



## **DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

Renovation works to farmhouse  
Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, RG40 4QX

Prepared for: Mr and Mrs Ray

*The purpose of this report is to accompany a pre app planning or Listed Building application. A heritage statement sets out the details of the history and development of the asset using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It includes an assessment of the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works upon that significance. In addition to desk based research a site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and a non intrusive survey took place.*

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## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### **Heritage Asset and its Setting:**

Project Address: Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, RG40 4QX

Local Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

Conservation Area: None

Building Use: Residential

Listing Status: Grade II                      List entry no. 1319144

#### **Designated Heritage Asset:**

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Scheduled Monument?        | N |
| Listed Building?           | Y |
| Registered Park and Garden | N |
| Historic Battlefield       | N |
| Conservation Area          | N |
| World Heritage Site        | N |

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Non Designated Heritage Asset | N |
|-------------------------------|---|

### **Project Overview:**

Renovation works to bring Grade II Listed building back into functional use as a family home, including adjustments to layout without changes to the roof or building footprint. The farmhouse is currently uninhabitable and the owners currently live on the site in a mobile home until renovation works can be completed. There will be a future application for the removal/ replacement of the modern single storey element, roof repairs and the replacement of the outbuildings once follow up bat surveys are complete.



*Photo 1 – View of front elevation (northeast)*

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*Photo 2 – View of side elevation (northwest)*



*Photo 3 and 4 – View of rear elevation (southwest)*



*Photo 5 – View of side elevation (southeast)*

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*Photo 6 – View of front elevation of outbuilding (northeast)*

### **Reason for the project:**

Mr Rays uncle lived in the property for many years and as he grew older the maintenance of the property became more difficult and declined as is not uncommon. He needed to downsize significantly as this property became unmanageable.

Mr Ray and his family purchased the property and applied for a mobile home on the land in order to be able to live there whilst work to the house was carried out -planning ref- 241639.

These proposals aim to bring the property back into functional use, working within the existing footprint. There is a wish to create a more modern kitchen, with a relationship to the outside, and a master bedroom suite as well as bedrooms for their 2 children. Adjustments to the layout facilitate this within the existing footprint and building massing.

There is a wish to replace the modern extension and outbuilding however this is excluded from this application whilst we undertake further bat assessments

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## **Schedule of Intervention:**

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

- New kitchen installed to end room at ground floor level.
- New walls dividing end space of original hall house into boot room, utility and shower room.
- New electrics, heating and plumbing throughout.
- Replace uPVC windows with traditional timber windows to match the existing. uPVC windows are located in the family bathroom (lower window) and games room (south west facing window).
- Repair existing timber windows like for like.
- Replacement of existing modern end gable window to former ensuite with new timber window with clear glazing.
- New secondary glazing to existing bedroom windows
- Internal redecoration throughout.
- New floor finishes where indicated. Cleaning and repair like of like where shown.
- New site wide drainage linked in with the new incoming mains sewer system. New SVP internally.
- Cleaning (non-chemical) of black paint from existing internal timbers.
- New sanitaryware and tiling throughout.
- Replace existing staircase to improve safety, including new 1.1m high oak balustrading.
- Creation of a master suite within the farmhouse and removal of existing low quality ensuite.
- Improve the look & security at the entrance of the property by replacing the existing entrance gates.

## **Design and Access:**

No change to existing site access. No change to existing parking on site. No change to the intensity of the site usage. No change to the impact on neighbouring properties.

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### Setting Overview/ Context:

Westwood Cottage is a detached vernacular farmhouse located west of Sheerlands Road and east of the A327. It is situated south of the Arborfield Green and south west of the larger town of Wokingham. The site is heavily screened from the surrounding roads and the adjacent Listed Buildings by a dense belt of mature trees and can't be seen from the road.

The traditional farmhouse sits within a large parcel of land used for residential purpose but with a commercial yard and buildings situated at the end of the access track. The farmhouse is uninhabited due to its condition however its owners live on site in a static home maintaining residential purpose until the farmhouse is renovated and can be used again as a family dwelling. There is a large pond and large domestic garden to the left hand side of the access track on approach to the house. Parking for the property is a large gravelled area behind the house on the north side of the site between the farmhouse and the commercial yard. There is also a small private courtyard to the south side which is dilapidated in nature.

