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Heritage Report

Town Barn, Dragons Green Road, Shipley, RH13 8GQ

Statement prepared by Chilcroft Heritage Planning
May 2026



Corporate members of:
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
Historic Houses Association
The Georgian Group



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1) INTRODUCTION

- 1.1) I am Haig Dalton, founder of Chilcroft Heritage Planning, an established independent heritage consultancy since 2006. Formerly, I was a local planning authority officer within development control departments. I have worked on a wide range of projects, predominantly (but not exclusively) for private sector clients.
- 1.2) I hold a masters degree in Historic Building Conservation (MSc); a postgraduate qualification in Architectural History from the University of Oxford (Oxon); I am an Affiliate member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC).
- 1.3) Over the last 21 years I have specialised in the historic environment, both in terms of understanding and analysing physical fabric, and in terms of policy application, specifically by assessing impacts, providing advice and supporting development proposals. My experience includes a diverse range of cases relating to the assessment of physical changes to, and development affecting all manner of heritage assets, and their settings.
- 1.4) I have undertaken numerous impact assessments where I have considered the impacts of new development on the historic environment (dealing with physical impacts, setting, townscape, views and inter-visibility), including dealing with the effects of development on heritage assets in rural contexts.
- 1.5) I have provided expert evidence at appeals, including public inquiries, on behalf of both appellants and local planning authorities.
- 1.6) I understand my role in producing this heritage report; to give objective evidence on matters within my expertise, based on my own independent opinion and uninfluenced by the instructing party. I confirm that I have stated the facts and matters on which my opinion is based, and that I have not omitted to mention facts or matters that could detract from my conclusions.

- 1.7) I believe that the facts stated within this Heritage Report are true and that the opinions expressed are correct. I have drawn attention to any matters where I consider I lack sufficient information to reach anything other than a provisional conclusion. I have adhered to the standards and duties of the professional bodies I am a member of, and will continue to adhere to those standards.
- 1.8) I was first approached in late 2025, when I was asked to consider the potential for development of the existing site. My assessment was based on several stages/elements, the first of which was an initial case review, including a site visit in September 2025. I confirm that I am able to act as the applicant's heritage expert following this initial work and a site visit.
- 1.9) As an independent professional, I have formed my own opinions and have come to my own conclusions about the effects of the proposed development.
- 1.10) I have included in my heritage report photos taken on my original site visit. The photos were taken with a compact digital camera and they have not been digitally altered, aside from cropping superfluous areas of sky and/or foreground. This visual assessment is intended to be informative, but it is not intended to be exhaustive.
- 1.11) This statement will describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by the setting, as required by Para.207 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2024). It will assess the significance of the heritage assets by way of Historic England guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017) in accordance with their preferred five-step procedure, identify, assess and explore the significance of their setting and consider the applicant's scheme in relation to them.

2) LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- 2.1) Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 and 66 of the Act place a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.
- 2.2) Section 72 of the Act places similar duty on the decision maker with respect to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, however this does not extend to the setting of conservation areas.
- 2.3) The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** constitutes the Government's current national guidance and policy regarding development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration and includes a succinct policy framework for local planning authorities and decision takers. It relates to planning law by stating that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.4) Paragraph 203 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with emphasis on "significance", defined in Annex 2 as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance."

- 2.5) Annex 2 of the NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."

- 2.6) Paragraph 207 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, providing a proportionate level of detail. The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interests.
- 2.7) Paragraph 208 of the NPPF notes that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 2.8) Paragraph 212 states with regard to heritage assets. that great weight should be given to their conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial or less than substantial harm.
- 2.9) Conservation (for heritage policy) is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

“The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”

- 2.10) The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not on a reactive approach to resisting change. In its simplest interpretation conservation could amount to a change that at least sustains the significance of a heritage asset.

- 2.11) Paragraphs 214 to 215 describe two levels of potential harm that can be caused to the significance of designated heritage assets, namely substantial harm and less than substantial harm. These effects are to be weighed in the planning balance according to the guidance set out within the paragraphs, bearing in mind the statutory provisions above. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including grade I and II* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.
- 2.12) Paragraph 215 deals with cases of less than substantial harm and notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage protection and the conservation of heritage assets are recognised as of benefit to the public.
- 2.13) Harm is defined by Historic England as a change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.14) Paragraph 219 of the NPPF notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.
- 2.15) **The National Planning Practice Guidance** provides advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment in accordance with the NPPF. The PPG currently relates to the 2019 version of the NPPF but will be updated in due course to reflect NPPF 2023.
- 2.16) In regards to the setting of heritage assets the PPG notes:

“The setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage.”

2.17) The guidance notes that a thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

2.18) In relation to harm the guidance states:

“Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, 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.”

2.19) Paragraph 020 of the document notes that public benefits can be heritage based and can include:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance and the contribution of its setting;
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset for the long term.

2.20) The **Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning** Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017) is a document published by Historic England as a second edition in December 2017, replacing the earlier 2015 setting guidance. The document provides for a thorough understanding of the setting of a heritage asset and the relationship of the setting to curtilage, character and context.

2.21) The guidance document notes, in paragraph 18, that the protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change. The document recognises that not all heritage assets are of equal importance and states that the contribution made by their setting to their significance will also vary. Not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without causing harm to the significance of the asset.

2.22) As per earlier Historic England guidance, the document advocates a stepped approach to assessing the impact of change within setting on the significance of heritage assets. This stepped approach is:

Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);

Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;

Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and

Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

2.23) Guidance under Step 2 notes that the asset's physical surroundings and how the asset is experienced (such as views, noise, tranquillity, sense of enclosure etc.) should be taken in to consideration.

2.24) Step 3 is also important in making it clear that a proposed development should not be assessed in terms of its impact on setting; instead it should be assessed in terms of the impacts on significance. That is to say, what matters is not the extent of visibility of the development or change to the setting of an asset, but the extent of change to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. In some circumstances, this evaluation may need to extend to cumulative and complex impacts which may have as great an effect on heritage

assets as large-scale development and which may not only be visual. At the very least the assessment should address the key attributes of the development in terms of its location and siting, form and appearance, additional effects and permanence.

- 2.25) Paragraph 39 notes that options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the relocation of elements of a development or changes to its design. It notes that good design may reduce or remove the harm.
- 2.26) **Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires great weight to be given to preserving the setting of a heritage asset. In *Jones v Mordue [2015] EWCA Civ 1243* the court confirmed that if the decision-maker has worked through the relevant heritage paragraphs in the NPPF, they will have complied with the s66 duty.
- 2.27) In *Barnwell Manor [2014] EWCA Civ 137* the court confirmed that great weight should be attached to the desirability of preserving the setting of a heritage asset.

3) ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1) The proposed site of Town Barn is located to the western side of Dragons Green Road, to the north of the hamlet of Dragon's Green. The site is not located in a Conservation Area and is situated in a rural location, outside of the built environment. The proposed site benefits from existing access to Dragons Green Road with gated access leading into the site.
- 3.2) Town Barn is believed to date from the 17th Century if not earlier and was originally constructed as a tithe barn. The building is not original to the proposed site and was constructed there in the early 20th Century. This is evident from the title maps prior to the 20th Century which show that the site remained vacant up until this time (**see Fig 1**). The map of 1897 clearly shows the proposed site directly above the pond as being devoid of any built structures and yet the construction of the barn clearly predates this mapping period. Earlier tithe maps including 1874 also show that the site was not built upon at this time and given Town Barn's proximity to Dragons Green Road, there is no possibility that a structure of this size and scale could simply have been left off of the tithe maps in the 19th Century or misplaced in error.
- 3.3) Town Barn first appears on the tithe maps in 1912 when it is then shown as an L-shaped building with a walled enclosure to the south-east side, overlooking the pond (**see Fig 2**). The principal elevation can be seen facing Dragons Green Road, from where its significance would have been best appreciated and despite its subsequent reduction in size, this remains the case today (**see Fig 3 and 5**). The building sits on a concrete constructed dwarf wall and there is evidence that the footings of the original timber frame barn have been cut, to sit it atop this modern concrete footing (**see Fig 6**). Although the main timber frame of the barn itself remains, for the most part, largely original, the rafters, timber weatherboarding and corrugated metal sheet roofing all date from the arrival of the building in the early 20th Century and therefore represent more modern fabric. The relocation of timber frame buildings in the early 20th Century was particularly common where older buildings of this kind were threatened with demolition and it was thought better to rebuild them in an alternative location, rather than to lose them entirely.

- 3.4) Town Barn, which is not a listed building, nevertheless remains of some historic fabric value and arguably only serves to enhance the rural setting in which it is located. Although the barn is not original to the site and has only stood on the proposed site for about 110 years, there is a case for saying that it could be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. There is no evidence to suggest where the barn originally stood and could have been moved some distance or even across counties, as some other timber frame buildings have been known to be. At the time that we were first engaged on the project, our initial suspicions were aroused by the idea of a tithe barn that did not form part of a collective of farmstead outbuildings or one that sat beside a farmhouse, as is typically the case. To see a tithe barn that is so isolated in a position is therefore at odds with how a historic farm building of this kind would have been witnessed and experienced and subject to appropriate design, the addition of an extra building or dwelling within its setting may offer an opportunity to better appreciate the heritage asset, as part of a broader collective experience.
- 3.5) The rear elevation of Town Barn faces north overlooking the main part of the proposed site which is currently set out as pasture (**see Fig 4 and Front Cover**). The former tithe barn is traditionally laid out across five bays with central door openings to the north and south. The barn and its immediate setting are devoid of any proper function and are arguably in need of finding a long term sustainable use, in the interests of the historic buildings long term wellbeing and needed investment. The significance of Town Barn stems primarily from its historic fabric. The building is not of historic interest because it was a historically associated with the proposed site. Nevertheless, given the proximity to the main part of the proposed site to the north-west, it is associated with it. By extension this association with the land beyond the barn can therefore be said to contribute to the way in which it is understood.
- 3.6) The significance of Town Barn is not substantively derived from archaeological interest, although it does have a degree of aesthetic value. Whilst there is some potential for archaeological interest in the form of the site's adaptation and use, given the barn has only been in situ on the land since the early 20th Century, any potential for significant finds are thought to be extremely low. If it was thought necessary, a watching brief can be secured by a condition and made subject to detailed proposals at a reserved matters stage.

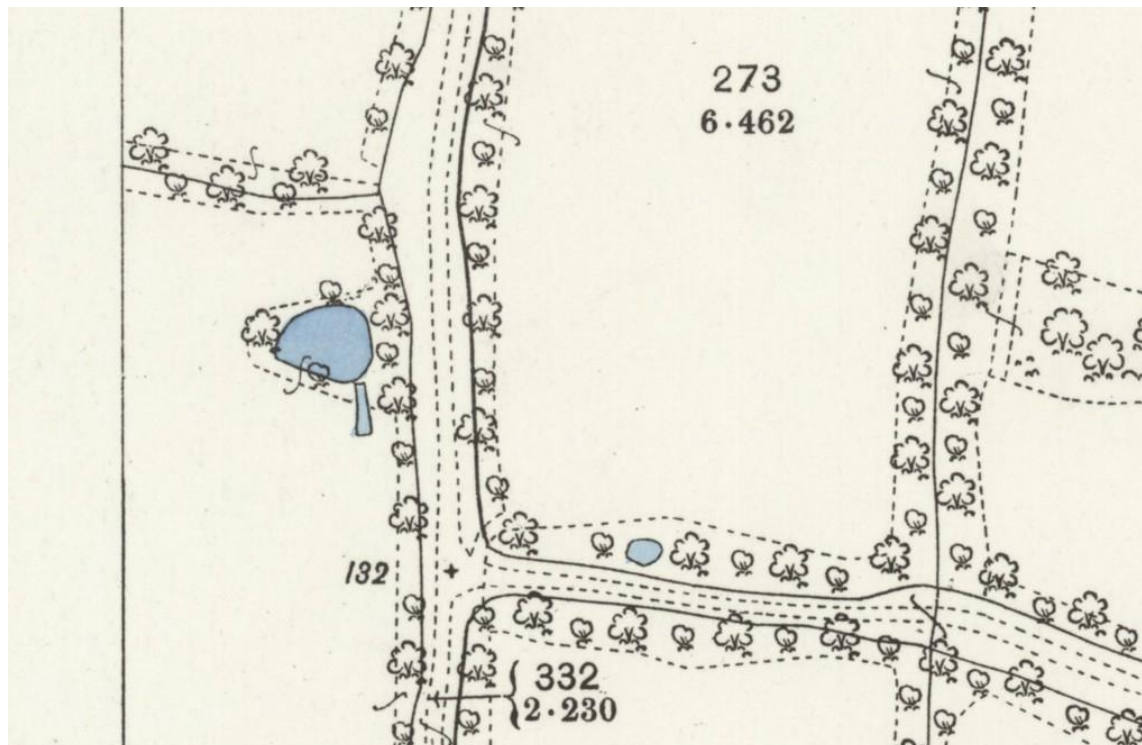


Fig 1: 1897 – Throughout the 19th Century and earlier, the proposed site remained vacant with nothing built upon the land. Despite its age, Town Barn is therefore not an original building to the site.

© Ordnance Survey 1897

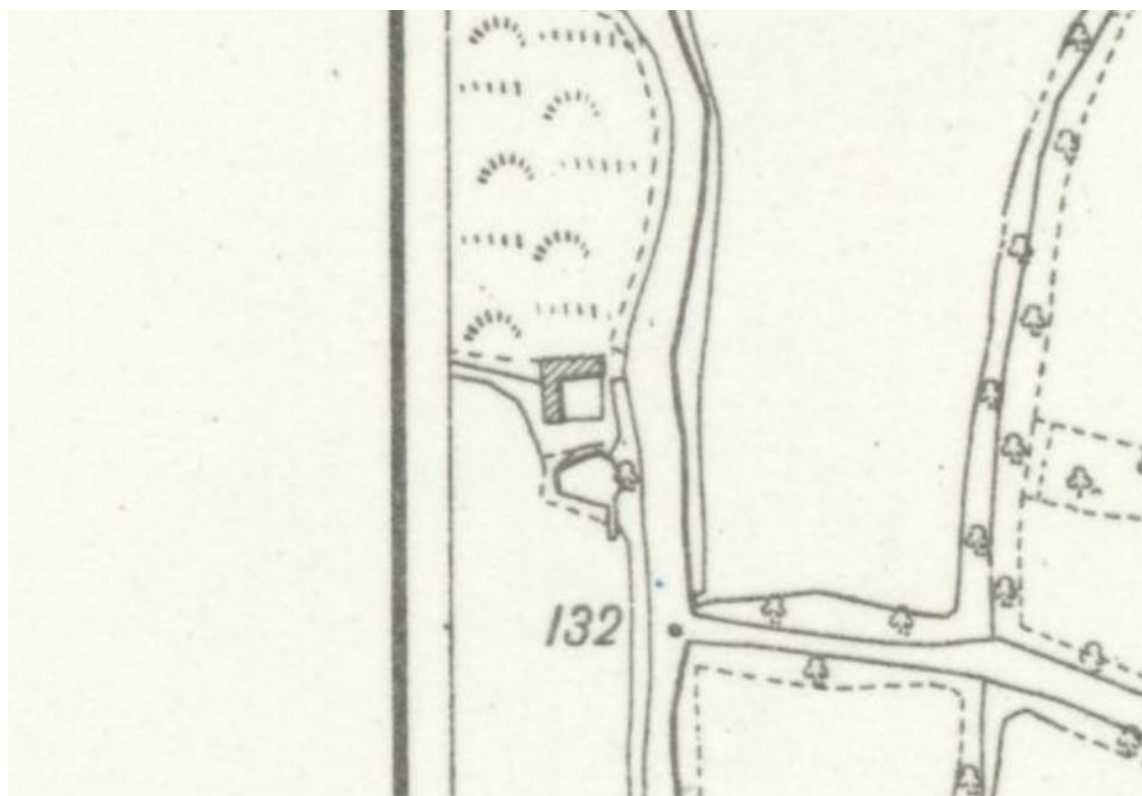


Fig 2: 1912 – By the early 20th Century, we can see Town Barn built there as what was then an L-shaped building, with a walled enclosure facing south-east overlooking Dragons Green Road.

