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Design & Access Statement
Heritage Statement

Proposed Conversion of Existing Barn to Annexe
and Ancillary Accommodation
Elm Tree Farm, Hazles Cross Rd, Kingsley, ST10 2AP

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1.0 DESCRIPTION

1.1. Elm Tree Farm is situated in Kingsley, within Staffordshire Moorlands. The site lies at the corner of Hazles Cross Rd, as High Street becomes The Green.

1.2. The farmhouse is Grade II listed and was designated in 1967 (UID: 1307992). The listing description is as follows:

"Farmhouse. C17 with early C19 and C20 alterations. Coursed dressed and squared stone; tiled roof; verge parapets; end stack to left. Eccentric T-shaped plan (virtually an L). Garden side to east of 2 storeys and 2 windows; projecting gable to right; C20 casement to first floor over labelled 4-light chamfered *mullioned window to ground set in remaining deep red C17 stonework; set-back wing to left has tripartite sash. Entrance on south side of rear wing with C19 Tudor arch."*

1.3. Also within the site, a Grade II listed barn lies approximately 5m SW of the Farmhouse. Listed in 1986 (UID 1037993), the description is as follows:

"Barn. Early C18 with mid-C19 alterations. Coursed dressed and squared stone of fine quality; tiled roof on chamfered eaves band. Hay loft over cow sheds. East face has slit vents to left and heavy lintel over door to right of centre."

1.4. Other listed buildings within the vicinity include Newhall Farmhouse (to the NW) and 44 High Street to the (SE). Both are listed Grade II.

1.5. The farmhouse dates from the late 17th century, and represents a fine example of a three-unit lobby-entrance house (Brunskill, 1997). This means that the front door opens into a lobby formed by the jamb wall of a fireplace, and this plan form was widely used in the 17th to mid-18th centuries. A three-unit house has an elongated elevation, with an extra room opened off the larger of the two main rooms.

1.6. It was also common, as living standards improved, for such houses to be extended to provide additional accommodation. This would be done via an extension (usually to the rear, but occasionally to the front as in this case), to produce an L or T-shaped plan. Such an arrangement was "widely employed in the 18th century, especially in…the Midlands" (Brunskill, 1997).

1.7. The farmhouse has undergone some changes throughout its lifetime – openings have been altered and 20th century windows added. It's likely that the original windows looked similar to the current frames, being within the "sub-medieval" phase (Brunskill, 2000), which represented a trasition between the long horizontal runs of mullioned windows (two examples of which remain to the ground floor), and later sash windows.

1.8. The attached barn, which is the subject of the proposed conversion, is a later addition. A review of historic OS maps shows this element doesn't appear until after 1924. Though it looks in very much the same style as the farmhouse, the colour and the coursing of the stone differs from that on the main house, and an obvious join is visible to the front elevation.

1.9. In plan form, the rear wall doesn't line through with the house, and a gap is visible in this corner internally, crudely filled with mortar.

1.10. It's likely that this barn was added to provide more accommodation for livestock, or simply as storage. The ventilation holes and opening at first floor suggest this was used as a hay loft. It's believed the property was still in use as a working farm into the 1960/70s.

1.11. Internally, the barn has been semi-converted to provide a domestic use secondary to the farmhouse. At ground floor, the space has previously been used as a workshop, and has been partially dry-lined. The floor level has been raised via the insertion of a (somewhat uneven) timber floor, presumably so that access can also be gained from the high level doorway at the rear.

1.12. The first floor is supported via slender timber joists and posts. These are a modern addition, but are unlikely to meet current standards (see structural survey).

1.13. At first floor, the space has been utilised for domestic purposes via the addition of a dry-lined plasterboard "box" containing an ensuite serving the master bedroom, together with a laundry room. The rest of the space is used for storage purposes, accessed via a reduced height door beneath the truss. It is believed these alterations were done several years ago (the current owners bought the property in 2016), but do not have listed building or planning consent for change of use.

1.14. The barn is generally structurally sound, but the roof requires some attention, with several rafters having already been supported by the addition of new joists to the sides. The accompanying survey covers any structural issues and recommendations for repair/replacement.

2.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

2.1. In order to assess the significance of the barns within their setting, this document adopts the methods outlined in Historic England's publication "*Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance.*" The guidance describes four heritage values that may contribute to the significance of a place: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal.

2.2. *Evidential Value* is described as "*the potential of a place to yield evidence of past activity.*" For example, archaeological deposits may provide clues in place of any written record.

2.3. The potential for archaeological deposits within the site is relatively low. The farmhouse dates from the late 17th century, while the attached barn was built comparatively recently, in the early-mid 20th century.

2.4. Evidential value is proportional to the amount of material evidence lost or altered since their original use and it is obvious that various elements may have been altered over time. However, this is a reflection of the changing times and developing methods of farming during the 19th & 20th centuries.

2.5. *Historical Value* derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It is similar to evidential value, but is more focused on how people originally used the buildings. The site represents a typical farmstead dating from the 17th/18th centuries, situated within a rural hamlet.

2.6. The layout of the buildings, with the earlier detached barn lying perpendicular to the front, and the later attached barn elongating the farmhouse elevation, demonstrates how the farm might have been used at one point. It's possible that the attached barn was built to house more valuable livestock or machinery, being situated closer to the house. However, a lack of documentary evidence to support such hypotheses limits the historic value.

2.7. *Aesthetic Value* derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. This may be the result of conscious design, or fortuitous evolution.

2.8. Some people may question the amount of aesthetic value which might be obtained from such agricultural buildings. Their vernacular architecture is borne out of the need for function over form, and the materials that were available at the time. However, the mixture of materials and ad hoc alterations add a distinctive charm.

2.9. The farmhouse is very visually appealing, situated in an elevated position amongst mature gardens. The yellow stone retains much of its colour, and the

addition of the attached barn, though more rustic in appearance, has done little to detract from the overall aesthetic value.

2.10. *Communal Value* is about the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it. As a private residence, set back from the main road, communal value is somewhat limited. However, its presence in Kingsley, and within the wider area, helps reinforce the area's identity as a primarily agricultural community.

3.0 THE DESIGN CONCEPT

3.1. The proposals seek the repair and conversion of the attached barn into a self-contained annexe alongside ancillary accommodation to serve.

3.2. At ground floor it is proposed to create a new doorway from the existing kitchen to access the barn internally. This will then connect the residential space with a new ground floor laundry and WC (something the current house lacks). The doorway will be in the gable wall of the farmhouse, and step down to a new floor level created within the barn.

3.3. The rest of the space will be utilised as self-contained living accommodation, though this will retain access into the laundry, and therefore a connection to the main house. A small kitchen, living/dining area and shower room will be created.

3.4. At first floor it's proposed to remove the current plasterboard "box" containing the ensuite and laundry, to create a larger ensuite and storage area (the laundry having been relocated to the ground floor). The current storage space, accessed beneath the truss, will form a mezzanine bedroom to the self-contained annexe. The boiler will also be relocated to the first floor.

3.5. A new first floor structure is required (see structural survey). This will remain at the current level for the annexe, but the ensuite floor will be raised in line with the master bedroom floor, to allow enough headroom for the new doorway below. The new floor will consist of timber joists, supported on joist hangers between the walls, and a post at the base of the staircase.

3.6. The design utilises the existing openings, primarily the doors to the front and rear elevations, and the first-floor gable window. One further window has been blocked up at the rear, and it is proposed to reinstate this as a window, to try and maximise light into the annexe. The rear doorway is to become a window (to allow units to be placed in front), but it is proposed to timber clad the base of the infill to retain the overall look of a doorway externally.

3.7. All windows are to be timber casements, painted white to match those on the farmhouse. However, it's proposed to avoid overly "fussy" glazing bars and keep the windows simple, to reflect the agricultural nature of the barn.

3.8. The front door is to be glazed and set back within the reveal, to limit the impact externally, whilst maximising daylight within the ground floor. The existing door is in a poor state of repair, so a replacement timber "barn" door is proposed, but will be fixed/latched back to the wall.

3.9. Internally the walls have been covered with a mix of dry lining, crumbling plaster and limewash. It's proposed to remove this and assess the quality of the stonework before proceeding with any further treatment. Options are to clean the stone and re-point where necessary, leaving the stone entirely visible.

Alternatively, should the stone be of poor quality, a lime based plaster could be applied. A final option would be to insulate the walls with the addition of sheep's wool between timber studwork, but this would compromise the internal space. Instead, it's proposed to balance energy efficiency requirements by maximising insulation within the roof and floors. The appropriate methodology should be approved by the conservation officer once the space has been cleared and before any work commences.

3.10. The suspended timber floor is to be removed, allowing assessment of the ground below (assumed to be bare earth). This should be stripped back, and a new limecrete floor slab laid, level with the front door threshold.

3.11. A new timber staircase will travel beneath the existing truss (avoiding the current head room issues), and land within the mezzanine bedroom. The truss is to be left open to the void above the stairs, to maximise daylight travelling throughout the space. A new wall will be constructed off the first floor, but will finish below the truss line, so that the space retains a mezzanine feel.

3.12. It is proposed to insert three new conservation rooflights to the rear – one to the bedroom, one to the stair void, and one to the ensuite bathroom. The current ensuite lacks any form of ventilation or natural daylight, so it is felt this would be an important addition. With limited openings at ground floor, the stair rooflight will allow daylight to travel down, creating a more impressive double height space in which the existing truss can be viewed in full at both levels.

3.13. The walls and roof structure will also require careful repair, as set out within the accompanying structural survey.

3.14. There are no further alterations externally or within the curtilage of the listed building.

4.0 THE IMPACT
The Impact

4.1. The conversion of the attached barn into residential accommodation should have a very negligible impact on the significance of the heritage asset as it stands.

