

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	250905
Address:	Newlands Farm, Barn 1, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9JH		
Proposal:	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed erection of a single storey side and rear extension with 1 no. roof lantern.		
Heritage Assets:	Stable at Newland Farm – Grade II listed building since 2002 Setting of: Barn at Newland Farm (Grade II) Cattleshed at Newland Farm (Grade II) Barn and Engine House at Newland Farm (Grade II) Arborfield Cross Conservation Area Listed buildings along with conservation areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (2024) and in the Council's Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	Yes – highway and external only		

Summary Of Recommendations

Objection – Refusal recommended

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the alteration and extension of the Grade II listed 'Stable at Newland Farm', a brick and timber stable of the early 18th century, now converted for domestic use. The stable building forms part of a well preserved, although no longer in agricultural use, 18th century farmstead – Newland Farm (historically Arborfield Farm). The farmhouse itself is later, 19th century, with the four Georgian structures individually listed on the site. The farm is located just to the north of Arborfield Cross and specifically included within the Conservation Area.

As part of a wider scheme of re-development, the stables were converted to resident use in 2006. This scheme – whilst may having room for a more sensitive approach if it came forward today – on the whole respected the architectural and historic special interest of the building, importantly retaining the plan form and overall massing of the building.

The application proposes the alteration of the stables, with a one-and-a-half and single storey additions to be sited to the north and west of the building. The one-and-a-half storey element extrudes from the extant half-hipped element, and effectively mimics this form, albeit with a gable end. The addition then wraps around to the west of the building with a modern single-storey crown roof and lantern arrangement.

The listed building draws its significance from a number of aspects – the context, association with the farmstead and village, the architectural and historic interest of which, crucially, the historic fabric and planform form part. It is these two latter elements which would be severely impacted by the proposals.

Part of the special interest of the listed building is that of the historic fabric, and whilst restored, a considerable amount of fabric remains – this is particularly important to preserve given an agricultural building, almost by definition will have fewer architectural features as compared to say, a domestic dwellinghouse, thus there is a greater emphasis on retaining fabric and features where they occur. The proposals would result in a substantial loss of fabric – with walling to the north and west removed. Combined with this is the impact upon the plan form, as a listed building the plan form greatly contributes to its special interest – the ability to appreciate the historic structure as a fairly simple agricultural building, set within the farmstead complex would be eroded by the increased footprint of the proposed alterations.

In respect to the proposed design, whilst the gable ended element reflects – to a degree – the host, it would betray an authenticity of historic appearance. An 18th century stabling – and it is important to remember this building was used for accommodating working farm horses as opposed to a politer, more formal equine function – is a fairly simple structure, horses at the bottom, hayloft at the top. The contemporary flat/crown roof would fail to respond and reflect the rural vernacular half-hipped roof form of the host, introducing a convoluted inauthentic appearance. These proposed extensions would seek to increase the sense of a ‘domestic characteristic’, thus eroding the rural/utilitarian interest of the agricultural barn and to the neighbouring, separately listed, barns on the site.

The proposed extensions would be visible from the public highway, and whilst good conservation practice seeks to retain the integrity of heritage assets irrespective of any public access, undoubtedly an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would arise. The spatial relationship between the stable and – the separately listed – barn immediately to the east would be affected. Through the form and massing, the proposals would erode this historic relationship, blurring the authentic plan of the farmstead. Whilst there are always unavoidable consequences of a conversion of an agricultural farmstead to residential use, these ‘barn conversions’ on the whole, have sought to minimise the sense of domesticity thus retaining the spirit of the farmstead complex. It is this character which would be eroded by the proposals as presented in this application thus adversely affecting this part of the Conservation Area.

As such, the proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets. Given the loss of historic fabric,

erosion to the plan form and inappropriately detailed proposed this harm would result in the dilution to the overall significance of the designated heritage assets (Section 16, NPPF).

Through the loss of historic fabric and plan form, and inauthentically designed alterations, the proposals would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the setting of the other listed buildings (S16/66, P(LBCA)A 90).

Through the unsympathetic size, form, and appearance of the development resulting in the erosion to the character of Newland Farm the proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (S72, P(LBCA)A 90).

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery local plan.

Conditions			
N/A			
Date:	16/05/2025	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer