

ATLAS

PLANNING GROUP

PLANNING STATEMENT

THE BARN, GARDENERS FARM, FLOWER LANE, PLAITFORD

February 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Site Description	3
Relevant Planning History	4
17/01951/FULLS	4
Variation – 20/02860/VARS	5
The Proposal.....	5
Planning Considerations	6
Principle of Development.....	6
Impact on The Landscape Character of the Area	9
Impact upon Heritage Assets	10
Residential Amenity	11
Highways Impact	11
Access	11
Parking.....	13
Ecology	13
Planning Balance & Conclusions	13

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been produced by Atlas Planning Group in support of an application seeking planning permission for the change of use of a barn into a three-bedroom dwelling.
- 1.2 The barn has lapsed consent to be converted into a holiday let under 17/01951/FULLS and subsequent variation (20/02860/VARS).
- 1.3 Despite attempts to redevelop the building, the barn has remained as agricultural/domestic storage for the previous owners.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site comprises a barn/stable, positioned on the western side of Flowers Lane in Plaitford.
- 2.2 The building is constructed in a mix of brick, timber and blockwork under a metal sheet roof.



Figure 1: Application Building

- 2.3 The site is currently accessed from the northwest on Sherfield English Road with its previous access from Flowers Lane blocked up.
- 2.4 The site is bound by office units to the west and residential properties to the north and east. The site's neighbour, Sweet Briar Cottage, is Grade II Listed.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

17/01951/FULLS

- 3.1 In October 2017, planning permission was granted for the conversion of barn to holiday accommodation.
- 3.2 The proposed holiday accommodation comprised three bedrooms, a kitchen, dining, separate lounge and utility room.

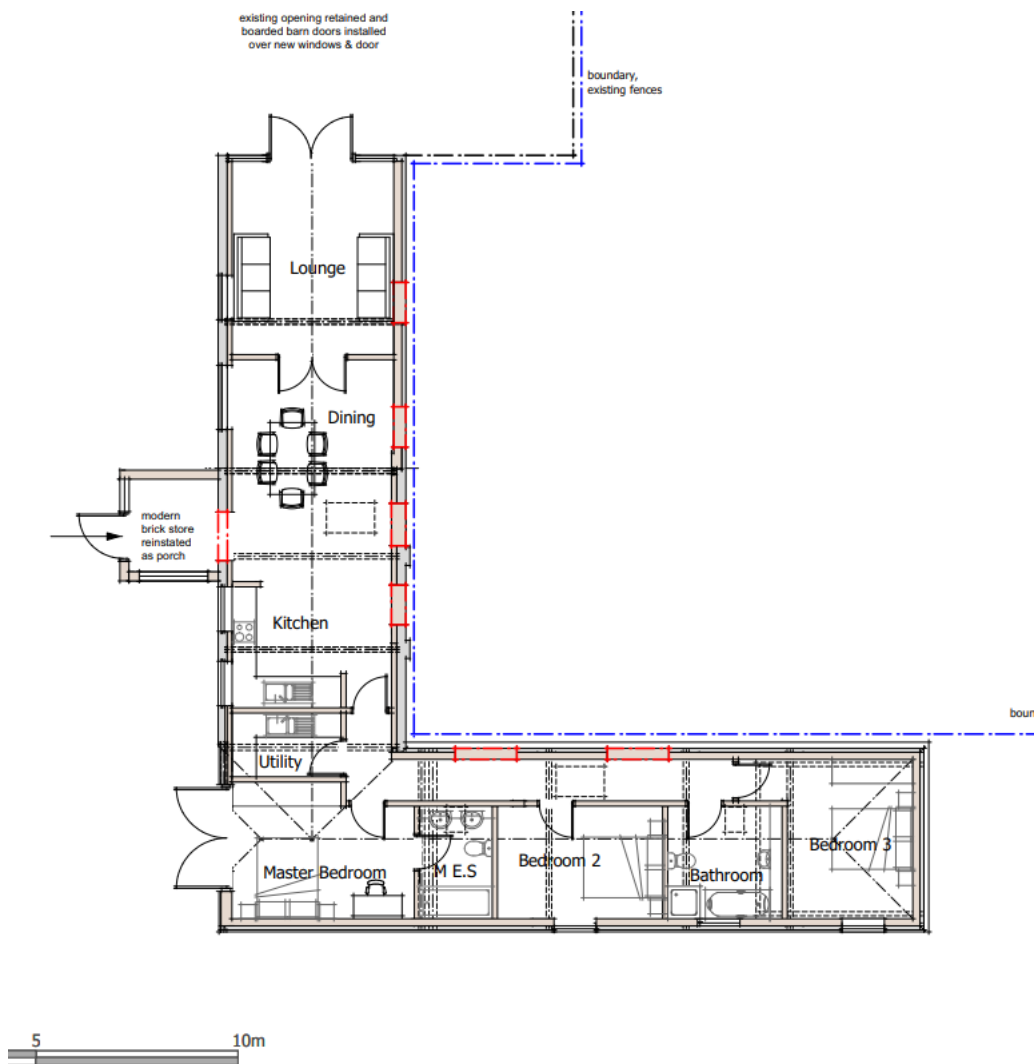


Figure 2: Approved Floor Plan

3.3 In January 2021, permission was granted to vary conditions 4,5 9, 12 and 13 of application 17/01951/FULLS. The variation sought to amend the wording of these conditions to limit the scope of information required to be submitted prior to commencement.

THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal seeks permission for the change of use of the barn into a three-bedroom dwelling.
- 4.2 The proposed plans are essentially the same as the holiday let approved under 17/01961/FULLS. The dwelling will have three bedrooms and will be accessed off Flowers Lane with parking for 3 cars.

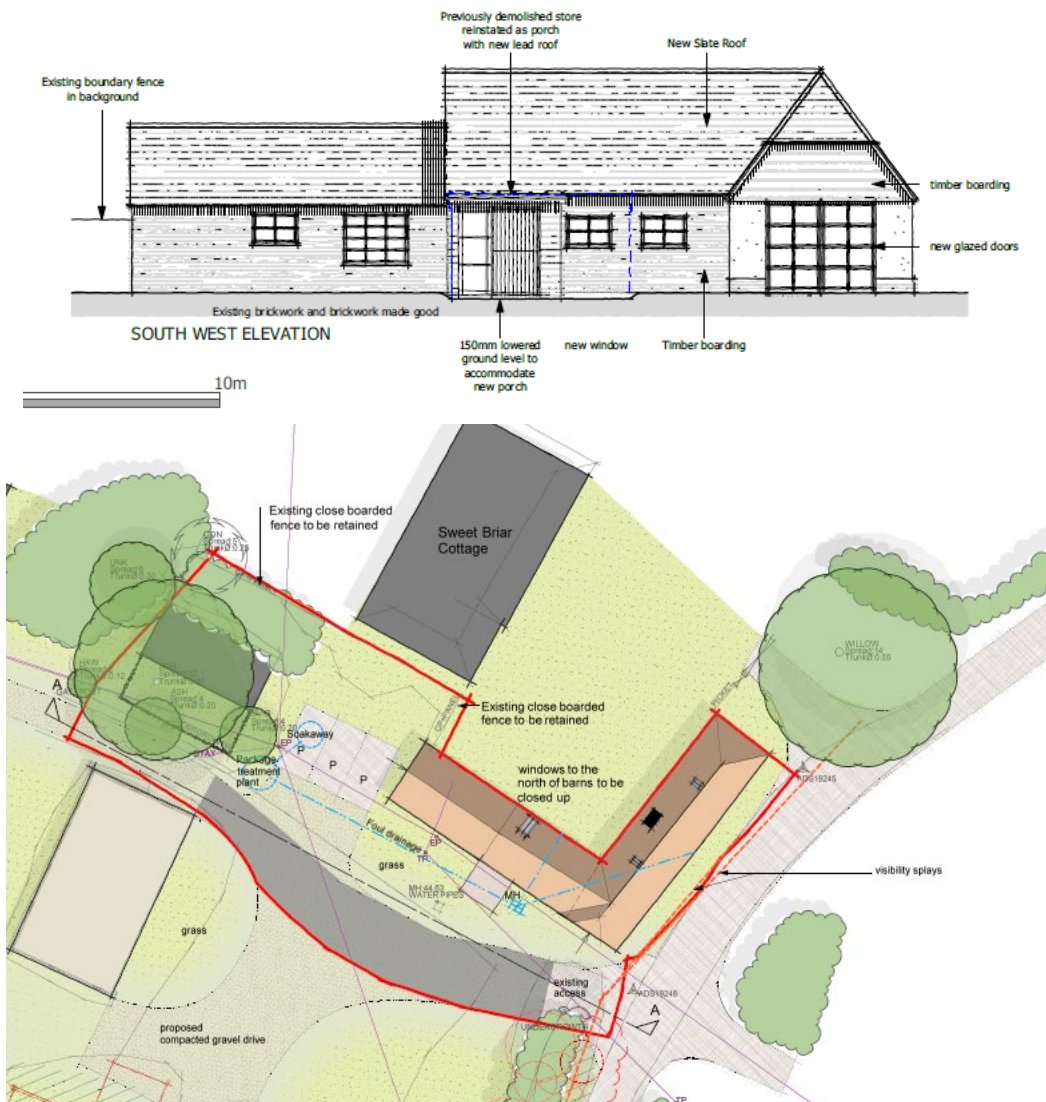


Figure 3: Proposed Plans

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.3 Test Valley Revised Local Plan (2016) is the Council's primary Development Plan Document (DPD), and the starting point for determining planning decisions within Test Valley.
- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) provides a national tier of policy and decision-making guidance for the planning system and forms a material consideration for planning decisions.
- 4.5 The policy and guidance contained within the statutory Development Plan Documents and all other relevant material considerations have been reviewed to ensure the proposal is an appropriate form of development for the application site.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 4.6 Table 7 of the Revised Local Plan highlights the Settlement hierarchy and identifies the scale of development appropriate within different settlements. The application site is positioned within the open countryside, where there is a general presumption against development subject to certain material considerations.
- 4.7 Policy COM2 of the Local Plan states that development outside the boundaries of settlements will only be permitted if:
- "a) it is appropriate in the countryside as set out in Revised Local Plan policy COM8-COM14, LE10, LE16-LE18; or*
- b) it is essential for the proposal to be located in the countryside."*
- 4.8 It is well established through previous appeal decisions (APP/C1760/W/17/3170081, APP/C1760/W/17/3179932) that the overall aim of Policy COM2 is to *"direct development to the most sustainable locations and in doing so to reconcile the need for development with the need to protect the countryside."* In short, it is the role of Policy COM2 to ensure that isolated and unsustainable new homes are avoided and to ensure that the characteristics of the open countryside are protected.
- 4.9 Policy LE16: Re-use of Building in the Countryside allows the re-use of buildings for residential use provided that:

- a) the building is structurally sound and suitable for conversion without substantial rebuilding, extension or alteration; and
- b) the proposal would not result in the requirement for another building to fulfil the function of the building being converted; and
- c) the proposed use is restricted primarily to the building; and
- d) development would lead to an enhancement of its immediate setting

Also,

- e) the proposal is for occupational accommodation for rural workers; or
- f) it is demonstrated that every reasonable attempt has been made to secure commercial use (including tourist accommodation); or
- g) there is no other means of protecting and retaining the building which is of architectural or historic merit.

4.10 The planning history of the site has confirmed criteria a-d have been met.

4.11 In the Officer Report of application 17/01951/FULLS, the Officer confirms that *“the buildings are structurally sound and suitable for conversion and as such the proposals comply with criteria a). The buildings were used in association with agricultural purposes and temporary domestic storage. The agent has confirmed that no other building would be required to fulfil the use of the building. Point b) is therefore complied with. With regards to points c) and d) the proposed tourist accommodation would be restricted to the existing building. In addition, bringing the building back into use would result in an enhancement, visually, to the character of the surrounding area.”*

4.12 The same arguments apply to this application. The building remains in the same condition and there would not be a requirement for another building since the application site has new owners, who do not require any agricultural buildings. Moreover, given that the plans are almost identical to the holiday accommodation, points c and d would be fulfilled. There would not be a discernible difference in the character of the barn and the impact on the surrounding area, as evidenced in Figure 4.

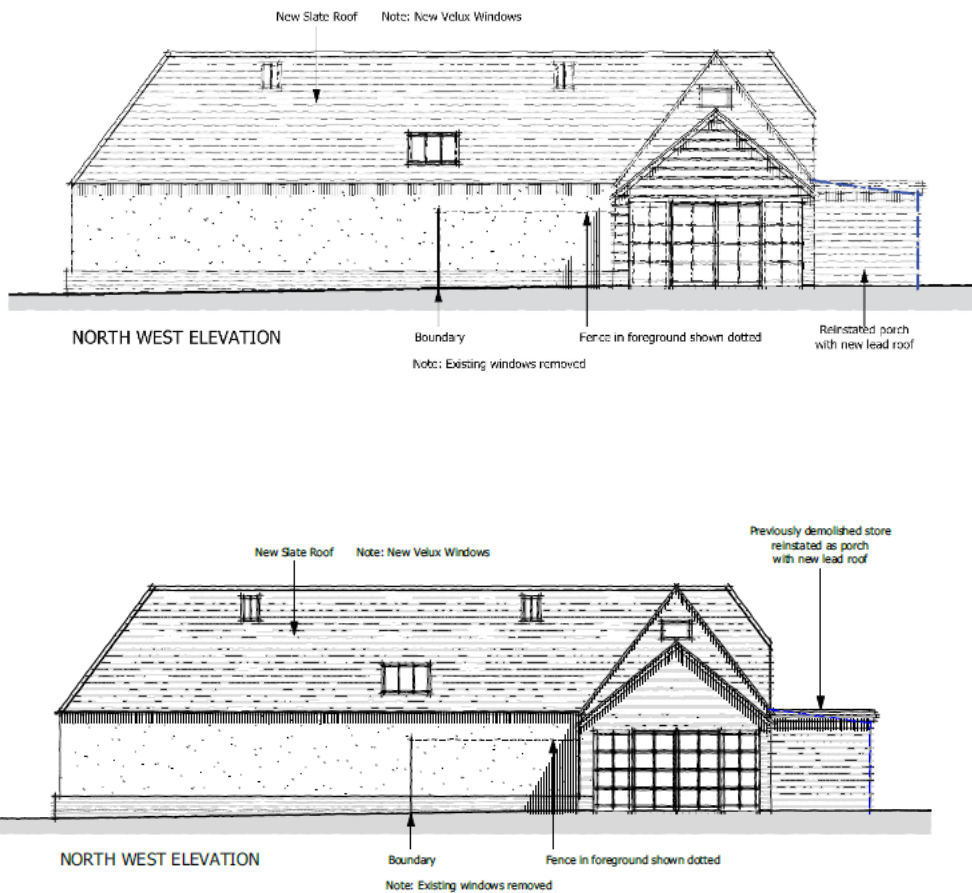


Figure 4: Approved Plans (top) and Proposed Plans (bottom) showing that the character of the barn will not be altered

4.13 With regards to the conditions of LE16 allowing residential use, the proposal would comply with criteria f) in that every reasonable attempt has been made to secure commercial use (including tourist accommodation).

4.14 The barn was marketed from 6th October 2018 until at least 24th February 2020 as a holiday let. A letter from the Sales Manager can be found in Appendix A. This outlines that Charles Powell Estate agents initially instructed to market the building on 6th October 2018 advertising the barn with conversion potential to a holiday let. With little interest, the estate agents reduced the barn on two further occasions, initially from £225,000 to £220,000 on 9th January 2019 and then a further reduction to £215,000 on 19th February 2019. There were no further reductions.

- 4.15 The Sales Manager explained that they had a total of six viewings during their marketing period. The interest had been minimal largely due to the restriction of usage for holiday let only. If the property had full residential planning permission, the Sales Manager had no doubt that the interest would have been greater, and a sale would have been achieved.
- 4.16 To determine if a holiday let remains a viable option in the current economic climate, a Financial Viability Assessment has been undertaken. The assessment shows that conversion to holiday accommodation is not economically viable. Moreover, the assessment also considered office use, which demonstrated that this use would be further economically unviable.
- 4.17 With regards to other commercial uses, given the character and design of the building and its location next to a Grade II Listed building and opposite other residential uses, a general industry use or even light industrial use would be impractical. There would be significant amenity issues and significant works would have to be undertaken to the barn to accommodate such use, which would ultimately impact the character and appearance of the area and barn.
- 4.18 Given that all other uses have been explored and are either economically unviable and/or impractical, criteria f) is met.
- 4.19 The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable as the proposed dwelling would comply with Policy LE16 of the Revised Local Plan.

IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

- 4.20 High quality design is encouraged by the LPA within all development proposals. Policy E1 of the Adopted Local Plan states:

“Development will be permitted if it is of a high quality in terms of design and local distinctiveness. To achieve this development:

- a) should integrate, respect and complement the character of the area in which the development is located in terms of layout, appearance, scale, materials and building styles;*
- b) should not detract from the dominance of, or interrupt important views of, key landmark buildings or features;*
- c) should be laid out to provide connectivity between spaces and a positive relationship between public and private spaces; and*

d) *makes efficient use of the land whilst respecting the character of the surrounding area and neighbouring uses. Development will not be permitted if it is of poor design and fails to improve the character, function and quality of the area.*"

4.21 Policy E2 states that to ensure protection, conservation, and enhancement of the landscape of the Borough, development will be permitted provided that it does not have an impact on the appearance of the immediate area and the landscape character of the area within which it is located.

4.22 The application site is positioned to the west of Flowers Lane, amongst a group of residential dwellings. As outlined by the Officer in the holiday let accommodation application *"the proposed works to convert the building into tourist accommodation would involve utilising existing windows/door openings. New openings are proposed however...would not detract from the agricultural character of the buildings. As a result, it is not considered that the proposals would result in the appearance the building being out of keeping with the surrounding, rural/agricultural landscape."*

4.23 Given that the changes between the holiday let application and the current dwelling application are de minimis, the same arguments apply. As stated by Officers, bringing the building back into use would result in an enhancement, visually, to the character of the surrounding area.

4.24 Like the holiday let application, conditions can be added to any permission to ensure that the works are in keeping with the landscape character of the surrounding area.

IMPACT UPON HERITAGE ASSETS

4.25 The nearest neighbour to the application site, Sweet Briar Cottage, is Grade II Listed.

4.26 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

4.27 The current barn is redundant but contributes to the agricultural history and setting of the Grade II Listed building. Without a viable use, the barn is likely to fall further into disrepair detracting from the setting of the heritage asset.

4.28 There are minimal changes to the external appearance of the barn, but the proposed changes would enhance the character of the building and thus, the setting of the Listed Building.

4.29 The proposal would therefore be in accordance with Policy E9 of the RLP.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

4.30 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF highlights that decisions should ensure proposals are *“inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users”*.

4.31 The proposed scheme is considered to provide a high level of amenity for future occupants and ensures that existing amenity is preserved. The nearest neighbour is Sweet Briar Cottage. However, like the previous consent, there would not be any undue overlooking, particularly as the relationship is improved with the removal of existing windows that face this property.

4.32 Given that the proposed development does not include any increase in built form, there is not considered to be any impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of light or overshadowing.

4.33 Moreover, the difference in use between a holiday let and dwelling would not cause any amenity issues. This is because the holiday let approved would have functioned as a separate independent dwelling and could have been occupied all year round.

4.34 For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy LHW4.

HIGHWAYS IMPACT

ACCESS

4.35 Policy T1 of the Local Plan permits development provided that it does not harm the safety and function of the existing highway network. As existing, the application site benefits from existing access off Sherfield English Road, with the original access from Flowers Lane blocked.

4.36 In December 2013, planning permission was sought for the change of use on the site to 4 no. holiday lets. In assessing the highway impact, Officers outlined that the proposed development would generate additional traffic which would not be able to be accommodated on the single track. As such, to overcome

the objection, access was shown directly from Sherfield English Road and Officers requested that the access from Flowers Lane was closed.

- 4.37 In subsequent applications (17/01951), Highways Officers again raised no objections subject to the stopping up of the existing access.
- 4.38 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF states that in assessing development, it should be ensured that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, whilst paragraph 115 notes that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 4.39 The application is accompanied by a Transport Note produced by Nick Culhane Highway Consultant, who has analysed the suitability and safety of the existing access from Flowers Lane.
- 4.40 This report outlines that a review of the accident history for this area has revealed that in the last 5 years there have been no recorded accidents that have resulted in injury on Flowers Lane, Spouts Lane and Pound Lane and their associated junctions. This would suggest that the road network is operating in a safe and efficient manner.
- 4.41 Furthermore, in order to assess the existing traffic flow on Flower Lane, Hampshire County Council (HCC) were commissioned to undertake an automatic traffic count. A counter was installed on 1st December 2023 and left in situ for a 7-day period.
- 4.42 From the automatic traffic count showed that the 85th percentile traffic speeds were 21.9mph (northbound) and 20.9mph (southbound). Given these figures, appropriate visibility splays have been provided, meaning that safe and suitable access can be achieved.
- 4.43 It is therefore considered that the development is wholly in accordance with paragraph 115 of the NPPF in so much as there will not be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would the residual cumulative impact on the road network be severe. The re-use of the former access for a residential dwelling is therefore considered to be acceptable from a highway point of view.
- 4.44 As a result, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with policy T1.

PARKING

- 4.45 With regards to parking, Policy T2 and Appendix G of the Local Plan highlights the appropriate parking standards for residential proposals, identifying that a 3-bedroom dwelling requires 2 car parking spaces.
- 4.46 The proposed dwelling will comprise of 3-bedrooms, and sufficient parking is provided. Therefore, the proposal accords with the criteria identified in Policy T2.

ECOLOGY

- 4.47 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken by Peach Ecology at the site to ensure that no protected habitats or species are affected by the proposal.
- 4.48 This report sets out various mitigation measures to ensure that habitats are enhanced, and bats and birds are protected.
- 4.49 The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable and would not harm any protected species.

PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposed development seeks planning permission for the change of use of a barn to a three-bedroom dwelling. The application building has previous consent for its change of use to holiday accommodation and the proposed plans are nearly identical.
- 5.2 Policy LE16 allows the re-use of rural buildings to residential use, provided certain criteria is met. This Planning Statement demonstrates that all criteria have been fulfilled and therefore, the principle of development should be considered acceptable.
- 5.3 The barn was marketed over 6 months as a holiday let to no avail and a financial visibility assessment accompanies the application which shows that it would not be viable to convert the building into tourist or office accommodation. Moreover, due to the position of the building next to a Listed Building and opposite other residential properties, an industrial use is not practical.
- 5.4 This Statement has demonstrated that there would be no other impacts derived from this scheme and wholly accords with the policies set out within the Revised Local Plan. Therefore, we commend the proposal to you.



CHARLES POWELL

ESTATE AGENTS

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24th February 2020

Dear Sirs,

Re: Gardeners Farm Barn, Plaitford SO51 6HH

I confirm that we are currently marketing the above property on behalf of Mr Jewell. It is an agricultural barn requiring improvement within the highly desirable village of Plaitford.

The property remains advertised on all major portals with Rightmove being the most reactive, our own website and within local newspapers and magazines. I attach a link to the property advert on our website along with the sales brochure.

We were initially instructed to market on 6th October 2018 advertising the barn with conversion potential to a holiday let. This provided us with an interested party very early on who subsequently offered £180,000, subject to contract, which at the time the vendor accepted. Unfortunately the client changed his mind after a couple of weeks and withdrew his offer. Since the launch we have reduced the barn on two further occasions, initially from £225,000 to £220,000 on 9th January 2019 and then a further reduction to £215,000 on 19th February 2019. There have been no further reductions since.

We have accompanied a total of six viewings during our marketing period The interest has been minimal largely due to the restriction of usage for holiday let only.

We have agreed sales on many other homes that are holiday let in the area but they do not have the same restriction in place which is one party cannot reside for more than 28 days in any calendar year.

If the property had full residential planning permission, I have no doubt that the interest would have been greater and a sale would have been achieved.

Please do contact me if you require any further information.

