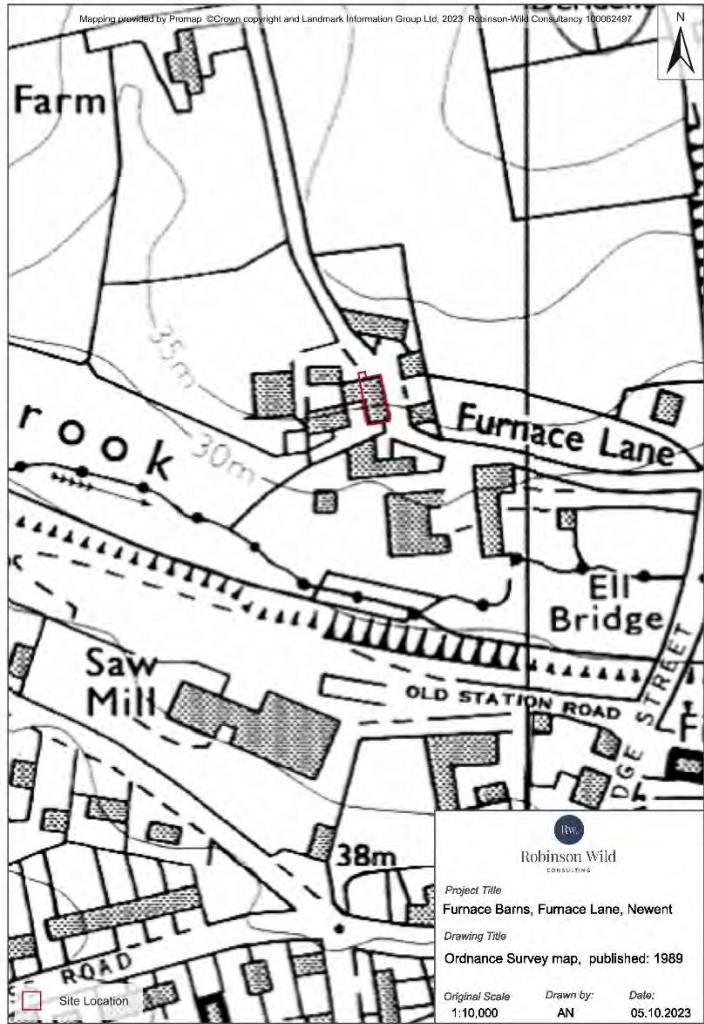


Figure 11: 1989 A detail from the Ordnance Survey (source: National Library of Scotland)

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1 The NPPF directs that for planning purposes, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by proposed alterations and/or development. The NPPF also points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting, being the surroundings in which it is experienced.
- 4.2 Historic England in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) identify four principal heritage values: Evidential (deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity), Historical (deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present), Aesthetic (deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place), and Communal (deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory) which might be taken into account when assessing the significance of heritage assets, whether they are designated or not.
- 4.3 The NPPF suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of heritage assets should be assessed under the headings of archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic which essentially correspond with the Historic England values.
- 4.4 Assessing the significance of heritage assets is to a great extent based on knowledge of the asset type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent to which it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people. The incorporation of a values-based benchmark within the assessment helps to ensure a consistency of approach when determining significance in the context of managing change to historic buildings and/or places.
- 4.5 The principal heritage values, or interests can be weighted in terms of their relative importance for a heritage asset. The significance of heritage assets or their elements can be measured on different levels:

Table 1.

Value / Criteria	Description
Very High Building/site/area of international significance	Sites, buildings, monuments, or landscapes of international significance and listed on the World Heritage Site List, or other sites, buildings, monuments, or landscapes of comparable quality
High Building/site/area of national significance	Listed Buildings Grade I, Grade II*, Conservation Areas (containing very important buildings) Scheduled Monuments, non-designated sites or assets of comparable quality, Registered battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade I and Grade II*. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that strongly contributes to significance
Medium Building/site/area of national significance	Listed Buildings Grade II, Conservation Areas, Historic Townscapes, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade II. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that makes a moderate contribution to significance
Low Buildings/sites/areas of regional/local significance	Buildings and areas of local interest, sites and archaeological remains which are not of national importance, historic landscapes of regional/county importance. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that makes a lesser contribution to significance

Negligible Buildings /Sites / Areas of little or no significance;	Buildings/sites/areas of little or no significance. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that has little or no value and therefore does not impact significance, either positively or negatively
Negative	An aspect (structure or feature) that detracts from the significance of a heritage asset

