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Planning, Design & Access Statement
to accompany a householder planning application
at The Moat House, Old Hall Green, Hertfordshire, SG11
1HE

On behalf of: Y Acton

Prepared by: N O'Hagan BA (Hons)

Date: 27/02/2024

planningdirect.co.uk | enquiries@planningdirect.co.uk | 01473 407911

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The Furnace, The Maltings, Princes Street,
Ipswich, IP1 1SB

 01473 407911

 enquiries@planningdirect.co.uk

 www.planningdirect.co.uk

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Introduction

This planning, design & access statement accompanies a householder planning application at The Moat House, Old Hall Green, Hertfordshire, SG11 1HE.

Background to the application

The site building is Grade II listed and was originally converted from a barn to a self-contained dwelling in the late 1980s, pursuant to 1986 consents 3/86/0844/FP and 3/86/0862/LB. The current owner/occupiers recently undertook a number of internal and external alterations to the converted property in the absence of Listed Building Consent (LBC). A separate, retrospective LBC application in respect of those changes has been submitted alongside this householder planning application. None of the recent alterations¹ require planning consent. However, the revised internal layout has necessitated the installation of an external staircase for fire escape purposes. The external staircase has not yet been installed but will require householder planning consent in addition to LBC.

Development proposals:

Installation of an external staircase for fire escape purposes, replacement of 1 no. window with 1 no. door and associated alterations.

Planning Direct has been instructed to produce this statement on behalf of Y Acton, the applicant.

The statement should be read in conjunction with the following documentation:

Drawings

- Site and location plans 2156-01-2;
- Pre-existing floor plans 2156-02-1;
- Pre-existing elevations 2156-03-2;
- Existing floor plans 2156-04-1;
- Existing elevations 2156-05-2;
- Proposed floor plans 2156-06-2;
- Proposed elevations 2156-07-4.

¹ consisting of: changes to internal layout and installation of external lights and CCTV

Product specifications

- External stair (British Spirals and Castings).

Misc.

- TecFire report (JTF0270);
- Appendix 1 - 3/86/0844/FP & 3/86/0862/LB plans1;
- Appendix 2 - 3/86/0844/FP & 3/86/0862/LB plans2;
- Appendix 3 - 3/86/0844/FP & 3/86/0862/LB plans3;
- Appendix 4 - 3/86/0862/LB decision notice;
- Appendix 5 - 3/86/0862/LB officer report;
- Appendix 6 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB Design & Access Statement;
- Appendix 7 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB block plan;
- Appendix 8 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB existing elevations;
- Appendix 9 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB existing floor plans;
- Appendix 10 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB location plan;
- Appendix 11 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB proposed elevations;
- Appendix 12 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB proposed floor plans;
- Appendix 13 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB proposed loft plan;
- Appendix 14 - 3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB proposed sections;
- Appendix 15 - 3/13/0542/LB Conservation Team's comments.

Location & Site Description

The site consists of a roughly rectangular parcel of land, containing one half of a Grade II listed building (entry no. 1347554). The site is in lawful use as a single, self-contained family dwelling (C3). The other half of the listed building comprises its own self-contained dwelling (Pond House), in separate ownership and occupation.



Front elevation of the listed building

An open-sided bay (winnowing area) is located at the point where the two residential units meet and this allows views through to the rear of the sites.

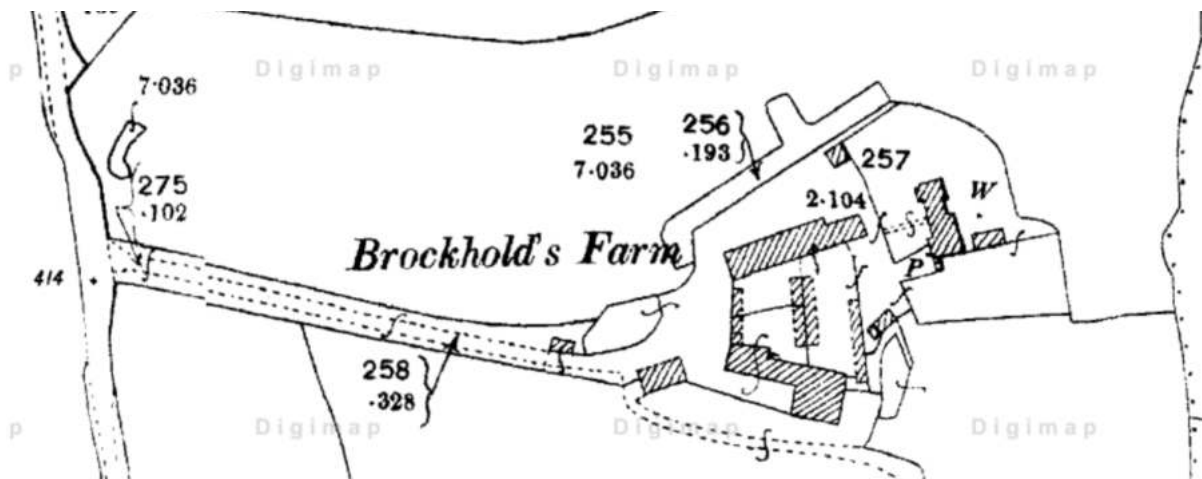


View through the winnowing area from the rear garden - timber post highlighted in yellow roughly marks split in ownership

To the front and rear of the listed building is its private curtilage, including gardens and a dedicated parking area. An historic moat runs along (but outside of) the site's rearmost boundary.