The house is described in the list entry as a late 16th century hall house, altered and extended in the 18th and 20th centuries. The building was added to the statutory list in 1986 and is Listed Grade II. It is a traditional two storey white painted brick property with a plain clay tile roof. It has been extended a number of times with the original central 'hall' part having an expressed timber frame with brick infills. The majority of the windows are painted timber although some have sadly been replaced with UPVC units.

There are a number of large outbuildings on the site which are in a poor condition and are currently suffering from structural failure and collapsing into the ditch behind them.

The setting was historically rural in nature and the buildings agricultural in form. Large quantities of modern housing development now surrounds it however changing its built context substantially.



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.

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### Site Planning History:

| Application No. | Description                                                                                                                                                                 | Decision & Date                      |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 241969          | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of Buildings 1 & 2 as storage and workshop use; Building 3 as office use, and land as storage use. | Approved:<br>February 2025           |
| 241639          | Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed temporary stationing of a mobile home for residential purposes.                                                | Approved:<br>September 2024          |
| 172689          | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of site for B1(a) business and ancillary storage uses.                                             | Not proceeded with:<br>November 2017 |
| 40052           | Refurbishment works.                                                                                                                                                        | Approved:<br>February 1993           |
| 35339           | Change of use from garage to office and part of the garden to storage.                                                                                                      | Refused:<br>April 1990               |
| R/263/65        | Demolition of garage and outbuildings and erection of two bedrooms and new garage.                                                                                          | Approved:<br>October 1965            |

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### Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits neither within nor just outside a Conservation Area.

The building is Grade II Listed.

#### Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building      Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1319144      Date first listed: 14-Feb-1986  
List Entry Name: WESTWOOD COTTAGE  
Statutory Address 1: WESTWOOD COTTAGE, SHERLANDS ROAD

#### Location

Statutory Address: WESTWOOD COTTAGE, SHERLANDS ROAD  
District: Wokingham (Unitary Authority)  
Parish: Finchampstead  
National Grid Reference: SU 76446 64647

#### Details

FINCHAMPSTEAD SHERLANDS ROAD SU 76 SE (West side) 12/20 Westwood Cottage II Hall house, now house. Early C16, altered and extended C18, and C20. Part timber framed with painted brick infill, part painted brick; old tile roof hipped and half-hipped. L-plan of 2 framed bays with solar at north west end, brick C18 extension on south west, C20 extension north east. Rendered plinth, brick dentil eaves, plat band on west front, timber frame exposed at rear. 1 1/2 storeys. One chimney on ridge near centre, one other at rear cut down to eaves level. Irregular 2 and 3-light casements. Entrance front:- Two 2-light casements in semi-dormers at upper level, one below on right hand, planked entrance door to left of this below left semi-dormer. 2 other similar windows on ground floor to left of door. Interior:- parts of timber frame exposed. Sooted rafters in roof with original wattle and daub which may have formed a smoke bay. C17 inglenook fireplace.  
Listing NGR: SU7644664647

The building is within the context of a Listed Building although there is no visual relationship between the two.

#### Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building  
Grade: II      List Entry Number: 1135796      Date first listed: 14-Feb-1986  
List Entry Name: WESTWOOD FARMHOUSE  
Statutory Address 1: WESTWOOD FARMHOUSE, SHERLANDS ROAD

#### Location

Statutory Address: WESTWOOD FARMHOUSE, SHERLANDS ROAD  
District: Wokingham (Unitary Authority)  
Parish: Finchampstead  
National Grid Reference: SU7641164590

#### Details

SU 76 SE 12/18  
FINCHAMPSTEAD SHERLANDS ROAD (west side) Westwood Farmhouse  
G.V. II  
Farmhouse, now house. C17 or earlier, with C20 extensions and alterations. Timber frame with brick infill, old tile gabled roof. Irregular plan with 2 crosswing gables facing south, C20 gabled extensions on north with false timbering. 2 storeys. A chimney in centre on ridge and one flanking on left. Irregular casement windows within frame. Access was not permitted to inspect the property at time of survey.  
Listing NGR: SU7641164590

## Assessment of Significance:

*Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013.*

*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 – NPPF*

**Archeological:** *As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

There are 4 archaeological records on the HER records within 250m of the site resulting in positive finds so it is assumed that the site is of high potential archaeological significance. The mapping also shows a substantial number of buildings on the site compared to the current situation.

| Name                                                                                            | Location               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <a href="#">Romano-British activity – Parcel 7, Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead, Berkshire</a>      | Arborfield And Newland |
| <a href="#">Medieval industrial activity – Parcel 7, Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead, Berkshire</a> | Arborfield And Newland |
| <a href="#">Prehistoric worked flint – Parcel 7, Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead, Berkshire</a>     | Arborfield And Newland |
| <a href="#">Findspot at Hogwood Shaw, Finchampstead, Berkshire</a>                              | Finchampstead          |

This proposal does not involve any extension or alteration of the building footprint, therefore no below ground is needed as part of these works.

