

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

APPLICATION BY ASHRIDGE PARK LIMITED

**ASHRIDGE FARM, WARREN HOUSE ROAD, WOKINGHAM,
BERKSHIRE, RG40 5QB**

CONVERSION OF LISTED AND CURTILAGE LISTED BARNs TO DWELLINGHOUSES

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

SPL Ref: 15.3106
LPA Ref: To be assigned

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This planning statement has been prepared with regard to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended). It accompanies an application seeking both planning permission AND listed building consent for the effective change of use of agricultural buildings to residential dwellings. Physical alterations and extensions to the existing buildings are also proposed in discrete instances by way of this submission.
- 1.2. The proposal has been based on a well-thought out design process involving direct liaison with officers from Wokingham Borough Council through an established Planning Performance Agreement. The evolution of the scheme derives from conversations with the Council and with Historic England's Alice Brockway.
- 1.3. The following documents have been taken into account in the preparation of the proposals and the drafting of this statement:
 - The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF);
 - The Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy January 2010 (CS);
 - The Wokingham Borough Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan February 2014 (MDD);
 - North Wokingham Strategic Development Location SPD October 2011 (SDL);
 - Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD for Strategic Development Locations October 2011 (SPD);
 - Wokingham Borough Design Guide June 2012 (DG);
 - The councils parking standards as set out within appendix 2 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014) and referred to in para. 4.38 of the adopted Core Strategy; and
 - The National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 as amended (NPPG)
- 1.4. The applications are supported by an Ecology Survey, a Historic Building Recording report, a Heritage Statement and Structural Surveys.
- 1.5. This statement demonstrates that the proposals are wholly in accordance with the Development Plan for the area and is acceptable in light of all other material planning considerations. An assessment of the planning balance takes place in chapter 5.0, with conclusions drawn in chapter 6.0.

2.0 SITE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

- 2.1. Ashridge Farm is to the north of Wokingham, approximately a 5 minute drive away from the town centre along Wiltshire Road. Footpath and cycle links connect the site to all key services, shops and facilities. There are bus stops within walking distance from the site.
- 2.2. Ashridge Farm used to be a large agricultural enterprise. However, significant incursions have been made over the last century that have far reduced the business and made farming an unviable operation.
- 2.3. Specifically, a large Sewage Treatment Works (STW) was constructed at the turn of the 20th century. Subsequently, as settlements grew, the A329 (M) was built effectively severing the farmland closest to the farmhouse in two. In more recent times, the Local Planning Authority (or LPA) have granted a number of large housing developments in their pursuit of their SDL policy.
- 2.4. The farm now consists of 13 hectares of land on the southern side of the A329 (M) with all buildings in the former farmstead situated at the confluence of Warren House Road and Bell Foundry Lane.
- 2.5. The principal building at the farm is a Grade II* farmhouse (photographs of this building and the surroundings are at PSS1 for context). Immediately east of the farmhouse, fronting onto the highway, is a Grade II listed barn.
- 2.6. The listed barn forms part of a courtyard enclave consisting of five other buildings, made with timber and brick respectively. For the purposes of assessment, it has been agreed with the LPA that these buildings are deemed curtilage listed by association. It is these buildings that form the courtyard which are subject to the current planning proposals. The suite of plans that accompany the application best describe the spatial qualities of the site.
- 2.7. Encircling the heritage assets is a band of active working farmyard whereon are barns, sheds, stables, sties and containers. Non-agricultural paraphernalia is also stored on site in various intensities.

Application Site in Depth

- 2.8. The site is defined closely around the listed / curtilage listed barns, the internal courtyard and the immediate land to the north and east. This is shown on plan M002

as submitted. The barns are in various states of repair, with the listed barn suffering the most dereliction. A structural survey accompanies this application and describes each building's condition; the historic building report gives background onto the previous farmyard operations in this area.

- 2.9. To the north, beyond the working farmyard and the STW, are open fields leading to the A329 (M), which is concealed from the farm via embankments and trees.
- 2.10. To the east are open fields with strongly defined field boundaries of native hedgerow and tree species. There is a watercourse (stream) running south / north approximately 110 metres due east of the site boundary. Further east is 'Kentwood Phase 2' residential development approved and under construction under SDL provisions.
- 2.11. To the immediate south is the carriageway of Warren House Road. On the opposite side of the highway is a large housing estate comprising of two storey dwellings of 1960's and 1970's design and character. The housing extends east and west of the application site. Further south is the town centre.
- 2.12. To the west, beyond the listed farmhouse, is another dwelling where the current farmer of Ashridge Farm lives (the farmhouse has, via ownership, become separated functionally from the farmland). Further west is Bell Foundry Lane and the local recreation ground known as Cantley Park. The northern and western boundaries of this parkland are now subject to residential developments via 'Matthews Green' and 'Bell Farm' respectively. Bell Farm represents a departure from the SDL policy provisions, being granted approval for development without a specific allocation being made in the SDL.

3.0 PROPOSAL SPECIFIC INFORMATION

- 3.1. Drawing reference 1678/16A identifies each of the individual buildings by number in a clockwise manner (Unit 1, 2 etc). The below description makes reference to these unit numbers for ease.
- 3.2. It is proposed to convert all buildings to residential use, with the surrounding grounds being laid out as parking and garden areas respectively.
- 3.3. Consideration has been given to alternative viable uses for these buildings and marketing was undertaken in early 2017. No other viable uses are foreseeable in this instance and there are no parties expressing interest in developing these for commercial purposes.
- 3.4. Unit 1 would be a two bedroom property with a central entrance point.
- 3.5. Unit 2 would be a three bedroom dwelling.
- 3.6. Unit 3 would have two bedrooms.
- 3.7. Unit 4 would have two bedrooms.
- 3.8. Unit 5 is the Grade II listed barn. It is proposed to convert this to a 3 bedroom dwelling.
- 3.9. A consequence of all conversions would be the introduction of new partition walls and new openings. These interventions in the buildings' historic fabric are limited however to an extent reasonable necessary to enable them to function as dwellings. All changes to the external appearance and internal arrangement of each residential unit have been through the pre-application discussion procedure.
- 3.10. Listed Building Consent is sought for the insertion of all windows, doors and internal partitions as shown on the suite of plans that accompany the application. Consent is also requested for the construction of a single storey extension to the eastern

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY AND PRACTICE

The NPPF

- 4.1. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the planning and decision-taking process. Developments that accord with the Development Plan should be approved without delay, unless the harms of doing so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 4.2. Footnote 9 to paragraph 14 places emphasis on a development needing to comply with other policies with the NPPF first, as a precursor to the full presumption in favour becoming engaged. The following is therefore an assessment of the relevant policies as they relate to the proposal.
- 4.3. The site falls outside of any settlement boundary but is within the locally designated SDL, which is key to the LPA maintaining a five year housing land supply. Current publications released by the LPA indicate a 6 year land supply. Regardless of the five year land supply position, the LPA is discharged with approving sustainable development. The site is very much sustainably located adjoining the established settlement and closer to Wokingham town centre than a large proportion of the SDL housing belt.
- 4.4. Given the sustainable location, the site qualifies as a windfall opportunity for the LPA under paragraph 48 of the NPPF. Whilst the applicant does not wish to rely on paragraph 55 of the NPPF, since the site is not isolated or remote by definition, it should be recognised that the development will make use of redundant, disused farm buildings and represents an optimal viable use for the site.
- 4.5. The principle of development is therefore established and supported under national planning policy.
- 4.6. By virtue of the local SDL policies, the site is not specifically allocated for housing. It is however true to say that this site is no longer part of any Green Belt designation or other such growth restriction policy.
- 4.7. The proposal sees the conversion of an existing Grade II listed barn and the immediately surrounding barns to a total of five dwellings. The barns that form the farm courtyard are curtilage listed by association and constitute heritage assets. A historic buildings report identifies the key architectural and cultural significances of these barns.