The listed building is an early C17 barn, with C19 alterations and extensions. It consists of a timber-framed structure, with dark weatherboard-clad elevations above a red brick plinth. It features an unusual double roof structure, the upper part thatched and the lower part slate tiled.

It was used, historically, in close functional association with Brockholds Farm (now defunct). The Grade II listed Brockholds Farmhouse (entry no. 1102255) - believed to have C15 origins - is located a few metres to its east.



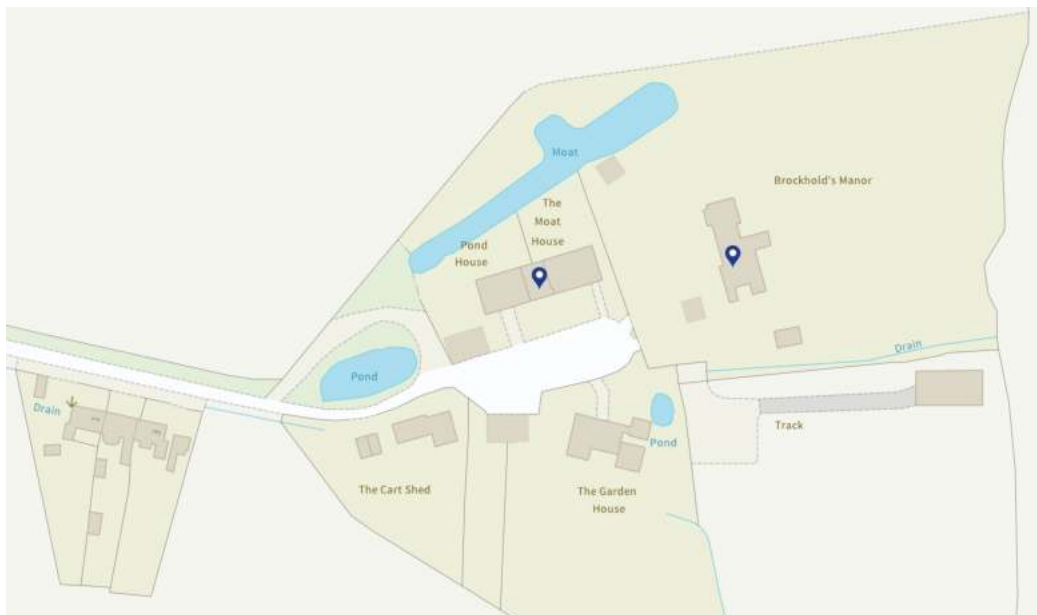
1890s OS Map - Brockholds Farm

The barn was originally converted to residential use in the late 1980s, pursuant to consents 3/86/0844/FP & 3/86/0862/LB. These consents also saw another of Brockholds Farm's agricultural buildings converted to residential use (The Garden House). Later, in c. 2008, the historic farm's cart shed was then extended and converted to another dwelling (3/08/1433/FP). Although the neighbouring converted farm buildings are not statutorily listed in their own right, they are likely to be considered curtilage listed.



Recent photograph of neighbouring barn conversion “The Garden House” - although not individually listed, the building possesses clear heritage value and is likely to be considered curtilage listed

As a result of modern conversions, the application site now forms part of a small cluster of residential development. Although residential in use, the former farmstead and its buildings do retain much of their agricultural character - including in terms of their courtyard arrangement and architecture.