**Historic:** *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

It was understood to be originally built as a three bay thatched open hall in around 1500.

The farmstead appears on the John Rocques Mapping in 1752 and appears to pre date the adjacent Westwood Farmhouse to the south as the primary high status residence which later replaced it in terms of importance.

The site was historically known as Little Westwood Farm and the adjacent site being known as Great Westwood Farm. In 1844 it is recorded to have been owned by Henry St John Esquire and occupied by John Clancy and registered as a homestead. The farmhouse was originally part of a much larger cluster of farm buildings, all located to the north and west, served by the same access road as exists now. The pond is present on the early mapping.

In 1851 the census shows that the house was used as a farmhouse by the farmer John Clary and his family.

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The two sites were known as a collective as Westwood Farm in 1911 but still with separate access.

The early mapping and census records seems to indicate that the property was split into three dwellings between 1897 and 1911, hence the numerous front doors. It is not know if the insertion of a floor occurred at the same time or prior to this The census seems to indicate that this had already occurred in 1891 and was being occupied by farm labourers.

The built form seems to indicate 3 primary build periods with a number of smaller alterations and refurbishments as illustrated below:

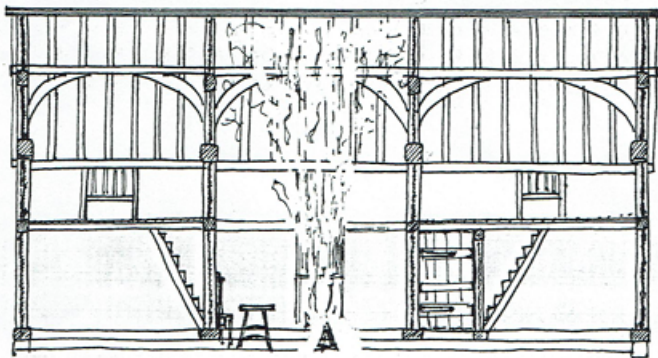
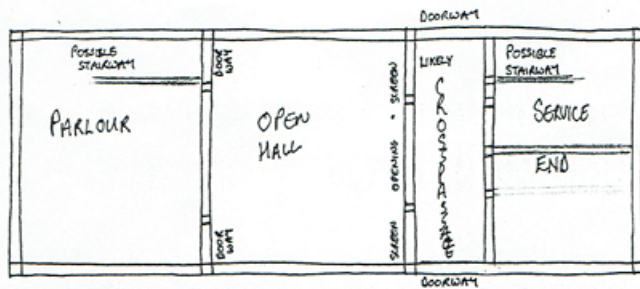
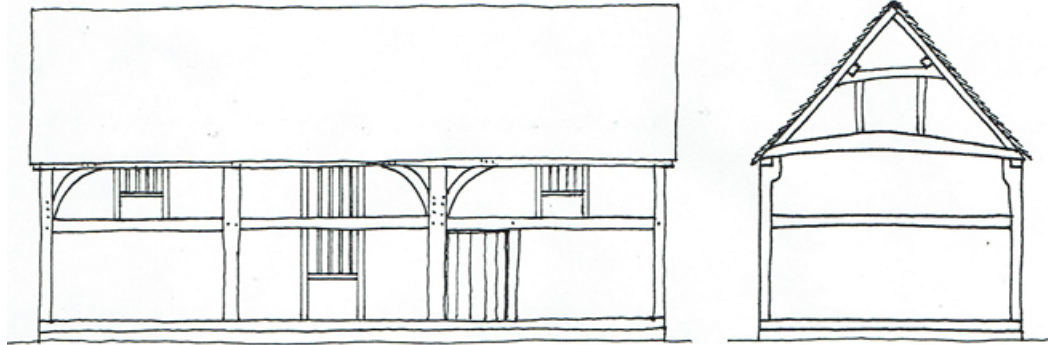


It is understood that the staircase was relocated and a new chimney stack inserted as part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century extension. There is apparently a clay tile marked with John Feltham and 1742 which indicates the possible date of the extension.

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Extract from a report in 2000 on the cottage by the Finchampstead Society on the assumed layout of the property as a Hall House prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and 20<sup>th</sup> Century extensions.



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**Architectural or Artistic:** *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*

The property is a traditional rural dwelling and its simple architecture and materiality is reflective of this. The build form tells the story of 3 clear main build phases changing its architecture from a single dwelling to multiple units. It was then clearly adapted again when converted back into a single dwelling again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century..

The modern extension on the northern end are of a low aesthetic quality and do not contribute to the architectural significance of the property.

The existing condition of the site is detrimental to its architectural significance.



Record photos from Jan 8<sup>th</sup> 2000 Building Recording by the Finchampstead Society

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**Historic Mapping** – For reference dating only, not for reproduction



Extract from The First Sheet of An Actual Survey of Berkshire John Rocques 1752



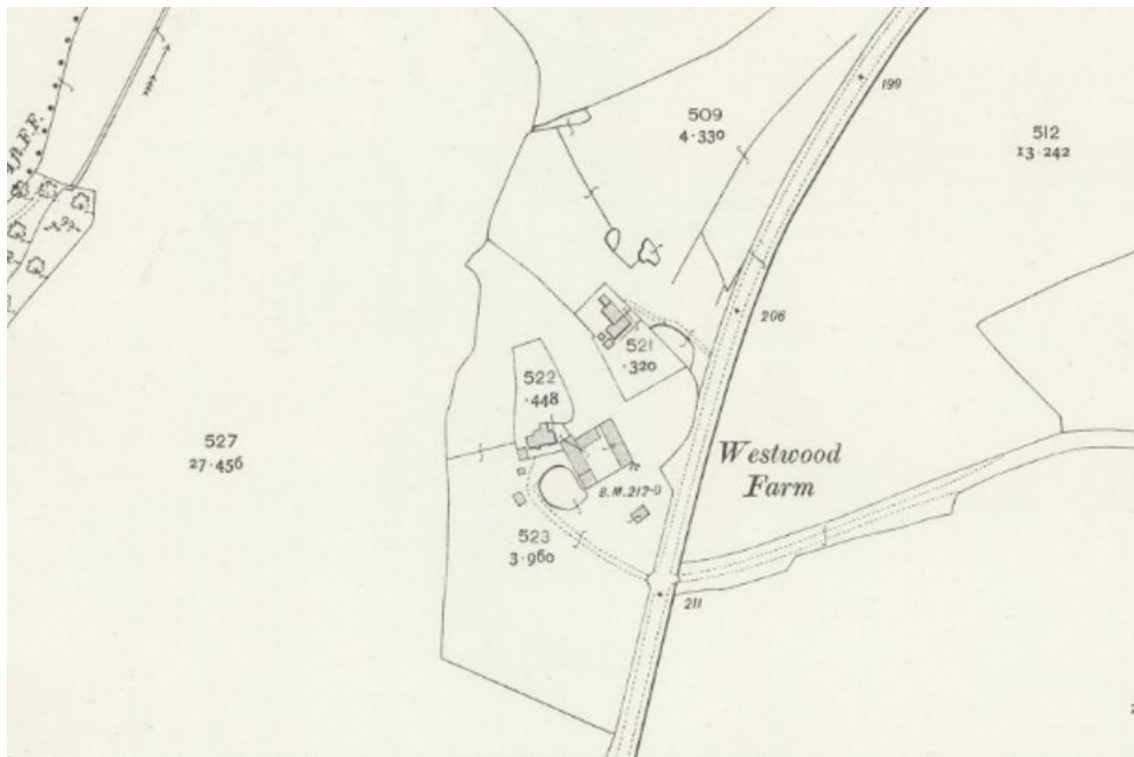
Extract from Plan of Parish of Finchampstead 1841

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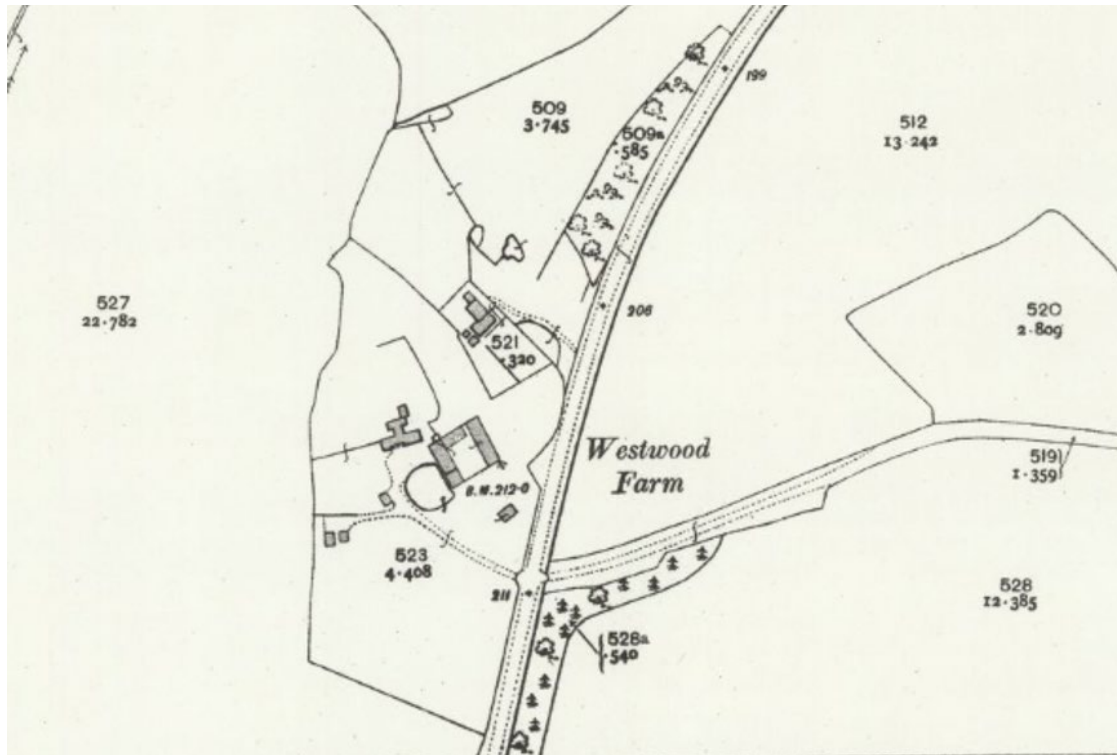
Extract from Berkshire XLVI 1876



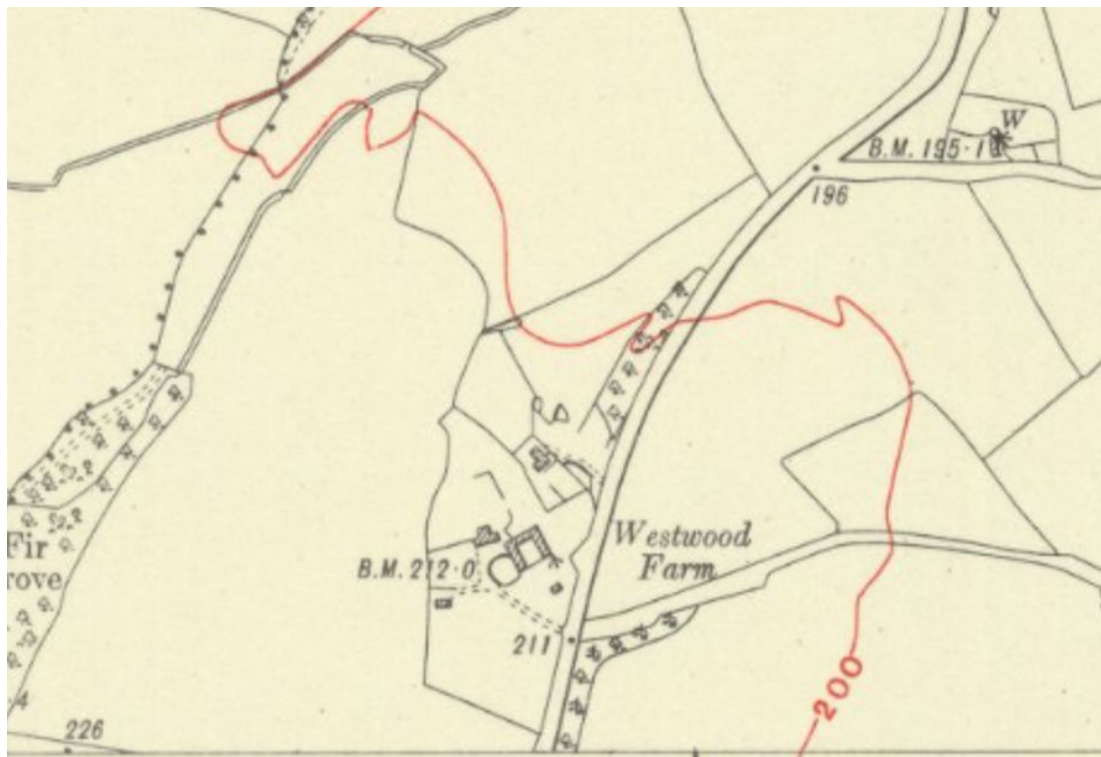
Extract from Berkshire XLVI.5 1911

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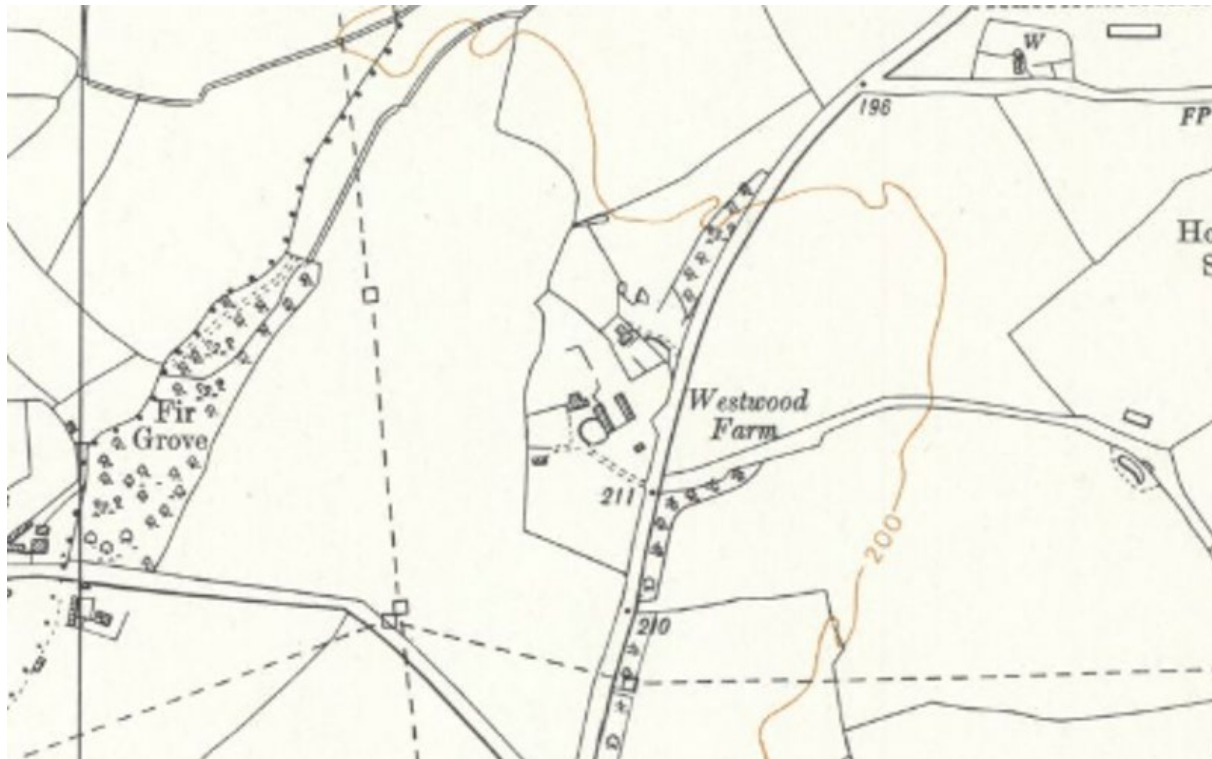
Extract from Berkshire XLVII.5 1933



Extract from Berkshire XLVI.NW 1938

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Extract from SU76SE 1961

## Pre-App Feedback

The following feedback was received from the pre-app. In red is our adapted response to this...:

