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## HERITAGE STATEMENT

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In respect of

**Manor Farm Barns, Holywell, Rowington,  
Warwickshire**

On behalf of

**Morton Titterton**

**AHC REF: SW/10219**

**January 2024**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report, which has been prepared and written by Sarah Watt, MCIfA, Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd., on behalf of Morton Titterton, is twofold: first, to provide an assessment of the heritage significance of the Grade II listed barn north of the Grade II listed Holywell Manor Farmhouse; and second, to provide an appraisal of the potential heritage impact of proposed alterations to convert the barn to residential use.
- 1.2 The barn was added to the statutory list at Grade II on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1990. The farmhouse was an earlier addition to the list, on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1967 (both Historic England list descriptions are included at **Appendix 1**).
- 1.3 The report is divided into two principal elements. The first provides a summary history of the property as a whole, and a detailed description and assessment of significance of the barn; and the second an assessment of the proposals.
- 1.4 A pre-application submission to convert the barn to a residential dwelling and an annexe to the existing farmhouse was made to Warwick District Council in April 2023 (ref: PRE 23/0053). The pre-application response indicated that while the principle of conversion of the barn to residential use was acceptable, the scheme as proposed would not be supported because of its impact on the listed building.
- 1.5 Following this response, Asset Heritage was instructed to undertake a site inspection in August 2023 to assess the building and advise on a revised scheme. The submitted proposals have been informed by this advice.
- 1.6 The assessment of significance is prepared in line with the requirements of paragraph 200 of the recently updated NPPF (December 2023), with the aim of gaining an understanding of the significance of the listed building. The following assessment of impact, informed by the assessment of significance, accords with paragraphs 200 and 201 of the NPPF.

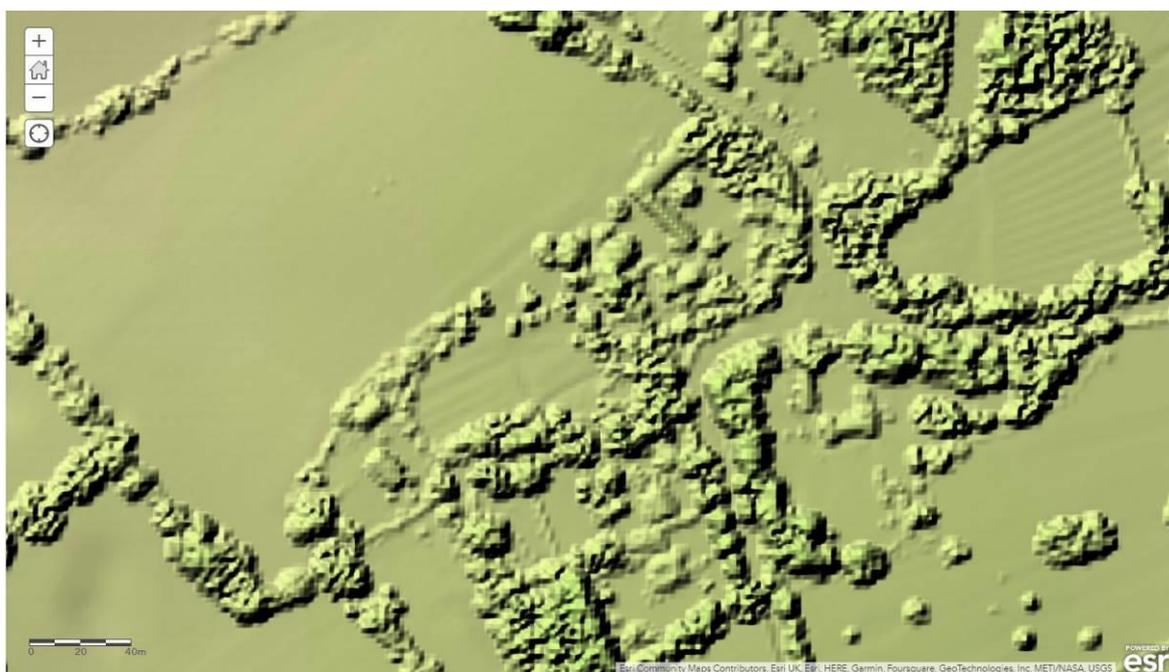
- 1.7 The two-stage approach of assessing impact based on an understanding of the significance of the building is in accordance with the good practice advocated in documents such as Historic England's *Conservation Principles* (2008) and formally expressed in the requirements of the government's policies on the Historic Environment set out in Section 16 of the NPPF and the accompanying advice provided by the PPG.

## 2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

*See annotated plans at **Appendix 2** for identification of the internal spaces referred to.*

- 2.1 Holywell lies within the parish of Rowington in central Warwickshire (in the upland area of the Forest of Arden). Rowington has Anglo-Saxon origins, established by descendants of the *Hwicce* people, who settled along the Avon valley. The place name derives from the name of their leader, *Hroca*, with *Hrocingatun* meaning 'the village or homestead of Hroca's people' (by Domesday it had become *Rochintone*). It is speculated that this early settlement may have been in the region of High Cross, Lowsonford and Holywell in the south-east of the parish.
- 2.2 In 1066, Rowington manor was granted to Hugh de Grentmesnil. He died in 1094 and was succeeded in the lordship by his daughter, Adeliza. In c.1133, she granted it to the Benedictine Abbey of Reading, in whose possession it remained for 400 years, until the Dissolution, when it passed to the Crown.
- 2.3 Rowington appears to have developed as a number of small hamlets formed in the Arden woodland, established alongside new small open-field units. There are several hamlets with the suffix 'End,' which are likely to be early settlements of this nature. The hamlet of Holywell, the name meaning 'Holy spring' (there is a natural spring here) is first recorded in 1284 in reference to Robert de Holewell, a juror at the Abbot of Reading's court. Woodall (in *From Hroca to Anne*, printed by Eclipse of Shirley in 1974) remarks of it that, '*Situated close to the original Rowington settlement site there is no evidence to show whether this hamlet had a separate open field unit. It may once have been part of Pinley, later it was included in Lowson End.*'
- 2.4 Holywell Manor Farmhouse, part brick and part timber-framed (incorporating elements of both close-studded and box framing) is believed to date from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, with 17<sup>th</sup>-century additions and 18<sup>th</sup>-century alterations. Its associated barn is probably of mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century date. Opposite, across the small triangular green to the south-east, is the earlier brick and timber-framed Holywell Farmhouse, of 15<sup>th</sup>-century date, with two cruck trusses and a 16<sup>th</sup>-century cross-wing, probably originally a hall house. A grade II listed 17<sup>th</sup>-century barn stands to its north.

- 2.5 Woodall (1974) says that Manor Farm was probably the home of the atte Lye family, who were later known by the name of Collins. In 1548, Robert Collyns was the free tenant of a house and 19 acres of land here, at an annual rent of 9s 8d. His widow was the tenant in 1561, succeeded by their son, John, in 1606. In 1649, Peter Collins was the occupant. By 1665, a few acres of the farm had been separated off and let to John Parks and others for an annual rent of 1s 11d.
- 2.6 The historic map evidence and the topography of the site suggest that it may have been moated in the medieval period. Indeed, this is recorded as a possibility (it has not been archaeologically investigated) on the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) under ref. MWA13504. In addition, visible earthworks in a pasture field (formerly an orchard) west of the farm site may potentially comprise evidence of a deserted medieval settlement (as recorded under HER ref: MWA 13507). Surviving ridge and furrow earthworks in fields nearby also attest to medieval settlement of the area. **Fig.1** shows LiDAR data covering the site and its environs, in which it appears ridge and furrow is present in this field, if not other forms of earthwork.



*Fig.1: LiDAR mapping*

- 2.7 The 1824 enclosure map for Rowington (**Fig.2**) shows no detail of the site other than depicting a single building of long rectangular plan form to the east against the road around the green, which does not accurately relate to any building currently on the

site or shown on the 1847 tithe map. This is labelled with the name Bolton, but other than showing each end of the western boundary of the site, the map does not show any internal detail or other buildings within the plot. The green itself is shown to have contained a very large pond and it is not clear whether any part of this corresponded with the pond shown within the Manor Farm plot in 1847 (albeit the road layout on both maps seems generally to correspond).

2.8 The map also shows a building in the rough location of Holywell Farmhouse, and shows Holywell House further to the east.

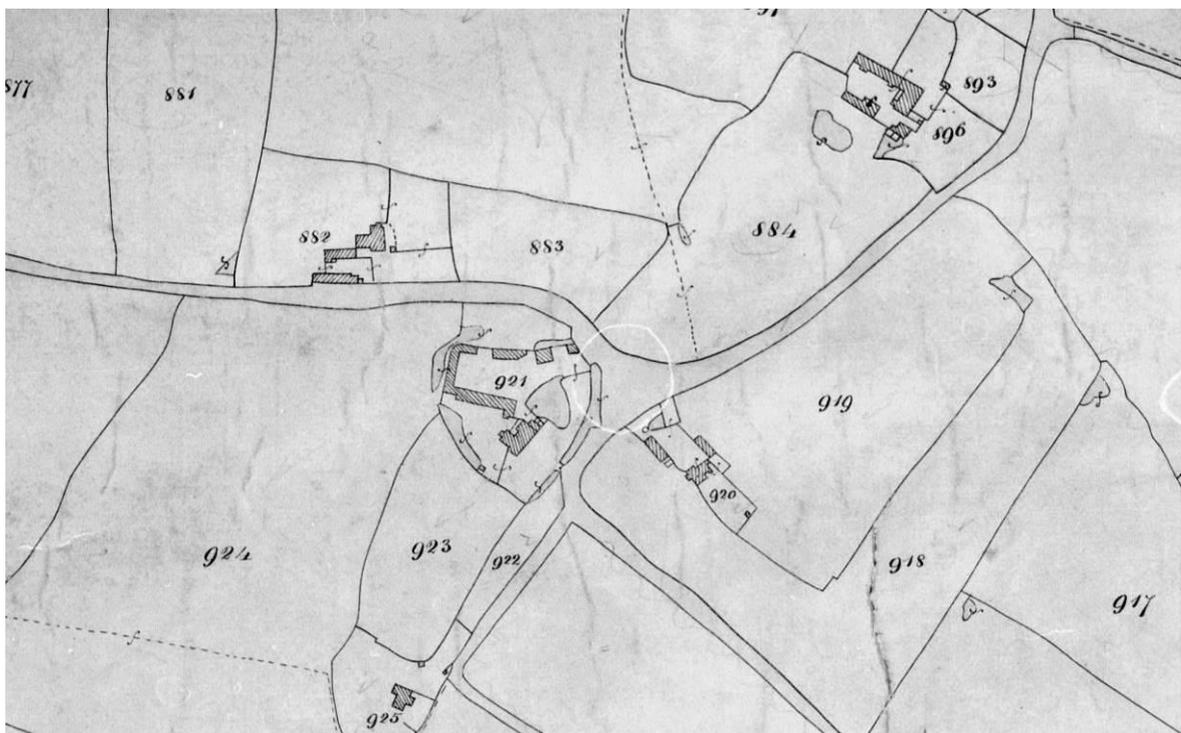


Fig.2: Rowington enclosure map, 1824

2.9 The 1847 tithe map presents a much clearer picture of the site (**Fig.3**), showing the farmhouse largely as it appears in footprint today, the barn and a number of outbuildings no longer extant. The barn is depicted as a long 'L' shape in plan, with its

'foot' at the south-eastern end. It did not extend as far north-west as it does now, being attached to a 'C'-shaped farm range at this end, which provided enclosure to the northern side of the farmyard. Along the north-eastern side of the yard were three other farm buildings of varying proportion, the small square building at the eastern end possibly a granary. A small garden building stood west of the farmhouse. There was an entrance from the road into the eastern end of the farmyard, at the southern end of which was a large pond.