- 4.6 The building is grade II listed. Its listed status is a formal recognition of its heritage value and, when taken in the context of the weighting of significance as set out above, its deemed **medium** significance. However, it is important to take a more nuanced approach to the assessment of significance and arrive at a detailed understanding of the heritage values which may contribute to it. The assessment also considers the significance of key elements and features of the building within the context of the heritage values as it is recognized that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. The assessment below considers these values in detail.
- 4.7 The aim of the assessment is to inform the level of change that is likely to be acceptable under any proposals for alteration and/or development, and it will ensure that decisions relating to the long-term management of the building consider the values which contribute to its significance.

Evidential Value

- 4.8 Evidential value is essentially an archaeological measure, but it can be derived from above-ground physical remains which have been inherited from the past just as well as remains buried in the ground. In this regard, our ability to understand and interpret the evidence relies upon the intactness of the extant remains.
- 4.9 In this case, the potential for buried archaeological deposits of high value or interest is considered to be low and they are likely to be limited to finds and/or features related to the former industrial and later agricultural-type activities undertaken at the wider site. While such remains are likely to be present, none are likely to be of high significance.
- 4.10 Turning to above-ground, structural remains, it is considered that the building was statutorily listed because it constitutes “Important remains of pre-Industrial Revolution iron works, outlier of Forest of Dean industrial area.” and because it is considered the “Only known C17 charcoal store in existence. (NHLE List Entry Description). In Section 3.0 above, it is hypothesised that in the absence of evidence that identifies the building as a former charcoal store, and evidence of its construction date, it is not possible to assert, without further investigation, that it is a former charcoal store, and of significance. Consequently, it is not possible to assign herein evidential value based on this deemed historic use.
- 4.11 The building displays an essential characteristic of a type of traditional farm building – ventilation holes – which are the only evident diagnostic feature as to building typology. The construction material is reflective of the local geology and its large scale and form may reflect the status of the farm and the owner, and the period in which it was constructed. In the late eighteenth century, mass-walled buildings in stone (and brick) roofed with tile or slate began to replace earlier forms. It is considered that the structure to the south was converted to agricultural use in the late eighteenth century (G&T Consulting Ltd 2006; GCCAS 2008; 2011).

Further investigation of the building and interrogation of the evidence relating to the period when the wider site was in agricultural use may elicit more evidence and information.

- 4.12 The building has undergone alteration in the twentieth century, notably with the removal and replacement of the half-hipped, tiled roof with modern materials. New openings for windows have been inserted into the fabric. Consequently, historic legibility and integrity of former agricultural use is somewhat compromised. As extant and considering its immediate setting, it presents as a former agricultural building and is considered of **low – medium** evidential value.

Historical Value

- 4.13 The extant historic buildings situated on Furnace Lane illustrate in part an element of the socio-economic history of the area, having been constructed during important periods in local history when ironworking and then agriculture were the dominant local industries.
- 4.14 Given the documented ironworking history of the site and the addition and alteration of buildings for a new use – agricultural, the plan form, specifically the characteristic of enclosure, of the farmstead came about organically rather than because of the application of a formal or regular plan as seen with other historic farmsteads. Notwithstanding this, the extant historic buildings retain evidence of this former use and from which some historical value is derived.
- 4.15 There are no notable historical events or figures associated with the building. However, the wider site has an association with a notable seventeenth century ironmaster, Thomas Foley, and his descendants. Foley had sole and partnership interests in furnaces, forges and other ironworks located across Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and the Forest of Dean. The building is considered of **low – medium** historical value and site of **medium** historical value.

Aesthetic Value

- 4.16 Architecturally, the building is of some interest. Its scale, form and materiality make it visually commanding, although the modern roof and the insertion of window openings have comprised architectural integrity. It is considered of **low - medium** value.

Communal Value

- 4.17 The historic and current use of the site precludes an assignment of high or medium communal value to it as it has not been the focus of any communal activity of interest. However, it may feature in the collective memory of previous inhabitants, visitors, and members of the local community. The building is considered of **low** communal value.

Setting

- 4.18 The effect of development on the significance of the setting of heritage assets is a material consideration in determining a planning application and the NPPF advises local planning authorities that they should require an applicant to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance.
- 4.19 Setting is defined as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced, and all heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. Therefore, the heritage assets identified in this Statement have a setting

and assessment will identify the key attributes of the heritage assets and their settings and the potential impact upon these occasioned by a proposal.