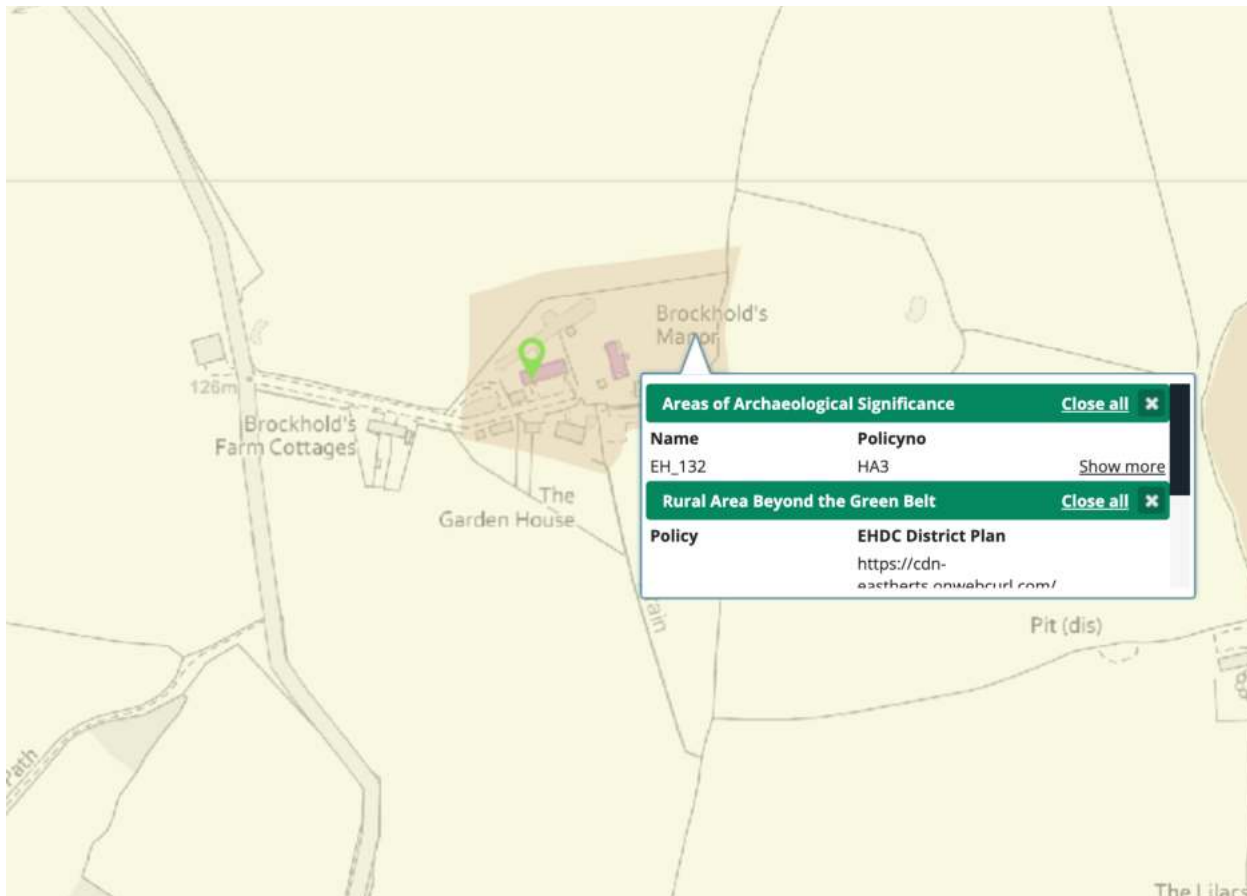


Listed buildings map - The Cart Shed, The Garden House, Pond House, The Moat House (application site) and Brockhold's Manor (GII farmhouse) all now in private residential use

The site is within a rural setting and belongs to the “Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt”, subject to local policy GBR2. The nearest defined settlement is Puckeridge, a Group 1 village, located c. 1.75 km to the site’s east.

The site is also within an Area of Archaeological Significance, where local policy HA3 applies.

The site is not subject to any other planning designations or constraints that are likely to affect or be affected by the proposed development.



Local policies map identifies the following relevant planning designations/constraints -

- Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt (policy GBR2);*
- Area of Archaeological Significance (policy HA3);*
- Listed Building*

Proposed Development

A number of internal alterations have recently been undertaken to the subject property. None of these require planning consent. However, the conversion of the site's second floor (loft) to storage and office space necessitates a number of other alterations, including provision of an external staircase for fire safety and Building Regs purposes.

The staircase has not yet been installed as the applicant understands it first requires householder planning consent and listed building consent.

This application accordingly seeks householder planning consent for the proposed external staircase, replacement of 1 no. window with 1 no. door and associated alterations.

The external staircase is proposed to be attached to the subject property's west elevation, facing onto the barn's central opening. The existing, uppermost window will be replaced with a white-painted FD30 fire door². The new door will provide access onto a small landing area with railings. The spiral staircase will lead from this landing area down to the ground. The stair features an open tread and slender metal railings to preserve views through. All parts of the new structure will be formed of white-painted aluminium. It will be attached to the building with gallows brackets.