- 4.8. Although the grade II listed farmhouse immediately to the west is not directly implicated in this development (and is not within the application site), the barns form part of the historic farmyard to that property.
- 4.9. Paragraphs 128 and 131 require the LPA to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets putting them to an optimal viable use consistent with their character and conservation. Both the LPA and the applicant should take into account the significance of heritage assets with a view to preserving them without causing substantial harm.
- 4.10. Paragraph 132 states that total loss or destruction of heritage assets should be wholly exceptional. Paragraph 132 continues to state that the 'significance' of a heritage asset can be harmed through alteration; any harm needs clear justification.
- 4.11. The proposed development does not involve any direct, intentional or planned loss or demolition of a listed / curtilage listed building. In fact, it is a proposal that will enable the retention, restoration and preservation of the heritage assets on site giving them a new and long-term lease of life under optimal viable use.
- 4.12. The development does involve the change of use of former agricultural buildings to residential. Such a change is not easily facilitated since the buildings are not naturally designed to functionally operate as dwellings, even though the floorspace is more than ample and accommodating. Windows and doors, plus internal partitions are required and these will inevitably have some impact on the layout, form and character of these buildings.
- 4.13. At this stage it is pertinent to recognise the buildings are not in active agricultural use and such use has not taken place for some time. The physical condition of the buildings is a clear indication that they have long outlasted their usefulness for agricultural purposes. This is a consequence of a) modernised farming practices requiring greater space, which has resulted in larger barns being constructed to the north and b) a progressive decline in the agricultural business on the land.
- 4.14. It is safe to say that there is no prospect of agricultural use resuming in any of the buildings subject of the application.
- 4.15. Marketing has been undertaken to ascertain if alternate uses for the buildings could be secured. There have not been any interests to take the barns on for commercial, office, leisure or retail uses. Significant investment would be required to convert the

buildings for such purposes with many years required for any company to recoup the initial outlay; as such the barns are unattractive for business purposes.

- 4.16. Residential use is therefore the best and optimal viable use for the barns, and is the most likely to secure a sustainable long-term future for them. The LPA Conservation Officer has confirmed that where other uses are unfeasible, residential use can be expected as acceptable.
- 4.17. Discussions and negotiations have taken place with the LPA on the level of change both internally and externally to the barn buildings. Interventions in the historic fabric have been kept to a minimum and subsequent external changes to the setting have been managed appropriately to retain as much character as possible.
- 4.18. The buildings would largely be retained in terms of form, height, architectural style and dimension; the overall arrangement of the buildings around a central courtyard would remain unaltered. The site's relationship to the wider agricultural land and the Grade II* listed farmhouse will remain consistent, with domestic paraphernalia constrained or modest at worst.
- 4.19. It is for these reasons that it considered the development would introduce "*less than substantial harm*" to the significance of the designated asset. Therefore paragraph 134 of the NPPF is deemed to be invoked in this instance and the development should not be considered in any other vein.
- 4.20. Paragraph 134 states that where less than substantial harm would occur, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing the optimum viable use of the heritage asset.
- 4.21. The listed barn is in a poor condition as confirmed in the structural survey. The curtilage listed buildings are disused and redundant, and are in a dilapidated condition. At present they are unable to be enjoyed and in need of repair.
- 4.22. The proposed residential conversion will vastly improve the quality, appearance and stability of the heritage assets. The use will serve as a catalyst for improvements to the historic setting and a general tidying of the immediate area. This will be of direct benefit to the significance and setting of these buildings, opening up views and connectivity between them and the wider surroundings.
- 4.23. The restoration, refurbishment and reinvigoration of the heritage assets is a major public benefit. It is a core principle of sustainable development in securing the future

of the heritage assets for forthcoming generations.

- 4.24. The residential conversion would preserve each of the buildings and their respective qualities. It has been demonstrated through the marketing assessment that the proposed dwellings represent the best, optimal and most viable use of the heritage assets.
- 4.25. Another public benefit is the provision of housing through the effective reuse of land and buildings. This windfall site can come forward for development without additional pressures on vacant 'virgin' greenfield sites; it is also within a sustainable location where housing growth should be encouraged. Notwithstanding, the development falls within the swathe of the local SDL and is therefore in the spirit of growth advocated by the LPA itself.
- 4.26. The benefits also correlate succinctly with the principles and the roles of sustainable development, which are defined as being economic, social and environmental.
- 4.27. The proposal is clearly economically sustainable. It represents an optimum viable use for the heritage assets. It will contribute additional dwellings to the local housing stock with a mix of properties compatible with the LPA housing strategies. Given the proximity to the town centre, there will be increased footfall to shops and services.
- 4.28. The proposal is clearly socially sustainable. It will benefit from footpaths and linkages to both the established settlement to the south and the new SDL schemes to the east and west. The prospective residents will integrate into an existing established community close to the recreation ground, schools and other facilities being developed across the SDL region.
- 4.29. The proposal is clearly environmentally sustainable. It represents the efficient and effective reuse of existing buildings, returning them to economic use. This use of resources also allows the barns to be improved in terms of energy performance. In addition, the proximity of the site to the town centre and public transportation means that prospective residents will be encouraged not to use private cars to be mobile or to access key services.
- 4.30. For these reasons it is considered there are significant public benefits in favour of the development. The cumulative total of these would outweigh any "*less than substantial harm*" the scheme poses in terms of residential interventions into an agricultural framework.

- 4.31. The development is thus acceptable under paragraph 134 of the NPPF and will not prejudice heritage conservation objectives.
- 4.32. Paragraph 118 requires decision-makers to consider biodiversity, aiming to minimise adverse impacts and provide enhancements as necessary. The ecology survey submitted with this application demonstrates that there will not be any significant or material loss of habitat for local wildlife; the barn conversions could take place without causing harm or disturbance to biodiversity.
- 4.33. Paragraph 103 relates to flood risk and that new development should be situated in areas with the least risk of flooding and should not increase the risk elsewhere. In this instance the site is wholly within flood zone 1, the buildings are existing (save for the parallel range to the east of Units 3&4), new garden areas will be introduced to replace existing hard surfaces improving the infiltration rates around the site and the internal courtyard will be appropriately surfaced with permeable materials. The development is therefore wholly acceptable in this instance.
- 4.34. Paragraphs 56 to 64 of the NPPF encourage good design, deeming it indivisible from good planning. It is appropriate to reinforce local distinctiveness but not to impose architectural styles or tastes nor to stifle innovation.
- 4.35. The development proposed is heritage-led in principle and in design. Reuse of the existing buildings with appropriate refurbishment and 'making good' the external condition of each building as necessary therefore dictates that there is limited change to the character, appearance or setting of the buildings. The residential interventions are functionally necessary and will allow for quality accommodation to be provided as part of the conversion process.
- 4.36. A brand new element, that being a parallel range to the rear of units 3&4, constitutes the only designed part of this proposal. The design has been shaped through consultation with the LPA and effectively mirrors the original building to which it will be attached. By positioning this effective extension to the building on the eastern elevation, it allows the character and beauty of the internal courtyard to remain without encroachment.
- 4.37. The development will preserve the character of the heritage assets and will not have any adverse impacts on the surrounding built / natural landscapes. This therefore secures the local distinctiveness in accordance with the NPPF.

- 4.38. Paragraphs 29 to 41 of the NPPF refer to promoting sustainable transport, seeking to reduce reliance on the private car and advocating appropriate levels of parking where necessary to meet the demands of a development.
- 4.39. The application site is well-situated to take advantage of public transportation, footpath and cycle links to the main town centre. Improvements to local services, particularly bus routes, healthcare and schools are being secured through growth within the SDL area and the site can both capitalise upon and support such services.
- 4.40. Inevitably use of the private car will be necessary for some trips, generating a need for off-street parking. Each dwelling would have two parking bays, in accordance with the local vehicle parking standards, which would be discretely located so as to avoid conflicting with heritage asset setting.
- 4.41. The generation of vehicle movements (not significant amounts due to the scale of the development) will not prejudice highway safety on Warren House Road; existing entrances and accesses will be utilised to serve the development and have adequate visibility splays to match the local road speed (notwithstanding plans to take traffic off Warren House Road via LPA proposals for the 'Northern Distributor Road' within the SDL).
- 4.42. From the above assessment, it is clear that there are no policies in the framework that dictate this development cannot proceed. Footnote 9 of paragraph 14 is therefore not applicable in this instance. The presumption in favour of the development should apply.
- 4.43. The only harm arising from this scheme is the "less than substantial harm" to the heritage asset. Such harm has already been demonstrated to be outweighed by the associated public benefits, and as such this is tempered sufficiently to justify the proposal accordingly.
- 4.44. In contrast, there are numerous benefits including:
- Effective reuse of existing buildings (thus resources);
 - Restoring heritage assets, conserving their character and appearance;
 - Improvements to the setting of the heritage assets;
 - Securing an optimal, sustainable and viable use for the listed barn and the curtilage listed barns;
 - Provision of dwellings to support the local housing market, stock and mix; and
 - Maximising the sustainable location for beneficial housing development with an

associated array of economic, social and environmental sustainability credentials.

- 4.45. On balance therefore it is clear that the benefits far outweigh any perceived harms. For this reason, under paragraph 14 of the NPPF, the proposal represents a sustainable development that should be approved without delay.

The CS

- 4.46. *Policy CP1 Sustainable Development:* states permission will be granted for developments that maintain high quality environments, avoid adverse impacts and support the principles of sustainability.
- 4.47. The proposal will not give rise to pollution, increased risk of flooding, adverse impacts to neighbours or cause any damage to the natural environment. The conversion project represents an effective use of land and resources.
- 4.48. *Policy CP3 General Principles for Development:* sets out that those proposals that are of an appropriate scale, character and function will be permitted. In respect of the policy's criteria the following is relevant:
- a) The development primarily relates to the reuse and refurbishment of existing buildings of established character and presence. Whilst a new single storey range would be constructed to the east of the site, it is designed to be of an architectural style and appearance to match in with the heritage context. The proposal is thus appropriate in terms of design considerations.
 - b) The residential conversions provide a functional layout commensurate with the local built, historic and natural environments. Prospective residents will be safe and secure, as well as integrated into the local community.
 - c) There will be no harmful impacts on ecology, heritage or landscape features.
 - d) The site is derelict at the moment but does not support any wildlife interests, situated within a semi-industrial / agricultural setting. Enhancements to this setting will restore some of the surrounding land back to greenery, thus improving the potential for wildlife on these grounds.
 - e) The full potential of the site will be realised through the conversion scheme.
 - f) The existing buildings already have a sense of place, having been established on the farmstead and local landscape for many years. The proposal will reinvigorate these dilapidated buildings and thus have a positive contribution to their character.
 - g) The proposal will not prejudice open space requirements and will benefit from

locally available public open space. Given the likely costs of restoring the listed and curtilage listed barns, no further contributions to open space provision should be required (see NPPG section). Private gardens to meet adopted standards will be provided for each unit.

- h) The site is sustainably located in relation to the existing settlement and the proposed new sustainable growth in the SDL. Increased footfall to the services and facilities is offered by the proposal.
- i) The proposal is for residential development, providing new housing, and will not result in any loss of developable residential land or dwellings.
- j) There will not be any loss of any community or recreational facility.

4.49. *Policy CP4 Infrastructure Requirements:* seeks to secure contributions and/or improvements to relevant infrastructure be it new or existing taking into account any cumulative impacts of multiple developments.

4.50. The proposed scheme provides five new dwellings through the restoration of several heritage assets. Notwithstanding the exemption of the scheme from paying any tariff style contributions (see NPPG section), it is unlikely the development would generate a value surplus to contribute to other infrastructure. In any event existing infrastructure (as built or being built through the SDL) is more than adequate to support the development and unlikely to be prejudiced by five additional residences.

4.51. *Policy CP5 Housing Mix, Density and Affordability:* states the developments of 5 dwellings or more should provide up to 50% of the net additional units. Subject to viability, the minimum amount of affordable housing to be sought on previously developed land is stated to be 20%.

4.52. Notwithstanding the NPPG, the structural survey submitted with this application demonstrates that the existing buildings are in need of an overhaul particularly to get them into functional residential use. The level of investment into the heritage assets and subsequent improvements of the surroundings should negate the need for any of the units to be allocated for affordable housing. The applicant may negotiate with the LPA in respect of a commuted sum, but the context of the scheme provides little scope for this.

4.53. *Policy CP6 Managing Travel Demand:* seeks to promote sustainable transportation and the provision of adequate parking. Road safety for all users should be secured.

4.54. The development makes use of existing and established accesses onto the highway

that can / are in use at present on a 24/7 basis by varying vehicle numbers, types and sizes. The use of these accesses for domestic traffic will not represent an intensification to the detriment of the area or the local highway network. Sustainable modes of transport are readily available.

- 4.55. *Policy CP8 Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area:* seeks to prevent any development, alone or in combination, that could have an adverse effect on this European wildlife designation.
- 4.56. The proposed development is self-contained and will not have any direct impacts on the SPA. The level of housing in itself is not considered to generate a need to meaningfully provide any Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG). Other public parks and SANG land is readily available in proximity to the site for prospective occupiers to use.
- 4.57. *Policy CP20 North Wokingham Strategic Development Location:* promotes the LPA aim to deliver a comprehensive sustainable mixed use development by 2026 on a swathe of land between the existing extent of Wokingham and the A329 (M).
- 4.58. The application site falls within the SDL limits, thus removing the site from any other policy designation (countryside outside settlement limits or Green Belt for example). It is a site that is not specifically designated for residential development within the SDL masterplan. However, given its location and relationship to the existing / expanding settlement, it represents a windfall site within the SDL to boost the supply and delivery of housing within it. Allowing the site to be developed for residential purposes will not conflict with or prejudice any of the objectives of policy CP20.
- 4.59. The proposal complies with the Core Strategy.

The MDD

- 4.60. *Policy CC01 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development:* is a direct reference and repetition of the NPPF in terms of policy and principles. As covered earlier in this statement, the development proposed will be in accordance with the Development Plan for the locality.
- 4.61. *Policy CC02 Development Limits:* states that proposals will be granted permission if they are within the settlement and/or in sensitive edge of settlement location. Those developments within the SDL will be permitted.

- 4.62. The application site falls within the development limits of Wokingham, as amended and planned for by the LPA through the SDL masterplan. The site is developed and abuts the previous extent of the settlement. A sensitive proposal is hereby tabled that respects local character and countryside setting.
- 4.63. *Policy CC04 Sustainable Construction:* seeks 'Code level 4' for new homes. Aside from this, all conversions should incorporate suitable waste management facilities including on-site recycling.
- 4.64. The aspiration to achieve code level 4 on this site will be tempered by the heritage preservation objectives. The extent to which the reuse and refurbishment contributes to the sustainable construction objectives will therefore be led / dictated by discussions with the LPA Conservation Officer. Should the development fall short of code level 4 for whatever reason, this should not be considered to conflict with policy CC04 due to the heritage sensitivities in this instance. Suitable domestic-scale waste management will be provided as standard.
- 4.65. *Policy CC07 Parking:* refers to the standards set out in appendix 2 of the MDD, seeking to achieve appropriate levels of off-street parking.
- 4.66. Each dwelling to be provided through the conversion project would be provided with 2no. car parking bays. This meets the minimum requirement for off-street parking relative each property size. This assumes some reliance on the private car despite the availability of alternative transportation methods.
- 4.67. *Policy CC09 Development and Flood Risk:* the policy aims to steer development to flood zone 1. Sequential tests for development on more vulnerable land will not be required for building conversions. The development should not give rise to an increased flood risk to other properties.
- 4.68. The site is within flood zone 1 and represents primarily a change of use based development project. There would be an extension to the eastern side of the eastern building, but this still be in flood zone 1. The surrounding grounds would be restored to grassed areas in the main; permeable surfacing would be used for any proposed hard surfaced areas. There would not be any flood risk implications from this development.
- 4.69. *Policy TB05 Housing Mix:* seeks an appropriate mix of housing meeting local needs of the population. Affordable housing should be considered and dwellings should be built

to a lifetime standard. The post-amble to the policy places preference on 2 bed dwellings as a 45% proportion of all those that need to be provided, with 20% three bed accordingly.