2.10 The map shows other bodies of water around all sides of the farm site, including two long sections along its western boundary against the fields, and curving around the north side; a long section along its south-eastern boundary, breached by a pedestrian entrance from the road to the garden at the front of the farmhouse; and a shorter section along the north-eastern boundary. While these did not all connect to each other, it seems almost certain that they once formed a continuous moat around a farmstead. It is not evident that the moat was fed by any watercourse, although it is possible that it was fed by a natural spring.



*Fig.3: Rowington tithe map, 1847*

2.11 The accompanying tithe apportionment records the plot as No.921, owned by Wilson Aylesbury Roberts and tenanted by William Malin and Richard Draper. The buildings

are recorded as 'Farm House Buildings Yards and Garden'. Malin and Draper held other land of Roberts in the vicinity, including plot 922 (New Inclosure; pasture); 923 (Hovel and Orchard; pasture); and 924 (Home Close; arable).

- 2.12 The 1851 Census records 30-year-old agricultural labourer William Malin in Rowington (no specific address recorded), with his wife, Sarah, and son, William. In the same year Richard Draper, a farmer in his sixties, is recorded at High Cross, quite possibly the same Draper recorded in the tithe apportionment. Wilson Aylesbury Roberts (1770-1853; of Bewdley, Worcs., and Packwood, Warks.) was lord of the manor of Rowington from 1791 to 1805.
- 2.13 The 25-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map surveyed in 1885 and published in 1887 (**Fig.4**) shows the further deterioration of the former moat; the south-eastern section is not shown at all (albeit it reappears on the 1905 map) and the short north-eastern section is no longer shown either. Two of the farm buildings along the north-eastern side of the yard had gone. The 'C'-shaped building at the north-western end is shown to have an open front to the yard and an open front to the south-west. The field enclosure to the south-west (in which earthworks have been noted) is depicted as still containing some orchard trees.
- 2.14 The 1905 OS map (**Fig.5**) once again depicts the south-eastern arm of the former moat – perhaps it had silted up by 1887 and was subsequently reinstated. The orchard, too, appears to have been replanted by this date as many more trees are shown. The small garden building west of the farmhouse had gone and a new slightly larger garden building had been erected nearby. The projecting 'foot' of the 'L' of the large barn had been extended and new yards had been created in front of the 'C'-shaped farm range. The surviving farm building against the north side of the yard is shown with an open front to the west. This period between 1887 and 1905 would appear to represent a phase of improvements to the property as a whole.

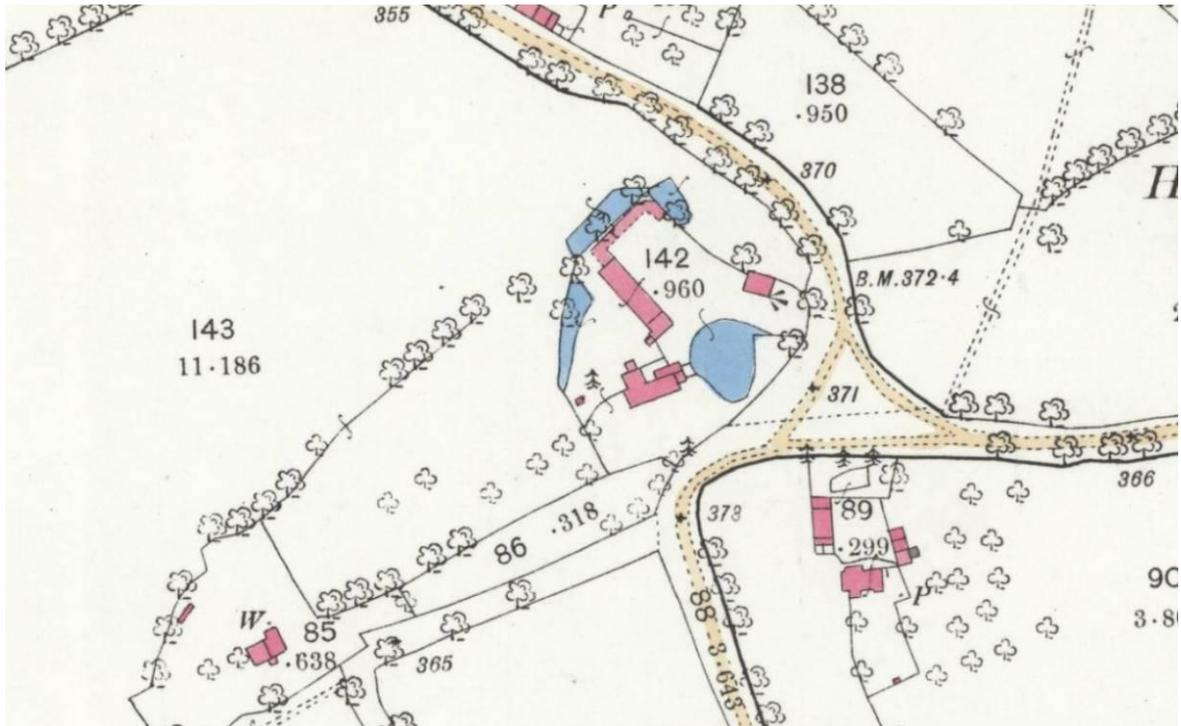


Fig.4: OS map, 1887 (surveyed 1885)

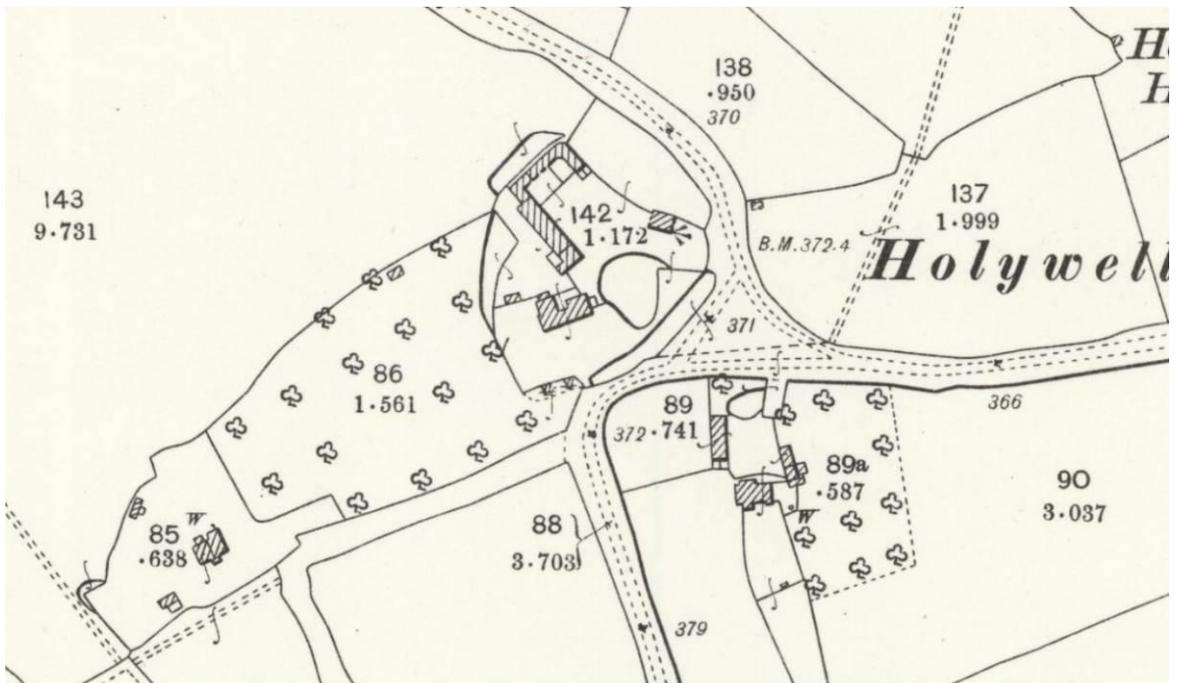


Fig.5: OS map, 1905 (surveyed 1903-4)

2.15 The 1925 OS map (**Fig.6**) is the first to label the site 'Manor Farm.' By this date, the 'C'-shaped farm range had been taken down and the south-eastern arm of the former moat is shown as being filled with reeds. These changes perhaps indicate that the farm range had fallen into disrepair.

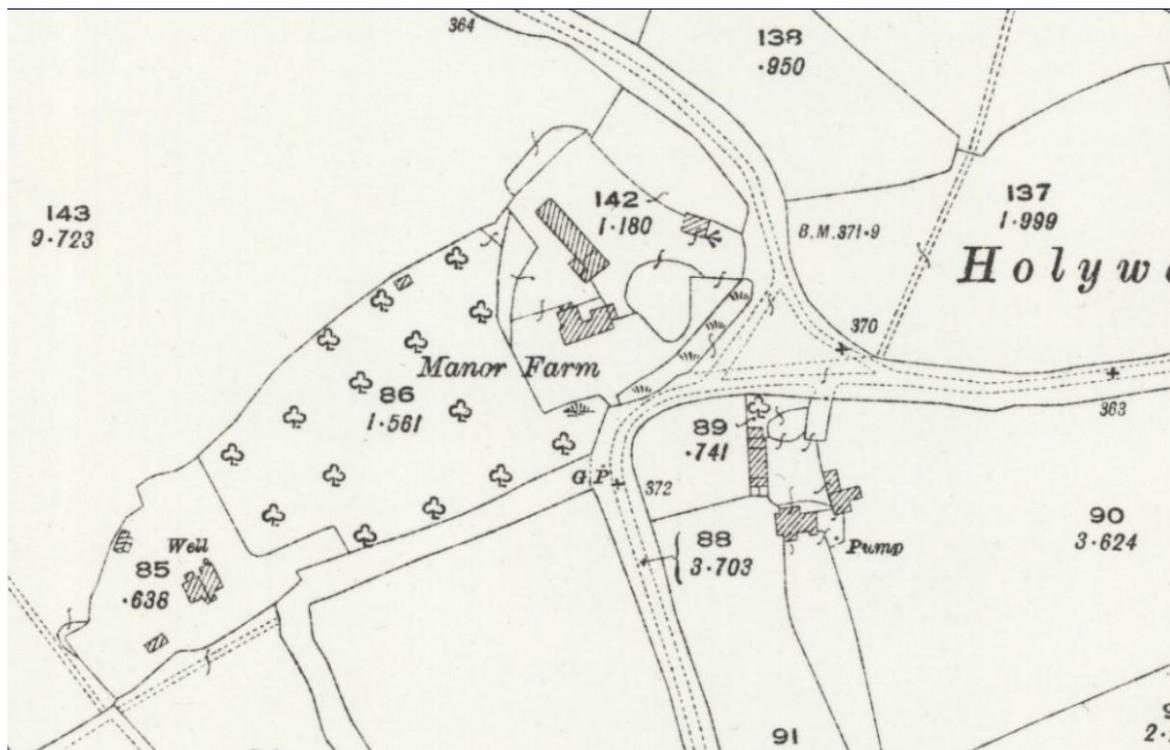


Fig.6: OS map, 1925 (revised 1923)

- 2.16 In probably the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the barn was extended to the north-west to meet the yard boundary with an addition constructed of Fletton bricks, and a steel-framed, originally open-sided, barn with barrel-profile roof of corrugated sheeting has been erected along the north-western side of the yard in place of the former 'C'-shaped range. The north-eastern boundary of the farmyard has been removed and the yard itself has been converted into a driveway, turning circle and parking area. The remaining outbuilding is still present, albeit in altered form, and serves as a garage/storage building.
- 2.17 The farmhouse is currently being extended to the south-west, following grant of planning and listed building consents in 2022.

### 3.0 DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

See annotated plans at **Appendix 2** for identification of separate ranges and internal spaces.

#### 3.1 Exterior

- 3.1.1 The list description describes the barn (a former threshing barn) as being probably of mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century date, but with what it calls a 're-sited spine beam bearing a date of 1719.' Generally, it comprises a box-framed timber structure on a brick plinth, with brick infill of varying date to the lower framed panels and weatherboard cladding over the upper panels. The roof is pitched and covered with plain clay tiles. At the north-western end is a cross-gabled bay and at the south-eastern end a projecting lean-to structure (**Plate 1**).



*Plate 1: Barn: NE elevation (left) and SW elevation (right)*

- 3.1.2 The list description states the original barn (discounting the 20<sup>th</sup>-century addition at the north-western end) comprises a range of eight bays. However, if bays are understood to be the open bays between principal roof trusses, it is probably better described as a range of five unequal bays. For instance, G2 has a length of four framed panels, flanked by trusses, while G3 has a length of five framed panels and is given additional support by an interim truss. The threshing bay (G4), although of similar length to G2, also has a higher interim truss dividing the half-bay between the opposing threshing doors from the adjoining half-bay; this truss, with a high-set king-post, is of markedly different form to the other trusses.

### North-eastern elevation

- 3.1.3 Beginning with Bay 1 (containing G1 & F1), the left-hand end of the north-eastern elevation, originally facing onto the farmyard, this (and the south-eastern gable end), has been rebuilt in red brick laid in Flemish Garden Wall Bond, probably an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century intervention (**Plate 2**). The elevation incorporates a window opening finished with closer bricks beneath a segmental brick arch. A timber window frame is retained but the opening is currently infilled with vertical boarding.



*Plate 2: NE elevation, Bay 1*

- 3.1.4 Bay 2 (containing G2) (**Plates 3-5**) is timber-framed on a brick plinth, with later-added chamfered tiled capping, with brick infill to the lower row of panels and weatherboard cladding covering the upper framing above the mid-rail. In the first panel is a door opening with ledged and braced boarded door. In the second panel there is historic, perhaps original, brick infill with lime mortar, with a window opening at the upper level with 20<sup>th</sup>-century two-light timber casement. The third panel contains historic, perhaps original, brick infill, with lime mortar, either side of an angled timber brace (the bracing at the upper level is concealed externally by the weatherboard cladding). The fourth panel contains 20<sup>th</sup>-century Fletton brick infill with a cementitious mortar.



*Plate 3: NE elevation, Bay 2*



*Plate 4: Bay 2, panel 1 with entrance*



*Plate 5: Detail of brickwork infill, Bay 2, panels 3 & 4*

3.1.5 Bay 3 (containing G3 & F2) (**Plates 6 & 7**) is timber-framed on a brick plinth (with cement capping). The first panel has historic but non-original (probably 19<sup>th</sup>-century) brick infill and a pattern of vent holes in the centre. The second panel, largely concealed by vegetation, appears to have similar brick infill. The third appears similar, but has an inserted window opening (of 20<sup>th</sup>-century date) the full width of the panel. The infill to the fourth and fifth panels appears to be historic, possibly original, brickwork. There is weatherboard cladding to the upper level.



*Plate 6: NE elevation, Bay 3, concealed by vegetation, with detail of panel 1 (right)*



*Plate 7: Bay 3, detail of panels 4 & 5 (left) and panel 4 (right)*

3.1.6 Bay 4 is the former threshing bay (G4), incorporating full-height double doors, of probable early 20<sup>th</sup>-century date. To right of this opening the rest of the elevation of this bay has been rebuilt in 20<sup>th</sup>-century stretcher-bond Fletton brickwork (**Plate 8**).



*Plate 8: NE elevation, Bay 4, detail of external and internal elevations*

- 3.1.7 Bay 5 (containing G5) (**Plate 9**) is gabled on both this and the other side of the building. Its elevation on this side has been rebuilt in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Fletton brickwork laid in Flemish Garden Wall bond, with a central entrance with 20<sup>th</sup>-century stable-type door. The original corner post is still present (visible from within the 20<sup>th</sup>-century steel-framed barn). The gable end retains its original timber framing, which has been over-clad with weatherboarding.



*Plate 9: NE elevation, Bay 5 (with gable)*

- 3.1.8 Bay 6 (containing G6 & F3) (constructed after 1925) is visible from within the 20<sup>th</sup>-century barn addition and comprises Fletton brickwork laid in Flemish Garden Wall Bond (**Plate 10**). This element was built with a first floor partly contained within the roof space; at ground-floor level it incorporates an entrance beneath a segmental brick arch and a high-level window opening.



*Plate 10: NE elevation, Bay 6*

### South-eastern gable end

- 3.1.9 This (**Plate 11**) is constructed of probably 19<sup>th</sup>-century red brick laid in Flemish Garden Wall Bond. It incorporates an entrance and a window opening with segmental arch to both ground and first floors (the first floor being partly contained within the roof space), albeit the low-set upper window has been blocked with boarding.



*Plate 11: SE gable-end elevation*

### South-western elevation

- 3.1.10 Beginning at the right-hand end in order to reflect the order in which the opposing elevation was described, the elevation to Bay 1 (containing G1 & F1) (**Plates 12 & 13**) is partly concealed by a single-storey addition of stretcher-bond red brick construction under a catslide roof. The 1847 tithe map depicts a projecting structure here, albeit one of different form. The current form emerged from that between 1887 and 1905 but was extended to the left; this extension has since been removed. The original wall behind the extension is timber framed with painted brick infill, with much evidence of rebuilding (possibly for reasons of reinforcement) below the mid-rail.



*Plate 12: SW elevation, Bay 1, with detail of brickwork to catslide addition*



*Plate 13: Internal side of SW elevation, Bay 1, with catslide addition beyond*

3.1.11 To the left, the timber framing comprises smaller square panels than those present to the adjoining bays and opposite side, such that there are three panels from plinth to eaves (as on the gabled Bay 5) rather than two. The brickwork infill is difficult to see externally because of vegetation growth, but the top row of four panels can be seen from within F1 on the first floor, indicating that panels 1 and 3 contain early brickwork, panel 2 comprises 20<sup>th</sup>-century Flettons, and panel 4 a mix of probably 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century bricks (**Plate 14**).

3.1.12 There are two 20<sup>th</sup>-century rooflights in the main roof-slope above the projecting addition. These provide natural light to the existing first floor room above G1.



*Plate 14: Internal side of SW elevation from first-floor room, F1, with panels 1-4 (right to left)*

3.1.13 Bay 2 (containing G2) (**Plates 15 & 16**) is constructed of the larger box framing (of two panels high) found on the opposite elevation, the upper panels clad with weatherboarding and the lower infilled with brick.

3.1.14 From the left, panel 1 contains a window opening, the lower two-thirds filled with alternating vertical planks serving as a vent, with three-light glazing above, and 20<sup>th</sup>-century brickwork to right and above. Panel 2, with angled brace, is infilled with historic, possibly original, brick. Panel 3 is infilled with non-original (perhaps 19<sup>th</sup>-century) brick and above it the weatherboarding has been cut into to insert a 20<sup>th</sup>-century casement window. Panel 4 is infilled with the same type of brick and incorporates a small half-width window which was originally full-width (as is evident internally). In the roof-slope above this bay is an 'agricultural' rooflight.



*Plate 15: SW elevation, Bay 2*



*Plate 16: Bay 2, detail of panels 1 & 2 (left) and 3 & 4 (right)*

3.1.15 On Bay 3 (containing G3 & F2), panels 2, 3 and 4 are infilled with the same non-original brickwork with high plinth, and weatherboard cladding to the upper framing (**Plates 17 & 18**). Panel 1 is infilled with later 20<sup>th</sup>-century brickwork and contains a shuttered opening. Panels 3 and 4 contain a pattern of vent holes, and panel 5 an entrance with boarded and battened door, probably of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. In the roof-slope above this bay is an 'agricultural' rooflight.



*Plate 17: SW elevation, Bay 3 (with pedestrian door); threshing Bay 4 to left*



*Plate 18: Details of Bay 3*

3.1.16 Bay 4 (containing G4, the threshing bay) has a pair of full-height plank doors of probably 18<sup>th</sup>-century date (**Plates 19 & 20**). The right-hand door incorporates a pedestrian entrance. The doors are made up of wide planks nailed to a mid-rail, top-rail and base plate, reinforced by battens and braces. There are wide gaps between each plank which are covered externally by narrower planks set further forward (possibly enabling some ventilation of the threshing bay), which are continuous (to the left-hand door) from top to bottom. To left of the doors is 20<sup>th</sup>-century Fletton brick infill.



*Plate 19: SW elevation, Bay 4, detail of threshing doors*



*Plate 20: Threshing doors in SW elevation, seen from inside G5*

3.1.17 Bay 5 (containing G5) is gabled and of box-framed construction, with smaller square panelling extending throughout: with three rows of panels up to eaves height, another above in the gable end, and inclined struts into the apex (**Plate 21**). Externally, the two lower rows of framing are exposed, with brick infill, with the upper panels clad with weatherboarding. Two angled braces rise from the base plate to the end posts. The brickwork infill is from different periods, with 20<sup>th</sup>-century Flettons to the lower panels and a mix of possibly 18<sup>th</sup>- or early 19<sup>th</sup>-century and 20<sup>th</sup>-century bricks to the second row. In the gable end, above panel 3, is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century casement window and, above this, a timber-shuttered opening.



*Plate 21: SW elevation, Bay 5*

3.1.18 At the north-western end is Bay 6 (containing G6 & F3), the 20<sup>th</sup>-century brick extension, with stable door and two-light window to ground floor and small two-light window beneath the eaves (largely concealed by vegetation) (**Plate 22**).



*Plate 22: SW elevation, Bay 6*

#### North-western gable end

3.1.19 This gable end of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century extension to the barn range has a three-light window in the gable apex (currently concealed by vegetation) (**Plate 23**).



*Plate 23: NW elevation, with steel-framed barn to left*

#### Steel-framed 20<sup>th</sup>-century barn

3.1.20 Standing forward of the north-western end of the historic barn is the 20<sup>th</sup>-century steel-framed barn addition. The long north-western elevation has been infilled - the left-hand half is weatherboarded over a timber-framed infill (as is the north-eastern end) while the right-hand half has been infilled with rendered concrete. The left-hand

half of the long south-eastern elevation is similarly weatherboarded over timber-framed infill, with the remaining three bays left open (**Plate 24**).



*Plate 24: 20<sup>th</sup>-century steel-framed barn: SE elevation (left) and NW elevation (right)*

### 3.2 Interior

#### Bay 1: G1 & F1

3.2.1 This bay (**Plates 25-27**) has had a first floor inserted across it at some point during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, albeit there is a historic longitudinal beam running across G1 (behind the plywood partitions) and emerging through the timber framing of the partition with G2, which may suggest the presence of an earlier floor or mezzanine in this bay (which may also relate to the blocked opening in the gable end). The ground floor has been divided up into three spaces (a passageway and two storage areas) with modern plywood partitioning and there is a ladder-type stair to provide access to the first-floor room, F1. There is a concrete screed floor.



*Plate 25: G1a, looking NW (left) and SE (right)*

- 3.2.2 The timber framing and brick infill and reinforcement to the south-west elevation against G1d and e is described above at paragraph 3.1.10 and can be seen at **Plate 13**. G1d comprises a brick-paved storage area and G1e a WC divided by a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century partition, the branch-like appearance of the purlin indicating the rather crude construction of this lean-to.



*Plate 26: G1d & e, with detail of purlin*

- 3.2.3 The bay partition against G2 (beneath Truss 4) is of concrete block construction at ground-floor level, clearly replacing a former timber-framed partition, the upper part of which remains intact and can be seen from within G2. Above the concrete blockwork, and set behind the timber framing exposed in G2, is a plywood partition enclosing F1.