Staircase profile [not to scale]

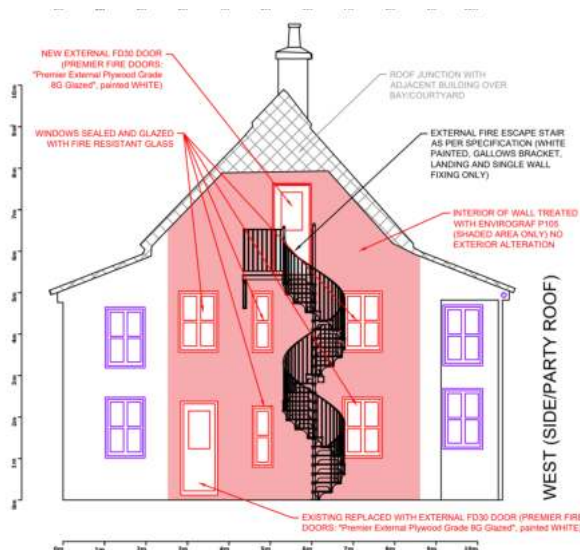
² PREMIER EXTERNAL PLYWOOD GRADE 8G GLAZED - <https://www.premierfiredoors.com/products/external-plywood-8g-glazed-fd30-fire-door>

To ensure fire safety, a number of existing windows will be sealed and refitted with fire-resistant glass. This will not materially alter their appearance. Part of the wall will also be treated, internally, with a white, fire resistant paint (Envirograf P105 - specifically designed for use on lath and plaster). This will not materially alter its appearance. Finally, the ground floor access door will be replaced with a white FD30 fire door to match the new door above.



Image of proposed doors (white colour)

All of the above alterations are indicated on the separate elevation plan (extract below). The application is also accompanied by detailed product specifications for the proposed staircase and new, external doors.



Proposed west elevation [not to scale]

Relevant Planning & Listed Building Consent History

Reference no.	Description	Decision	Date
3/86/0844/FP & 3/86/0862/LB	Partial demolition, conversion and partial conversion of two barns to three residential units and extension to Brockholds Cottage (Brockholds Farm, Great Munden)	Approved	21/10/1986
3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB	Single storey rear extension, internal alterations, replacement doors and windows and insertion of windows to loft space, insertion of staircase and conversion of loft to habitable room	Approved	06/06/2013

Consents 3/86/0844/FP & 3/86/0862/LB concerned the original conversion of the subject barn to 2 no. dwellings. The “north barn” in this historic application includes the subject property, now known as The Moat House. A selection of the approved plans and related documents are submitted at appendices 1 - 5 for reference.

The applicant took ownership of the site in 2011, a number of years after the original 1980s conversion scheme was implemented and its residential occupation began.

In 2013, the current owner/occupier submitted applications for various internal and external alterations to the property (3/13/0541/FP & 3/13/0542/LB). The relevant consents were granted in the summer of 2013. However, its pre-commencement condition³ was never discharged and the development was never implemented. Notwithstanding this, the expired 2013 consents still attract weight and comprise a material planning consideration in this case⁴. A selection of the approved, 2013 plans and related documents are submitted at appendices 6 - 15 for reference.

³ requiring approval and implementation of a scheme of archaeological investigation in respect of ground works associated with the rear extension

⁴ this was confirmed by the Court of Appeal in 2019 - [2019] EWCA Civ 1272

Policy Justification

National

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or as the case may be, the Secretary of State, shall 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.

NPPF (2023)

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development

Section 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Local

The East Herts District Plan 2018

Policy GBR2 - Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt

- I. In order to maintain the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt as a valued countryside resource, the following types of development will be permitted, provided that they are compatible with the character and appearance of the rural area:
- (a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - (b) facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, including equine development in accordance with CFLR6 (Equine Development), and for cemeteries;
 - (c) new employment generating uses where they are sustainably located, in accordance with Policy ED2 (Rural Economy);
 - (d) the replacement, extension or alteration of a building, provided the size, scale,

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- mass, form, siting, design and materials of construction are appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding areas;
- (e) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings) in sustainable locations, where appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding area;
 - (f) rural exception housing in accordance with Policy HOU4 (Rural Exception Affordable Housing Sites);
 - (g) accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in accordance with Policy HOU9 (Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) or Non-Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, in accordance with Policy HOU10 (New Park Home Sites for Non-Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople);
 - (h) development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy HOU11 - Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings, Residential Outbuildings and Works Within Residential Curtilages

Proposals for:

- extensions and alterations to dwellings;
- residential outbuildings or extensions to existing outbuildings; and
- works within residential curtilages,

will be considered against the following criteria:

- (a) be of a size, scale, mass, form, siting, design and materials of construction that are appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the existing dwelling and/or the surrounding area, and extensions should generally appear as a subservient addition to the dwelling;
- (b) side extensions at first floor level or above should ensure appropriate space is left between the flank wall of the extension and the common curtilage with a neighbouring property (as a general rule a space of 1 metre will be the minimum acceptable), to safeguard the character and appearance of the street scene and prevent a visually damaging 'terracing' effect;
- (c) flat roofed extensions, except those on the ground floor, will be refused as visually undesirable other than in those exceptional circumstances where the character of

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- the original dwelling allows a flat-roofed design to be appropriately incorporated, or it represents a sustainable or innovative design approach;
- (d) roof dormers may be acceptable if appropriate to the design and character of the dwelling and its surroundings. Dormers should generally be of limited extent and modest proportions, so as not to dominate the existing roof form.

