

Design & Access Statement

incorporating **Heritage Statement**

Project:

Barn conversion.

Lee Farm, Rushton Spencer, Macclesfield, SK11 0RS

Client:

Mr. & Mrs Grindey

Please note this document has been prepared with reference to:

- ❖ Historic England 'Guidelines for Enabling the Development of Historic Buildings'
- ❖ Staffordshire County Council 'Historic Character Assessment.'
- ❖ CABE's 'Design and Access Statements'

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Introduction

This document has been prepared in support of an application for the restoration and conversion of the attached barn at Lee Farm, Rushton Spencer, to ancillary residential accommodation.

The barn is listed by virtue of being attached to, and within the curtilage of, a Listed Building (The Lee)

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1037772**

Date first listed: **20-Nov-1987**

Date of most recent amendment: **12-Dec-1990**

List Entry Name: **THE LEE**

Location

Statutory Address: **THE LEE**

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

County: **Staffordshire**

District: **Staffordshire Moorlands (District Authority)**

Parish: **Rushton**

National Grid Reference: **SJ 92728 62934**

Details

In the entry for: Rushton CP SJ 96 SW Lee House 4/137 II

The entry shall be amended to read:

SJ 96 SW The Lee 4/137 II

RUSHTON C.P. - SJ 96 SW 4/137 Lee House - - II

Farmhouse. Early C18, extended 1758, remodelled 1852, later alterations. Red brick with ashlar dressings and quoins to east/west range and coursed dressed rubble to butted 'L' plan north range; stone slate and Welsh slate roofs; twin-shafted brick end and ridge stacks. Early C18 frontage block in brick and stone slate roof with verge parapets, and rusticated quoins; fenestration framed in 2 raised stone-dressed continuous ranges; 3-light casement windows to left with a shield in the panel formed at first floor level, inscribed R ; 3-sided parapetted flat-roofed B & S 2-storey bay window to right 1852 with casement light. Small-pane casement 2-window stone and slate roof range to rear, dated N ; hipped lean-to against early C18 H S block on south-west. Entrance adjacent 1758 to left with pedimented doorcase and panelled door. Interior: stair hall has several panelled doors, one to south-east with architrave and keystone. Dog leg stair; vase base balusters and open strings, curtail step and scroll; 3-transom stair window. Wing to rear has heavy ceiling beams and large fireplace with an internal fire-light.

Listing NGR: SJ9272862934



This document has been prepared with reference to the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework - policies relevant to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019). Section 16 relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and paragraphs 184-202 are relevant to the curtilage Listed status of the building.
- Historic England's Good Practice Advice (GPA) notes 1,2,3 (2015) is the national conservation guidance to support the NPPF policies and supersedes PPS5.
- Local Planning Policy relevant to the historic Environment
- English Heritage guidance.

0.0	Background and History
	The Listed Building referred to as 'The Lee' actually consists of 2 separate residential dwellings in separate ownership, one in the main part of the house which is approached by its own access drive from the south-east, and the second is "Lee Farm" which is the part referred to in the list description as <i>"Wing to rear has heavy ceiling beams and large fireplace with an internal fire-light."</i> Lee Farm also owns all of the modern agricultural buildings to the north that make up the working farmyard, and is currently farmed as a genuine agricultural enterprise employing Mr & Mrs Grindey along with their adult son Matthew. The Lee The list description sets out the notable features of "The Lee". Lee Farm is the house that is attached to The Lee (the former 'rear wing'), and the barn proposed for conversion is then attached to Lee Farm, creating a continuous range.

	The attached barn is the subject of this application for change of use. The law provides that buildings and other structures that pre-date July 1948 and are within the curtilage of a listed building are to be treated as part of the listed building (Historic England Advice Note 10 - Listed Buildings and Curtilage). The barn pre-dates 1948 and any ancillary object or structure fixed to a listed building is also treated as part of the building. Extensions or alterations to listed buildings made after listing form part of the listed building and are subject to the protection regime. The exact date of construction of these farm buildings adjoining The Lee is unknown, however it is assumed that because of the definitions above, the building proposed for conversion (which pre-dates 1948) are listed buildings for the purposes of the legislation.
1.0	Design Please refer to drawings submitted with this proposal The proposal is to convert the existing barn into ancillary residential accommodation to the main farmhouse (Lee Farm). This will enable its conservation and a future viable use as the restoration of the historic farm buildings. The proposal is of a suitably respectful design to ensure that it will make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape. The proposed conversion of the barn will retain the existing historic materials, red brick and Staffordshire blue tiles. Windows are to be timber and painted white to match the existing.
1.1	Use
	The Development Plan promotes high quality and appropriate design for sustainable, residential development. The proposal will be a sympathetic combination of re-use and restoration of an existing historic/heritage asset and the creation of well-designed residential accommodation, using traditional and local materials and detailing.

1.2	Layout
	The layout is entirely within the original building. It will accommodate living areas, kitchen, bathrooms, utility/plant room, and bedrooms to provide a more private living space for Matthew who works on the farm full-time but is still within the same family.
1.3	Scale
	Because the proposal is a conversion of the existing building, the scale of the buildings remains the same. It provides a modest amount of more private living space for a young man without having to share the same house as his parents as an adult working on the family farm.
1.4	Conservation
	The conversion work carried out on the barn will be guided by the principles of English Heritage informed conservation. The proposal is for a minimum intervention approach with reference to: Historic England 'Guidelines for Enabling the Development of Historic Buildings'. This follows the concept of only replacing where necessary, and replacing like for like with any joinery, brick work or tile work. This is to protect the nature and style of the building. Any repair to brick work will be with the use of permeable, lime-based hydraulic mortars allow for the free passage of moisture and can therefore protect historic masonry from unnecessary deterioration. No rooflights are proposed.
1.5	Landscaping
	There will be NO additional hard landscaping with this proposal. The

	topography, context and surfaces of the site will remain unaltered. As ancillary accommodation the existing garden and parking areas will continue to serve as the outdoor amenity space for the whole family.
1.6	Appearance The proposal is to create ancillary residential accommodation by converting the existing attached barn. The building itself will be restored and conserved appropriately and in the local vernacular style of brick and tile, matching like for like where appropriate and necessary. Please refer to drawings submitted with this proposal The proposal will create a quality residential environment. The proposal not only aims to conserve and restore the historic building but enhance the local character and amenity of the area. The building is in a poor state of repair, with holes in the roof. Without a financially viable scheme of conversion, it is at serious risk of collapse and substantial damage. The proposed conservation and restoration of the attached barn will be a predominantly internal restoration and conversion, with only the new windows inserted into existing opening visible from the exterior.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- Understand the significance of the affected assets
- Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance
- Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance
- Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change
- Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through improvements to the appearance of the buildings.

The nature of the significance is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation.

The extent of that significance is also important because this can, among other things, lead to a better understanding of how adaptable the asset may be and therefore improve viability and the prospects for long term conservation.

The level of significance is important as it provides the essential guide to how the policies should be applied. This is intrinsic to decision-taking where there is unavoidable conflict with other planning objectives.

English Heritage in *Conservation Principles* (2008) identifies four types of heritage value that an asset may hold: aesthetic, communal, historic and evidential value. This is simply another way of analysing its significance. Heritage values can help in deciding the most efficient and effective way of managing the heritage asset so as to sustain its overall value to society.

Curtilage structures

Some buildings and structures are deemed designated as listed buildings by being fixed to the principal building or by being ancillary within its curtilage and pre-dating 1 July 1948. Whether alteration, extension or demolition of such buildings amounts to harm or substantial harm to the designated heritage asset (i.e. the listed building together with its curtilage and attached buildings) needs careful consideration. Some curtilage structures are of high significance, which should be taken fully into account in decisions, but some are of little or none. Thus, like other forms of heritage asset, curtilage structures should be considered in proportion to their significance.

The designation of the main house building as Grade II listed is understandable given its date of construction and its architectural features. The barn attached to the rear wing (formerly the servant's quarters) is a valued heritage asset which is an irreplaceable resource and

contributes to the setting of the original house (The Lee) as well as providing a context to the historic farmyard setting as a whole.