- 4.20 To identify these key attributes, it is necessary to consider the physical surroundings of the assets, including relationships with other heritage assets, including the way the assets are appreciated and the assets' associations and patterns of use.
- 4.21 A consideration of these attributes allows an estimation to be made of whether, how and to what degree setting contributes to the heritage assets. Development can affect the settings of heritage assets and the ability to understand, experience and appreciate them.
- 4.22 An assessment of the scope of the magnitude and effect of any impact on settings is part of the remit of the assessment undertaken in relation to a proposal for alteration and will be undertaken with reference to the Historic England document, *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning:3*. The value of a heritage asset can be harmed or lost through alteration within or destruction of its setting. Current policy states that the extent of a setting is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. It is acknowledged that a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the value of a heritage asset, it may affect the ability to appreciate that value or it may be neutral.
- 4.23 Setting is most commonly framed with reference to visual considerations and so lines of sight to or from a heritage asset across, though into and out of its setting will play an important part in considerations of setting. However, non-visual considerations also apply, such as spatial associations and an understanding of the historic relationship between places. To undertake an assessment of significance of the settings to a level of thoroughness proportionate to the relative importance of the assets, the settings of which may be affected by a proposal for alteration, the assessment will seek to describe the setting for each significant heritage asset and provide a measure of the contribution that the setting plays in the value of the asset.
- 4.24 Many heritage assets within any given landscape may be visible from several locations – publicly accessible areas such as footpaths, streets and the open countryside and private spaces such as dwellings and private land. Many sightlines from, to, into and across heritage assets are, therefore, incidental and are not intrinsically or intimately associated with the significances assigned to any given heritage asset. However, there are instances where the characteristics of sightlines may have been intentionally designed and as part of the setting are integral to the significance.
- 4.25 There are two listed buildings within a 250m radius of the building (fig. X). A 250m radius (“Assessment Area”) was drawn up following consultation of the Heritage Gateway, Historic England’s National Heritage List for England, and other source repositories. It was also chosen as it represents the furthest distance at which it was anticipated that a perceptible measure of magnitude of change to the settings of heritage assets might bring about an impact on those settings.
- 4.26 The listed buildings are,
- Farm Building (Former Blowing House) about 48m west of Oakdale House. Grade II (NHLE List Entry Number: 1078599), c.20m to the south of the building
 - Oakdale House, Grade II (NHLE List Entry Number: 1341932), c.55m to the southeast of the building

- 4.27 The designated status of the buildings is a formal recognition of their heritage value and when taken in the context of the weighting of significance as set out in table 1 above, their deemed **medium** significance. Historic England assign group value to the building and the listed buildings noted above. This is due to a deemed relationship between them derived from the period when ironworking was undertaken on the wider site. It has been noted (Martin, Rees, and Goulding 2015) that Oakdale House was formerly the house for the manager of the ironworks.
- 4.28 The farm building (referred to as “the structure” herein) has been identified as the former Blowing House of the ironworks and thereby of seventeenth century date (Bick 1980; NHLE). It has been much altered in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (paragraph 3.3, GCCAS 2008). It has been the subject of investigation (Bick 1980) and evaluation (G&T Consulting Ltd 2006). The evaluation divided the structure (figs. 24; 26 – 30 / plates 12; 14 – 18), which is of an L-shape and situated directly to the south of the building, into four components – the main structure (figs. 28; 30 / plates 16; 18); the east wing; the west area and the northern extensions (figs. 28 – 29 / plates 16 - 17).
- 4.29 The evaluation concluded that the most significant feature is the ground floor masonry of the main structure, which it opines, may have been part of the casting house. It further concludes that the other masonry walls identified as being contemporary with this structure, including the northern boundary wall and the western yard, are equally important in potentially defining other elements of the historic ironworks (paragraphs 7.1 – 7.2).
- 4.30 Consequently, the structure referred to as the farm building is considered to have demonstrable evidential and historical values which contribute to its significance. These are also derived from the period in which the structure was in agricultural use. The extant structure is a historical touchpoint with an element of the development of the area from which evidential value is derived. The main structure, as defined in the evaluation, is of some aesthetic value which is derived from the elevational treatment, specifically the handmade red bricks.
- 4.31 Oakdale House is described as a farmhouse of early eighteenth century date, altered in the early and mid-nineteenth century. It has a documented association with the ironworking history of the wider site and the families which owned it. It has demonstrable evidential, historical, and evidential values which contribute to its significance. The extant building is a historical touchpoint with an element of the development of the area from which evidential value is derived.
- 4.32 Furnace Lane is situated in a characteristically rural area. The lane is single-track and bordered by a high hedge on the north side and brick wall on the east side close to where it turns northwards, and it opens up to the wider site. The condition of the extant historic buildings, some of which were demonstrably in agricultural use indicates disuse. Conversely, Oakdale Cottage and the buildings on the west side of the lane, in the ownership of Smiths Funeral Services, are demonstrably in use. As such, there is some disconnect in both the visual and experiential engagement with the setting of the building, and the other extant historic buildings.
- 4.33 From the southern section of Furnace Lane, only a section of the east side of the roof of the modern agricultural barn that is the subject of the proposal is visible. The north elevation is visible from the north end of the lane when looking southwest. The setting of the wider site

is demonstrably rural when viewed from that higher point due to the topography. The agricultural barn is accessed off a private driveway off the lane.

- 4.34 The setting of the identified heritage assets has changed as the wider site has developed for both agricultural and commercial use. As noted above, attendant with these uses was the construction of new buildings and the alteration and extension of the extant. The most impactful of these on setting was the construction of unashamedly modern, in terms of form and design, buildings to the northeast and east of the building.



Figure 12: Location of Designated Heritage Assets within 250m of the Site

5.0 PROPOSAL AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 When assessing a proposal that may affect a heritage asset, the local planning authority is directed by legislation, national and local planning policy, and guidance. The decisive heritage-related factor associated with the proposal is the impact, if any, upon the significance of the building and the setting of the building.
- 5.2 The Client has recently gained approval to secure Class Q prior consent for the conversion of the agricultural barn to residential (two units) from Forest of Dean District Council (ref: P0532/23/PQ3PA).
- 5.3 The barn, which was constructed between 1974 and 1989, is a well-maintained structure comprised of a mix of block work, steel framing and timber construction. It is sited on an established concrete platform. Formerly it was in agricultural use but is currently disused. It is situated to the west of the building.
- 5.4 Under the proposal, the barn will be divided into two units comprised of a larger main dwelling, and an adjoining smaller dwelling. To the south, there will be a courtyard formed on a terraced area. The materials that will be used include reclaimed brick and powder coated aluminium fenestration. The proposal is fully detailed and referenced in the material prepared and collated by McLoughlin Planning Ltd. The Planning Statement provides a detailed rationale for the scale, design and materiality of the proposal which is considered to be responsive to local context, and historic land use.
- 5.5 Proposed alteration and/or development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm. Paragraphs 200 - 202 of the NPPF consider the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset and notes two categories of harm – substantial and less than substantial. The revised (July 2019) *Historic Environment PPG* confirms that it is no longer enough to simply identify the category of harm with further articulation about where the proposal sits within that category now also required (Paragraph 018).
- 5.6 In response to the directive in paragraph 018 of the PPG, the impact of a proposal for alteration and/or development on the significance of the identified heritage assets (fig.11) will be assessed by drawing on a methodology for environmental impact assessment to quantify the significance of effect of the proposed development.
- 5.7 The potential impact of the proposal will be considered in the context of the assessment of weighting significance of key features/elements of the heritage assets; an assessment of the magnitude of the impact (Table 2. Factors in the Assessment); and significance of effect (Table 3. Effect Significance Matrix) of the proposed development in the context of the legislative and planning policy related to the decisive heritage-related factor.
- 5.8 For the purposes of assessing direct impacts to a heritage asset the pre-eminent characteristic of the impact is the scale to which the impact alters the asset. This can be gauged by cross referencing the potential impact activities with each known asset. In addition, the type of impact is judged to arrive at a magnitude. The scale ranges from negligible, through minor and moderate to substantial and the type of impact can be beneficial or adverse. A matrix can be completed which provides a rating based upon the scale and type of impact and extent or components of the asset affected. The magnitude of impact to an individual asset is a matter

of professional judgment and is based on a five-fold scale (major, moderate, minor, negligible and no change). The range of impact magnitude is explained in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Factors in the Assessment of Magnitude of Impact to Heritage Assets