- 4.70. The proposed development consists of two and three bedroom dwellings spread across the five units being provided. The mix of housing therefore reflects the housing strategy of the LPA. The scheme should be exempt from affordable housing provision.
- 4.71. Policy TB07 Internal Space Standards: sets a local level of housing quality compared to the national space standards adopted by Government in 2015. The internal standards indicate a two bedroom property should be at least 83sqm in size and a three bedroom dwelling to be 87sqm.
- 4.72. Notwithstanding the heritage constraints and the positive benefits of reuse of existing buildings, the internal space standards are broadly met across the development.
- 4.73. Policy TB08 Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities: dictates the amount of contribution to or provision of public space arising per 1,000 population from new residential development.
- 4.74. The proposal for 5 units is not on a scale whereby such open space should be provided either on-site or via a commuted sum. The nature of the development does not trigger any criteria or stipulations under this policy.
- 4.75. Policy TB21 Landscape Character: requires proposals to retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.
- 4.76. In this instance the physical conversion of the barns to residential use involves significant investment and refurbishment for effective restoration. The consequence of this will be a group of buildings reinstated into beneficial use and, in terms of the local landscape, of reinstated character and improved appearance.
- 4.77. The changes affecting the outward grounds of these buildings (i.e. the land not within the courtyard) will domesticate land that is currently in active farming / business use. However, such changes would significantly improve the setting to these buildings and the views thereto. This is of overall benefit to the qualities of the landscape. No features of interest would be lost or damaged by way of this proposal.
- 4.78. Policy TB23 Biodiversity and Development: ensures new developments are ecologically permeable and that any impacts of development on wildlife is minimised

or reduced as much as possible.

- 4.79. The ecology report that accompanies the application demonstrates the development will not harm local wildlife interests. Opportunities for enhancement can be explored in conjunction with the LPA officers.
- 4.80. The site does fall within the catchment of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA). Developments within such an area are required to provide mitigation to avoid any adverse impacts upon the special wildlife that the SPA conserves. Typically such mitigation is in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG), given as a land contribution to encourage dwelling occupants to use the created parkland as opposed to walking etc at the SPA.
- 4.81. The development of five dwellings may give rise to increased numbers of residents in the area, but not of a significant proportion. Converting and refurbishing the listed buildings will be a costly process. For these reasons it is considered that the development does not generate a need for actual physical SANG land to be provided and that a reasonable / proportionate contribution for SANG should only be sought by the LPA, if any at all in the circumstances.
- 4.82. Policy TB24 Designated Heritage Assets: iterates the LPA will seek to conserve or enhance heritage assets. Proposals should demonstrate how such aims are achieved and will be supported where schemes support the management of and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality.
- 4.83. The subject buildings are formerly agricultural barns. This function has now ceased and a change of use to residential is proposed. The change of use has been demonstrated to be the optimum viable use for the listed buildings via a dedicated marketing appraisal.
- 4.84. The conversion will see much of the scale, form, height, mass and architectural style of the barns conserved. Features of historical significance, including the farmyard / courtyard layout and appearance, will be wholly retained with minimal intervention. The insertion of doors, windows and internal partitions will evidently change the buildings' outward character, but this is offset by the ultimate preservation and restoration of the assets for future generations.

- 4.85. Policy SAL05 Delivery of avoidance measures for Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area: identifies the location of local SANG networks that form part of the LPA's strategy in respect of green infrastructure and the SPA.
- 4.86. The development proposed is closest to the Rooks Nest Wood allocation. It will not have a direct impact upon this allocation but any specific mitigation needs arising from the proposal are likely to be met through this SANG site.
- 4.87. On the basis of the above, the proposal does not conflict with any local policy aims or objectives under the MDD.

The SDL

- 4.88. The application site sits within the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL), as identified within the Core Strategy Policy 20. The site is not however specifically identified for housing development. In addition, WBC can demonstrate a five-year land supply of deliverable housing sites so is not reliant upon this site to meet its housing targets.
- 4.89. Notwithstanding, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The NPPF is a material planning consideration of significant weight in the determination of this planning application.
- 4.90. Although the site is not allocated for housing development at this time, it is important to note that the SDL sets out guidance only as to the broad principles for the location and type of development within North Wokingham. Importantly, the SDL should not be seen as static document and should not preclude development coming forward in the SDL provided it is sustainable and does not result in significant harm to the local area. This approach has been established / accepted at both Keephatch Beech (300 dwellings - North Wokingham SDL) and Shinfield West (450 dwellings - South of M4 SDL).
- 4.91. This is a sustainable location for development; hence the designation of the wider SDL.

As an urban extension to the largest town in the Borough, occupants of the new homes would have relatively easy access to a wide range of services. Wokingham is the largest retail centre, which would be within modest walking and cycling distances of the site, along routes which are being improved as part of the master planning of the area. Improvement of existing bus services is being secured as part of the SDL wide development and the railway station is within an easy cycle distance, and a manageable walk.

- 4.92. The development would undoubtedly have public benefit. Firstly it would provide five new dwellings of varying household size, contributing to the mix and delivery of housing within the SDL. Housing on this sustainable site is likely to support the LPA's rejection of unsatisfactory and less sustainable sites elsewhere, making it an idea windfall for the LPA.
- 4.93. Secondly, it secures the preservation and conservation of existing designated heritage assets. The reuse of existing buildings in itself is a sustainability benefit, let alone the effective and efficient reuse of listed / curtilage listed buildings for the benefit of the community.
- 4.94. Thirdly, a range of economic benefits would also derive from the development. These include: the creation of a range of construction jobs and opportunities; increases in resident expenditure in the locality providing a boost to the local economy; and the creation of "spin-off" jobs in services and other firms' resultant from wage spending and supplier sourcing from the occupiers of the new development. These economic effects align well with a wide range of national, regional and local policy objectives, in particular, increasing the supply of high quality, sustainable housing to meet projected increases in population and enhancing economic prosperity through creating employment opportunities for local people.
- 4.95. Other benefits are listed at paragraph 4.44 above.
- 4.96. The development is wholly in accordance with the spirit and thrust of the SDL, and does not prejudice the delivery of any key infrastructure or objectives within the SDL as aspired to by the LPA.

The SPD

- 4.97. The application would be subject to CIL.
- 4.98. The applicant will negotiate with the LPA in respect of any planning obligations deemed

appropriate, proportionate and reasonable on this scheme. The level of any contributions should be tempered by the economic investment and benefits of restoring the heritage assets involved in this instance. The development of five dwellings is equally not to a sizeable threshold to warrant contributions towards significant local infrastructure projects.

- 4.99. The LPA are invited to comment and open a dialogue on such negotiations.

The NPPG

- 4.100. Paragraph Reference 21a-001-20140306 states the planning conditions can be used to enhance the quality of a development and to enable proposals to be approved. It advocates effective use of conditions to mitigate adverse effects of a development and thus allow permission to be granted.
- 4.101. It has already been discussed that the applicant welcomes the use of conditions to control any perceived issues. Full details of a landscaping scheme could be secured if necessary and materials appropriate to the heritage assets (samples) can be provided through this approach. Conditions over highways matters are also expected as standard.
- 4.102. Should the LPA feel the need for other conditions, early proactive engagement is encouraged so that a mutually agreeable position can be reached that benefits both parties and does not unduly constrain the development.

5.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The legislative framework for conservation and enhancement of listed buildings and conservation areas are set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 7 of the Act states Listed Building Consent is required for, *'any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a listed building'*. Section 16(2) of the Act states that, *'in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*. With regard to applications for planning permission affecting the setting of listed buildings, Section 66 of the Act requires that, *'in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting or whether to grant listed building consent, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural interest which it possesses'*. Part II of the Act relates to Conservation Areas with Section 72 appertaining to the general duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions and states, *special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.*

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. The guiding principle of the document is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the protection and enhancement of the historic environment is embedded in this approach.
- 5.3. Sustainable development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF breaks down this definition into three dimensions; economic, social and environmental. Within the environmental dimension sustainable development needs to contribute to *'protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.'*
- 5.4. Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a conservation area as a designated heritage asset along with, World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden or Registered Battlefield designated under the relevant legislation. Annex 2 also contains the definition of a heritage asset as, *a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of*

significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including local listing).

- 5.5. There are several paragraphs contained in the NPPF which relate to the historic environment, particularly Paragraphs 126-141 contained in Section 12. Also of relevance is Paragraph 17 in the Core Planning Principles which contains the following:
- 5.6. Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
- 5.7. The relevant Paragraphs contained in Section 12 are:

128. 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.

129. 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 assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

131. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability 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; and*
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

132. 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II Listed Building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, Grade I and II Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

133. 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 loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

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

134. 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 securing its optimum viable use.