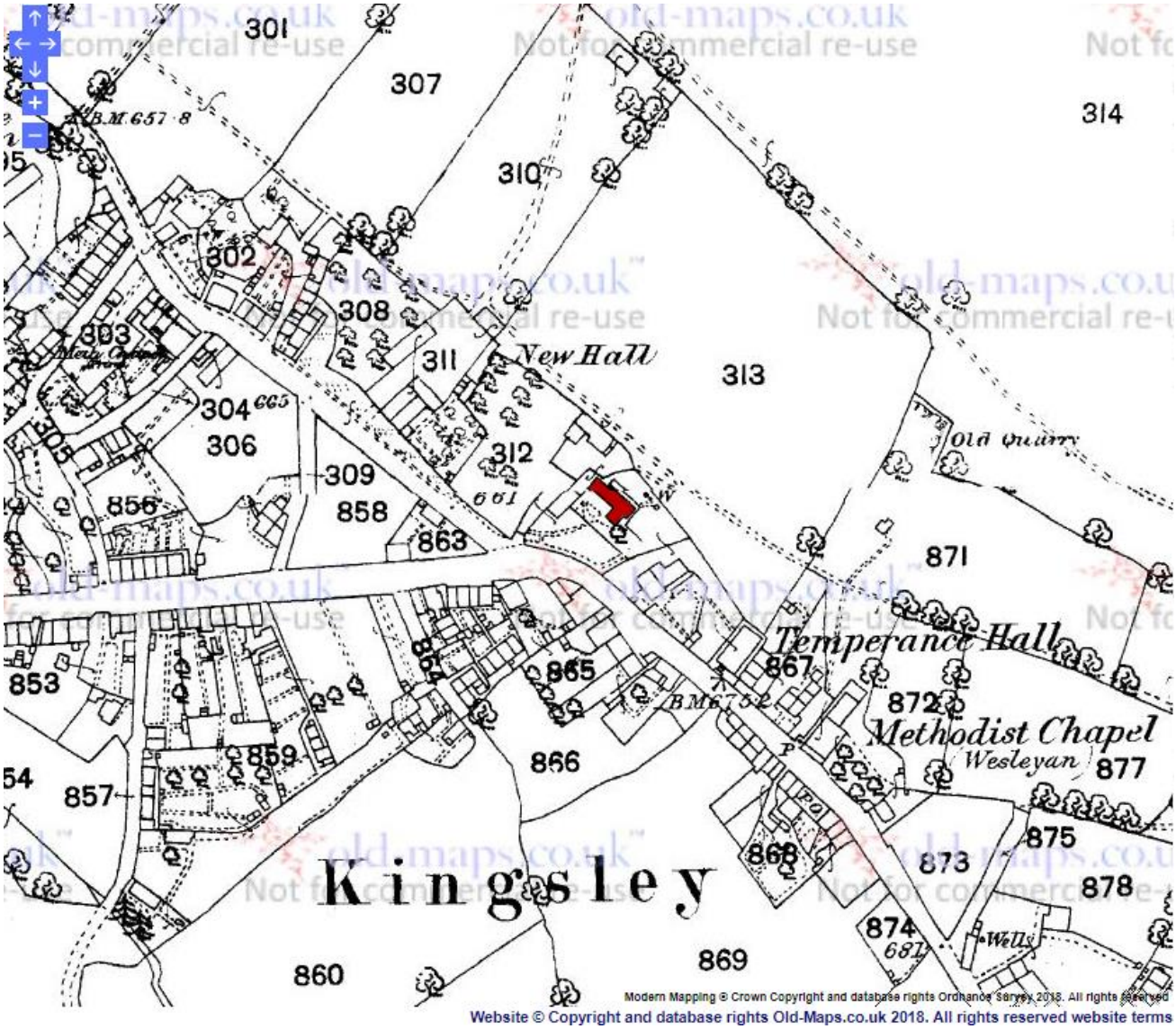
4.2. The barn has already been semi-converted, albeit without permission, for many years, and hasn't been used for agricultural purposes since the 1970s. Considering the historic map evidence shows no structure in this location until the mid-1920s (at the earliest), this represents a relatively short lifespan as an agricultural building, with little historic significance. The listing description for the farmhouse makes no reference to the attached barn, while the detached barn (listed in its own right) represents a far better and more historic example of this type of building.

4.3. The farmhouse is, of course, Grade II listed (the barn being listed by association), and retains a high level of significance, both historically and aesthetically. However, the conversion of the attached barn should have little to no impact on this significance. The creation of an opening in the gable wall will not be visible externally, and any loss of historic fabric must be weighed against the benefits of conversion i.e. the continued repair and maintenance of the attached building.

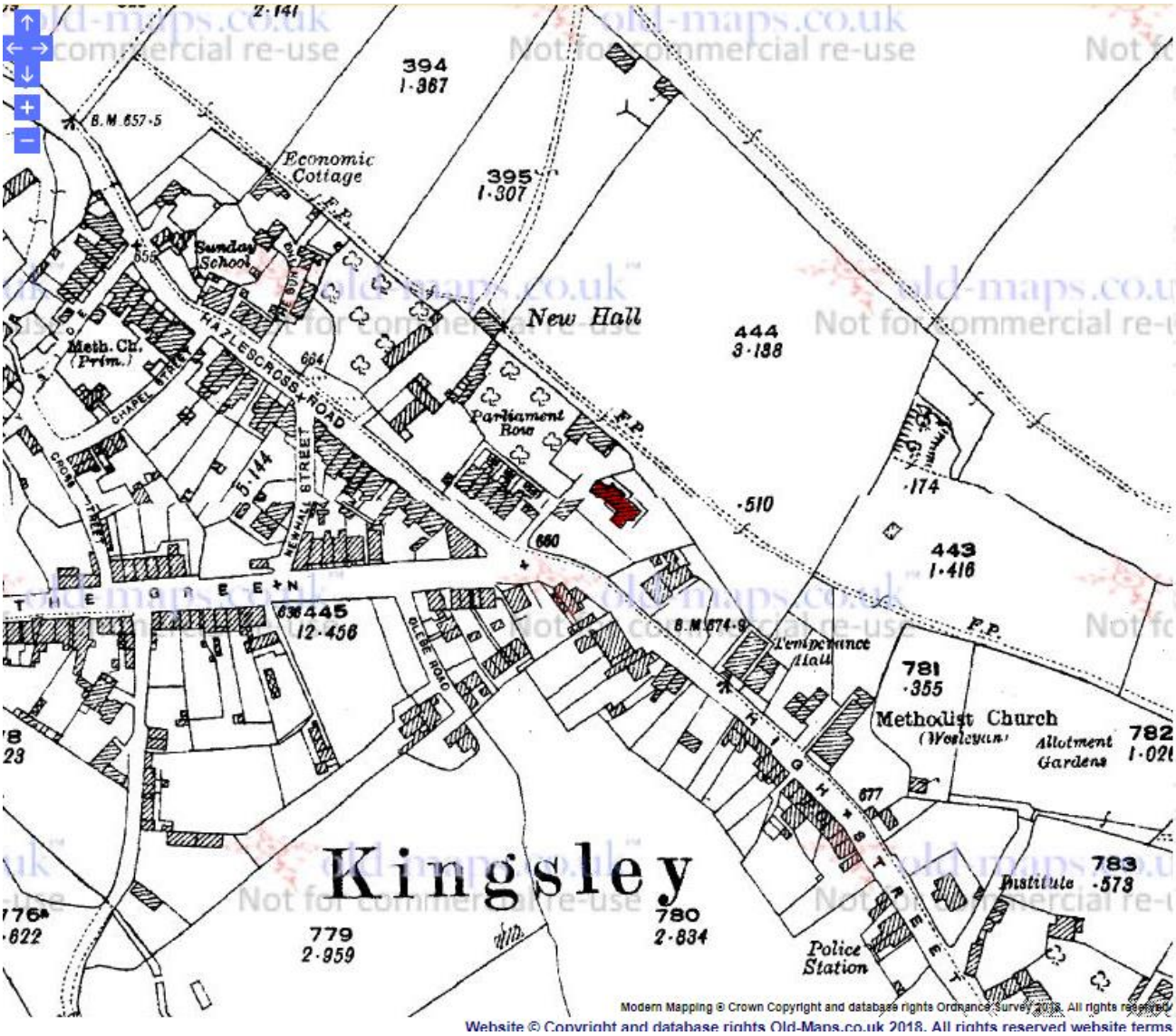
4.4. The setting of the historic building will not be negatively affected – the repair/replacement of doors and windows as proposed should have a positive effect on the overall appearance. The insertion of new rooflights has been kept to the rear, to limit impact on the principal elevation, and should only be visible within the property's own curtilage.

4.5. Historic methods and materials (timber, lime etc.), will be utilised wherever possible, to maintain the integrity of the fabric. The use of light partition walls rather than blockwork should minimise potential harm.

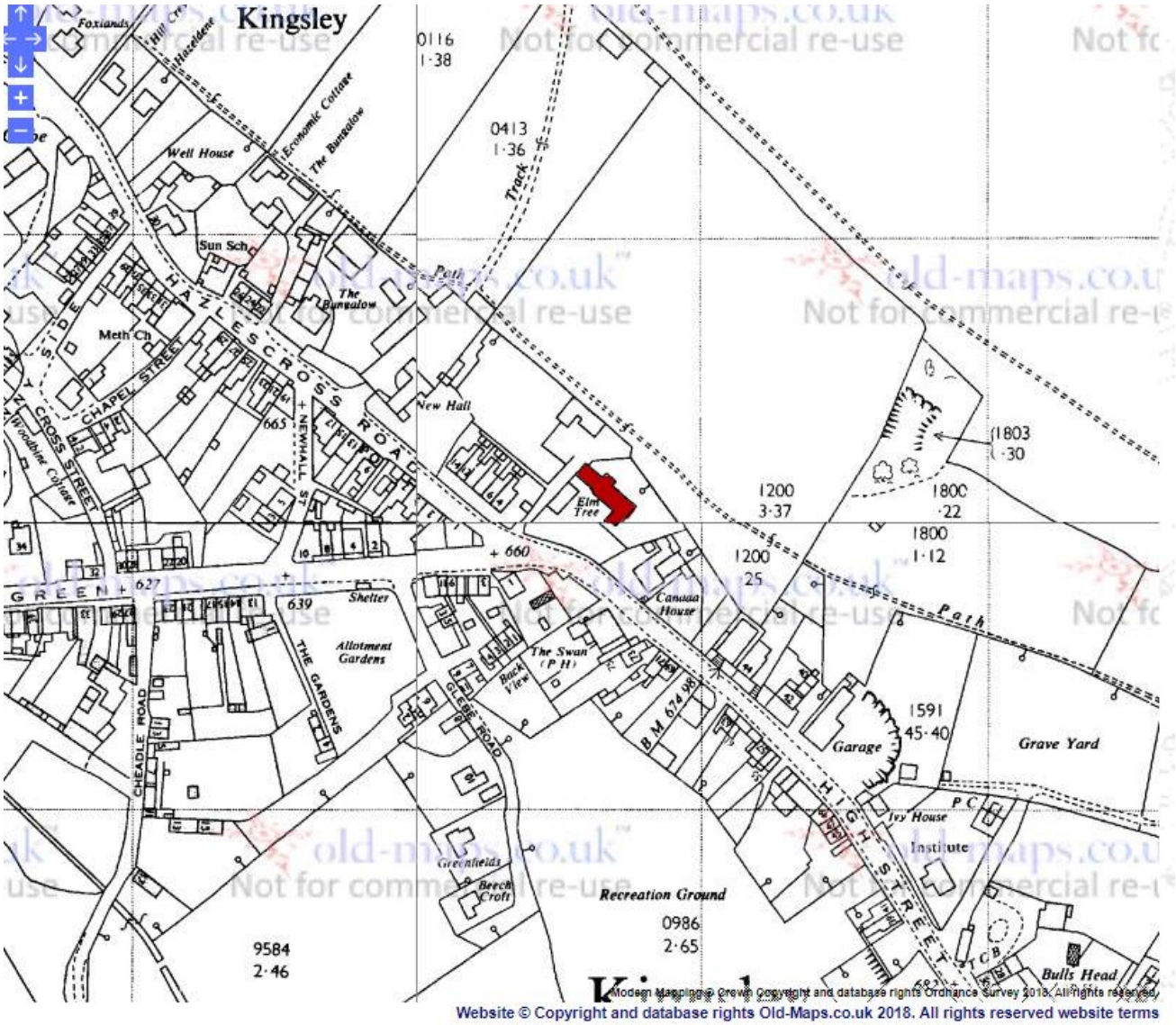
4.6. It is felt that in order to secure the future survival of the building, it requires a degree of adaptation to conform to modern living standards. The provision of a ground floor laundry and WC will improve the current owner's way of life, while the self-contained annexe makes far better use of redundant space.



1: Historic OS Map 1880



2: Historic OS Map 1924



3: Historic OS Map 1967