- *"The proposed subdivision as to create a utility room, shower room and boot room is acceptable as this would be fairly lightweight and reversible. It is a shame to alter the plan here to lose the sense of the medieval cross passage, but it is acknowledged this is already very difficult to read."* **Reduced opening from boot room to modern extension and cup'd retained.**
- *"Upstairs, the slight loss of walling as to create the en-suite is regrettable as this may be 18th century (uncertain due to number of alterations in this area – it did at least feel solid) and thus the opening here should be kept to a minimum."* **Opening reduced to a minimum so that room is legible.**
- *"Within the master bedroom, no concern is raised to the removal of the en-suite shower room to the left of the chimney stack, however to the right this appears to be an original 18th century cupboard with untouched door and untouched ironmongery – thus of high significance and therefore should be retained."* **Cup'd retained**
- *"Related to this, a good number of the internal doors are historic and should be retained and repaired as appropriate." Particular mention was made of a historic door and frame that may have connected into a 19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to absorbed into the 20<sup>th</sup> century extension: "Consideration should be given to inclusion and retention of the door, but if not possible, the re-use of it elsewhere in the building."* **Historic doors largely retained and repaired.**
- *"[F]or a building of this type and age, the condition is fairly good - structurally the frame appears sound, or at least there is no obvious evidence of serious structural issue. This is not to say the building is not without fault. Numerous inappropriate alterations have taken place, the insertion of a number of uPVC windows (thankfully not that many in number) and the use of cement externally and gypsum plaster internally has all resulted in an excessive moisture content within the fabric (i.e. damp). This can be easily rectified with good conservation practice – removing the inappropriate materials and alterations and applying appropriate breathable materials combined with sympathetic repairs. Most of these will require consent due to the scope and should be included with any forthcoming listed building consent application... Such repairs/conservation lead alterations should include, but not limited to:*
  - *Removal of all non-breathable materials, i.e. cement pointing, gypsum plaster and associated plasterboard, timber cleaning (to be conditioned) and subsequent replacement with lime render, mortar, lath and lime plaster etc.* **Agreed.**
  - *If poured concrete floors are presented (this wasn't able to be inspected), consideration should be given to their removal and subsequent replacement with limecrete.* **We can confirm this as part of a later application. We at present prefer the approach of minimal intervention choosing to leave it untouched unless we find upon opening out that it is causing material harm.**
  - *Repair and reconditioning of the windows. From the initial inspection none of the windows appear to be 'original' or of significant age (caveated by not inspecting each and every window on site to a close degree) most appear to be early 20th century/interwar, perhaps a few 19th century. All these windows should be retained and appropriately repaired. Where uPVC windows have been added, these should be removed and suitably detailed replacements specified (details to be conditioned).* **Agreed and this is the approach taken,.**
  - *The removal of the rudimentary pipework and electrical fixings and subsequent replacement with more sympathetically sited and installed M&E. This should be boxed in where appropriate or use existing runs, new chasing in should not take place – again, this would be conditioned."* **Agreed**
- *"Westwood Cottage has been painted white for at least 40 years (as noted in the 1986 listing description) but was likely first painted in the mid-20th century, probably contemporary to the extension. The building has a number of coats of paint, the top being a vinyl masonry paint, with sub-layers likely similar. Being non-breathable, this paint will be trapping moisture within the fabric, exacerbating the damp issues. Furthermore, where the brick nogging panels are painted to the rear, between the timber frame, moisture will be forced into the wood, resulting in further decay to the timber. Historically the timber framed building would have had wattle and daub noggings (the panels*

*between the timber framing) which would have had a limewash finish, generally re-applied annually. These may have been later replaced with lath and plaster, again with a limewash finish. In the mid-18th century, the building was altered, extended to the south with a perpendicular range constructed of brick, at the same time the north-eastern elevation was refaced with the same brick as to be more 'polite' that is, not only to be of the fashion of the day but also to demonstrate higher wealth and status. As is common, however, the rear of the building (not being particularly seen by visitors) was left with the old medieval appearance – although some of the nogging became brick, likely during the same time. Up until the 20th century brick was never painted (save some examples of limewashing), brick being of a fairly high-status building material (generally only second to stone) was designed to 'show off', not designed to be concealed under paint. Therefore, to restore to the building to a more appropriate, a more authentic appearance would be a considerable benefit, both in terms of the special interest but also to the functionality (breathability) of the building... [I]t would be strongly advised to remove the vinyl paint as this is actively harming the building, it also undermines any 'good' conservation repair works elsewhere. Even if it is decided to not leave the brick bare, any re-painting should be done in a breathable paint, such as from Earthborn, Keim or similar." We would like to consider this and have included for a test area of paint removal on the gable elevation to see if it is feasible. Following this test we can discuss if the complete removal should be included in the subsequent application.*

## **Development Impact on the Historical Asset:**

*An assessment of how the proposed works will affect the significance of the heritage asset and the justification for that impact.*

*Proposals should and do:*

- 1 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF.*
- 2 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.*

## **Building Elevations and Setting:**

These proposals do not include any changes to the building elevations except for the replacement of all the unsightly uPVC windows with traditional timber windows to match the existing and the like-for-like repair of those existing timber windows. There are no proposed changes to the window proportions, therefore the historic elevations of the farmhouse are retained.