Yours faithfully

Paul Mason | Sales Manager



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CGI

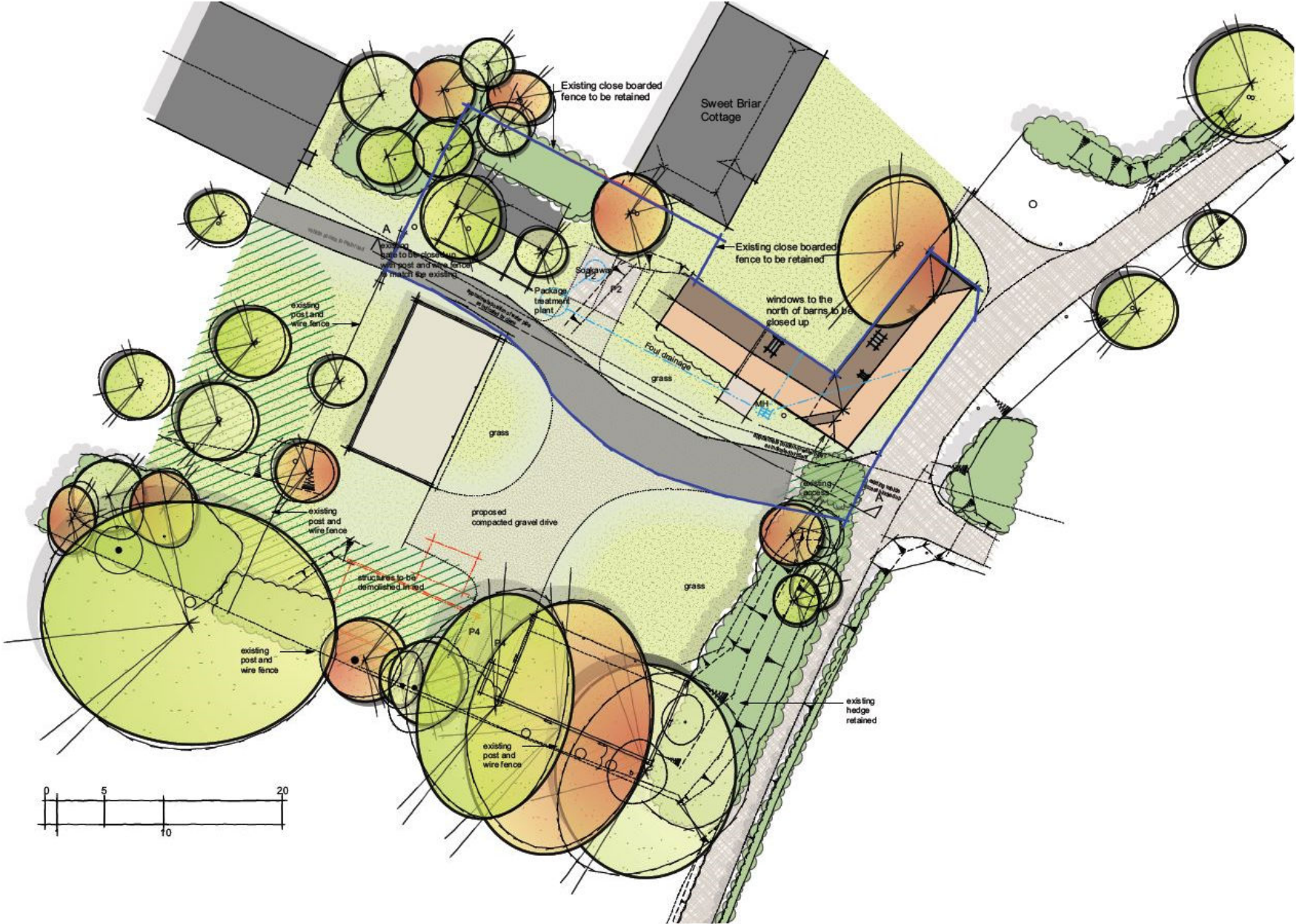


Current Barn

Gardeners Farm Barn

Plaitford

£215,000



Gardeners Farm Barn Plaitford SO51 6HH

Agents Comments

A unique opportunity to build a barn style holiday let to derive a healthy investment income.

Introduction

Situated on a quiet country lane away from passing traffic, is this rare opportunity to construct a holiday let cottage on the site of an existing agricultural barn enabling a prospective buyer to derive an income from an investment in the centre of the popular village of Plaitford. The proposed property offers over 1500 sq. ft of contemporary styled living accommodation with open plan living spaces and three generous bedrooms and generous luxury bathroom facilities.

Proposed Layout of the New Barn

The porch provides access to the open plan kitchen diner which is supplemented by a useful Utility Room with double doors opening into the sitting room with French doors out to the gardens. The inner hallway provides access to the three double bedrooms with the master featuring French doors out to the gardens and benefiting from luxury ensuite facilities with his & hers wash hand basin and double shower cubicle with the bedroom two and three served by a stylish four piece family bathroom.

Outside

Access to the property will be via a long driveway through an orchard over the adjacent land. The gardens are well proportioned and can be landscaped to taste.

Agents notes

Planning permission is approved for a holiday let cottage and not for full residential usage. Planning approval reference number is 17/01951/FULLS was consented in July 2017.

Location

Plaitford is a sought after village positioned on the Northern fringes of the New Forest National Park. It boasts a church, village hall, public house amongst other local amenities. It is approximately 20 minutes' drive to Southampton, the cathedral city of Salisbury and half hour's drive to Winchester. It a short distance from the M27 motorway providing excellent access to the South coast including Bournemouth and London via the M3. The area is hugely popular for holiday makers all year round. The local town of Romsey has an eclectic mix of boutique shopping outlets and eateries. Venture into Southampton and you will find West Quay shopping centre and new