The Significance of the attached barn that is proposed for conversion lies within its evidential, communal, historical and aesthetic values:

Evidential Value

The evidential value of the attached barn lies in the linear form of the buildings and the relationship to the original farmhouse that it is attached to. The building would have been used originally as a 'byre & mew' which houses cattle on the ground floor at one end (byre) and at the other end is stored a hay crop, which was gathered loose and stored in the barn in one big pile. As the loads of hay were brought in from the fields and the pile grew, the hay was thrown in through pitching holes high up in the walls. Ventilation slits and patterned brickwork provided fresh air for the cattle, and enabled the hay to dry thoroughly. The piled hay compressed down and so had to be cut away with a hay-knife for feeding the cattle, which was done via the central feed passage.

Historical, Aesthetic and Communal Value

The Historical, Aesthetic and Communal Values of the building lies in the group setting with the original farmhouse. It contributes to the story of how the farm developed over time as part of a rural community.

The building is an important part of the development of Lee Farm and although the crittall windows are clearly a later addition, the original form and fabric remains largely as built, except for the infilling of the large opening to the central passage which has been infilled and fitted with a much smaller doorway.

In conservation terms it is considered that the significance of the attached barn s is high, especially in its contribution to the setting of the Farmhouse, however the building proposed for conversion in this application can most easily withstand a degree of change to secure its viable future, ensuring that the changes are appropriate and sensitively considered and designed.

The building is unsuitable for modern farming methods and machinery, and without a financially viable future use they are at risk of deterioration.

CONSERVATION AIMS

Conservation

*"The process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations"*¹

¹ Historic England - Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

The aims of the alterations and conversion of this curtilage-listed building is to bring the building into habitable use to ensure its long-term safe-guarding so that the building and the farmstead as a whole can be enjoyed for future generations to come. The protection and restoration of the historic and architectural fabric is paramount in achieving this.

The main philosophy and conservation principles throughout this application are to:

- Preserve, restore and maintain the existing historic fabric
- Detail appropriate and legible alterations, to retain the integrity of the curtilage-listed building whilst keeping its original function evident in its form and openings.
- To sensitively bring the buildings into a residential use as ancillary accommodation.

Conservation Policies

Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) States:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

We have discussed above the history of the building and its setting. We have understood the evolution of the building through measured building surveys, recording of the building in photographs, and also undertaking site visits to appreciate the detail and character of the building and its setting. The proposed scheme of conversion has been informed by the above research and information.

Paragraph 138 of the Historic England Document ‘Conservation Policies’ States:

New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;*
- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;*
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;*

- d. *the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.*

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The proposed development is for alterations and conversion of the attached barn into ancillary residential accommodation. The proposals are necessary for the building to become a habitable space and to provide privacy and dignity for the applicant's adult son who works full time on the farm.

Change of use from agricultural to ancillary domestic

Historic England guidance maintains that the best use for a Listed Building in terms of protecting its character and integrity over the longer term, will normally be the use for which it was originally constructed. The attached barn has clearly been altered in the mid-20th Century by the introduction of concrete boskins and concrete flooring as well as the introduction of crittal windows, at a time when keeping a few cows was enough to make a living. In modern times, much larger buildings are required to operate a farm – that can be accessed with machinery and to house many more animals.

The current proposal will facilitate the refurbishment and conversion of the attached barn into a residential use. Part of the ground floor of the barn has historically been incorporated into the main house (prior to the date of listing) and given that it is not unusual for attached barns to be incorporated into the residential use of an attached farmhouse, it is considered that the character and integrity of the barn will be preserved – especially given the sensitive design solutions proposed in this scheme.

The proposed use of the attached barn by converting into residential accommodation is acceptable in order to secure its future viability and prevent its structural deterioration. In this respect it is considered the conversion to be an enhancement to the setting of the grade 2 listed house "The Lee".

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was updated in July 2018. Chapter 2 of the Framework is titled "Achieving Sustainable Development":

"The purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development".

"At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):"

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11) which for decision-taking

means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i). the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii). any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Footnote 6 clarifies which policies section (i) refers to:

'The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 176) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 63); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.'

Footnote 7 clarifies the definition of out-of-date:

'This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer, as set out in paragraph 73); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years. Transitional arrangements for the Housing Delivery Test are set out in Annex 1.'

Paragraph 78 promotes sustainable development in rural areas: *'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.'*

Paragraph 79 discusses heritage assets:

79. b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

79. c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

Chapter 16 is titled **"Conserving and enhancing the historic environment"**, stating:

184. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

185. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

186. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

187. Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to:

- a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and*
- b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.*

Paragraph 189 onwards **“Proposals affecting heritage assets”** then goes on to state:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

190. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

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

- 192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Then from paragraph 193 **“Considering potential impacts”**

193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

194. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional*

195. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

197. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

198. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

199. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

200. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

201. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

202. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure

the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Planning Guidance

The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) compliments the NPPF and is therefore of relevance.

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2 (2015) states that decision taking in the historic environment should be predicated by an understanding of the significance of affected assets, and an understanding of the impact of the proposal on that significance.

The Historic England 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Note 3 – The setting of Heritage Assets' (2017) provides a useful guide to the concept of setting. The Advice Note suggests that an assessment of setting can be undertaken by considering the following 4 steps:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes'

The setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which it is experienced. The issue of importance when contemplating change to a setting is the contribution it makes to how we understand or appreciate the significance of the heritage asset.

The Historic England Advice Note on setting provides a list of potential attributes of setting which may contribute to the significance of a heritage asset. The list includes both physical features and attributes which contribute to the experience of the asset.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development

The principle of the re-use of listed buildings through conversion to residential uses is long-established in the planning system. It is often only a residential use that provides sufficient value to make the conversion and resultant long-term preservation of the listed building financially viable.

There are exceptions of course, where the character of the building would be so substantially altered that a residential use would not be appropriate. However, for this building, the existing alterations that have taken place to it before the date of listing means that there is none of the original internal structure present that would represent a significant original interior worthy of preservation. The significance then of the building is its external form and the contribution that it makes to the farmstead setting. Allowing is

conversion would repair and preserve the external form to ensure that contribution continues to be made to the setting.

Impact on the listed building

There are no significant alterations proposed to the external fabric of the building as part of the conversion. The relationship between this building and the original house will remain unchanged. Allowing the conversion will mean that the historic fabric of the attached barn will be conserved and maintained for the future. The group value of the site as a farmstead will therefore be protected for the future.

Impact on neighbouring residents

The nearest neighbouring residential property is the grade 2 listed “The Lee” House itself, which this building is attached to by virtue of being attached to Lee Farmhouse. The Lee has its own clearly defined garden areas that are all to the south-east of the house residential amenity and the proposed barn for conversion it at the far end of the building from this house.

The proposed change of use to ancillary residential accommodation will not cause any detrimental impact on residential amenity at this property, because the situation with garden boundaries will not alter from the existing arrangement in any way.

Ecology

A bat activity survey has been undertaken during the active season and the report is submitted with the application documents. It found that three Brown long-eared bats are using the building and one common pipistrelle. A European Protected Species License will be required from Natural England to undertake the works of conversion, and mitigation is proposed in the report.

The planning balance

It is clear from the policies in the updated NPPF that when considering applications for development affecting heritage assets such as listed buildings, that a balancing act must be undertaken to consider the benefits of an economically viable long-term use and the continued maintenance and repair of these listed buildings, which has to be offset against any perceived harm from the proposed conversion.

CONCLUSION

There are clear benefits to the restoration and conversion of the attached barn into ancillary residential accommodation. As part of this process a minimal degree of change to the historic fabric is sought, in the form of reinstating historic openings such as the central cross passage and by opening up blocked ventilation slits. Through the sensitive design of the scheme, the proposals will secure the repair and future use of this building and provide ancillary accommodation for the applicant's adult son Matthew (who works full time on the farm) to live in, through the sensitive conversion of an existing building.

Overall, it is considered that the scheme as a whole will conserve the special character and significance of the Listed Building, and the contribution that this attached barn makes to the historic farm yard setting of "The Lee".