There are no proposed extensions or roof works as part of this application. There are no proposed changes to the building setting apart from the replacement of the site entrance gates.

Overall the proposed external alterations and repairs are like for like and improve the aesthetics of the building whilst returning functional use to the property.

## **Internally:**

The principles of the application is to renew the property to make it habitable and functional in purpose again with minimal intervention. There will be a later application to replace the modern single storey element and repair the roof once the additional bat surveys and reports are complete.

Timbers will remain expressed internally but will have the black painted cleaned with a gentle clean, resulting in a lighter colour. The internal redecoration throughout the property will otherwise be like-for-like to maintain all historical details except where inappropriate, not permeable, materials have been used. In these instances, the inappropriate materials will be replaced with breathable materials in accordance to good conservation practice. Modern wall paper will be removed.

The property contains modern skirting, varying in styles and this is proposed to be removed and replaced.

Where new walls are proposed or existing walls removed, they are minimal to achieve the client's wishes of a master suite and a link through to the boot room. New walls will be timber frame and reversible in nature. Overall there was a wish to work with the existing building layout with minimal intervention.

In order to improve the safety of the staircase, a new stair with increased thread depth to meet current planning legislation is proposed. In addition, the existing low wall around the stair opening is to be removed and replaced with a simple, 1.1m high oak balustrade that extends beyond the end of the existing low wall to meet the top of the stair. The existing stair and low wall are modern so their removal does not we believe involve the removal of any historic fabric.

New sanitaryware and finishes are to be fitted to existing and proposed bathroom/WC spaces. The sanitaryware and fittings will be hung from modern timber studwork and will not involve

Electrics and heating in the property are dated and are both environmentally efficient and a fire risk. The renewal of the existing wiring and replacement of the heating system is proposed. The principles are contained within the method statements provided and there is no intention to make any alterations or fixings to the historic timber framework.

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**Scale and Massing:**

As no extension to the building nor any change to the roof is currently proposed, the scale and massing will be unchanged.

There will be a subsequent application for a new extension, roof repairs and replacements outbuilding once further bat assessment have been completed in the spring.

**Archaeology:**

This proposal does not include any below ground works as no change to the building footprint is proposed. As such the potential for harm to below ground archaeology is very limited.

**Use:**

The existing building is currently uninhabitable. The works aim to bring back its functional use as a single dwelling as it has been historically used. The current vacancy of the property is incredibly bad for the historic fabric and there is both the public benefit of restoration of a Listed Building and private benefit to the reinstatement of use.

## Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies framework for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlining the framework within which local authorities should consider the importance of conserving, or enhancing aspects of the historic environment within the planning process. This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

Conservation as defined by the NPPF is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesigned buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines 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 assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

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. 'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

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When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

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

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

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority may have location specific guidance also which includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset. In assessing the impact of these proposals local guidance has also been considered.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 196) requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use of that asset. Where a heritage asset is capable of having a use, then securing its optimum viable use should be taken into account in assessing the public benefits of a proposed development. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit. Examples of heritage benefits may include: sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset, securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing. All design work and procedures should follow guidance outlined in BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

Job number: 2176

Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, RG40 4QX

### **Conclusion:**

We are looking to bring an uninhabitable Listed dwelling back into functional use as a family home in order to facilitate its long term conservation using best practice. This offers both public and private heritage benefits.

This application is the forerunner to a series of applications for a replacement of the single store element, roof repairs to the farmhouse and outbuildings replacement which are currently awaiting follow up Bat surveys.

The interventions are minimal and focus on the renovation and repair of the property generally using best practice, including the remove unsightly features such as UPVC windows and the repair of the existing timber windows. Adjustments to the internal layouts are minimal and deliberately retain the legibility of the building layout.

The proposals respond to the comments made during the pre app process and act in accordance with both local and national planning policy.

### **Assessor Details:**

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons) BArch RIBA MSc Building Conservation IHBC

### **Information Source Checklist:**

*The following information sources have been used when conducting desk based research:*

Historic England List of Protected Historic Sites x

National Planning Policy Framework x

Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment x

Relevant Local Plans x

Conservation Area Character Appraisal x

Local Authority Landscape Character Assessment n/a

The Local List of Buildings and Monuments x

Local Records Office Other (please state):