



**DESIGN, ACCESS & PLANNING
STATEMENT
FOR THE
FULL PLANNING
APPLICATION FOR THE
DISMANTLE AND REBUILD
EXISTING STRUCTURE
AT
LARK HOUSE, COWSLEY LANE,
CORNSAY, DURHAM, DH7 9EP**



Contents

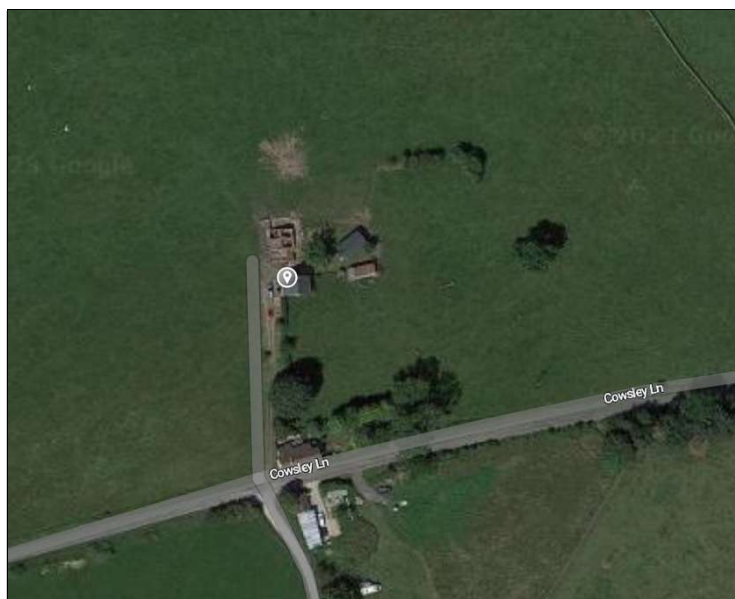
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This Design, Access and Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany the full planning application in relation to the demolition and rebuilding of the existing dilapidated farmhouse at Lark House, Cowsley Lane, Cornsey, DH7 9EP.
- 1.1.2 Lark House and its associated outbuildings are located to the north side of Cowsley Lane within a rural position in County Durham. The main house is a detached two storey farm house. The boundary of the extents of the Lark House property is edged red on the location plan submitted.



Photograph 1 - Location image

1.2 Planning history of Lark House

- 1.2.1 None known or available from Durham County Council online Public Access Planning Search at time of preparation

2.0 Existing and Proposed Development

- 2.1 The existing principal building constitutes a two storey farm house of stone construction with a pitched design, slate covered roof, occupying an irregular shaped site along with associated outbuildings. Estimated to have been originally constructed approximately 130 years ago, although mapping records suggest that buildings have been situated on the site for at least 160 years. The closest elevation of the building is set back from the public highway of Cowsley Lane by approximately 65m. Existing outbuildings are a combination of stone, brick, steel frame and clad and timber structures.



Photograph 2 – West view of main building



Photograph 3 – East view of main building

- 2.2 It is understood that the property previously had a clay pantile roof covering that was replaced in more recent years (along with the roof timbers) to incorporate the natural slate which is currently in situ. The applicants would like to construct the proposed new dwelling with terracotta clay pan tile covering to replicate the previous and also tie in with Lark Cottage directly to the south of the site.



Photograph 4 – Adjacent Lark Cottage with clay pan tile roof covering

- 2.3 This application relates to the proposed demolition of the existing farm house and rebuilding / replacement with new dwelling and rebuilding accommodation to meet the habitation needs of the existing owners for the present and foreseeable future. It has been identified that the structural elements of the existing building in question are in a very poor state of repair and are unsuitable for retention or refurbishment. This is expanded upon in the Structure Only Survey which accompanies this application. The main building would be constructed to largely the same footprint and volume of the existing with only minor amendments made to achieve better layouts, use of the site, orientation and aesthetics.
- 2.4 It is our clients desire to rebuilding the structure to provide an efficient, sympathetic, dwelling that meets their needs for a healthy and sustainable living environment whilst also ensuring the longevity and future of the building. Therefore the external elevations will be constructed in natural stone (reclaimed from demolition of the existing) with terracotta clay pan tile covered roofs in order to replicate the original whilst improving the thermal performance and efficiency of the building by adhering to (and bettering where reasonably possible) the recently revised Building Regulations. The design of the building has taken into account the vernacular of the



surrounding area and developments which have been previously carried out therein.

- 2.5 In addition to the rebuilding of a dwelling house it is proposed that a double garage will be constructed to the east of the main building as shown on proposed site plan. This will be of traditional construction with stone facing to all elevations and a pitched roof of same angle of the main house. Roof covering will also match the main house.

3.0 Description of Asset and Assessment of Significance

- 3.1 It is understood that Lark House and the associated outbuilding are not listed or situated within the green belt or AONB. However, it is recognised that the property is situated within the countryside and rural environment and as such, the proposal takes this into account. The property is set back from the public highway but visible from the surrounding area.
- 3.2 The buildings within this proposal are situated to the west of the site, accessed via a private driveway which also incorporates a public right of way. It is believed that the property was operated as a working farm until around 1973, following which only the field to the south was used for grazing of cattle / sheep. In more recent years the property has fallen into a state of considerable disrepair which has rendered it unsuitable for occupation, unsightly and at risk of further deterioration.
- 3.3 External elevations are of stone construction which have been largely rendered and are in poor condition.
- 3.4 Internally the property is currently uninhabitable, and the vast majority of fixtures and fittings have been previously removed.



Photograph 5, 6, 7, 8 – Example internal images of main building



- 3.5 Initial assessment of the property has not revealed any features of what we would consider to be of particular interest or merit. Existing stone is to be retained and reused in the proposed development which adheres to good practice of sustainable construction with reduced emissions and environmental impact, but also allows the proposed building to blend in more to the locality.

4.0 Assessment of Impact of Proposed Changes

- 4.1 It is considered that the principle of rebuilding of the farm house on the existing location with vastly similar footprint is within the confines and guidance of government guidance and local plans. This takes into account the lack of use or viability of the existing outbuilding, the dilapidated state thereof, the inherent risks that a dilapidated structure has. As such the development presents a workable and beneficial proposal which has notable improvement to the aesthetics of the locality, users of the public right of way and owners of the property.
- 4.2 The size of the plot upon which the buildings are situated, is considered to be entirely capable of accepting the volume of the proposed buildings. Particularly given the proposal being designed to accommodate the existing footprints of previous buildings, with only minor amendments.
- 4.3 As the existing structures are visually unappealing, it is considered the proposed buildings would be a considerable improvement.
- 4.4 Given the age and construction of the farm house building, it is clear that it would not be thermally efficient, and measures required to meet current building regulations would be financially non-viable. It is therefore considered that rebuilding thereof would enable the current standards to be achieved in a feasible manner whilst also creating an efficient property for habitation.
- 4.5 We consider that the proposed development would not have a negative impact upon neighbouring properties, the openness of the countryside, infrastructure in terms of services or transportation and as such would be a positive improvement to the existing.
- 4.6 It is understood that development of adjacent properties within the locality has been approved and these have been considered in preparation of the proposed development with the intention of avoiding stark contrast or jarring contradiction to the vernacular of the local housing stock.
- 4.7 As the proposed development does not increase the number of properties it is considered that it should not have a negative impact in terms of the adjacent highway and the in-curtilage parking provisions are entirely suitable to accept the proposed capacity.
- 4.8 With regard to the proposed double garage, the overall area of the site and the existing open space is considered to be capable of housing this feature without the area becoming over-crowded or seen to adversely impact the open space.



5.0 Mitigation Strategy

- 5.1 The design, materials and finish proposed will be of the highest quality; reusing those reclaimed from demolition and matching the existing where new is required to make up any shortfall.
- 5.2 To safeguard finishes and integrity of the property, all works will be carried out by skilled persons.
- 5.3 Safe access for carrying out the high-level works will be via scaffolding erected by a competent and insured contractor.

6.0 Design and Access Statement

6.1 Access

- 6.1.1 The proposed works have been designed with careful consideration to the existing building and the use of it by the occupants. Vehicular access to the property will be provided, the operation of works on site should not need to incorporate any temporary traffic management in and around the area of the works.
- 6.1.2 The public right of way shall be maintained, and temporary fencing placed in situ to prevent obstruction and ensure pedestrian traffic is guided appropriately through the right of way and safely avoiding the area of works. Such management will be brought into the site management plan with frequent reviews and inspections carried out.



Photograph 9 & 10 – Area to west of outbuilding including public right of way.

- 6.1.3 Due care and consideration are to be given in relation to the access by workers, transportation of materials and ensure accessibility to and from the property is adequately maintained. Furthermore, working areas are to be adequately maintained during the works to prevent public access as per health and safety requirements. Scaffolding will be utilised in accordance with health and safety and best practice to ensure risks are mitigated as far as reasonably practicable.
- 6.1.4 During the works the grounds of the property will be utilised for contractors parking and materials storage during the course of the works, mitigating any traffic management requirements.



- 6.1.5 During the works the contractor's vehicles will be carefully parked to ensure there is no hindrance to the users of the adjacent properties or the right of way.
- 6.1.6 The dwelling is also designed to meet Part M of the Building Regulations, offering an accessible route from the car parking areas to the accessible, level entrances of the dwelling. A Part M compliant WC is provided on the ground floor.
- 6.1.7 The proposed garage is of standard minimum dimensions required for safe and practical use. The location of the garage will be to the east of the main house and therefore concealed from the view of all passing across the public right of way.

6.2 Design

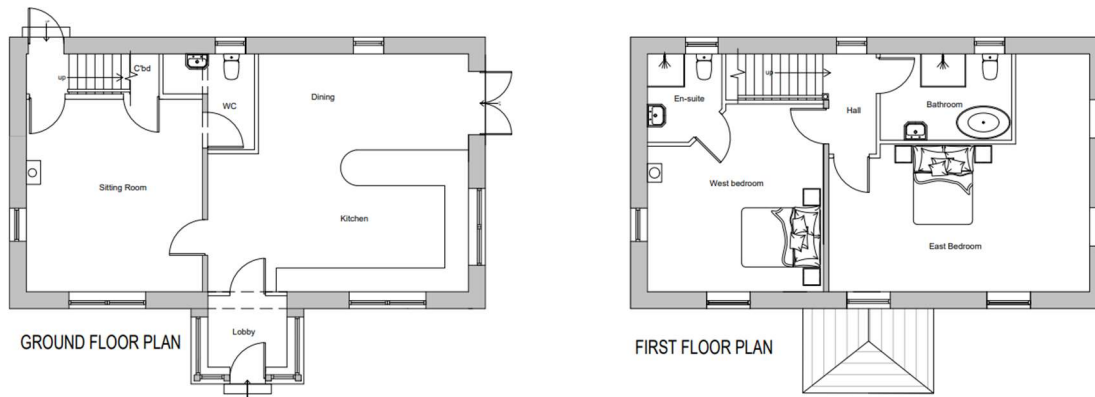
- 6.2.1 The design of the building has been carefully considered to mitigate any adverse impact on the surrounding area. This includes positioning upon existing footprints, orientation and design of windows, heights and volume of the structures.
- 6.2.2 The approach to the design is to maintain the essence of the existing or originally intended forms, materials, and volume of the buildings; where daylight penetration is maximised to reduce reliance on artificial lighting and therefore reduce energy use; to allow sunlight penetration where possible to enhance the wellbeing of the occupants; and to utilise a design that is appropriate to the character of the site and its setting.
- 6.2.3 The use of the existing stone and application of clay pan tile roof covering will help maintain the sense of aesthetic appropriateness to its location.





6.2.4 The insulation materials to the structures will be designed to comply and exceed current (recently revised) Building Regulation standards.

6.2.5 Internally, the design of the farm house has been implemented to remain predominantly true to its origins. In doing so it acknowledges the original use without compromising the effectiveness or reducing the predictable longevity of the property.



6.2.6 With regard to the proposed double garage, the design has been influenced by the proposed dwelling house so that it is in-keeping and has an appearance that is expected within the rural setting.

6.3 Amount of Development

6.3.1 The footprint of the existing building is 79 sq m and the proposed is 88 sq m which constitutes a modest increase of 9 sq. m. Most of which is to accommodate the need for thicker external walls to meet revised Building Regulations in relation to thermal efficiency. The extent of the development is led by the existing buildings both in terms of mass and location. The proposed garage is 36 sq.m, the standard minimum dimensions required for such an element. The site is sufficiently sized to accommodate the proposed development without adverse impact. Therefore, it is considered that the amount of development is relatively modest.

6.4 Layout

6.4.1 The internal layout has been designed to improve the accommodation's flexibility of use of the building which is necessary for its future life as a modern habitable family home. The layout focuses away from the public right of way and over the land within the site. This is to help facilitate privacy and minimal impact on user of adjacent the land.

6.5 Scale

6.5.1 The scale of the works is relatively modest and the location, nature of the building and size of the site is entirely in keeping and capable of accepting the proposed works without adverse effect.



6.7 Landscaping

- 6.7.1 Minimal external landscaping alterations are included within this application. It is proposed that the driveway will be whacked gravel on a hardcore/rubble substrate. The extent of which is indicative on the proposed site plan.

7.0 Planning Statement

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This planning statement is an assessment of how the proposed development accords with relevant national and local planning policies. Policies are set out below followed by an assessment.

7.2 County Durham Plan

7.2.1 Policy 10 – Development in the Countryside

This policy states that development will not be permitted unless allowed for by specific policies in the Plan or Neighbourhood Plan or unless it relates to exceptions or development of existing buildings. Provision of development of existing buildings includes replacement of an existing dwelling. In all instances the resulting development must be of a design, construction and scale which is suitable for and commensurate to the intended use.

The structure only building survey submitted as part of this application highlights that the existing dwelling would not benefit from repairs and should be replaced in its entirety. The applicant proposes to carefully dismantle the existing dwelling to retain existing stone for reuse as part of the replacement dwelling in the same location with a comparable footprint and mass.

7.2.2 Policy 21 – Delivering Sustainable Transport

The transport implications of development must be addressed as part of any planning application.

The traffic generated by the proposed development is considered to be safely accommodated on the local and strategic highway network and does not cause an unacceptable increase in congestion or air pollution. Suitable levels of car parking will be provided on site and overall vehicle use is not considered to be greater than would have been in existence when the original dwelling was occupied.

7.2.3 Policy 26 – Green Infrastructure

Development will be expected to maintain and protect, and where appropriate improve, the county's green infrastructure network. Development proposals will not be permitted that would result in the loss of open space or harm to green infrastructure assets. Development will be expected to maintain or improve the permeability of the built environment and access to the countryside for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders. Proposals that would result in the loss of, or deterioration in the quality of,



existing Public Rights of Way (PROWs) will not be permitted unless equivalent alternative provision of a suitable standard is made.

Rights of Way Officer comments (14.03.23)

“Cornsay Footpath 24 lies adjacent and to the west of Lark House and as I understand would also be the vehicular access. This footpath will need to be protected from future development and consideration for the amenity of path users as well as residents should be considered, as the footpath crosses very close to the proposed dwelling. The applicant may wish to consider a permanent diversion of the path in the interests of privacy. Any damage and subsequent maintenance required to the footpath due to increased vehicle use of this the path surface will be for the applicant. The applicant is advised that a temporary closure can be applied for during a construction stage if the Health & Safety of the public using this path cannot be ensured.”

“In addition to my comments, 14.03.2023, regarding the use of Cornsay Footpath 24 as access to the property, I should also add that we have an historical Definitive Map Modification Order claim to upgrade this footpath to bridleway status (Lark House Bridle Road). The applicant should be aware that a bridleway would likely be a minimum of 3 metres in width, where available, and factor this into any decisions on how development affects the existing lane as the full lane width will need to be protected.”

The applicants are aware of the need to maintain this PROW and fully intend to now permit anything to occur on site that would result in the loss or deterioration in the quality of this path. The full width of the path will be retained and any works in close proximity will be suitably protected and enclosed.

7.2.4 Policy 29 – Sustainable Design

All development proposals will be required to achieve well designed buildings and places having regard to supplementary planning documents and other local guidance documents where relevant, and:

a) contribute positively to an area’s character, identity, heritage significance, townscape and landscape features, helping to create and reinforce locally distinctive and sustainable communities;

b) create buildings and spaces that are adaptable to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions and include appropriate and proportionate measures to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security;

c) minimise greenhouse gas emissions, by seeking to achieve zero carbon buildings and providing renewable and low carbon energy generation, and include connections to an existing or approved district energy scheme where viable opportunities exist. Where connection to the gas network is not viable, development should utilise renewable and low carbon technologies as the main heating source;

d) minimise the use of non-renewable and unsustainable resources, including energy, water and materials, during both construction and use by



encouraging waste reduction and appropriate reuse and recycling of materials, including appropriate storage space and segregation facilities for recyclable and non-recyclable waste and prioritising the use of local materials;

e) provide high standards of amenity and privacy, and minimise the impact of development upon the occupants of existing adjacent and nearby properties; and

f) contribute towards healthy neighbourhoods and consider the health impacts of development and the needs of existing and future users, including those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.