Policy DES2 - Landscape Character

- I. Development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve, enhance or strengthen the character and distinctive features of the district's landscape. For major applications, or applications where there is a potential adverse impact on landscape character, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and/or Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment should be provided to ensure that impacts, mitigation and enhancement opportunities are appropriately addressed.
- II. Appropriate mitigation measures will be taken into account when considering the effect of development on landscape character/landscaping.
- III. Where relevant, development proposals will have regard to the District Council's currently adopted Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy DES4 - Design of Development

- I. All development proposals, including extensions to existing buildings, must be of a high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness. Proposals will be expected to:
 - (a) Make the best possible use of the available land by respecting or improving upon the character of the site and the surrounding area, in terms of its scale, height, massing (volume, shape), orientation, siting, layout, density, building materials (colour, texture), landscaping, environmental assets, and design features, having due regard to the design opportunities and constraints of a site;
 - (b) Incorporate homes, buildings and neighbourhoods that are flexible to future adaptation, including the changing needs of occupants and users, and changes in wider employment and social trends;
 - (c) Avoid significant detrimental impacts on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties and land, and ensure that their environments are not harmed by noise and disturbance or by inadequate daylight, privacy or overshadowing;
 - (d) Incorporate high quality innovative design, new technologies and construction

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- techniques, including zero or low carbon energy and water efficient, design and sustainable construction methods. Proposals for residential and commercial development should seek to make appropriate provision for high speed broadband connectivity, ensuring that Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) is provided;
- (e) Make provision for the storage of bins and ancillary household equipment. Garages and driveways should be capable of accommodating family sized vehicles. Dwelling design and layout should make provision for electric vehicle charging points in safe and accessible locations;
 - (f) All new residential developments should meet the requirements of Policy HOU7, and ensure all internal rooms are of an appropriate size and dimension so that the intended function of each room can be satisfactorily achieved. All dwellings shall be identified by their square metreage.

II. Proposals must not prejudice the development opportunities of surrounding sites.

III. Development proposals which create new or have a significant impact on the public realm should:

- (a) Maximise legibility and accessibility of the public realm through the layout of buildings, landmarks, use of colour, landscaping, paving, high quality public art, street furniture and infrastructure including clear and legible signposting, rest places and public toilets, in a way that maintains uncluttered spaces and enables easy navigation and movement through the space;
- (b) Maximise opportunities for urban greening, for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping wherever possible;
- (c) Avoid creating 'left-over' spaces with no clear purpose or function;
- (d) Ensure that long-term maintenance and management arrangements are in place for the public realm as appropriate.
- (e) Engage the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel as part of the Pre-application stage and throughout the Development Management process where appropriate.

Policy HA1 - Designated Heritage Assets

- I. Development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment of East Herts.
- II. Development proposals that would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a

designated heritage asset will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

III. Where there is evidence of neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset will not be taken into account in any decision.

IV. The Council will, as part of a positive strategy, pursue opportunities for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment recognising its role and contribution in achieving sustainable development.

Policy HA3 - Archaeology

I. Where a site has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest (whether scheduled or unscheduled), applicants should consult with the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit to submit an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, the results of a field evaluation, prior to the submission of an application.

II. Where development is permitted on sites containing archaeological remains, planning permission will be subject to conditions and/or formal agreements requiring appropriate excavation and recording in advance of development and the subsequent storage and display of material.

Policy HA7 - Listed Buildings

I. The Council will actively seek opportunities to sustain and enhance the significance of Listed Buildings and ensure that they are in viable uses consistent with their conservation.

II. In considering applications the Council will ensure that proposals involving the alteration, extension, or change of use of a Listed Building will only be permitted where:

- (a) The proposal would not have any adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the interior or exterior of the building or its setting; and

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- (b) The proposal respects the scale, design, materials and finishes of the existing building(s), and preserves its historic fabric.

III. Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where the setting of the building is preserved.

Commentary

Introduction

The main planning considerations in this case are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Design and impacts on character, appearance and heritage interest
- Impact on residential amenities.

Because of the siting and minor nature of the householder development, there is no potential for impacts in respect of highways safety, parking, flood risk/drainage or trees/ecology etc..

Principle of development

The site lies within the area designated as “Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt”. The principle of development in this case therefore stands to be assessed against local policy GBR2. This policy specifically provides that the following type of development will be permitted, provided it is compatible with the character and appearance of the rural area:

- (d) the replacement, extension or alteration of a building, provided the size, scale, mass, form, siting, design and materials of construction are appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding areas.*

The development proposals concern the extension/alteration of an existing building. The principle of development is consequently established by policy GBR2, subject to the usual considerations in respect of design and impacts on local character and appearance.

An assessment of design and impacts on local character and appearance is carried out below.