Impact Magnitude	Description
Substantial Adverse	Total loss of asset
Substantial Beneficial	Comprehensive improvement to the asset through restoration or enhancement
Moderate Adverse	Partial loss of or detrimental modification to the asset, but integrity of majority of asset remains
Moderate Beneficial	Improvement to asset condition/preservation through enhancement or protection
Minor Adverse	Some measurable depreciation to the attributes and quality of asset
Minor Beneficial	Some measurable improvement to the attributes and quality of asset
Neutral	No loss or alteration of asset, no discernible impact either adverse or beneficial, or Very slight loss or detrimental alteration to asset or Very slight benefit to condition/preservation of asset

- 5.9 The significance of the residual effect on an asset is a combination of the importance of the asset and the magnitude of the impact. The required combination for an identified heritage asset and its respective key features/elements has been undertaken with the aid of a matrix, as shown in Table 3 below, to assist professional judgements regarding importance and impact magnitude in order that a reasonable and balanced assessment of effect significance (either beneficial or adverse) can be reached. In summary, the significance of the residual effect assignment is based both on a matrix that assists judgements regarding the importance of the assets and the magnitude of the impact, and professional judgement.
- 5.10 The assessment of impacts using this (EIA) methodology is not exactly the same as an assessment of impacts under the NPPF. The terminology is different, and the policy assessment in NPPF is geared to harmful impacts whereas the EIA assessment is geared to a range of effects that may or may not lead to significant impacts. In both cases, however, it is the impact on the heritage significance of the asset, as the receptor, which is key. For the purposes of the assessment, it is necessary to have regard to the provisions of the NPPF. Paragraphs 200 and 201 of the NPPF make it clear that substantial harm amounts to the total or near complete loss of significance of a designated heritage asset. The NPPF use of ‘substantial harm’ sets a high threshold for significance of effect, shown in the table below graphically as effects which are of Substantial effect shown in emboldened text.
- 5.11 The assessment of impacts and effects following the NPPF differs in criteria and terminology from those used by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) for assessing significance in the context of managing change and formalised in Conservation Principles, Policies and

Guidance. Consequently, the issue of assessing the proposal against Conservation Principles is considered in Table 3 below. Notwithstanding the criteria and terminology differences, Conservation Principles also allows for system aided judgement through the incorporation of a values-based benchmark which helps to ensure a consistency of approach.

Table 3. Effect Significance Matrix for Assets

Importance of Asset	Very High	Neutral	Moderate	Substantial	Substantial
	High	Neutral	Moderate	Substantial	Substantial
	Medium	Neutral	Minor / Moderate	Moderate / Substantial	Substantial
	Low	Neutral	Minor	Minor / Moderate	Moderate
	Negligible	Neutral	Minor	Minor	Minor / Moderate
	Unknown	Neutral	Neutral	Minor	Moderate
		Neutral	Minor	Moderate	Substantial
		MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT TO ASSET			

- 5.12 In summary, it is considered that the proposal will have a **Neutral** impact upon the significance of the building and the setting of the other identified heritage assets. Other than being situated within the same site boundary, and formerly in agricultural use, there is no notable nor significant interrelationship between the barn, which is c.34 – 49 years old, and constructed of modern materials, and the building. It also has no significant interrelationship with the other identified heritage assets. Its conversion is considered to have no discernible impact on their significance or setting.
- 5.13 There is no inter-visibility between the barn and the identified heritage assets. The former farmyard and disused, single-storey former agricultural buildings are situated between them. There is limited co-visibility with only a small section (figs. 32; 44 / plates 20; 32) of the east side of the roof of the barn visible when looking northwest and taking in the barn. There is co-visibility with the north elevation of the barn and the north elevation of the building visible from the north end of the lane when looking southwest. The north elevation of the building has undergone the most alteration, notably with the insertion of a large section of brick on the east side. As a result, historic fabric has been reduced and legibility has been compromised. Under the proposal, the extant openings to the barn will be retained and barn doors added. There will therefore be limited alteration to the view.
- 5.14 There will be no confusion brought about over the historicity of the building or the identified heritage assets through the conversion to residential use which is simply considered another phase in the developmental history of the site. From the visual and experiential perspectives, there will be discernible harmful impact on the identified heritage assets’ setting arising from the proposal. There are no public rights of way surrounding the site. Consequently, the wider site is not experienced by members of the public.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposal is set out in Section 5.0 above. It is considered compliant with legislation, planning policy and guidance in that it is responsive to the environmental objective of conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 6.2 The proposal represents a sustainable approach to the provision of housing in an underutilised building for which its previous agricultural use is no longer appropriate or viable.
- 6.3 The design, mass, scale, form, and materiality of the proposal are responsive to local context, and it therefore complies with Core Strategy Policy CSP:1 and Policy AP4 of the Allocations Plan.
- 6.4 This Statement enables an informed, sensitive, sustainable, and responsible approach to development within the setting of designated heritage assets. The information provided meets the expectations of paragraph 194 of the NPPF in that the applicant has described the significance of the heritage assets that may be affected by the proposal and has also assessed any contribution made by the setting of the identified heritage assets.
- 6.5 In accordance with paragraph 018 of the PPG, the Impact Assessment has considered the proposal in the context of the potential impact on the significance of the building, and the setting of the other identified heritage assets. It is concluded that the proposal will have a ***Neutral impact.***
- 6.6 On this basis, it is considered that there is no harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets associated with the proposal. Therefore, it is concluded that there are no axiomatic reasons arising from historic environment considerations to refuse planning permission.