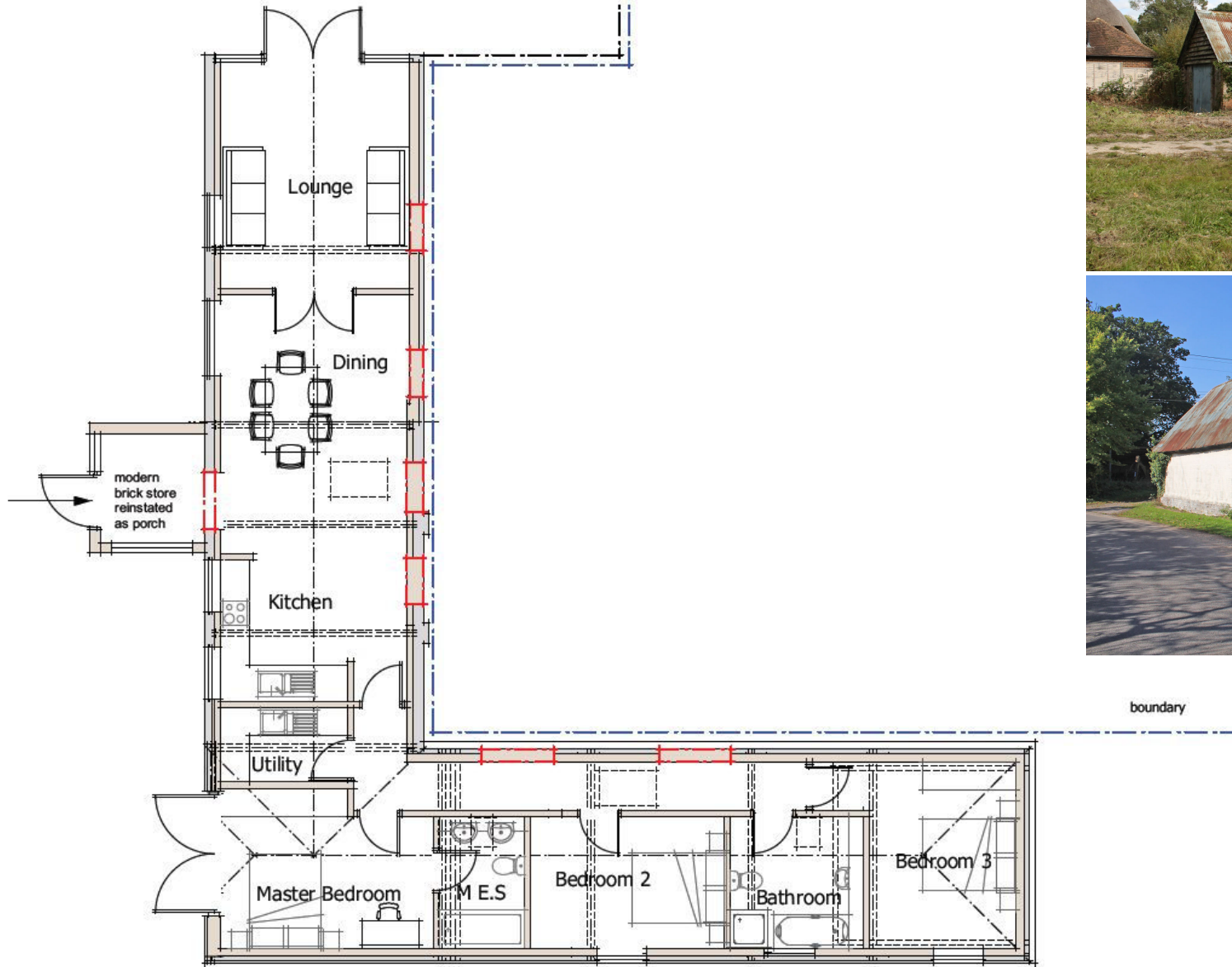
cinema, bowling and restaurant complex. Paultons Park is in nearby Ower and attracts visitors from across the South and its Peppa Pig World is a favoured destination for young children. The New Forest is famous for its heathland, forest trails and native ponies. It is a wonderful environment for a relaxing walk, family cycle rides or exploring by open top bus.

Directions

From our offices in West Wellow proceed along the A36 towards Salisbury into the village of Plaitford turning right into Sherfield English Road. Proceed for approximately 3/4 mile and turn right into Flowers Lane and follow the lane for about 1/4 mile and the barn is on the right hand side.

existing opening retained and boarded barn doors installed over new windows & door

boundary,
existing fences



Current Barn



Current Barn

boundary



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We wish to inform you that these particulars are set out as a general outline and do not constitute any part of an offer or contract. We have not tested any services, appliance or equipment and no warranty is given or implied that these are in working order. Fixtures, fittings and furnishings are not included unless specifically described. All measurements, distances and areas are approximate and for guidance only. It should not be assumed that the property remains the same as shown in the photographs.