*Plate 27: Historic beam running across G1 (left) and part-concrete/part-timber frame partition between G1 and G2 beneath Truss 4 (right; note end of beam emerging through centre of timber frame)*

- 3.2.4 In F1, the roof has also been lined with plywood beneath the rafters, leaving the purlins exposed. The brickwork walls are also exposed. In the gable end is a blocked opening beneath segmental arch (**Plate 28**).



*Plate 28: F1, looking towards gable end and SW elevation (left) and NE elevation (right), with plywood stair enclosure*

#### Bay 2 (G2)

- 3.2.5 G2 is fully open to the exposed original roof structure (**Plate 29**). This (in general) comprises a butt-purlin roof with trusses comprising substantial principal rafters and tie beam which carry a ridge purlin and side purlins with the aid of inclined struts. Although the list description refers to this as a 'queen strut' roof, this is not strictly true as queen struts are normally vertical and do not directly carry side purlins. The tie beam is additionally supported by angled braces rising from the principal posts. The struts comprising the timber-framed internal walls are tenoned into the soffit of the tie beam. Truss 4 and the partly rebuilt partition between G2 and G1 are illustrated at **Plate 27**, while Truss 3 between G2 and G3 is shown below at **Plate 29**. Truss 4 between G1 and G3 appears to bear the carpenter's mark 'IIII', albeit this is unclear.
- 3.2.6 G2 has latterly been used as an animal shelter, evidenced by the remains of brick and timber stall partitions forming two stalls with mangers, and a concrete floor with a drainage channel (**Plate 30**). The brickwork plinth to the stalls is formed of Fletton bricks, indicating the stalls are most likely of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century date. The door into G3 has two large circular holes cut into it, presumably for ventilation purposes.



*Plate 29: G2, looking NW towards Truss 3 dividing G2 from G3*



*Plate 30: G2, Looking towards SW elevation, with detail of livestock stalls*

### Bay 3 (G3 & F2)

3.2.7 This bay (**Plates 31 & 32**) has a brick-paved floor and a timber mezzanine floor extending across the south-eastern two-thirds of the bay, providing a partial first-floor space above (F2). Access to the mezzanine floor is provided by a rudimentary unenclosed timber staircase.



*Plate 31: G3, Looking towards NE elevation (left) and towards SW elevation (right)*



*Plate 32: G3, looking SE, with mezzanine (left) and detail of interim' Truss 2.5, seen from F2 (right)*

- 3.2.8 F2 has a boarded floor. Truss 2.5 is suspended above it (**Plate 32**). I have referred to this as an 'interim' truss as it is not, like the other principal trusses, supported by principal posts, but simply rests on the wall plate.
- 3.2.9 Truss 3 and the timber framing below it have been clad with corrugated sheeting to provide separation between the mezzanine floor and G2 (see **Plates 29 & 32**).
- 3.2.10 The bay is divided from Bay 4 (G4) by the remnants of a c.1m high horizontally boarded partition beneath Truss 2 (**Plate 33**). This is fixed to two substantial and long raking struts which are jointed to the principal posts supporting the truss, just below the top, and at the bottom to a base plate. This may have been installed to provide separation of G3 from the adjoining threshing floor in G4.



*Plate 33: Framing and divider beneath Truss 2 between G3 and G4, looking from G3 side (left) and G4 side (right)*

### Bay 4 (G4)

- 3.2.11 This is the original threshing bay and retains a stone-flagged threshing floor. Above the bay is Truss 1.5; this is not a full truss but a collar between purlins with kingpost up to the ridge (**Plate 34**).

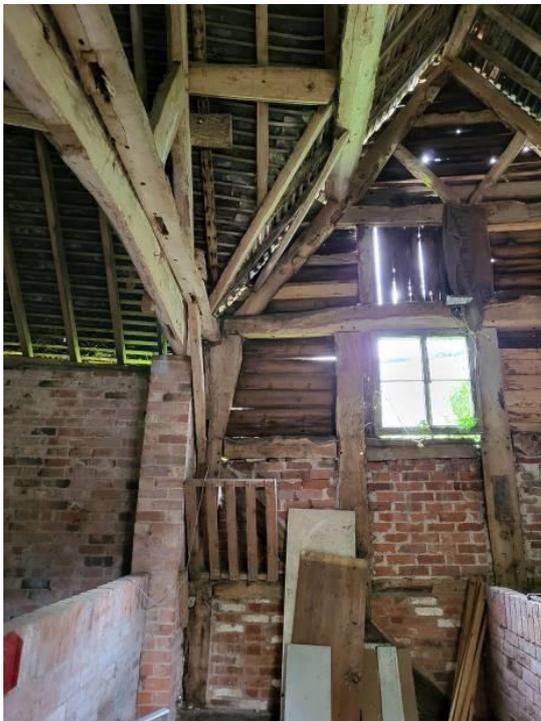


*Plate 34: G4, details of stone flagged threshing floor (left) and kingpost 'truss; (Truss 1.5) (right)*

- 3.2.12 As already noted, the external walls adjoining the two sets of threshing doors have been rebuilt in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Fletton brickwork, with four full-height brick piers, one adjoining the north-west side of each opening and another on each wall on the alignment of Truss 1 (**Plates 8, 35 & 36**): on the north-east wall, the original principal post (which supports Truss 1 and also the gable end of Bay 5 (G5) has been truncated, with only its upper half surviving, embedded in the later brickwork. The brick pier directly adjoining it provides support for an additional tie beam, presumably nailed to the existing, which extends across to rest on the opposing brick pier on the south-west side, where the original principal post has remained fully intact.
- 3.2.13 Empty mortices in the soffit of the original tie beam indicate there was previously a timber-framed partition here, dividing G4 from G5 in the cross-gabled element. The framing has been removed and replaced at the lower level by a Fletton brick wall dividing off livestock stalls in G5.



*Plate 35: G4, looking NE. To left, note truncated principal post supporting Truss 1 and adjoining brick pier carrying additional tie beam. Truss 2 to right*



*Plate 36: Looking SW across G5, with Truss 1 and G4 beyond it to left; note brick pier supporting additional tie beam, empty mortices in soffit of truss tie and retained principal post in corner of G5, supporting Truss 1 and gable structure*

### Bay 5 (G5)

3.2.14 The livestock stalls in this space are of mid-late 20<sup>th</sup>-century date and constructed of Fletton bricks and concrete blockwork (**Plates 37-40**). The north-west wall of G5 is the original box-framed wall, with three rows of panels, infilled with limewashed brickwork, of uncertain date, some panels earlier than others. The floor is of concrete

screed, incorporating a drainage channel. A boarded and battened door opens into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century extension, G6.



*Plate 37: Looking NW from G4 to G5*



*Plate 38: G5, looking SE*



*Plate 39: G7, NW wall*



*Plate 40: G5, looking NE*

### G6 and F3

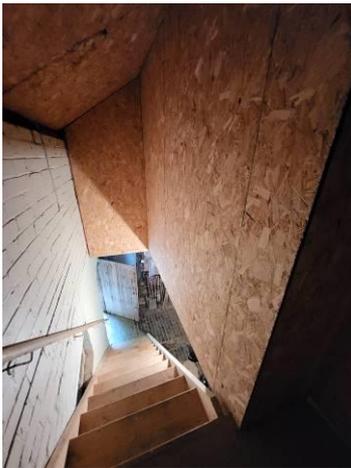
3.2.15 This has a brick-paved floor and contains a livestock pen formed by brick walls (**Plates 41-45**). Carpenter's marks are visible on the exposed timber framing of the end wall of the original barn. The space has a first floor accessed by a simple ladder-type staircase. F3 has been separated from the staircase by chipboard panels.



*Plate 41: G6, looking SW*



*Plate 42: G6, looking NE*



*Plate 43: Stairs from F3 down to G6*



*Plate 44: G6, looking SE*



*Plate 45: Carpenter's marks on framing of SE wall of G6 (NW external wall of original barn)*

### 3.3 Setting

3.3.1 The site can be loosely divided into four areas:

- the north-east garden with vehicular access and parking/turning area;
- the area around the pond;
- the front garden area south of the house; and
- the land behind the house, west of the barn.

3.3.2 The vehicular driveway opens off the lane through Holywell just north of where it curves around the west side of the triangular green (effectively following the line of the putative moat) before turning north-west. The gravelled driveway passes a former outbuilding, now garage, accessed from a short spur of the drive, before arriving at a turning circle and parking area in the angle between the two arms of the barn where the farmyard was previously (**Plate 46**). A substantial mature tree now stands in the centre of the turning circle. North-east of the turning circle is a grassed area planted with trees. The farmhouse is only glimpsed from this area, through a gap between the southern end of the barn and a large willow on the side of the pond. This reflects the original 'separated' relationship of domestic farmhouse to working yard.



*Plate 46: Looking E along driveway towards lane (left) and SW from turning circle/parking area (right)*

3.3.3 The former farm pond, surrounded by trees (including willows) and other planting and lawn, now provides an attractive amenity for the occupants of the farmhouse. There are evocative views across it from its eastern edge to the timber-framed eastern gable

end of the farmhouse (**Plate 47**). North-east of the pond is an area of lawn adjoining the driveway and the brick and weatherboarded garage building (**Plate 48**).



*Plate 47: Looking S and SW across pond towards farmhouse*



*Plate 48: Looking NW towards outbuilding/garage from SE boundary of site (the area proposed to be used for parking for the farmhouse)*

3.3.4 The front garden area (the main garden area historically) is accessed from the lane, across a grass verge and through a pedestrian gate and path between hedges that bridges the putative moat, aligned on the façade of the farmhouse. The site boundary against the lane is reinforced by the presence of the ditch/putative moat (**Plates 49 & 50**).

3.3.5 The garden comprises a lawn, divided east-west by ornamental hedging and planting beds. East of the gate, the moat lies along the outer side of the boundary hedge. West of the gate, it lies within the garden (**Plates 51 & 52**).



*Plate 49: Site boundary seen from lane across grass verge*



*Plate 50: Gated pedestrian entrance which bridges ditch/putative moat*



*Plate 51: Looking N across front garden to farmhouse (left) and NE (right)*



*Plate 52: Looking SW across front garden to farmhouse, with reed-filled ditch (possible remains of moat) to left*

- 3.3.6 The area west of the barn (which formerly contained a section of the probable moat, now infilled) was historically divided from the front garden area by a boundary, probably a fence, which had shifted northwards slightly by 1905. This boundary marked the division between the domestic dwelling and the secondary farmyard west of the barn. A tall hedge stands along part of this alignment but the area is now largely contiguous with the front garden area, forming a single large garden space (**Plates 53 & 54**). This part of the garden contains a wide expanse of lawn and various trees and shrubs, and is separated from the fields beyond by a wooden post-and-rail fence (**Plates 55 & 56**).



*Plate 53: Looking SE across western lawn towards farmhouse (barn to left)*



*Plate 54: Looking NE across western lawn towards barn (farmhouse to right)*



*Plate 55: Looking SW across western lawn towards boundary against fields beyond*



*Plate 56: Looking NW along boundary of field and western lawn*

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1 As a Grade II listed building, the significance and 'special architectural and historic interest' of the Manor Farm barn is effectively beyond dispute, and it is clear that the building merits its inclusion on the statutory list.
- 4.2 This significance derives primarily from its early date, surviving fabric of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (including the original timber framing and roof structure), and its relationship with the probably mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century farmhouse (physically close to it but with the separation of domestic and agricultural spaces). The barn is large and speaks of a farmstead that was historically of some status, the remains of the probable moat also tending to confirm the presence and importance of the site and the wealth of its owners in the medieval period. The building remains legible as a hand-threshing barn, retaining its opposing threshing entrances. The 20<sup>th</sup>-century steel-framed barn addition is not of any heritage significance.
- 4.3 By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century threshing was becoming increasingly mechanised, with horse-powered machines being accommodated in projecting wheel houses, doing away with the need for large cross-ventilated threshing bays. The introduction of the portable steam engine and threshing machine in the 1850s heralded the end of the traditional barn of this type and many thus became redundant in their original purpose. As generally large buildings with open volumes, they were often adapted to other agricultural uses, such as storage (of farm vehicles or livestock fodder) or livestock accommodation. Where farms later became converted to wholly domestic use as private dwellings, these uses also ceased, making these buildings redundant but for *ad hoc* storage purposes.
- 4.4 The barn at Holywell Manor Farm reflects these changes in use, containing livestock stalls of both mid- and later 20<sup>th</sup>-century date, a two-storey 20<sup>th</sup>-century brick addition, and inserted floors and window openings. While these elements are illustrative of the changing uses of the barn, they are not of intrinsically high significance in themselves.
- 4.5 The elements of greatest significance comprise the original fabric (timber framing and roof structure, and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century threshing doors on the south-west elevation). The

brick infill or nogging to the timber frame varies in date, with some perhaps original brickwork surviving in places and renewed infill (of both 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century date) elsewhere. The open volume of the threshing bay preserves the legibility of the building's original use.

## 5.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The purpose of this section of the report is to examine the proposed alterations in the context of the significance and 'special interest' of the listed building, and to provide them with a sustainable justification in conservation terms.

5.1.2 The application for listed building consent seeks the conversion of the barn into two dwellings, of two and four bedrooms respectively.

5.1.3 The advice received from the Council's Conservation Officer on the pre-application scheme made a number of points, which are summarised as:

- any deviation from historic agricultural character to be done in a sympathetic manner, with minimal disruption to fabric and form;
- insertion of stairs and floors should be kept to a minimum (the insertion of a first floor in the cross-gable element (G5) would not be supported);
- glazing should be kept to a minimum; the loss of brick nogging panels for glazing is not supported;
- fixing back the 18<sup>th</sup>-century threshing doors on the SW elevation would remove the ability to appreciate their particular form of construction and 'completely alter' how the space is experienced;
- the loss of the stall partitions (in G2) is not supported '*as these are considered to contribute to the later agricultural character of the space and the evolving narrative of the building*';
- a new vehicular access in place of the existing pedestrian access to the site is not considered appropriate because of impact on visual setting; and
- the alteration of the parking area would require careful consideration in terms of how the listed buildings are viewed from the public realm.

5.1.4 These points have been considered and addressed in formulating the submitted scheme and, where relevant, are referred to throughout this section of the report.

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- 5.1.5 The rationale behind the proposals is to achieve a successful conversion with minimal change to the external appearance of the building, and sensitive change to the interior, allowing the existing form to dictate the proposals, thus securing a sustainable long-term future in use for the building while preserving its significance and 'special architectural and historic interest.'
- 5.1.6 The 20<sup>th</sup>-century steel-framed barn is of no heritage significance and this will be converted to an open-plan living room/kitchen/dining space and two bedrooms. This takes the pressure off the historic barn, which will retain its current bay divisions and will not need to support additional bedrooms through the insertion of first floors where there is no first floor currently. Indeed, the only first-floor spaces proposed under this scheme are in bays where first-floor structures already exist. All bays that are currently open to the roof from ground floor up will remain open to the roof, preserving the existing volumes of the spaces. In addition, only a minimal number of new partitions to subdivide spaces are necessary within the compass of the historic barn.
- 5.1.7 All the existing trusses and timber-framing to internal bay divisions will be retained. Where bay divisions have no infilling material, new infill will be reinstated to the timber frame in order to form solid walls between bays/rooms. All existing timber frame and brickwork infill is to be retained, except where noted to external walls where existing openings are proposed to be enlarged.
- 5.1.8 A new timber-frame structure will be added internally to enable the insulation of the building; to provide additional structural support to the deflecting walls; and to provide additional support for the first-floor structures in order to avoid any further loading on the existing timber frame.
- 5.1.9 The insulation of the building is clearly necessary if it is to be successfully converted to a residential use. In some places, the only material separating inside from outside is weatherboarding, which has been used to clad large parts of the external walls where there is no brick or other solid infill to the timber frame. Much of this material is in a poor condition and the inside of the building is therefore not fully protected against the elements.

5.1.10 Council Officers, at pre-application stage, did not raise any objection to the principle of conversion to residential use. Indeed, in my view, this is now the most appropriate and viable long-term use for the building. There needs, therefore, to be a pragmatic approach to achieving this and securing the building's future in use. In my view, the proposals discussed here represent an approach that is both pragmatic and sensitive to the building's character and significance as a Grade II listed building.

## **5.2 Exterior changes**

5.2.1 The proposals for the external elevations are minimal and mostly relate to fenestration and ensuring that there are adequate sources of natural light into the building.

5.2.2 On the north-east elevation, it is proposed to:

- i. enlarge the size of the existing window opening in panel 3 of Bay 3 so that the full panel down to the plinth becomes glazed;
- ii. to insert two new closely-set Conservation rooflights in the roof-slope above to provide additional natural light to the proposed first-floor bedroom in F2; and
- iii. to insert a glazed screen behind the retained existing threshing doors.

5.2.3 On the south-west elevation, it is proposed to:

- i. Glaze the shuttered opening in panel 1 of Bay 3 (retaining the external shutter);
- ii. replace (in differing positions) the two existing agricultural rooflights above Bays 2 and 3 with two new Conservation rooflights, and replace the two existing 20<sup>th</sup>-century Velux-type rooflights above Bay 1 with Conservation rooflights;
- iii. enlarge the two existing ground-floor window openings in panels 1 and 4 of Bay 2; and
- iv. to insert a glazed screen behind the retained existing threshing doors.

5.2.4 G3 in Bay 3 currently receives very little natural light, from a single (20<sup>th</sup>-century) window in the north-east elevation. This window extends the full width of the upper half of panel 3, the opening having been inserted through non-original (possibly 19<sup>th</sup>-

century) brick infill. This source of light on its own is inadequate for a main living space and so it is proposed to enlarge the existing opening down to the plinth by removing what is a relatively modest amount of brickwork.

- 5.2.5 It is also proposed to glaze the shuttered opening (but retaining the external timber shutter) in panel 1 of Bay 3 on the south-west elevation. This will have no impact on external character.
- 5.2.6 G2 (Bay 2) has a single upper-level window opening in both of its north-east and south-west elevations. These openings are too high (beneath the eaves) to offer any view out of the building from internal ground level. The north-east elevation has no lower-level openings, while the south-west elevation has only two very small openings (in panels 1 and 4) which are also relatively high-set and too small to admit much light or allow views outside.
- 5.2.7 It is proposed to retain the two upper-level window openings (replacing the 20<sup>th</sup>-century windows they contain) and enlarge the two existing lower-level window openings so that they fill their respective timber-framed panels. The lower two-thirds of the opening in panel 1 are currently infilled with ventilation boarding, with three-light glazing above, and 20<sup>th</sup>-century brickwork to right and above. Panel 4 is infilled with possibly 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick and incorporates a small half-width window which was originally full-width (as is evident internally).
- 5.2.8 The loss of these relatively modest amounts of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century brickwork infill can in my view be justified by the respectively moderate and low significance of the fabric to be lost and the benefits enlarging the openings will bring to the proposed use, and thus the enhanced ability to secure a sustainable and viable new use for the building.
- 5.2.9 The Conservation Officer, in their pre-application advice, stated that '*the loss of brick nogging panels for glazing would not be supported,*' and that glazing overall should be kept to a minimum. In my view, the amount of proposed new glazing to the building has been kept to an absolute minimum; there are only three proposed new openings in the two principal elevations and these all involve the enlargement of existing openings, with no introduction of new openings in existing 'untouched' panels.

- 5.2.10 These proposals therefore represent minimal removal of non-original fabric in order to ensure that G3 and G2 can function adequately as main living spaces. This is key to achieving a successful conversion, which in my view provides the '*clear and convincing justification*' required by paragraph 206 of the NPPF in respect of any perceived harm. In this case, the impact is low because it involves the removal of a modest amount of non-original fabric with limited change to appearance and very limited impact on the character of the building overall. In my view, any 'less than substantial harm' caused by this element of the proposals is outweighed by the proportionately larger benefit arising from what this alteration will contribute to the viability of achieving a successful conversion and securing the building's optimum viable use.
- 5.2.11 As noted above at paragraph 5.2.3, the two existing agricultural-style rooflights on the south-western roof-slope are proposed to be replaced with two new Conservation rooflights (both to be above Bay 3), and the two existing Velux-type rooflights above Bay 1 will also be replaced (in slightly shifted positions) with new Conservation rooflights. This does not alter the number of existing rooflights present on this side of the building. On the north-eastern roof-slope, it is proposed to add two new rooflight openings above Bay 3 (which will retain a first-floor structure).
- 5.2.12 While the insertion of rooflights into former agricultural buildings is sometimes considered intrusive, their visual impact can be minimised by the use of flush Conservation-type rooflights, and by keeping them to a minimum number and of modest proportions, as is the case now proposed here. There is a benefit arising from the replacement of the projecting rooflights above Bay 1 with flush Conservation rooflights, while the introduction of two new rooflights on the north-eastern elevation (sited close together) is minimal, with the minor visual impact mitigated by the use of the Conservation type of rooflight.
- 5.2.13 The remaining proposal for the external elevations is the insertion of glazed screens behind the existing threshing doors in each of the two long elevations. The pre-application advice stated that, '*The eighteenth century double plank threshing barn doors are recognised in the listing, and fixing these open on the west elevation would actually mean that you cannot appreciate that these are double plank and also has a potential to completely alter how the space is experienced.*'

- 5.2.14 In actual fact, the 'double plank' nature of the doors' construction is equally fully appreciable from either side of the doors (see **Plates 19 & 20**), such that fixing them back to the elevation in an open position would not at all remove the ability to appreciate this aspect. Nevertheless, it is now proposed to insert the glazed screens but to retain the threshing doors such that they can be held open or closed as currently, rather than fixing them back to the external walls.
- 5.2.15 In summary, it is my view that these proposals adopt the conservative approach advocated by Historic England ('HE') in their publication, *'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings. Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse'* (September 2017), and will have the most minimal effect on the fabric and character of the elevations.
- 5.2.16 The HE guidance recognises that ventilation was usually a more important consideration than light for farm buildings, meaning these often have few external openings. As the historic pattern of openings is usually related to the function of the building, it can make a fundamental contribution to its character. However, in this case, most windows are of 20<sup>th</sup>-century date and it is not known whether they replaced earlier windows or (more likely) were simply inserted anew at this time as the use of the barn changed.
- 5.2.17 HE advice is to maximise the use of existing openings by designing the internal spaces around them and limiting the need to form new openings. This advice has been followed: the existing bay divisions within the barn are retained and existing openings are proposed to be enlarged rather than inserting new ones (other than the two new rooflights on the north-eastern elevation).
- 5.2.18 In respect of large threshing bay entrances, the Council's own guidance *'Agricultural Buildings and Conversion – Barns'* (September 2010) states that *'Wagon door openings provide an excellent source of light to the interior thus minimising the need for new openings. Where good doors remain, they can be retained as shutters allowing the opening to be used as a light source, or sealed in situ if daylight is not a problem.'*
- 5.2.19 The HE guidance notes that, *'New entrance screens which are slightly recessed with a simple vertical emphasis can be effective. Full glazing can alter the scale of the building and can give too much prominence to the opening. However, if the cart doors*

*still survive or replacements are designed this can successfully reduce the impact of glazing.*’ Indeed, the insertion of glazing in this manner and the retention of the barn doors alongside has become a well-established and generally accepted method of treating threshing-barn entrances as part of conversions to residential use.

#### Steel-framed barn

- 5.2.20 This range of the building is not of heritage significance but lends itself to retention and conversion to support the proposed residential use in the historic barn, enabling a partially open-plan style of accommodation. This barn was originally open-sided and has since been partially infilled, with a mix of rendered concrete blockwork and timber cladding. In order to effect the conversion, all remaining open bays will be infilled.
- 5.2.21 The pre-application scheme proposed that the first three bays from the left on the south-eastern elevation of the range would be infilled with glazed screens, with the two bays at the right-hand end clad with vertical boarding (the end bay being double doors opening onto a garage). On the north-western elevation, the three bays at the right-hand end (currently all infilled) were proposed to have glazed screens and the two left-hand bays be clad with timber weatherboarding. However, the pre-application advice included the opinion that, *‘the proposal to the later twentieth century section is felt to include a lot of glazing that would be close to the historic section of the barn which is felt to be out of character and contrary to guidance. Whilst a section of this later addition is open for access and storage, this is not felt to be of the same character.’*
- 5.2.22 In my own view, the concept of introducing glazed screens as infill to some of the open bays (all of which were originally open) is entirely appropriate and would have no bearing on the historic character and significance of the historic barn, or on the ability to appreciate it. However, the submitted scheme has revised the design of this element to take account of that advice.
- 5.2.23 On the ‘front’ (south-east) elevation, all five bays are now to be clad with vertical burnt larch timber boarding. The existing entrance to the left will remain the position of a new glazed entrance and a strip of high-level glazing will be incorporated beneath the eaves of all but the left-hand bay. This will enable additional natural light into the building while substantially reducing the extent of glazing that is visible in conjunction

with the north-eastern elevation of the historic barn, preserving a greater agricultural character on this side of the building.

5.2.24 In order to achieve this, it means that a greater degree of glazing is required on the 'rear' (north-west) elevation to light (and to complement the nature of) the proposed open-plan living areas. However, this is 'broken up' in terms of its extent by introducing panels of vertical burnt larch boarding across the elevation, including at either end and in an off-centre position. The glazing and boarding will be inserted just behind the existing steel frame of the barn so that the existing modern agricultural aesthetic is preserved. This elevation is not seen in conjunction with either of the principal important elevations of the historic barn and is less sensitive in this respect, with more flexibility in design terms.

5.2.25 In my view this presents a good compromise between preserving an agricultural aesthetic and good design that works with the nature of the internal space and provides it with sufficient natural light. The full-height glazing, where this is used, reflects the originally fully open-sided nature of the barn range, but is concentrated on the elevation that is not seen in conjunction with any principal elevation of the historic barn.

### **5.3 Interior: Plot 1**

5.3.1 Plot 1 would comprise a single dwelling over Bays 1, 2 and 3 of the building.

#### Bay 1: G1 & F1

5.3.2 This bay will comprise the entrance hall to the property, with a study in what is currently G1b, a staircase in G1c, and boot room and WC in G1a and G1b.

5.3.3 The bay already has a first floor and will retain a first floor under the proposals. The existing ladder-type stairs up to it will be removed and replaced with a new staircase that meets building regulations. This will be installed in a similar location to the existing but will also fill the space currently occupied by G1c. The existing plyboard partitions forming G1b and G1c will be replaced with new partitions on similar alignments, while the layout of G1d and G1e will also remain as existing, with new

sanitary fittings installed to provide a boot room and WC. The existing entrance in the gable end will be retained and provide the main entrance to the dwelling.

- 5.3.4 F1, the first-floor space, will be subdivided with new partitions to form a bedroom with en suite, and the new stairhead. The bedroom will be lit by the two existing rooflight openings (the windows themselves to be replaced with Conservation rooflights).
- 5.3.5 There is no loss of historic/significant fabric or any other harmful impact arising from the proposals for Bay 1.

#### Bay 2: G2

- 5.3.6 The pre-application scheme proposed the removal of the probably mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century stall partitions from this bay and the insertion of a new first-floor structure. The pre-application advice noted that, *'the loss of partitions to the pens to the south would also be considered a loss of character as these are considered to contribute to the later agricultural character of the space and the evolving narrative of the building.'*
- 5.3.7 While I would agree with this statement to some degree, I am not of the view that the 20<sup>th</sup>-century stall partitions are so significant to the 'special interest' of the barn that their removal would have a significantly harmful impact; they are late interventions of no intrinsic heritage significance in themselves. However, the submitted scheme now retains and refurbishes the partitions and incorporates them into the kitchen fittings that will be installed in the space. This is an imaginative solution that finds a compromise between retention of fabric and character, and ability to use the space as part of the residential accommodation.
- 5.3.8 The pre-application advice also notes that, *'Insertion of stairs and upper floors should be kept to a minimum.'* The submitted proposals insert no additional first-floor structures but simply retain first floors where these already exist. In line with this principle, it is no longer proposed to insert a first floor across Bay 2, which will instead remain open to the roof as currently.
- 5.3.9 Certainly, in this respect and across the building as a whole, the proposals are in accordance with the Council's September 2010 guidance on barn conversions (see

paragraph 5.2.18 above), which says, *Do ensure that a substantial part of the main interior void – at least one third – remains open to its full height.* Here, three of six bays remain open to their full height, as currently.

### Bay 3: G3 & F2

- 5.3.10 The pre-application scheme proposed the division of G3 into a bedroom, walk-in wardrobe and en suite bathroom. The existing first-floor mezzanine structure was to be extended across the full bay and subdivided along similar lines, with access provided by a new staircase to be inserted in Bay 4 (G4; the threshing bay).
- 5.3.11 These proposals have been significantly revised. As previously, the mezzanine structure is replaced by a full first-floor structure across the bay, extending to the existing partial timber-framed partition against Bay 4, which will form the party wall between the Plot 1 and 2 dwellings. However, G3 will remain undivided and used as a living room, with a new staircase to be inserted in the location of the existing rudimentary ladder-type stair to the mezzanine. F2 above will be divided to form a bedroom with en suite and a small landing at the new stairhead.
- 5.3.12 The new floor structure will be at a higher level than the existing so that there is a more comfortable ceiling height in G3 and so that Truss 2.5 (the 'interim' truss) can be retained in a manner that means it will not obstruct the use of F2 (as it currently hinders the use of the mezzanine floor). The tie beam of the truss will be contained within the new floor void, retaining the inclined struts in place in the bedroom (one will be against the new partition wall between bedroom and en suite). The submitted section drawing shows how this will be achieved and shows the relationship of the higher floor level to the proposed replacement rooflights such that users of the first-floor room will have a view out and so that the stairwell is also lit from above.
- 5.3.13 In summary, it is clear that the proposals for the Plot 1 dwelling work with the existing form of the building, preserving the existing open volume in Bay 2 (and the stall partitions) and retaining first-floor structures where these already exist, which is essential to the ability to convert this part of the building into a two-bedroom dwelling.

## 5.4 Interior: Plot 2

5.4.1 Plot 2 would comprise a single dwelling over Bays 4, 5 and 6 of the building.

### Bay 4: G4

5.4.2 The pre-application scheme proposed the insertion of a staircase into, and a bridging structure across this bay (the former threshing bay) to provide access between the first-floor structure over G3 and a new first floor in Bay 5 (both then proposed to be part of the same dwelling). The pre-application advice stated that, *'The insertion of an upper floor to the cross gable section [i.e. Bay 5] would not be supported as this would diminish the character of the barn and disrupt the plan form.'*

5.4.3 The submitted scheme divides the two dwellings differently and does not include the insertion of a first floor across Bay 5 and so there is now no need for either the staircase or a bridging structure in G4, enabling the former threshing bay to retain its current open volume into the roof. It is established practice in threshing barn conversions that, wherever possible, the volume of the threshing bay should remain open in order to preserve an appreciation of how the barn originally functioned and to preserve open character, and the submitted proposals are in line with this principle.

5.4.4 This bay will be converted to a living room/snug and will be lit by the glazed screens proposed to be inserted behind the retained threshing-bay doors in each of the two long elevations (it being possible to open or close these as required for privacy/security).

### Bay 5: G5

5.4.5 As referred to above, in line with the pre-application advice, there is no longer a proposal to insert a first-floor structure across this 'cross-gabled' bay. Instead, it will be left open into the roof, allowing the original gabled form still to be appreciated as part of a single-volume space.

5.4.6 This will be a dining room. The existing brick and concrete blockwork livestock pens will be taken out. It is noted that the pre-application advice did not attach any significance to these, which rather undermines the point made about the slightly earlier pens in G2; that is, the latter contribute to the evolving narrative of the use of

the building but the former do not, despite both serving the same function. Certainly, however, the pens in G5 are of later date than those in G2 and I am of the view that these can be removed without any harmful impact whatsoever on the fabric or character and 'special interest' of the building. Their retention would obstruct the ability to convert and use this space in any sensible way.

#### Bay 6: G6 & F3

- 5.4.7 This bay was added to the barn in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century (after 1925). It already has a first floor, which will be retained and used as a bedroom with en suite. The modern stall partitions in the ground-floor space will be taken out so that this space can also be converted to a bedroom. These works do not involve the loss of significant historic fabric or impact on significant historic character.

#### Steel-framed barn

- 5.4.8 This range is not of heritage interest. The proposed changes to its external appearance have been discussed above. Internally, the concrete blockwork livestock pens will be removed and the space redivided to create large open-plan living spaces and two further bedrooms. This will not result in any impact on heritage values.

### **5.5 Setting**

- 5.5.1 As two dwellings are proposed under the conversion scheme, there is a need to provide separate private amenity space for each property while also respecting the private amenity space associated with the existing farmhouse and protecting the setting of the listed buildings generally, including their relationship to one another.
- 5.5.2 One of the pre-application scheme options was to provide a second vehicular entrance to the site to serve the farmhouse, in the location of the existing pedestrian access. The pre-application advice stated that this would be inappropriate '*as this would alter the visual impact of the setting of the listed building, as at present its surroundings are very green and rural.*' I am generally in agreement with this, with the additional point to be made that creating a new vehicle access here could have a physical impact on the remains of the probable moat and its archaeological significance, as well as having an impact on the green and enclosed appearance of the setting of the

farmhouse from the lane. Providing associated parking in front of the farmhouse could also have a harmful visual impact.

- 5.5.3 This option has therefore been abandoned in favour of simply using the existing vehicular access to serve all three properties. The existing driveway will run into the existing parking area (with the turning circle element removed in favour of soft landscaping) and serve the two properties in the converted barn, while the farmhouse will be served by providing a new short spur of driveway off the existing drive where it enters the site from the lane, which will run into a new parking area in front of the existing outbuilding/garage. This area will connect via a footpath to the farmhouse.
- 5.5.4 This part of the garden is discreetly tucked away between the existing drive, the garage and the pond, and does not fall within the sightline of any significant views to the listed buildings or impinge on any aspect of the physical or visual relationship between the farmhouse and barn. The area between the pond and the garage formerly provided the main access to the farmyard and would have enabled the comings and goings of the working farm; it was not historically part of the front garden to the farmhouse.
- 5.5.5 The garden to the farmhouse will remain generous and proportionate to the size and status of the property, comprising its original front garden, the pond and garage area and the lawn to the west. The northern boundary of the rear garden will be shifted further south to create privacy between it and the south-western outlook from the converted barn: land north of this boundary will revert to pasture. This piece of land was historically separated from the farmhouse and its garden, providing a secondary working yard for the barn so its re-separation has historical precedent.
- 5.5.6 The Plot 1 dwelling will have a garden to the north-east, while the garden to the Plot 2 dwelling, a larger property, will comprise the north-eastern corner of the site. Separation between Plot 1 and the farmhouse garden will be achieved with new planting along the boundary, while separation between the Plots 1 and 2 dwellings could be achieved in an appropriately rural manner, with post-and-rail fencing and/or native hedge planting.