Landscape proposals should:

g) respond creatively to topography and to existing features of landscape or heritage interest and wildlife habitats;

h) respect and where appropriate take opportunities to create attractive views of and from the site;

i) reflect in the detailed design any features characteristic of the locality such as boundaries, paving materials and plant species;

j) create opportunities for wildlife including though the use of locally native species;

k) make appropriate provision for maintenance and long term management; and

l) in the case of edge of settlement development, provide for an appropriate level of structural landscaping to screen or assimilate the development into its surroundings and provide an attractive new settlement boundary.

Buildings

All new residential development will be required to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

Firstly, the new dwelling has been designed to satisfy the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

The proposed new dwelling has been redesigned following pre-application advice from the design, conservation and landscape officers. As a result, the design proposed within this planning application is considered to be sustainable through the re-use of existing stone and introduction of a previously removed pantile roof. Proportions of the stone detailing has been revised along with vertical proportions of the fenestration.

The proposed design is high quality and fits into the local character and site context by taking into account the building traditions and architectural form of other traditional dwellings in open countryside.



The basic principles of designing in sympathy with the local tradition has delivered a simple form and plan with appropriate scale and detailing. This is summarised as:

1. Keep a simple plan and roof shape.
2. Maintain a high solid to void ratio.
3. Keep types and number of openings to a minimum with symmetrical arrangement around an opening placed on the central axis.
4. Keep the number of openings on gable walls to the minimum where possible. Gable ends have a much higher solid to void ratio than other elevations.

Finally, as the proposal involves replacing an existing building in its entirety, this permits the applicant to construct the new thermal elements of the building to modern building standards for thermal efficiency and air tightness.

7.2.5 Policy 31 – Amenity and Pollution

Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on health, living or working conditions or the natural environment and that can be integrated effectively with any existing business and community facilities. The proposal will also need to demonstrate that future occupiers of the proposed development will have acceptable living and/or working conditions. Proposals which will have an unacceptable impact such as through overlooking, visual intrusion, visual dominance or loss of light, noise or privacy will not be permitted unless satisfactory mitigation measures can be demonstrated whilst ensuring that any existing business and/or community facilities do not have any unreasonable restrictions placed upon them as a result.

The proposed new dwelling is to be of a high-quality sustainable design in roughly the same location with relatively similar mass and scaling. This is not considered to have an unacceptable impact on visual dominance, loss of sight/light or privacy.

The proposed dwelling will be constructed to the most recent Building Regulations to ensure that there is no unacceptable impact on living conditions of any future occupants or the surrounding natural environment.

Best practice construction methods and management of construction sites will be delivered to ensure that there is no unacceptable impact in areas such as air quality, dust creation, odour, light or noise pollution.

Due to the fact that this development constitutes a change of use to a more sensitive receptor, The Screening Assessment Form (Version 11.2) in Appendix 2 of the YALPAG Guidance 'Development on Land Affected by Contamination' and site photographs have been submitted with the planning application. This is to ensure that the presence of contamination is identified, risk assessed and if necessary, a land contamination scheme proposed to ensure the site is suitable for use.

7.2.6 Policy 32 – Despoiled, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land



Development will not be permitted unless the developer can demonstrate that:

- a) any existing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land issues can be satisfactorily addressed by appropriate mitigation measures prior to the construction or occupation of the proposed development;
- b) the site is suitable for the proposed use, and does not result in unacceptable risks which would adversely impact on the environment, human health and the amenity of local communities; and
- c) all investigations and risk assessments have been undertaken by an appropriately qualified person.

The proposed development will see the dismantling of an existing derelict dwelling and subsequent replacement with a new dwelling.

Within County Durham the principle issue relates to ground instability relating to past coal mining activities. Large parts of Durham are identified by the Coal Authority as 'Development High Risk Areas' due to the known occurrence of coal mining legacy issues and related health hazards. This proposal demonstrates the new development will be safe and stable through submission of a Coal Mining Risk Assessment (CMRA). Further details regarding any potential land instability and risks are presented within the aforementioned CMRA.