© Ordnance Survey 1912



Fig 3: The east facing side elevation of Town Barn as seen from Dragons Green Road, which benefits from existing vehicular access into the proposed site. From this aspect, the proposals will broadly preserve its setting.

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Fig 4: The rear elevation of Town Barn as seen from the north-west side, will back onto the proposed new dwelling and be used for ancillary use, providing the historic building with a long term sustainable use.

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Fig 5: The tithe barn was originally constructed as an L-shaped building with a wing coming off to the left side. The building will be restored using period correct materials including oak boarding and clay tiles.

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Fig 6: The tithe barn has a modern concrete dwarf wall all round, having been assembled on site in the early 20th Century. The main timber frame is largely 17th Century with early 20th Century rafters, timber weatherboarding and corrugated metal roof sheeting. Left, metal sheeting covers the bay wall to the south-west corner that originally was built as an L-shape in that corner. New windows will be insert here.

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4) IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1) The proposals would see the existing Town Barn brought into ancillary residential use as an outbuilding for the proposed new dwelling, with the existing vehicular access utilised for the same purpose. The proposals would not alter the internal layout of the barn or seek to extend it and would be confined to the restoration of the historic barn, with a new two storey dwelling built further to the north-west in what is existing pasture.
- 4.2) The proposed development would see the former tithe barn utilised for ancillary residential use, including the repair of the historic building with appropriate materials. In so doing, it would provide for the sustainable long term use of the heritage asset, an approach supported by Historic England guidance. Although this guidance advocates that the best use for a historic building is the one for which it was originally built, this is plainly not possible in this case and the tithe barn has remained under utilised for some time. Subject to appropriate design, this use is therefore broadly welcomed.
- 4.3) The proposal would see Town Barn restored using materials which are considered to be of a high quality, consistent with the historic vernacular of the building. This would include replacing the corrugated metal sheet roofing with clay tiles, changing the softwood weatherboarding for Oak timber and introducing the use of brickwork around the concrete dwarf walls, which will collectively enhance the significance of the heritage asset. Pair of tall windows will be inserted into the south-west corner wall which used to be L-shaped, giving a nod to the opening that was once there and involving no loss of historic fabric. Internally, the volume of the barn would remain unchanged.
- 4.4) The proposed dwelling would be sighted further to the north-west, beyond a cluster of existing trees, some distance from the tithe barn. Although the two storey dwelling is of a good size and scale, given the relative distance between them, I am satisfied that the barn and dwelling would never be directly experienced together. With the proposed dwelling set further from Dragon Green Road, it would not overpower or appear detrimental to the setting of the tithe barn. With soft boundary treatments, the meandering driveway would also accord with the rural area. On balance, the proposal would preserve the setting.

5) SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

- 5.1) The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains a statutory duty to give considerable importance and great weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building in the planning balance. Preserving means to do no harm.
- 5.2) The NPPF lays down an approach that corresponds with the statutory duty of the 1990 Act. In cases where harm occurs, the NPPF requires balancing the benefits of a proposal against harm resulting from it.
- 5.3) The Horsham District Council's adopted Development Plan policies require development proposals to conserve heritage assets (such as listed buildings), and their settings.
- 5.4) The guidance in Historic England's GPA3 provides a framework for considering and assessing effects on the setting of heritage assets.

Conclusions

- 5.5) The proposed design would not result in the loss of any historic fabric to the tithe barn. Where changes are sought, they would involve the loss of early 20th Century fabric, which is not original to the 17th Century building.
- 5.6) The proposal has understood the significance of the barn and would utilise doors and former openings without the need to alter historic fabric and is sensitive to its historic layout, leaving the volume of the barn fully legible.
- 5.7) The proposed design is of an architectural and material quality that would enhance the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. The proposal would also provide the heritage asset with a long term sustainable use.
- 5.8) The proposed dwelling is of a scale and design that would preserve the setting of the barn and ensure that it remains the focal point, as seen from the public realm of Dragons Green Road, from where its significance is best appreciated.

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