137. 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 or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

5.8. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which provides up-to-date guidance on NPPF policies. The NPPG provides useful guidance on assessing harm in relation to paragraphs 132 and 133 of the NPPF which contain policy on substantial harm to designated heritage assets. The NPPG states that ‘in

determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

- 5.9. In defining what constitutes substantial harm, the NPPG identifies that the impact of total destruction is obviously substantial harm while partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all. Anything less than total destructions need to be evaluated on its own merits, for example, the removal of elements to an asset which themselves impact on its significance may therefore not be harmful to the asset.
- 5.10. The NPPG advises works that *'are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all.'* However, it is important to consider each development in its own context as the NPPG identifies that minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm to the significance of an asset.

Assessing Significance

- 5.11. To a certain extent the significance of Ashridge Farmhouse and the adjacent barn has already been recognised by its inclusion on the NHLE. Therefore, as defined in government policy, Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them.
- 5.12. Significance of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF as the value of a heritage asset placed on it by current and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological; architectural; artistic or historical. The setting of a heritage asset also contributes to its significance and is defined by the NPPF as the surrounding in which a heritage asset is experienced. In comparison, Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008) uses evidential; aesthetic; historical and communal values to define significance. These different set of values have been combined for the purpose of this report.
- 5.13. These values allow us to understand the degree of significance and inform us of the potential impact from the proposed works on the heritage assets and their setting. These values may be tangible, the physical fabric of the building, capable of being touched, or view such as its landscape. Also, the value may be intangible through a

past event or an association with a person.

- **Evidential (archaeological) value** relates to physical aspects of the site which provide evidence from the past. This can be with built form or below ground archaeology.
- **Historical value** is the extent to which the asset is associated with or illustrative of historic events or people.
- **Aesthetic (architectural/artistic) value** includes design, visual, landscape and architectural qualities.
- **Communal value** includes social, commemorative or spiritual value, local identity and the meaning of place for people.

5.14. The assessment of significance draws upon information contained in the section on Understanding the Heritage and uses the values defined above to establish the level of significance detailed below:

- Features of the asset which contribute to the principal historical and architectural interest are considered to be of **high significance**.
- Features of the asset which noticeably contribute to the overall architectural or historical Interest and may include post construction features of historic or design interest are considered to be of **medium significance**.
- Features of the asset which make a relatively minor contribution to the historic and architectural interest are considered to be of **low significance**.
- Features which do not contribute to the historic and architectural interest of the asset, and in some cases may even detract from the significance are therefore considered to be either **natural or detracting**

5.15. There are two guiding documents produced by Historic England for assessing setting and views, Seeing the History in the View (2011) and The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 (2015).

5.16. Setting varies from asset to asset and cannot be generically defined. Changes to the setting of heritage assets may be positive as it replaces poor development which has compromised the assets setting. It is likely that the setting of an asset has changed over time from the dynamics of human activity and natural occurrences such as weather.

5.17. The importance setting makes to the contribution to the significance of the heritage asset is often related to how the heritage asset is seen in views, this can include views

looking towards the heritage asset or from the heritage asset looking outwards, and may include relationships between the asset and other heritage assets, natural or topographical features. Assets may also be intended to be seen from one another in designed landscapes for aesthetic reasons.

- 5.18. Seeing the History in the View provides a method for understanding and assessing the significance of heritage in views by identifying and establishing the baseline significance of heritage in views. Having identified the significance of the heritage within views, an assessment of the potential impact of a development proposal on the heritage significance of the identified view. The guidance documents uses values for the importance of heritage assets identified within the view, for the view as a whole and criteria for determining the magnitude or level of impact of a development on the heritage significance within the view. The overall effect is expressed in a range from negligible to major.
- 5.19. Historic England's Good Practice Advice 3, *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2015), notes a staged approach to proportionate decision-taking, with relevant NPPF paragraphs along with guidance contained in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) for their implementation, providing the framework for the consideration of changes affecting the setting of heritage assets which should be assessed proportionately and based on the nature, extent and level of the heritage asset's significance.

Assessing Impact

- 5.20. The NPPF measures the effects on heritage assets to be substantial harm or less than substantial harm however, the NPPF does not quantify this definition. A heritage statement is required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposed development and consider the impact on designated heritage assets and effect on non-designated heritage assets. The judgement of whether an effect causes substantial harm is based on whether the effect on the individual asset has an effect on the wider historic environment; where the significance of an asset is such that its loss would be detrimental to the understanding of the values of the wider asset type. This may include extensive physical damage to an asset or loss of key features to an asset's setting. The identification of substantial harm is therefore one of professional judgment.

Significance

- 5.21. Ashridge Farm historically was part of the 'Holt Estate' which was an extensive estate

comprising what is now Holt School, the Joel Park Estate, Ashridge, part of Norreys and land off Wellington Road. Theories suggest that Holt House was at one time the dower house to Beaches Manor. The map at PDAS1 identifies the extent of the estate in 1814.

- 5.22. The map at PDAS1 calls the application site Holt Farm House. Fronting onto the track (opposite the annotation Willm Douglas) are records of what is now Ashridge Farmhouse and two barns. The farmhouse and the closest barn to it are now Grade II* and Grade II listed respectively. The list descriptions are at PDAS2 and PDAS3 for reference.
- 5.23. To the northwest of these buildings appears to be a larger building, possibly a dwellinghouse. However, when referring to PDAS4, it can be seen that such a building no longer existed in 1883. However, the Grade II* farmhouse is clearly prominent and a courtyard of barns is readily visible.
- 5.24. The map at PDAS4 very much reflects the layout and form of the courtyard in the present day. The close functional and social ties between the barns on the application site and the adjacent farmhouse is clear. Whilst the orchard shown on the 1883 map is no longer present, the historic field boundaries and field patterns largely exist on site in the present day.
- 5.25. At PDAS5 is a map extract from the 1930s. Additional buildings and structures have been added into the grounds of the farm, with the northern range extended westwards and other infill buildings occurring. The historic form and layout is retained throughout the years. It is probable that part of the now Grade II listed barn was demolished between 1883 and 1930 on the eastern side.
- 5.26. The barns on the application site are therefore are different ages, but all are present in form prior to 1900. For the purposes of this assessment, the non-listed barns are to be considered as curtilage listed.
- 5.27. The historical farmyard and its context are therefore of historical and cultural value to the evolution of Wokingham and the surrounding land. The farmyard, and the individual buildings thereon, contribute to Wokingham's heritage and value of the countryside.
- 5.28. Much of the external aesthetic value of both the farmhouse and the barn remains, although the barns within the farmyard are in a poor state of repair. Modern farming practices have dictated that these buildings are no longer fit for purpose and have

therefore not contributed to the overall working of the farmyard for many years.

- 5.29. The setting of the farmhouse and the farmyard is historically associated with the wider agricultural holding. The former extent of the Holt Estate no longer persists, and successive developments over the agricultural land, approved in the LPA's own hand, have resulted in significant loss of the farm's setting. Residential developments and a sewage works built in the early 20th century have taken substantial portions of land away from Ashridge Farm.
- 5.30. Nonetheless Ashridge Farm is still a working farm, although the majority of activities are now in a much wider 'ring' around the northwest, north and northeast of the listed buildings.

Assessment of the Development Impacts

- 5.31. It is proposed to convert all of the historic barns into dwellings, totalling 5no. units.
- 5.32. An exercise has been undertaken that concludes that there is no realistic prospect of the building's being used for business or commercial purposes. Residential development therefore represents the optimum viable use for these buildings.
- 5.33. Externally, the impact will be from the insertion of new windows into the east (front) and west (rear) elevations and are a minimal amount required in order to facilitate the proposed internal layout. The location of these proposed windows have been assessed in order not to impact on the in situ openings which have either louvered or shuttered windows so that these important historic and architectural elements are retained in situ.
- 5.34. Also, the provision of a new parallel range to the eastern side of the easternmost barn will impact upon views of the site when approaching from the west. However, efforts have been made to keep the central courtyard open and free from intervention. The works proposed are minimal and necessary to enable the change of use to function properly.
- 5.35. Internally, the impact to the buildings will be from subdivision of the floor space in order to create the residential units.
- 5.36. The Grade II* farmhouse is not involved in or implicated by any part of the development proposals.

Justification

- 5.37. Changing the use to residential will further alter the internal form of the buildings from a wide open space with modern partitioned rooms at either end to a space which is subdivided.
- 5.38. However, the proposed use will ensure the retention of all barns for the future as a sustainable and economic heritage asset which will continue to contribute to Wokingham's cultural heritage.
- 5.39. In summary, the proposed change of use will conserve the external character of the building through active and positive restoration. The overall form and layout of the buildings will be retained, as per the historic courtyard arrangement dating back to the 19th century.
- 5.40. Architecturally, the buildings would largely remain unaltered and would retain the same proportions and features currently displayed. The only exception is the eastern building that would be subject of a parallel range, to be built outside of the key courtyard. This change has been progressed in liaison with the LPA Conservation Officer and deemed sympathetic to the historical significance of this particular building.
- 5.41. Domestic curtilage would be formed through sensitive and modest levels of native landscaping. Previously the land to the immediate north of the site was an orchard, and reference has been drawn from this in the selection of trees to be planted around the site boundaries. It has been key in re-defining these boundaries to ensure:
- An appropriate interface between the garden / private amenity areas for each dwelling and the working farmyard;
 - The wider historical field patterns are not significantly affected;
 - Views to and from the buildings over short and longer distances are retained with only limited change.

Conclusions

- 5.42. The proposals will not result in substantial harm, with the scale of works minor to moderate in relation to the NPPG. The significance of the listed and curtilage listed buildings will not be adversely impacted upon, lost or destroyed. In fact, efforts are being made to conserve, preserve and enhance as much as possible through this development scheme. Therefore, under the NPPF, paragraph 134 only is invoked in

this instance.

- 5.43. Where less than substantial harm is deemed to occur, this must be weighed against any public benefits.
- 5.44. There are numerous benefits associated with the proposal including:
- Effective reuse of existing buildings (thus resources);
 - Restoring heritage assets, conserving their character and appearance for future generations;
 - Improvements to the setting of the heritage assets;
 - Securing an optimal, sustainable and viable use for the listed barn and the curtilage listed barns;
 - Provision of dwellings to support the local housing market, stock and mix; and
 - Maximising the sustainable location for beneficial housing development with an associated array of economic, social and environmental sustainability credentials.
- 5.45. The evolution of the project has been influenced through positive discussions between the LPA, the applicant and the architect, resulting in a development that is considered acceptable with regards to heritage-related matters. On this basis the proposal is sustainable development under the NPPF.

6.0 EVALUATION

Principle of Development

- 6.1. The proposal is in a sustainable location within the broad sweep of the North SDL development allocation. It represents the reuse of existing buildings and the provision of a dwelling mix compliant with LPA policies.
- 6.2. On this basis the development is acceptable in principle.

Design

- 6.3. Conservation principles have been applied in the restoration and refurbishment of the listed and curtilage listed buildings. Windows and doors, the full details of which can be negotiated with the LPA and secured by planning condition, will be of a sympathetic style and material contemporary to the period.
- 6.4. The parallel range to the eastern side of the farmyard is simple in design, layout and form. It is a utilitarian structure in keeping with the agricultural context of the site and wider surrounds. The design complements the overall appearance of the site within this landscaped setting.
- 6.5. Treatment of external areas for the purposes of parking and private amenity space has been carried out sensitively so as not to detract from the historical setting. Change is inevitable given the development proposed, but this is not likely to cause demonstrable harm to any heritage asset or the understanding of the former farmyard.
- 6.6. On this basis the design is appropriate to the locality and reinforces local distinctiveness, in accordance with paragraphs 56 to 64 of the NPPF.

Highways

- 6.7. There is a current entrance in between the Grade II listed barn and the eastern range that can, at present, be used unrestricted by agricultural vehicles. This provides direct access to the courtyard.
- 6.8. The design and layout of the development results in minimal intervention and change to the courtyard as a whole. However, it is both logical and practical to allow future occupiers of the listed barn to park vehicles within the yard. This off-street parking will take a largely informal approach.

- 6.9. Continued use of the existing access point into the courtyard will not cause material adverse effects upon highway safety for any user. It does not represent intensification on a detrimental scale. Cars can enter and exit the site in forward gear. Since the access is already established, there should be no objection from the Highways Authority.
- 6.10. A second access, which will in effect be the primary access for prospective residents, exists to the east of the farmyard. This access is established and in active use at present by agricultural vehicles. It runs parallel to the eastern range, and will remain in situ unaffected by the parallel range proposed.
- 6.11. Once again, sufficient off-street parking to meet the needs of the dwellings is to be provided with safe turning facilities on site. The existing access point has suitable visibility splays given the speed limit of the local road and the prominent bend just a short distance west of the application site. There will be no detriment to highway safety through the use of this entrance for private vehicular traffic.
- 6.12. The site is of course close enough to the town centre and to public transport opportunities to present future occupiers with different travel choices.

Other Planning Matters

- 6.13. The development is self-contained to the existing grounds and buildings at Ashridge Farm. The farmyard setting is distant from any other residential (or non-residential) property on the northern side of Warren House Road.
- 6.14. In these circumstances the development is unlikely to cause any harm or detriment to the amenities of local residents. Overbearing, overshadowing and overlooking will not occur. Care and attention to the treatment of the site's layout has been taken to ensure no such impacts occur intra-development scheme.
- 6.15. The site is within flood zone 1 with the least associated risk of flooding. Permeable materials will be used where possible on site, and the introduction of private gardens will introduce a greater surface area for water to drain away naturally. There will not be any increased risk of flooding as a result of this proposal.
- 6.16. A contaminated land survey has been produced and accompanies the application. The restoration of the farmyard and buildings can take place without hazard to human health. Whilst the survey covers all parts of the Ashridge Farm land, sections 4.2a, 5.3a, 7.2a and 8.2 relate specifically to the farmhouse and barn buildings. The need

for a Phase 2 intrusive investigation in this part of the site is considered warranted and can thus be secured via planning condition as appropriate.

- 6.17. The ecology survey demonstrates that the development will not have an adverse impact on wildlife or biodiversity.
- 6.18. The development would not prejudice the aims or objectives of the SDL.
- 6.19. The LPA would normally expect developments to provide, via a legal agreement, a number of planning obligations. The SDL has its own deliverability criteria in this regard and the obligations SPD sets out the expectations for such contributions.
- 6.20. In the first instance the Structural Survey submitted with the application identifies a number of elements that need rectifying in order to facilitate the conversion process. Since these are works to listed and curtilage-listed buildings, extra care must be taken during the restoration and refurbishment works which will be at significant cost.
- 6.21. Given the heritage-led approach and the investment required to conserve, preserve and enhance the heritage assets, the scheme would not be able to contribute towards affordable housing goals or other infrastructure objections. Precedence should be given to the heritage restoration over any other type of contribution.
- 6.22. Furthermore, the scale of the proposal is minimal and almost incidental to the overall SDL masterplan. It is unlikely to generate a significant burden upon locally provided infrastructure. This is particularly true since the sites of Matthews Green and Kentwood have not delivered the quantity of housing development planned for within the SDL documents (effectively meaning there is a shortfall of housing). The five units hereby proposed will not have a detrimental impact in this regard.
- 6.23. Notwithstanding the above, there is a reinstated clause within the NPPG that states developments of 10 dwellings or less should not be subject to tariff style contributions.
- 6.24. Whilst the applicant welcomes any discussions on the matter of contributions, an exemption from payment is requested due to the circumstances of the project.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. The proposal is deemed sustainable development under the NPPF and should therefore be approved without delay.
- 7.2. It has been demonstrated compliant with the Development Plan for the area and acceptable in light of all other material planning considerations. There are no reasons to warrant an alternate or adverse assessment of the proposal.
- 7.3. The LPA is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission and listed building consent subject to a suite of reasonable planning conditions. Any conditions or any obligations the LPA consider are applicable in this instance should be discussed with the applicant and tolerances / allowances made considering the heritage-led nature of this project.
- 7.4. Should the LPA require any additional information, positive and proactive engagement is requested to ensure issues are resolved swiftly and smoothly. This is in accordance with the Planning Performance Agreement signed by both parties.

PDAS1

MAP OF THE APPLICATION SITE IN 1814



LT GENERAL JOHN LEVESON GOWER.

37/5 5 7

67 1 29

BILL HILL.

Purchased of the
Proprietors of the
Holt Estate

31 2 29

35 3 0

17 2 20

Lieut General John Leveson Gower

THE HOLT ESTATE.

29 3 26

Wokingham
Amr.
Colonel
Buckridge
1 2 37

John Slyfield
2 1 21
Gusset Pitts
2 3 3
John Slyfield
1 1 6

GOWER.

Lieut
General J.L Gower.

Colonel
Buckridge.

GEORGE HENRY CRUTCHLEY ESQ.

G.H Crutchley Esq.

Boardgate
G.H Crutchley Esq.
Taken in Exchange
from the Holt Estate
3 3 30

THE
HOLT
ESTATE.

CHARLES BIRD ESQ.

Bellfounders Esq.

Lieut
General John
Leveson Gower

Mathews Green
22
CHARLES BIRD ESQ.

Bellfounders
Farm

Holt Farm
Mouse

Willm Douglas

Lieutenant
General John
Leveson Gower

Horts Hill
Farm

Lieut
Gen. John
Leveson
Gower

Mrs Dux

JOHN NASH ESQ.
Wiltshire
Farm

John Bagnett Esq.

THE HOLT
ESTATE.

G.H Crutchley Esq.

Wokingham
Church
M Thompson
M Holmes

The Fiat of Involvement
J.H.

referred to in our
letter November
hundred and
Ninth 1811

ASHRIDGE
BERRIS
IN

PDAS2

LIST DESCRIPTION FOR THE FARMHOUSE

List entry Summary

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

Name: ASHRIDGE FARMHOUSE

List entry Number: 1319183

Location

ASHRIDGE FARMHOUSE, WARREN HOUSE ROAD

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Wokingham	Unitary Authority	Wokingham

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 12-Nov-1951

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

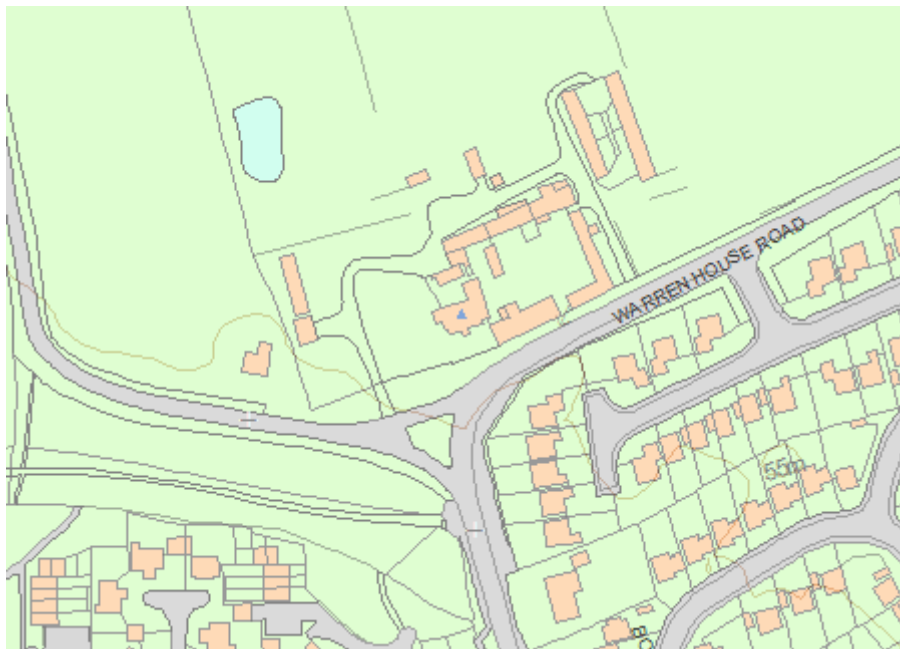
Details

WOKINGHAM WARREN HOUSE ROAD SU 86 NW (North side)
10/20 Ashridge Farmhouse 12.11.51 G.V. II* Farmhouse. Late C16, extended late C19. Timber framed, part tile-hung, part brick, part weatherboarded. Old tile cross gabled roof. Lobby entry, 4 cell plan, extensions on north east. 2 storeys, cellar and attics. Fine, large, central chimney with 4 octagonal brick shafts, moulded star shaped brick caps and weathered coping on square stack. Each gable has a 3-

light leaded casement, diminishing in size on each floor, with a small opening light in centre top part. Road front:- double gabled with moulded bargeboards. Rendered ground floor, weatherboarded above. Projecting, closed, gabled porch in centre; rendered, and with the original, repaired planked door in a moulded frame which is a replica of the original which still exists behind in the former position. Small 3-light overhead. Interior:- virtually unaltered. Newel stair the whole height. Doors mostly original in heavy moulded and chamfered frames. Dining room:- chalk fireplace with Tudor arch in square head; former bread oven on right, small spice cupboard with original door and hinges on left. Drawing room:- chalk fireplace with flat head, moulded and carved with ball flower ornament. A date on the 2 jambs of 1575, and a date and inscription on the top reads '16RS.PS58RP.' spice cupboard with door on right. Chimney piece of fluted pilasters with panelled overmantel. Remainder of room has C17 panelling and moulded cornice. Stained glass in window facing south of 4 diamond leads with fleur-de-lys on each side pane; '1.P' in the top pane and '1576' in the bottom pane. Upper floors contain several original doors in moulded frames and fireplaces. B.O.E. (Berkshire) p.309.

Listing NGR: SU8137669727

Map



PDAS3

LIST DESCRIPTION FOR THE BARN

List entry Summary

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

Name: CATTLE SHED AT ASHRIDGE FARM, NORTH OF FARMHOUSE

List entry Number: 1303123

Location

CATTLE SHED AT ASHRIDGE FARM, NORTH OF FARMHOUSE, WARREN HOUSE ROAD

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Wokingham	Unitary Authority	Wokingham

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 15-Jul-1987

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

WOKINGHAM WARREN HOUSE ROAD SU 86 NW (North side)
10/23 Cattle shed Ashridge Farm, north of farmhouse G.V. II Cattle shed, now store. Mid C17, extended C19. Timber framed brick infill, old tile gabled roof. 2 framed bays, with one bay on east re-built C19 with re-used timbers. Small lean-to on west. Late C16 re-used beam

from elsewhere in first bay with chamfers and run out stops. Queen strut roof with clasped purlins.

Listing NGR: SU8136169772

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 81361 69772

Map



List entry Summary

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

Name: MILESTONE IN THE GARDEN OF ASHRIDGE FARMHOUSE, APPROXIMATELY 3 METRES SOUTH OF ENTRANCE PORCH

List entry Number: 1155933

Location

MILESTONE IN THE GARDEN OF ASHRIDGE FARMHOUSE, APPROXIMATELY 3 METRES SOUTH OF ENTRANCE PORCH, WARREN HOUSE ROAD

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Wokingham	Unitary Authority	Wokingham

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 15-Jul-1987

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

WOKINGHAM WARREN HOUSE ROAD SU 86 NW (North side)
10/21 Milestone in the garden of Ashridge Farmhouse, approximately 3 metres south of entrance porch G.V. II Milestone. 1747. Square

stone with pyramidal top and incised lettering and pointing hands. On the north face : at the top a hand pointing west, and the words 'The Warren'; underneath a hand pointing east, and the words 'Bill Hill' On the east face : XXX Miles to Hyde Park Corner 1747 On the west face : To Wokingham