Design & impacts on character, appearance and heritage interest

Policy requirements

All new development in the area is required to achieve a high standard of design that reflects and promotes local distinctiveness, in accordance with local policy DES4. Extensions and alterations to dwellings should be appropriate in their design to the character, appearance and setting of the dwelling and surrounding area and generally appear subservient, in accordance with local policy HOU11. These requirements are also built into the main strategic policy, GBR2.

As the host dwelling comprises a statutory heritage asset, local policies HA1 and HA7 also apply. These policies require new development to preserve and where appropriate enhance the significance of listed buildings by respecting their architectural qualities, preserving their historic fabric and avoiding adverse impacts on their external and internal character and appearance.

The following assessments demonstrate how these policy requirements are met.

Staircase

The proposed external staircase is of a bespoke design that responds inherently well to the character of the listed building.

Its spiral form ensures it appears as a compact and discreet new feature, subservient not only to the building as a whole but also to the affected elevation.

Its style is simple and this, coupled with its use of high-quality aluminium, implies an industrial/agricultural character which relates it well to the architectural style and agricultural provenance of the host barn conversion. Aluminium is also a natural and enduring material whose functionality and appearance does not unduly diminish with time.



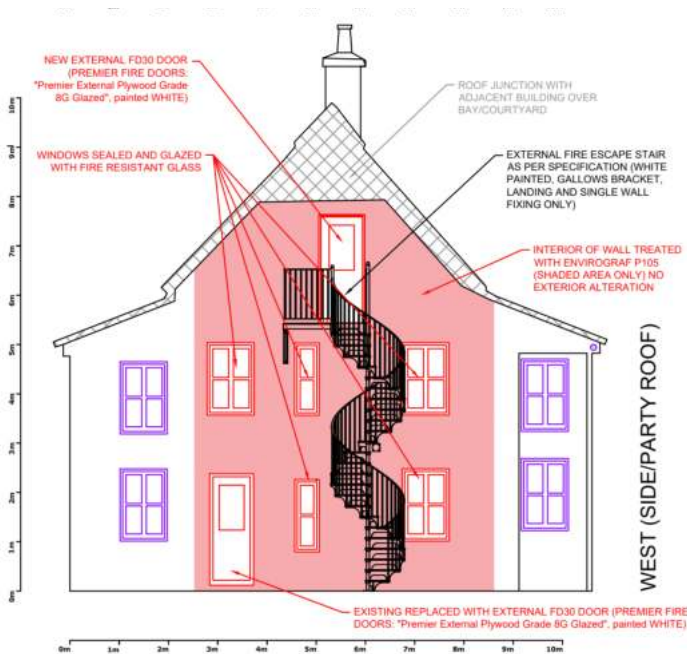
Example of a historic stair attached to a GII C15 barn in Somerset - Historic England archives (reference IOE01/03046/28). The stair itself is built-in but significantly makes use of simplistic, dark metal railings

Its spiral form and metal material also provides continuity and a strong sense of cohesion between the interior and exterior of the building; with internal access to the upper floors also being provided by a metal spiral staircase.



Interior stair has a simple, functional character that relates well to the agricultural style of the converted barn. Its compact form and open tread preserves much of the building's original open plan form and long sight lines

Its position on the west elevation is also discreet, ensuring it has only limited visibility in public views of the asset. Its white colour will assist its visual integration with the white wall behind. The winnowing area onto which it faces also has a more functional character, being used primarily for the storage of domestic bins (by both dwellings).

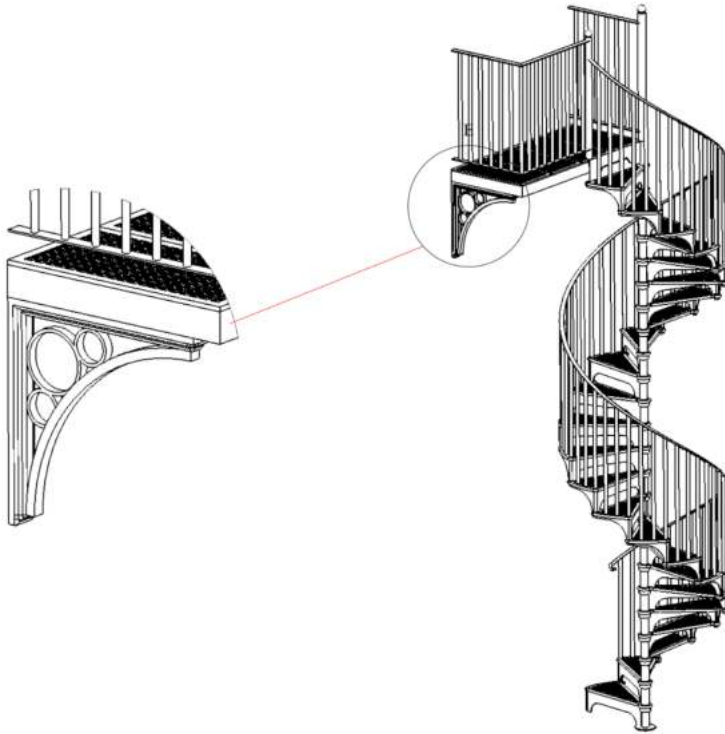


Proposed west elevation [not to scale]

The staircase is also positioned between windows, avoiding any obstruction of these existing features. Not only does this preserve the outlook from those windows, it also ensures the new structure does not appear unduly cramped or the resultant west elevation overly crowded.

As for the interior staircase, the use of an open tread and slender, well-spaced railings provides a sense of lightness to the structure and allows views through to the listed building. This ensures very minimal obscuration of the listed building and its historic fabric.

In terms of its attachment to the listed building, the staircase itself sits away from the wall, attached only to the new landing area. The landing area is attached to the building by way of a simple pair of gallows brackets which have a discreet form and character and will result in minimal obstruction of and intervention into its fabric.



Landing area attached to building by way of a simple pair of gallows brackets

Window alterations

As indicated on the separate elevation plan, the proposed fire safety measures include the sealing and re-glazing of 5 no. existing windows on the building's west elevation. This aspect of the proposals is a minor improvement that will not result in any material change to the windows' appearance. It is not considered likely, therefore, that it requires planning permission. However, the following benefits and neutral impacts are noted in the interests of completeness:

Firstly, the affected windows are modern in both their style and their provenance (late 1980s). The alterations will not affect any historic fabric and nor will they add to the established domesticity of the existing windows.

Secondly, all of the affected rooms possess at least one other window that will remain openable to ensure adequate ventilation of the building. Suitable ventilation is also assisted by the revised internal layout which is now predominantly open plan.

Finally, the introduction of fire resistant glass will improve the building's resilience in the event of a fire, reducing the likelihood of substantial damage or total destruction.

This element of the proposals is not considered to give rise to any negative design impacts.

New doors

The development includes the insertion of 2 no. new doors in the west elevation of the building. One of the doors will replace an existing, modern window and the other door will replace an existing, modern door.

It is notable, therefore, that the development does not result in any new, modern openings, nor does it require the removal of any historic or architecturally significant openings. It requires only the replacement of existing, modern openings of a perceptibly domestic character. This ensures the proposals do not add to the overall domesticity of the building, nor result in any significant loss of its historic fabric.



Existing, modern window for replacement



Existing, modern door for replacement

In terms of their style and materials, the new doors are very similar to the existing, modern door and window and would consequently result in a negligible change to the character of the building.

It is also relevant to consider the proposed siting of the doors, one of which would be located in the building's upper gable. Whilst this siting would be unusual for many building typologies, it is not inappropriate in this context. This is because many traditional barns and similar, agricultural buildings incorporated haylofts with hay doors for access. Most commonly, hay doors would have been sited in the upper gable, similar to the door here proposed.



Example of a hay door located in the upper gable of a traditional rural barn

Overall

Overall, the design of the proposed alterations is considered to be responsive to the established character and qualities of the host listed building. All new features are

simple in their form and style, reflecting the overriding agricultural character of the converted barn. Natural, enduring materials have been used wherever possible. The new additions are clearly subordinate to the building and their siting has been carefully considered to achieve a harmonious and well-balanced appearance, with limited impact on historic fabric.

Whilst the use of plywood and UPVC materials in the doors (essential for fire safety reasons) is somewhat unfortunate, this modest degree of heritage harm is considered to be adequately counterbalanced by the following heritage benefits:

- The material improvements to the fire safety and resilience of the listed building. Together, the proposed alterations significantly reduce the risk of serious damage to or total destruction of the barn in the event of a fire. This presents a clear and long-term heritage benefit, especially given the presence of a large, thatched roof⁵.

The proposed development is consequently assessed to present a thoughtful response to the heritage asset that duly preserves - and, in some respects, enhances - its significance, in accordance with local policies GBR2, DES4, HOU11, HA1 and HA7.

Other impacts

As the site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance - where local policy HA3 applies - it is necessary to consider the potential archaeological impact of the proposals. Given the nature and siting of the proposals, there is no need for any kind of ground works nor any other disturbance of the ground. Therefore, there will be no potential for harm, loss or other disturbance of any below-ground deposits that might exist. Accordingly, there is no requirement for any archaeological investigations (desktop or otherwise) and no conflict with policy HA3.

Local policy DES2 also requires applicants to consider the potential for adverse impacts on landscape character. Given the particular siting of the minor alterations - attached to an existing building and facing onto an internal courtyard - the potential for to local landscape character is mostly avoided. It is recognised, however, that the host listed building makes a substantial, positive contribution to the character of the surrounding

⁵ although thatched roofs are no more likely to catch fire, they do make fires more likely to spread and harder to extinguish once they have taken hold

rural landscape. As the proposals ensure the preservation of the building's special character (as justified above), it is considered that they also ensure the building's contribution to landscape character is preserved.