## **6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 This report has set out the historical development and significance of the Grade II listed barn at Holywell Manor Farm. This assessment has provided an understanding of the significance of the listed building that has informed the development of proposals for conversion of the barn to two dwellings.
- 6.2 The submitted proposals seek to secure a new use for the buildings as two dwellings. The building's agricultural use is redundant and it is currently only partly in use for *ad hoc* storage associated with the existing residential property, Holywell Manor Farmhouse (also a Grade II listed building). A new residential use for the barn, achieved through a sensitive conversion, is now considered to be the optimum viable use.
- 6.3 The approach has been to effect minimal change to the external appearance of the barn, retaining and repairing historic fabric and preserving historic agricultural character, and to work with the barn's existing form in planning the internal spaces. The proposals will preserve a high degree of openness inside the barn and accord with local authority and Historic England guidance on achieving sensitive conversions.
- 6.4 The relationship of the barn to the farmhouse with which it is associated will remain strong and the proposals will not have any impact on the significance of the farmhouse.
- 6.5 In my view, the minimum degree of intervention has been proposed in order to achieve a successful conversion of the barn. Where a limited amount of historic fabric has been proposed for removal (where existing window openings are proposed to be enlarged), I am firmly of the view that this loss is justified in the interests of achieving a successful conversion and securing the long-term sustainable use of the building.
- 6.6 Any minor less than substantial harm that may be perceived to arise from this aspect of the proposals is in my view more than outweighed by the overarching benefit of securing the building's future in use.

6.7 Therefore, and for the reasons set out in the body of this report, I am firmly of the view that the proposed works are compatible with the preservation of the significance and 'special architectural and historic interest' of the listed buildings. As such, it is my considered opinion that the proposals comply with the advice on conserving and enhancing the historic environment contained in the NPPF, relevant local policy and, most importantly of all, the statutory tests set by Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

**Appendix 1:**  
**Historic England list descriptions**

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# BARN APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES NORTH OF HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE

## Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1184506**

Date first listed: **16-Feb-1990**

List Entry Name: **BARN APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES NORTH OF HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE**

Statutory Address 1: **BARN APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES NORTH OF HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE**

**This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.**

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

**[Understanding list entries](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/)** (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

**[Corrections and minor amendments](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/)** (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

## Location

Statutory Address: **BARN APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES NORTH OF HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: **Warwickshire**

District: **Warwick (District Authority)**

Parish: **Rowington**

National Grid Reference: **SP 19712 66518**

## Details

ROWINGTON HOLLYWELL SP16NE 3/90 Barn approx. 5n N of Hollywell Manor Farmhouse GV II Barn. Probably mid C17, date of 1719 to re-sited spine beam. Brick plinth; small timber-framing with brick infill; small timber framing with weatherboarding to upper panels, old plain-tile roof, with C20 plain-tile areas. 8-bay range. C18 double plank doors to left of centre. Plank pedestrian door to centre. Irregular fenestration of casements and shuttered openings. C20 roof lights to right. Interior: queen strut roof. [ 91]

Listing NGR: SP1971266518

## Legacy

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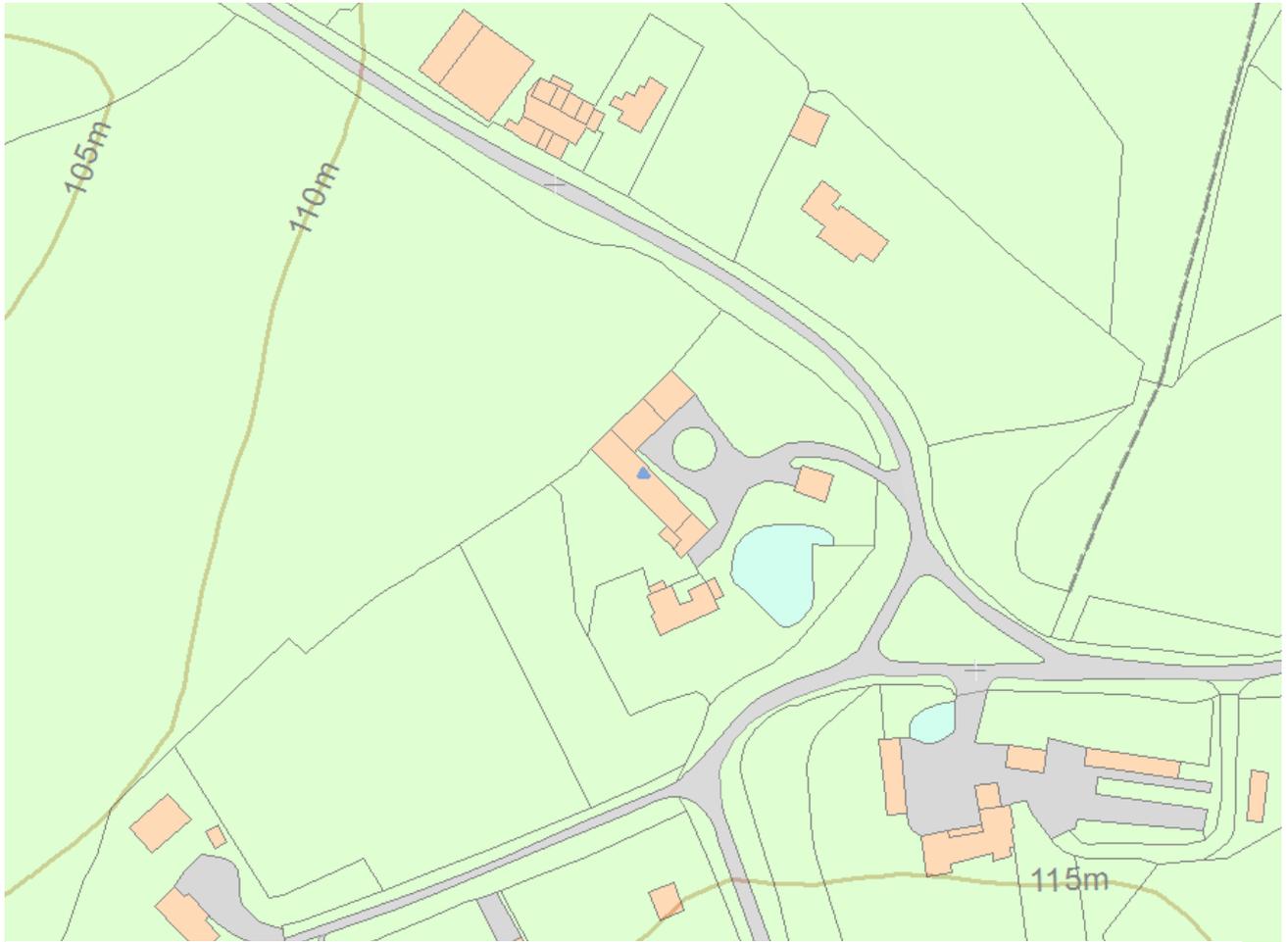
Legacy System number: **308354**

Legacy System: **LBS**

## Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

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## Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale.  
This copy shows the entry on 31-Jul-2023 at 22:08:44.

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End of official list entry

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# HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE

## Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1035094**

Date first listed: **11-Apr-1967**

List Entry Name: **HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE**

Statutory Address 1: **HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE**

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

**Understanding list entries** (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

**Corrections and minor amendments** (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

## Location

Statutory Address: **HOLYWELL MANOR FARMHOUSE**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: **Warwickshire**

District: **Warwick (District Authority)**

Parish: **Rowington**

National Grid Reference: **SP 19718 66486**

## Details

ROWINGTON HOLLYWELL SP16NE 3/89 Hollywell Manor Farmhouse 11/04/67 GV II Farmhouse. Probably mid C16, with C17 addition and C18 alterations. Brick to ground floor; close-studded timber-framing to first floor with brick infill, except stone rubble infill to left of centre; old plain-tile roof; stone-based internal stack to left of centre with 2 diagonally set rebuilt brick flues; brick ridge stack to right of centre. 2-storey, 3-window range. French doors to right. 3-light casements to left and centre. 3 gabled false dormers with 3-light casements. Left return: faced in probably early C19 red brick. Cross-wing to rear right: brick to ground floor; small timber-framing with brick infill to first floor left and right returns; close-studded timber-framing with rendered infill to first floor and attic gable end of cross-wing. Single-light wood window with diagonally-set wood bar to first floor right of end of cross-wing. Interior: open fireplaces to ground floor. Chamfered spine beams to ground floor. Queen post roof with windbraces. [ 90]

Listing NGR: SP1971866486

## Legacy

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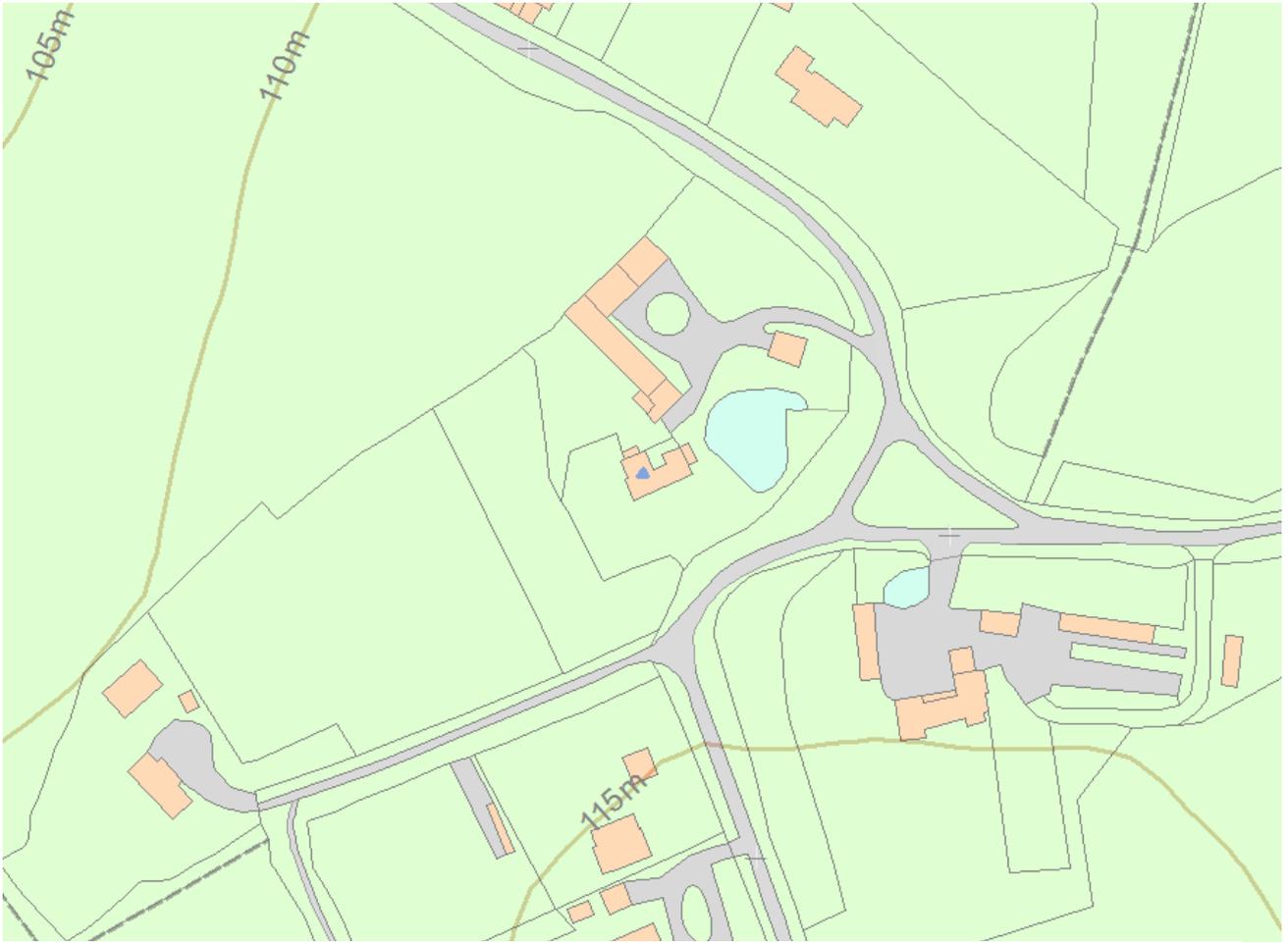
Legacy System number: **308353**