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APPENDIX 1: SITE AND BUILDING PHOTOGRAPHS

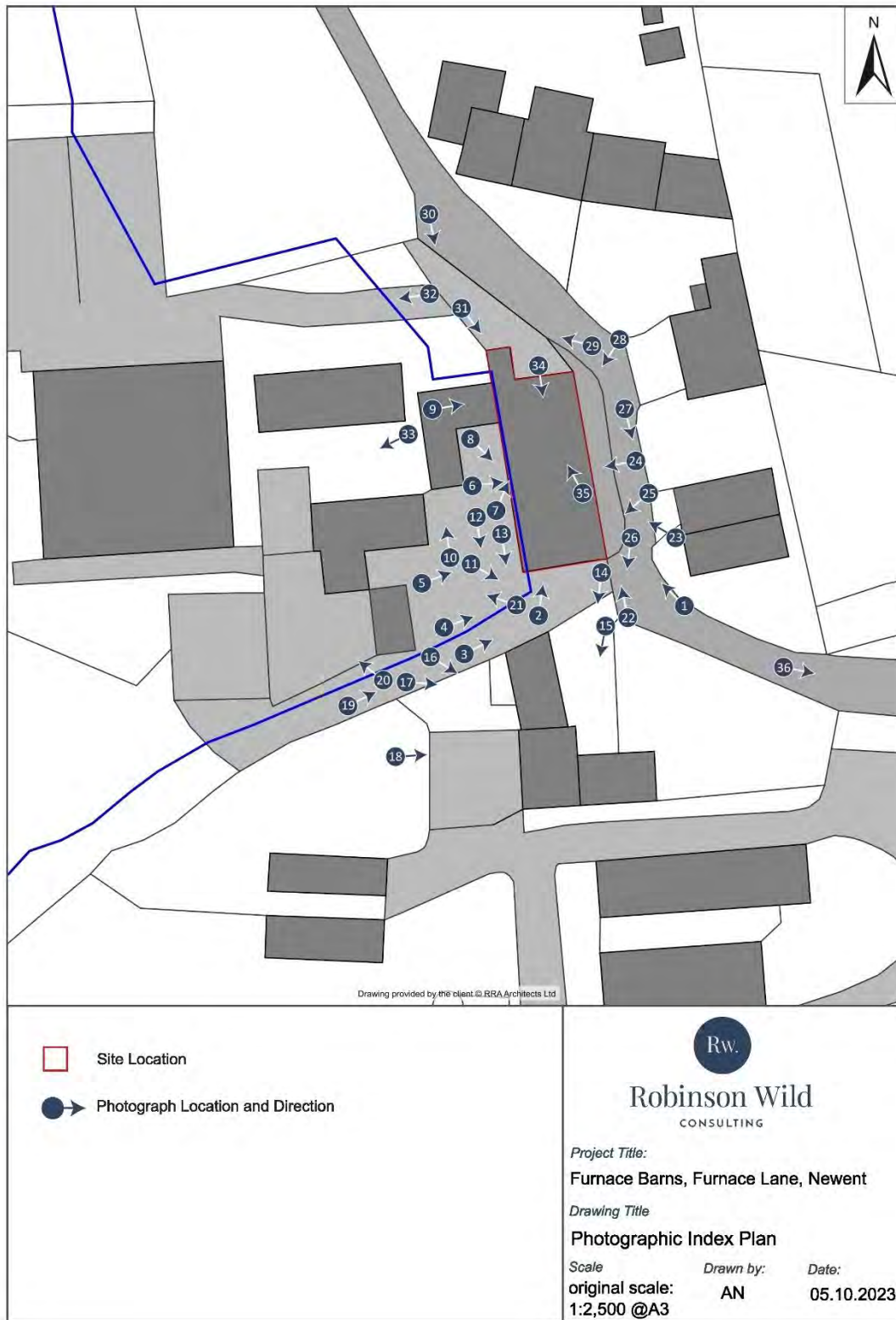


Figure 13: Photographic Index Plan



Figure 14: Plate 1 The building, view to the south and east elevations, looking northwest