Impact on residential amenities

Policy requirements

Local policy DES4 expects all new development to avoid significant detrimental impacts on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties and land, and ensure that their environments are not harmed by noise and disturbance or by inadequate daylight, privacy or overshadowing.

The following assessments demonstrate how this policy requirement is met.

Amenities of the host dwelling

The proposals significantly improve the fire safety and resilience of the listed building which is of material and self-evident benefit to the amenities of occupiers of both the host dwelling and the neighbouring, attached dwelling (Pond House).

The proposals also enable the building's loft space to be used as a home office, to the benefit of the dwelling's functionality and overall standard of accommodation. As home working becomes a more typical and widespread practice, the availability of suitable, dedicated home working spaces is highly desirable, if not expected.

The siting of the proposed staircase preserves the outlook from all west-facing windows and ensures no reduction in the affected rooms' access to natural light. The proposed sealing of a number of west-facing windows is also acceptable, especially as all affected rooms benefit from additional windows that will remain openable for ventilation purposes.

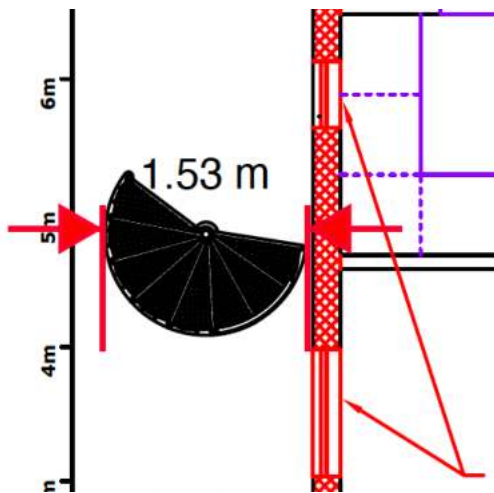
Overall, the proposals are considered to materially improve the amenities of the host dwelling.

Amenities of Pond House

Because of the siting and modest nature of the proposed development, the only neighbouring property with the potential to be materially affected is Pond House. Pond House forms the other half of the host listed building; the two dwellings sharing a single

thatched roof and also sharing the central courtyard onto which the host dwelling's west elevation faces. It is this west elevation to which the proposed staircase will attach and on which the new doors will be inserted.

In terms of impact, the new staircase would not have the potential to overshadow any part of Pond House or reduce its access to light. This is partly due to its siting - the structure extending beyond the west elevation of The Moat House by only c. 1.5 m and maintaining a gap of c. 5m to the nearest (east) elevation of Pond House - and partly due to its form, with open tread and railings allowing both light and views to filter through.



Measured plan extract (Adobe measuring tool) - staircase structure extends beyond dwelling's west elevation by c. 1.5m

The staircase is not intended for regular use and would only be used in the case of a genuine emergency such as a fire. Its exceptional use would not, therefore, have any material impacts on the amenities of Pond House.

It comprises a reasonably discreet and attractive feature that would not cause any material harm to the eastern outlook of Pond House. On this matter, it is also relevant that the winnowing area has a primarily functional character, containing bins, bin stores and garden paraphernalia belonging to the two properties (see below photo). It is also a shared space, overlooked by the doors and windows of both Pond House and The Moat House. It is consequently highly unlikely that the east facing windows of Pond House provide its main or most amenable outlook.



Recent photograph of the winnowing area indicating its primarily functional character as an area for the storage of bins and garden paraphernalia



View of winnowing area from a window in the property's west elevation. N.B. timber structure on right-hand side marks the split in ownership

The staircase would also provide some form of physical barrier between the facing elevations of the two residential properties; increasing, to some extent, their sense of privacy.

For these reasons, the development proposals are considered to preserve the neighbour's residential amenities in accordance with local policy DES4.

Conclusion

The development proposals have been progressed by way of a thoughtful and iterative design process. Their detailed design has been informed by a thorough appraisal and understanding of the host listed building and its particular, special character. The result is a development that appears as a congruent, high quality and subordinate addition to the heritage asset and sits happily in its built and landscape contexts.

As justified throughout this statement:

- the principle of development is supported by local policy GBR2;
- the design of the development demonstrates necessary compliance with the relevant provisions of local policies GBR2, DES2, DES4, HOU11, HA1 and HA7; and
- its impacts on neighbouring amenities are modest and positive overall, in accordance with part (c) of local policy DES2.

It is the professional opinion of Planning Direct that this application ought therefore to be approved without delay.

The applicant expects the LPA to bring any potential issues arising with the proposal to the attention of Planning Direct at the earliest opportunity, in order that clarifications can be provided and/or solutions agreed where appropriate.