7.2.7 Policy 35 – Water Management

All development proposals will be required to consider the effect of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site, commensurate with the scale and impact of the development and taking into account the predicted impacts of climate change for the lifetime of the proposal. This includes completion of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) where appropriate.

The proposed development is expected to not see a net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development. The quantity and quality of surface and groundwater bodies shall be protected. Relevant flood maps have been reviewed and the site location is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding. A flood map for planning has been included within Appendix A.

Surface water run-off must be managed at source wherever possible and disposed of in the following order:

1. to an infiltration or soak away system
2. to a watercourse open or closed
3. to a surface water sewer
4. to a combined sewer

The rain and surface water drainage are to be directed to a pond (the existing arrangement runs into the field to the east of the site). The design



of which will be large enough to ensure that water is draining correctly. This is considered to be a suitable soak away system.

7.2.8 Policy 35 – Water Infrastructure

In the consideration of development proposals, the hierarchy of drainage options that must be considered and discounted for foul water are (in the following order):

- 1) connection to the public sewer;
- 2) package sewage treatment plant (which can be offered to the Sewerage Undertaker for adoption; and
- 3) septic tank (which must drain into an appropriate soak away and not discharge directly into a watercourse).

Applications involving the use of non-mains methods of drainage (including Septic Tanks/Cess Pits) will not be permitted in areas where public sewerage exists.

The water environment is vital for its contribution to biodiversity and is important to the quality of life of people. The development is considered to be within environmental limits and carefully considers how the water environment will be affected.

The foul water drainage of the new dwelling will be connected to the existing septic tank. The proposal will not see a change to occupation levels of the site it is therefore considered that the capacity of the existing tank will be sufficient for expected requirements.

7.2.9 Policy 39 – Landscape

Proposals for new development will be permitted where they would not cause unacceptable harm to the character, quality or distinctiveness of the landscape, or to important features or views. Proposals will be expected to incorporate appropriate measures to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects. Development affecting Areas of Higher Landscape Value defined on Map H, will only be permitted where it conserves, and where appropriate enhances, the special qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh the harm. Development proposals should have regard to the County Durham Landscape Character Assessment and County Durham Landscape Strategy and contribute, where possible, to the conservation or enhancement of the local landscape.

Following pre-application advice of the Landscape officer the design of the new dwelling has been revised dramatically to ensure that the proposed development will not cause unacceptable harm to the surrounding landscape. The high-quality design is also considered to positively contribute to enhance the local landscape and rural built environment.

The planning application is accompanied by a tree assessment carried out by a qualified arboriculturist, covering all trees on or adjacent to the site.



The associated arboricultural impact assessment and tree protection plan will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012.

7.2.10 Policy 40 – Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites

All development proposals in, or which are likely to adversely impact upon (either individually or in combination with other developments), any of the following national designations (where not a component of an internationally designated site):

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

National Nature Reserves

will only be permitted where the benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh the impacts on the interest features on the site and any wider impacts on the network of sites.

In relation to protected species and their habitats, all development which, alone or in combination, has a likely adverse impact on the ability of species to survive, reproduce and maintain or expand their current distribution will not be permitted unless:

a) appropriate mitigation, or as a last resort compensation, can be provided, which maintains a viable population and where possible provides opportunities for the population to expand; and

b) where the species is a European protected species, the proposal also meets the licensing criteria (the 3 legal tests) of overriding public interest, no satisfactory alternative and favourable conservation status.

The proposed development is not within any national or local protected site.

As there is a potential for roosting bats on the existing building, a preliminary bat roost assessment has been undertaken and the findings are contained in the report submitted as part of the planning application.

7.3 Conclusion

Following the assessment of adherence to the relevant policies presented above, it is considered that the proposed development should be accepted.



Appendix A – Flood Map for Planning



Flood map for planning

Your reference	Location (easting/northing)	Created
<Unspecified>	413363/542141	1 Dec 2023 11:52

Your selected location is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

You will need to do a flood risk assessment if your site is **any of the following:**

- bigger than 1 hectare (ha)
- In an area with critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency
- identified as being at increased flood risk in future by the local authority's strategic flood risk assessment
- at risk from other sources of flooding (such as surface water or reservoirs) and its development would increase the vulnerability of its use (such as constructing an office on an undeveloped site or converting a shop to a dwelling)