Figure 15: Plate 2 The building, view to the south elevation, looking northeast



Figure 16: Plate 3 The building, view to the south and west elevations, looking northeast



Figure 17: Plate 4 The building, view to the south and west elevations, looking northeast (2)



Figure 18: Plate 5 The building, view to the west elevation, looking northeast



Figure 19: Plate 6 The building, view to the west elevation, looking east



Figure 20: Plate 7 The building, view to the entranceway to the west elevation, looking east



Figure 21: Plate 8 The building, view to the west elevation, looking southeast



Figure 22: Plate 9 The building, view to the north section of the west elevation, looking east



Figure 23: Plate 10 Former Farmyard, looking north



Figure 24: Plate 11 View to the building, Oakdale House and to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking southeast



Figure 25: Plate 12 View from the former farmyard to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House looking southeast



Figure 26: Plate 13 View from the former farmyard to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking south



Figure 27: Plate 14 View to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking southwest



Figure 28: Plate 15 View to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking southwest



Figure 29: Plate 16 View to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking southeast



Figure 30: Plate 17 View to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking east



Figure 31: Plate 18 View to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking east



Figure 32: Plate 19 View to the former farmyard and the building, looking northeast



Figure 33: Plate 20 Former agricultural barn, looking northwest



Figure 34: Plate 21 Former farmyard, looking northwest



Figure 35: Plate 22 View to Furnace Lane and Oakdale Cottage (Smiths Funeral Services), looking north



Figure 36: Plate 23 The building, view to the east elevation, looking northwest



Figure 37: Plate 24 The building, view to the centre section of the east elevation, looking west



Figure 38: Plate 25 The building, view to the south section of the east elevation, looking southwest



Figure 39: Plate 26 View to the structure understood to include the former Blowing House, looking southwest



Figure 40: Plate 27 View to Furnace Lane and the building, looking south



Figure 41: Plate 28 The building, view to the east elevation, looking southwest



Figure 42: Plate 29 Furnace Barns, looking west



Figure 43: Plate 30 View to the building and barns, looking south



Figure 44: Plate 31 The building, view to the north elevation, looking southeast



Figure 45: Plate 32 Furnace Barns, looking west



Figure 46: Plate 33 Furnace Barns, looking southwest



Figure 47: Plate 34 The building, interior, looking south



Figure 48: Plate 35 The building, interior, looking north



Figure 49: Plate 36 Furnace Lane, view to Oakdale House, looking east

APPENDIX 2: HISTORIC ENGLAND LIST DESCRIPTION

Overview

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List entry Number: **1078600**

Date first listed: **19-Sep-1984**

Statutory Address: **FARM BUILDING (FORMER CHARCOAL STORE) OF FURNACE FARM, ABOUT 50 METRES NORTH WEST OF OAKDALE HOUSE**

Location

County: **Gloucestershire**

District: **Forest of Dean (District Authority)**

National Grid Reference: **SO 71923 26486**

Details

Former charcoal store for iron furnace, now farm building. C17 or earlier, later alterations, including 1984. Roughly squared and coursed reddish stone; thin yellowish stone to top quarter or less of wall, but not buttresses. Corrugated asbestos roof on steel frame. Four-bay building. Facade to road, plain plinth, at ground level on right, high on left with slope of ground. Square- set buttresses, single offset just below eaves. First bay 5 small square holes: second 3-light mullioned window on left and above, 3 square holes, to right door-frame infilled 2-light mullion and transom window at upper level. Third and fourth bays 6 square holes: end buttresses removed. Left return high plinth, buttresses at corners; wide centre doorway, about 2.1m high, rebate in stonework for doors, flat timber lintel. Square window to right at same level, 2 rows of 4 small square holes above. 1984 low-pitched gable oversails wall. Right return wide opening, part rebuilt in C20 brickwork. Interior gutted; evidence of upper floor at left end, with cross wall in centre of second bay. Said to be former charcoal store of C17 iron works: earlier use not clear, later converted to farm building. Previous roof half-hipped, tiled, removed 1984. Important remains of pre-Industrial Revolution iron works, outlier of Forest of Dean industrial area. Only known C17 charcoal store in existence. Forms group with former blowing house and Oakdale House, (q.v.).

APPENDIX 3: RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (FOR PROPERTIES ON FURNACE LANE)

- Reference: P0470/23/FUL – Heathfield (**Furnace Barns**)
 Summary description: Change of use of paddock and former track to residential curtilage.
 Decision and date: Granted. 23/08/23
- Reference: P0532/23/PQ3PA – Furnace Farm (Barn At) (**Furnace Barns**)
 Summary description: Prior approval for the change of use of an agricultural barn to 2 residential dwellings and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion.
 Decision and date: Approved. 12/06/23
- Reference: P1643/22/PQ3PA – Furnace Farm (**Furnace Barns**)
 Summary description: Prior approval for the proposed change of use of agricultural building to 2no. dwellinghouses (Class C3) and associated operational development.
 Decision and date: Refused. 20/01/23. Appeal lodged.
- Reference: P1212/22/PQ3PA – Barn At (Heathfield) Furnace Farm (**Furnace Barns**)
 Summary description: Prior approval for the proposed change of use of agricultural building to 2no. dwellinghouses (Class C3) and associated operational development.
 Decision and date: Refused. 25/10/22
- Reference: P0373/22/PQ3PA – **Furnace Barns**
 Summary description: Prior notification for the conversion of an agricultural building to 2 residential dwellings with associated building operations.
 Decision and date: Refused. 01/06/22
- Reference: P2080/21/FUL – The Bungalow
 Summary description: Change of use of land from agriculture to a mixed use consisting of agriculture and vehicle/equipment storage for an agricultural contractors business. Erection of a barn and associated works.
 Decision and date: Granted. 24/06/22
- Reference: P1727/09/COU – Oakdale Furnace
 Summary description: Conversion of former furnace building and agricultural store to create one dwelling.
 Decision and date: Granted. 23/12/09
- Reference: P1729/09/LBC – Oakdale Furnace

- Summary description: Listed Building Consent for the conversion of former furnace building and agricultural store to create one dwelling.

Decision and date: Granted. 23/12/09
- Reference: P1466/08/COU – Furnace Farm

Summary description: Conversion of existing barns to create a dwelling, demolition of attached building to facilitate the erection of a double garage.

Decision and date: Granted. 20/03/09
- Reference: P1141/08/COU – Oakdale Furnace

Summary description: Conversion of former furnace building and agricultural store to create one dwelling.

Decision and date: Refused. 22/10/08
- Reference: P1142/08/LBC – Oakdale Furnace

Summary description: Listed Building Consent for the conversion of former furnace building and agricultural store to create one dwelling.

Decision and date: Refused. 22/10/08
- Reference: P0829/08/COU – Oakdale Furnace

Summary description: Conversion of former furnace building and agricultural store to create one dwelling.

Decision and date: Withdrawn. 20/08/08
- Reference: P0828/08/LBC – Oakdale Furnace

Summary description: Listed Building Consent for the conversion of former furnace building and agricultural store to create one dwelling.

Decision and date: Withdrawn. 20/08/08
- Reference: P1443/06/FUL – Smiths Funeral Services

Summary description: Reroofing of existing building used for garaging, masonry workshop and the display of headstones.

Decision and date: Grant. 20/11/06
- Reference: P0471/96/FUL – 1 Furnace Lane

Summary description: Alterations And Extension To Dwelling. (Demolition Of Existing Single Storey Building).

Decision and date: Grant. 16/02/99
- Reference: P0507/98/FUL – Oakdale Farm

Summary description: Change Of Use Of Warehouse And Office To Light Industrial Use, Storage And Office. (Pottery).

Decision and date: Grant. 23/06/98
- Reference: P0471/96/FUL – Furnace Farm

- Summary description: Alterations And Extension To Dwelling.
Decision and date: Grant. 09/07/96
- Reference: P0219/96/FUL – Furnace Cottage
Summary description: Alterations And Extension To Dwelling To Create Additional Storage Space In Association With Existing Funeral Parlour.
Decision and date: Grant. 02/05/96
- Reference: P8103/83/FUL – 2 Furnace Lane
Summary description: Erection of chapel of rest, toilet block and improvements to ancillary buildings.
Decision and date: Grant. 01/02/83