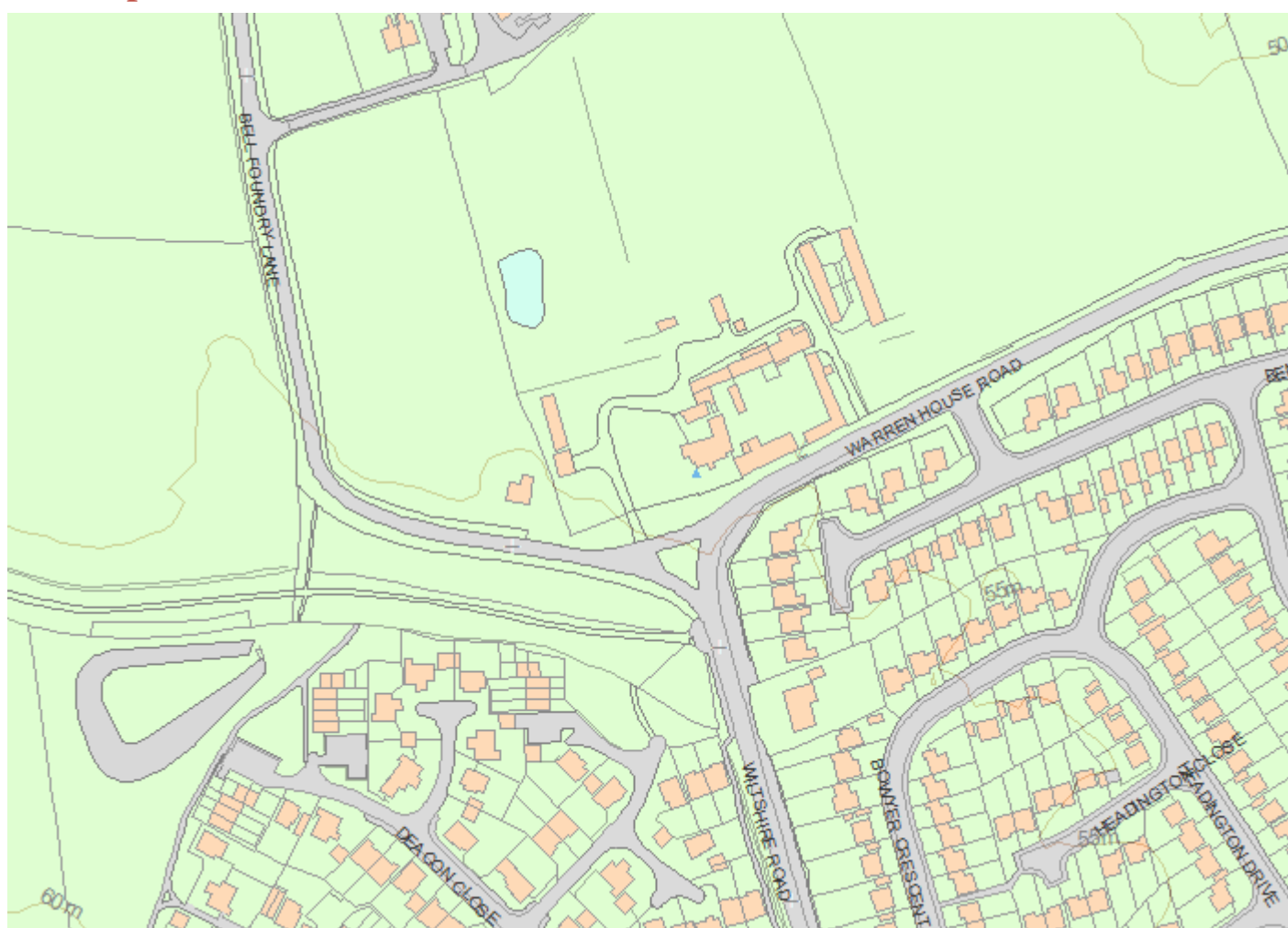
Listing NGR: SU8137269718

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 81372 69718

Map



List entry Summary

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

Name: BARN AT ASHRIDGE FARM, SOUTH EAST OF FARMHOUSE

List entry Number: 1118017

Location

BARN AT ASHRIDGE FARM, SOUTH EAST OF FARMHOUSE,
WARREN HOUSE ROAD

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Wokingham	Unitary Authority	Wokingham

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 12-Nov-1951

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 41785

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

WOKINGHAM WARREN HOUSE ROAD SU 86 NW (North side)
10/22 Barn at Ashridge Farm, south east of farmhouse 12.11.51 G.V.
II 10/22 Threshing barn, now barn and farm shop. Late C16, extended C17. Timber framed and weatherboarded, part brick infill. Old tile roof, hipped on east, gabled and half hipped on west. 5 framed bays and one framed bay extension; midstrey in third bay frame west and on north side. Extension is floored and has brick infill and daub panels externally with a high sole plate, on an old brick plinth. Queen post roof with clasped purlins and reducing principal rafters. Some windbraces re- placed.

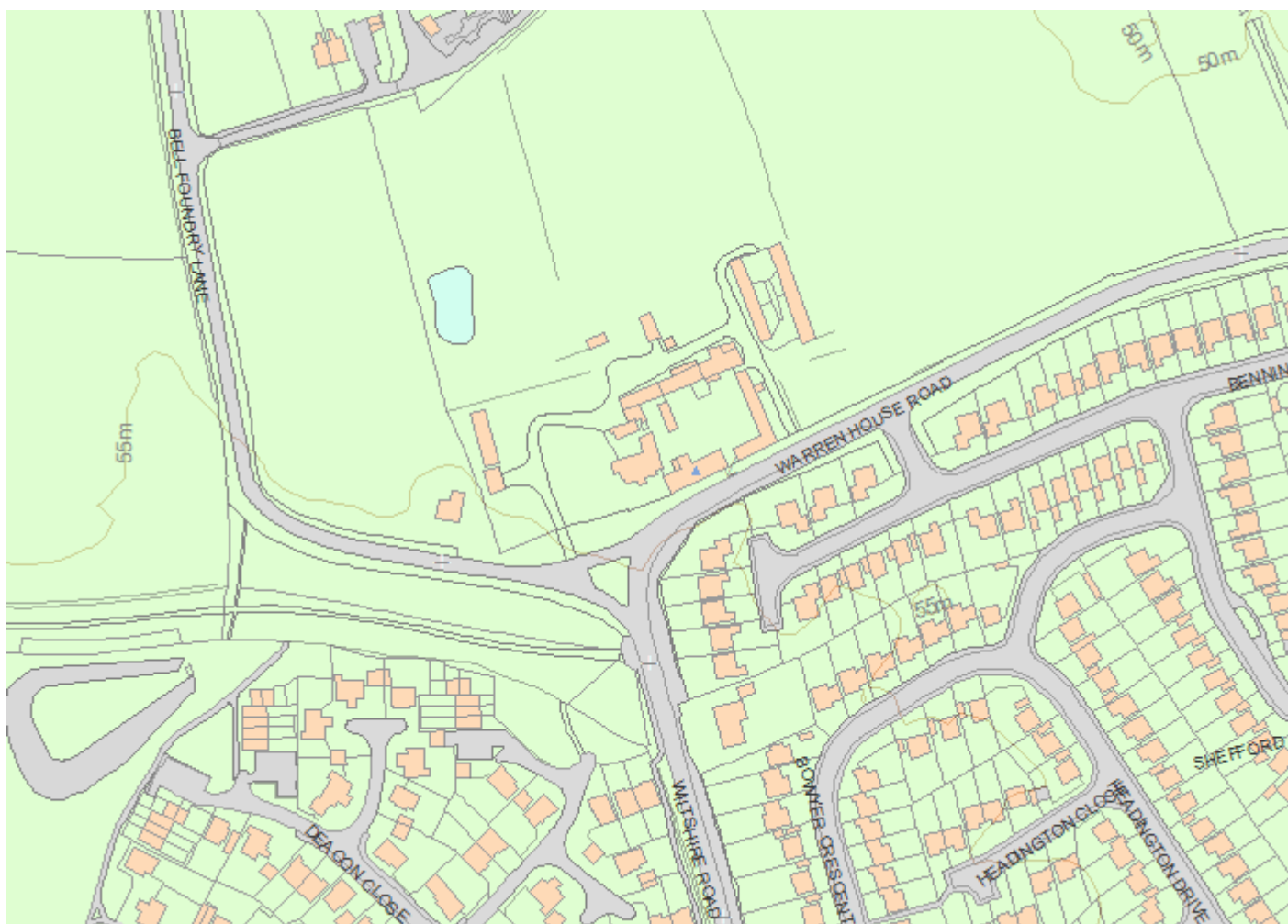
Listing NGR: SU8139769725

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 81397 69725

Map



PDAS4

MAP OF THE APPLICATION SITE IN 1883



PDAS5

MAP OF THE APPLICATION SITE IN THE 1930S

I · 453

790

2 · 106

Ashridge

B.M. 179·0

181

3