Legacy System: **LBS**

## Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

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## Map

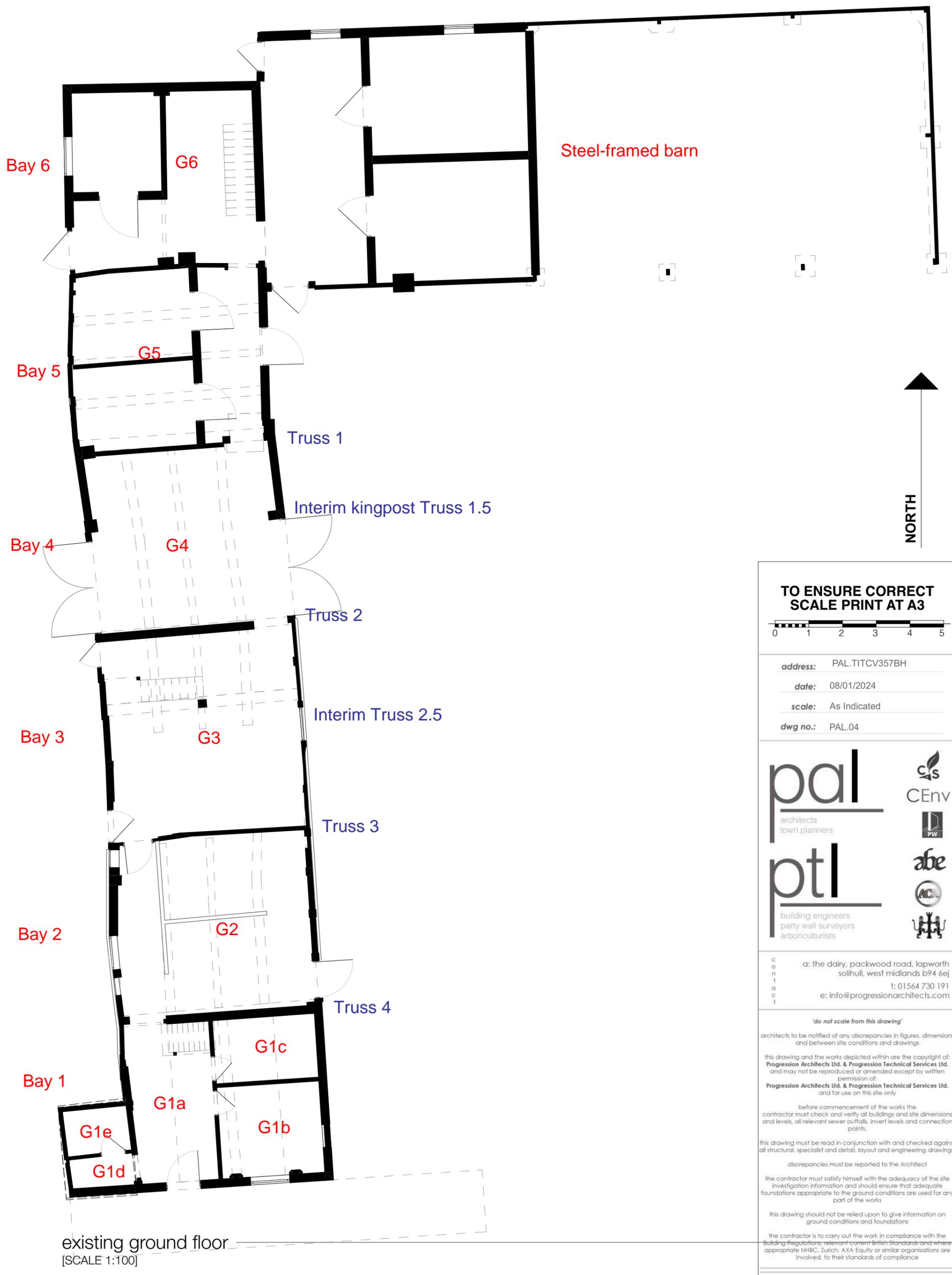
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End of official list entry

**Appendix 2:  
Annotated survey plans**



**TO ENSURE CORRECT SCALE PRINT AT A3**



address: PAL.TITCV357BH  
 date: 08/01/2024  
 scale: As Indicated  
 dwg no.: PAL.04









contact: the dairy, packwood road, lapworth solihull, west midlands b94 6ej  
 t: 01564 730 191  
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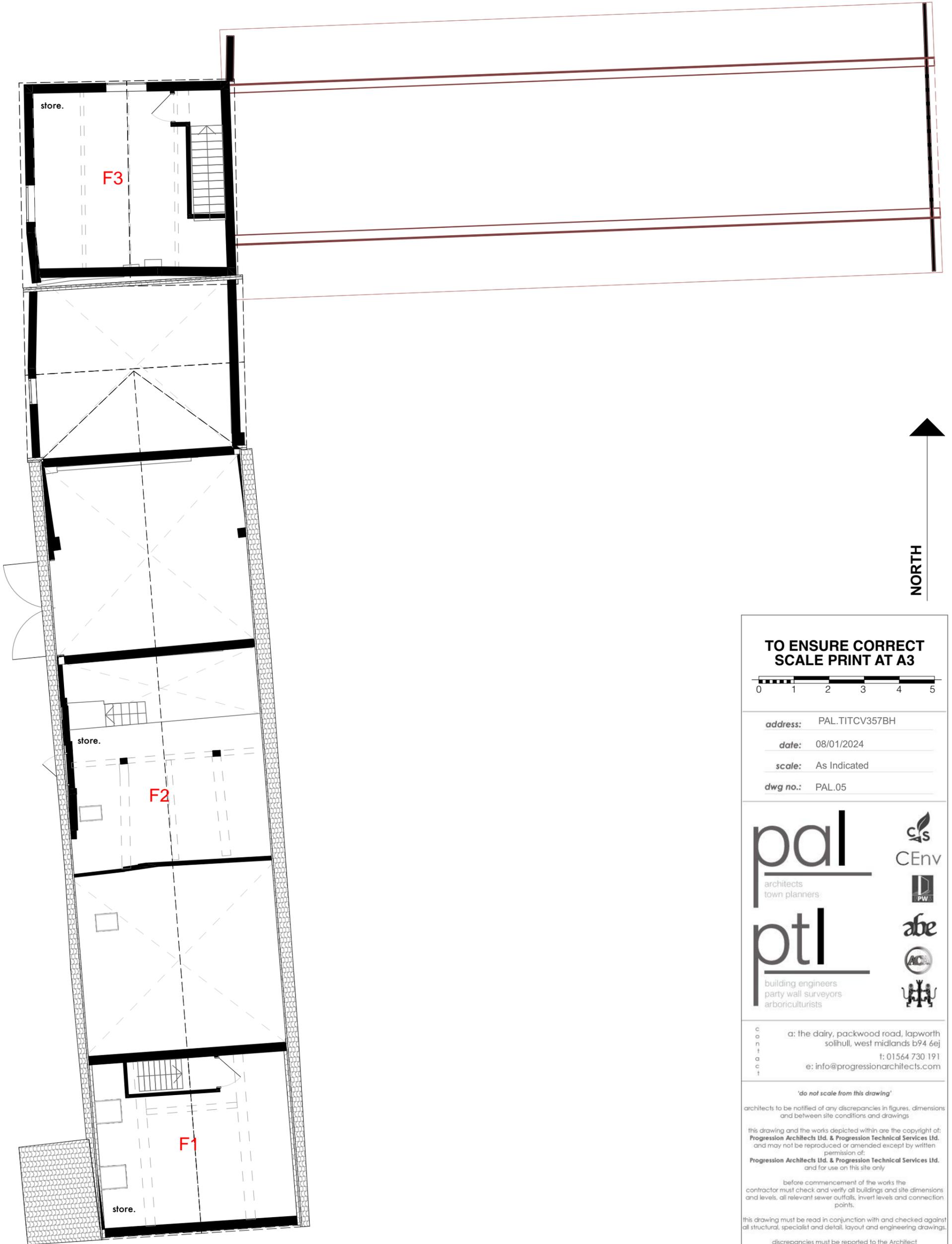
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the contractor is to carry out the work in compliance with the Building Regulations, relevant current British Standards and where appropriate NHBC, Zurich, AXA Equity or similar organisations are involved, to their standards of compliance

existing ground floor  
 [SCALE 1:100]



existing first floor  
[SCALE 1:100]

**TO ENSURE CORRECT  
SCALE PRINT AT A3**



address: PAL.TITCV357BH

date: 08/01/2024

scale: As Indicated

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**pal**  
architects  
town planners



**ptl**  
building engineers  
party wall surveyors  
arboriculturists



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discrepancies must be reported to the Architect

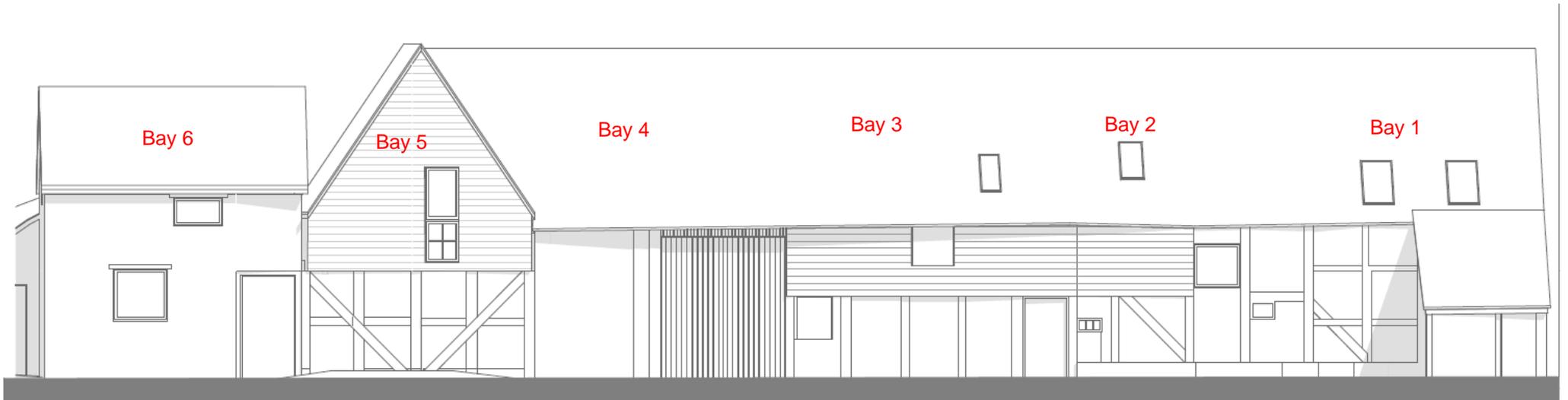
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this drawing should not be relied upon to give information on ground conditions and foundations

the contractor is to carry out the work in compliance with the Building Regulations, relevant current British Standards and where appropriate NHBC, Zurich, AXA Equity or similar organisations are involved, to their standards of compliance



NE elevation



SW elevation