

Conservation Team Advice

- Date:** 18th March 2026
- Application Ref:** SMD/2026/0022 & SMD/2026/0023
- Site Address:** Marsh Side Farm, Tan House Lane, Rushton Spencer
- Proposal:**
- This application seeks permission for a change of use of three existing agricultural buildings to a children's nursery, together with the erection of two tipis and the siting of three repurposed shipping containers to provide toilet facilities and a staff room. The tipis would be linked via two of the three shipping containers, with the third providing the staff room. There will be no alterations, extensions or demolition of the existing listed farm house building. The application also seeks permission to erect three identical agricultural buildings on the farm to provide shelter and storage for animals on the farm.
 - Listed Building Consent: This application seeks permission for a change of use of three existing agricultural buildings to a children's nursery, together with the erection of two tipis and the siting of three repurposed shipping containers to provide toilet facilities and a staff room. The tipis would be linked via two of the three shipping containers, with the third providing the staff room. There will be no alterations, extensions or demolition of the existing listed farm house building. The application also seeks permission to erect three identical agricultural buildings on the farm to provide shelter and storage for animals on the farm.

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	• Marshside Farmhouse – Grade II (listing ref: 1037781)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations within the setting of Marsh Side Farmhouse, which is a Grade II Listed Building.

The building is an early-19th century farmhouse, constructed in squared and dressed rubble stone with a symmetrical façade and L-plan formation with later wings to the rear. The significance of the building derives from its retention of historic fabric and plan form, illustrative vernacular construction with some polite architectural influence and association with the development of farmsteads in the early-19th century. The setting is provided by the open agricultural fields to the north which make a positive contribute to the historic agricultural significance of the Listed Building.

To the northeast of the principal Listed Building is a 1-storey brick shippon, which is visible on mid-1940s OS mapping (Fig.2) and has the potential to be considered curtilage listed to the principal house. There is also a timber haybarn which, although modern, still has an overtly agrarian character and makes a neutral contribution to the setting and significance of the Listed Building.

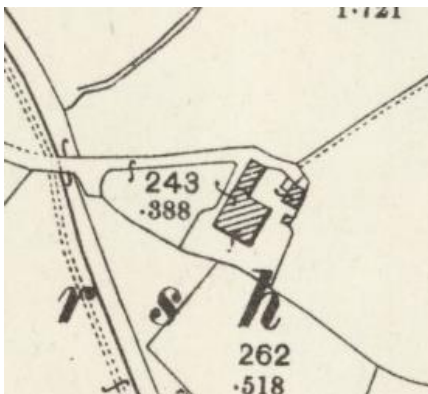


Fig. 1 c.1897-98 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)



Fig. 2 c.1945-47 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve a change of use of the land and buildings around Marsh Side Farm to a children's nursery, creation of new outbuildings and structures within the grounds, creation of two car parking areas and alterations to the shippon, haybarn and store buildings.

It is noted that pg.4-7 of the Statement of Significance references works which appear outside the scope of this development, it is assumed these pages have been submitted in error but if clarification can be provided that would be useful.

Construction of car parking and track

The proposed site plan indicates visitor car parking adjacent to Tan House and staff car parking adjacent to Marsh Side Farmhouse (Grade II). No specific details on the car parking have been provided, such as surfacing materials and any means of enclosure which would be useful to assess the impact on the setting of the Listed Building.

It is also noted that a proposed track is shown in plan in Appendix A (pg.4), but this does not appear to be shown on the proposed site plan. Details of this would likely be required, for example details of surfacing and any new access details.

Construction of outbuildings and structures within the grounds

The proposal would involve the construction of two tipis, adjoined by a flat roof container in the middle. The dimensions of this structure would be approx. 7.4m (H) x 10.4m (D) x 25m (L).

The tipi structure would be a large in scale and have a bulky appearance. The twinned conical shape of the tipis would starkly contrast with the appearance of the surrounding more traditional roof shapes and forms. In addition, the canvas material would also contrast with the surrounding traditional palette of materials. Whilst a khaki green is proposed, this would not mask the incongruous shape, form and materials of the structure.

A shipping container is proposed as the adjoining structure for the tipis, which presumably would be metal. Its flat roof form and materials would result in an overtly industrial appearance which would contrast with the overriding agrarian character of the site and adjacent buildings. An alternative canvas design for the adjoining part is shown in Appendix A. However, both options would result in a form and design that would not be sympathetic to the overriding vernacular and agricultural character of the site.

The supporting statement mentions this structure would not be visible from public vantage points (although it is noted that public footpaths run through the site). Nevertheless, Historic England's guidance outlines that the contribution the setting makes to a heritage asset is not dependant upon public rights of access¹ and the proposal would draw focus and detract from the architectural interest of the principal listed building as well as diminish its open field and agricultural setting.

The Statement of Significance mentions that fences are proposed around the nursery building, although these don't appear to be shown on the proposed elevation or proposed site plan.

The drawings also indicate animal shelters to the north of the site, which would 3m (H) x 3m (D) x 6m (L). Their siting would be at a considerable distance from the Listed

¹ Historic England 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' Planning Note 3 (2015)

Building and, as these would be small in scale and agricultural in character, they would unlikely harm the setting of the Listed Building.

It is also noted that the proposed site plan indicates a bin store adjacent to the haybarn, but this doesn't appear to be shown on the proposed elevations. Would this be the small brick currently building on site?

The proposed site plan highlights an area to the southeast in orange as the kitchen garden – would there be any structures associated with this?

Alterations to shippon, store and haybarn

The store at the entrance of the site, adjacent to the listed farmhouse, is currently in a derelict condition with the roof missing. This appears to be a modern building, and the proposed reinstatement of the pitched roof would likely have a negligible impact on the setting of the Listed Building.

The 1-storey shippon to the rear of the farmhouse is visible on c.1940s and has the potential to be considered curtilage listed as a result of its proximity to the principal listed building, its ancillary function and dating pre-1947. The proposed works would involve installation of a ramp to the front, replacement of the doors to the south elevation and minor internal alterations. Subject to the detailing of the ramp and doors, these works would likely have a minimal impact on the setting and significance of the designated heritage asset as it would still overall maintain the agricultural character of the building.

Minor alterations are proposed to the existing haybarn, including installation of a timber door where there is currently a gate. This would have a negligible impact on the setting of the Listed Building.

Overall, there are some inconsistencies and details missing in the information provided. Nevertheless, it is considered that the tipi structure would have a moderate harmful impact on the setting of the Listed Building. Other works such as the proposed track and car parking also have the potential to harm the setting, subject to proposed detailing.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the setting and special interest of the Listed Building (s.16 and 66).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality,

the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification (par.213).

Where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (par.215).

Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020) – DC2 The Historic Environment

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposal would have a moderate harmful impact on the immediate setting of the Listed Building which would fail to satisfy s.16 and 66 of the Act. With reference to planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). There would be no heritage-related benefits arising from the proposal (par.215 of NPPF) and there is no clear justification as to why a more sympathetic design could not be proposed to minimise or remove the heritage harm to the setting of the Listed Building (par.213 of NPPF). As set out in the NPPF, great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset (par.212 of NPPF). At this stage, we object to the proposal from a conservation perspective and, if considered an appropriate use from a planning perspective, we would suggest amendments to the design of the outbuildings in close proximity to the listed structures otherwise we would recommend it is refused.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson