

APP 02

Application Number: 12/02643/FUL
Minor

Conversion and renovation of the existing main barn and attached single storey outbuilding into a residential dwelling; erection of a garage/external store/home office on the footprint of previous buildings on the site.

AT Elm Hall Farm, Main Road, Astwood

FOR State Office, North Crawley Estates

Target: 14th February 2013

Ward: Sherington

Parish: Astwood & Hardmead Parish
Council

Report Author/Case Officer: Katy Lycett

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Head of Team: Alex Harrison

Contact Details: 01908 252608 Alex.Harrison@milton-keynes.gov.uk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

(A brief explanation of what the application is about)

1.1 The Site

The application site is an existing redundant Farm complex located on Main Road in Astwood. The site sits within the Open Countryside as designated in the Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011 and is not within the Conservation Area. The local area is characterised by residential properties in a semi-rural location at the edge of the village. The existing barn is set within a large paddock and agricultural land with the main barn and attached outbuilding being redundant.

1.2 In accordance with the description of the site as submitted within the Design and Access Statement the location is described as:

'The topography of the site is mainly flat with a lower area in the centre part of the site rising approximately 1 metre to the east and west boundaries. The length of the site from the east to the west is approximately 175 metres and the overall depth of the site from north to south is approximately 63 metres.'

The Proposal

The proposal seeks consent for the conversion and renovation of the existing main barn. The works involve:

- Restoration of a traditional barn and outbuilding to create a residential

property. This proposal will include the creation of a domestic garden and the creation of a separate single storey building accommodating garages, workshops and home office. This building is proposed to be located to the east of the main barn.

- Vehicle access will be via Main Road leading a parking and turning area for vehicles in front of the garage, store and home office building.

Details of the proposal as described above can be seen in the plans appended to this report.

2.0 RELEVANT POLICIES

(The most important policy considerations relating to this application)

2.1 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph:

- 7 – Requiring Good Design
- 14 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- 17 – High Quality Design
- 64 – Impact of Character and Appearance of the Area

2.2 Local Policy

Adopted Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011

- D1 – Impact of Development Proposals on Locality
- D2 – Design of Buildings
- T15 – Parking Provision
- S10 – Development in the Open Countryside
- E5 – Re-Use of Rural Buildings

2.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Parking Standards for Milton Keynes 2005 (amended 2009)

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

(The issues which have the greatest bearing on the decision)

- 3.1
- The principle of the works being outside the established village envelope. Under the relevant Local Plan Policy, S10 the proposed development would fail to comply with the relevant criteria as set out. In addition the creation of a large detached outbuilding would be equally contrary to the requirements under Policy E5.
 - The impact of the development on nearby properties and occupiers. Although located close to a residential area within the village, the existing barn is set on an isolated site in a rural location and the acceptance of a conversion would establish the principle of residential use in the Open Countryside.
 - The impact of the development on the historic qualities of the building and its surroundings. The proposal has been assessed in terms of the

non-designated Heritage Asset criteria and it is determined that there is insufficient information and assessment submitted to justify a conversion and alteration to the building of this amount.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

(The decision that officers recommend to the Committee)

- 4.1 It is recommended that planning permission be refused for the reasons set out at the end of this report.

5.0 CONSIDERATIONS

(An explanation of the main issues that have lead to the officer Recommendation)

5.1 Open Countryside and Re-Use of Rural Buildings

Under the criteria as set out in Policy S10 of the Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011 it is highlighted that the Open Countryside is defined as all land outside the development boundaries defined on the Proposals Map. In the open countryside, planning permission will only be given for development that is essential for agriculture, forestry, countryside recreation or other development which is wholly appropriate to a rural area and cannot be located with a settlement. The current proposal does not meet any of these criterion and the application is considered to be contrary to policy S10 as a result.

- 5.2 However, policy E5 does allow for the re-use of rural buildings. However it states residential conversion would only be acceptable if it is shown that reasonable attempts to secure a non-residential use have failed and that, among other things, show that the building is not so derelict as to require complete or substantial reconstruction and that the proposal itself can be accommodated without said reconstruction, extension or alteration to the building.
- 5.3 The submitted structural survey leads to the conclusion that the building is into capable of accommodating the proposal without substantial reconstruction. The survey admits that the 'buildings are generally in a dilapidated condition and that damage to the structural timbers has resulted in the building deflecting. The report states the timbers are structurally adequate, before advising they are subject to rot. The extent of rot and number of timbers affected is not explicitly revealed but the survey recommends that damaged elements are replaced. These considerations should also be taken in light of the fact that none of the existing facing materials would be retained and reused.
- 5.4 On this basis the structural integrity of the building is such that a conversion would not be suitable without significant rebuilding, repairs and additions which would be contrary to Policy E5 of the Milton Keynes Local Plan. The building is therefore considered to be unsuitable for conversion as a matter of principle when considering saved Local Plan polices.

- 5.5 Section 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework relates to the reuse of redundant buildings and states that:

Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- *The essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or*
- *Where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or*
- *Where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting; or*
- *The exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.*

- 5.6 The third bullet point could be used to justify the proposal as a matter of principle. However the key word is 're-use'. The extent of rebuilding and structural works that would be required to bring the building to a structurally sound and usable standard is such that it is not considered that the building is being reused. The proposal effectively uses what remains of the original building to justify a new dwelling which is tantamount to a new building in the open countryside which is in turn tantamount to a new dwelling in the open countryside. It is deemed that, although there is support for the conversion of redundant or disused buildings, this proposal would not constitute development of this nature. There is no policy support for this proposal in either the NPPF or the Local Plan and as a result the provision of the new dwelling on this site is unacceptable as a matter of principle.

- 5.7 The proposal also includes the provision of a garage/workshop and home office building as a detached outbuilding. This element of the proposal is also contrary to policy E5 as it entails the proposed use cannot be accommodated within an existing building and that new buildings are required.

5.8 Heritage and Conservation Considerations

The Conservation Officer considers that a full assessment of the building's historic significance would be required in order to determine the importance and potential risk of any development. A residential conversion is considered to be a more intensive use than other uses due to the amount of internal works that would be required. No such assessment has been done and therefore it is difficult to ascertain the impact on the building as a non-designated heritage asset. It is considered that there is insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate this impact, particularly in light of the extent of works required, and the proposal cannot therefore be supported.

5.9 Highway Safety, Access and Parking

There is no objection to the principle of creating a suitable access to the site however no such detail has been provided and therefore this cannot be supported. However, given the objection in principle it is considered that it would be unreasonable to request details that would not affect the principle of the scheme and therefore this has not been followed up in this instance.

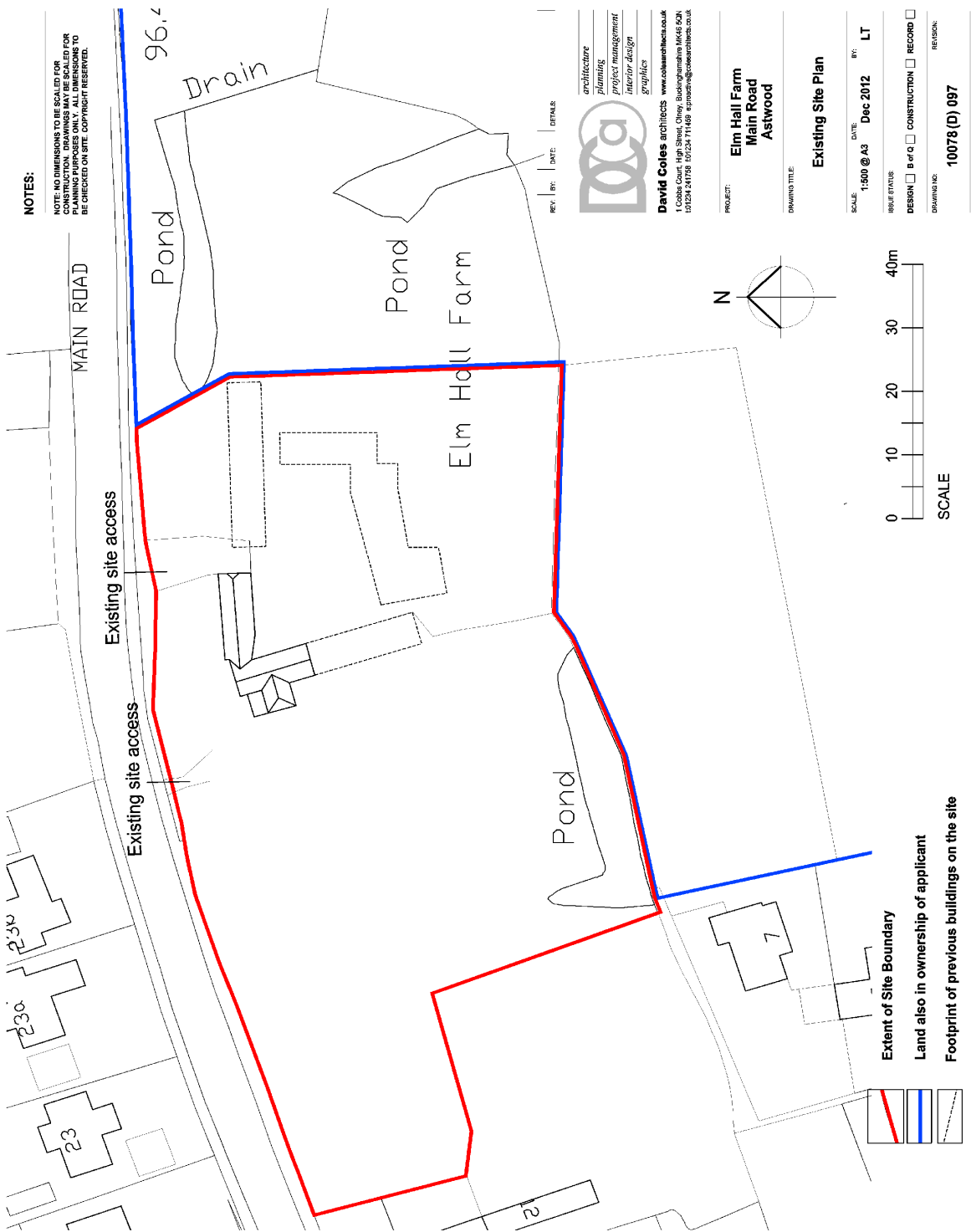
5.10 Ecological Impact

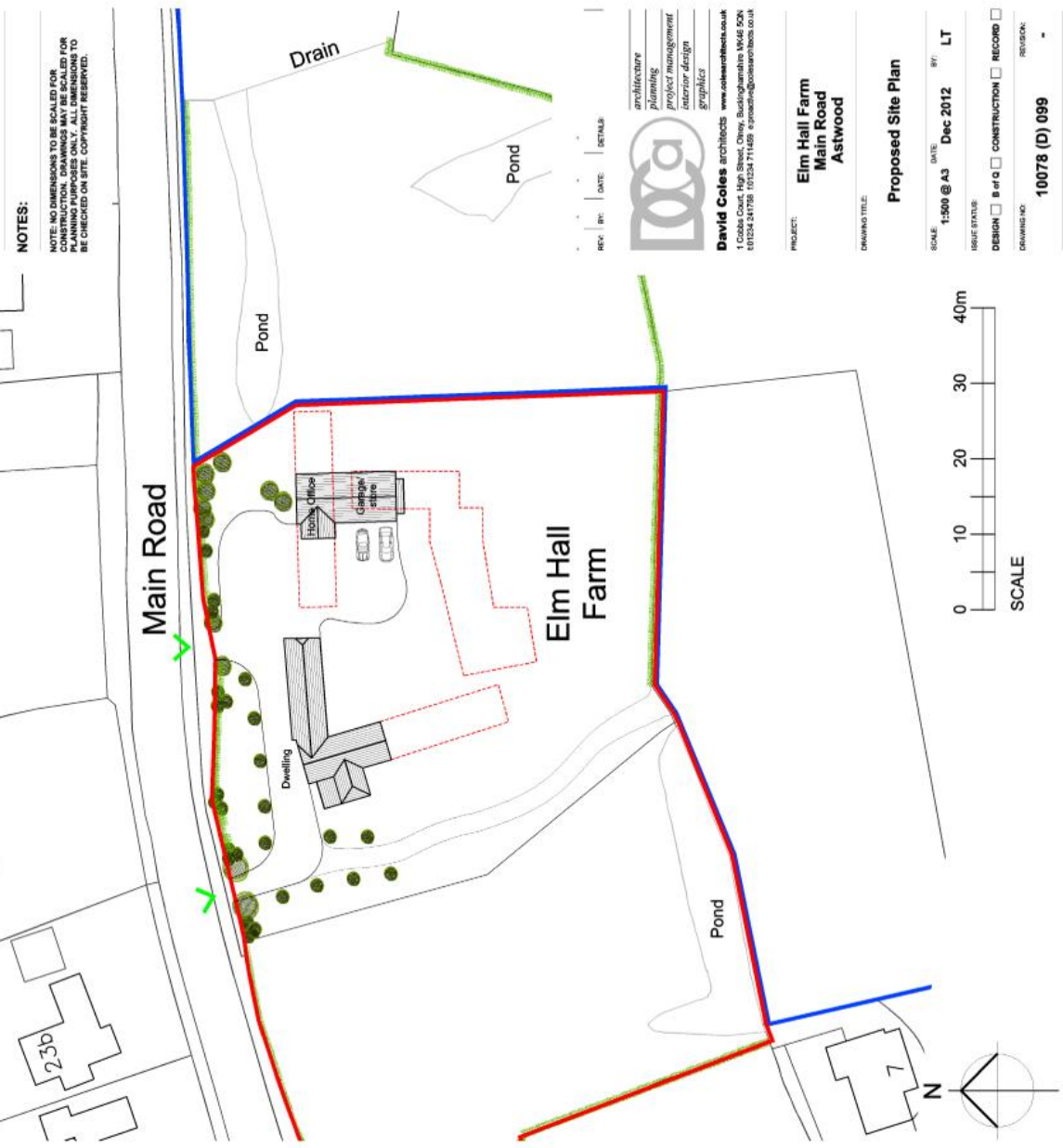
The Ecology/Countryside Officer has raised a number of issues regarding protected species. He has noted three ponds on site and the area could contain a habitat suitable for breeding, foraging and hibernation of Great Crested Newts. Furthermore there have been recorded instances of Barn Owls close to the site in 2009 and 2010. An ecological survey has been submitted with the application concluding no affected species although the Council's Ecologist has requested a specific Great Crested Newt survey within the site. It is considered that the ecological survey is lacking in its specific assessment of GCN presence but, as with paragraph 5.9 the objection of the principle of development means it would be unreasonable to request further survey work. Should the proposal have been acceptable in principle the additional work would be required and refusal of the application would be justified for the absence of this information.

6.0 **REASONS**

(The reasons that officers recommend that the application should be refused. The reasons must be ones that the Council can demonstrate with evidence, should the applicant appeal against the refusal.)

By reasons of the scale, design and principle of residential conversion the proposal would not be supported by the Local Planning Authority. The application would fail to meet the relevant criteria of Policy S10 (Open Countryside) and E5 (Re-Use of Rural Buildings) and there is insufficient information submitted to justify the amount of works proposed in terms of the potential risk to a non-designated Heritage Asset. On this basis the application in its current form would fail to preserve or enhance the historic features of the existing barn.





NOTES:
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PROJECT: **Elm Hall Farm Main Road Astwood**

DRAWING TITLE: **Proposed Site Plan**

SCALE: 1:500 @ A3 DATE: Dec 2012 BY: LT

ISSUE STATUS: DESIGN B of C CONSTRUCTION RECORD

DRAWING NO: 10078 (D) 099 REVISION: -

DESIGNERS HAZARD ASSESSMENT RECORD
 DESIGNER: BJC
 DRAWN: BJC
 CHECKED: BJC
 DATE: 12/12/12

ACTIVITY	HAZARD	ACTION
1. SITE VISITATION	SAFETY OF PUBLIC	ALL VISITS TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SUITABLY TRAINED PERSONNEL
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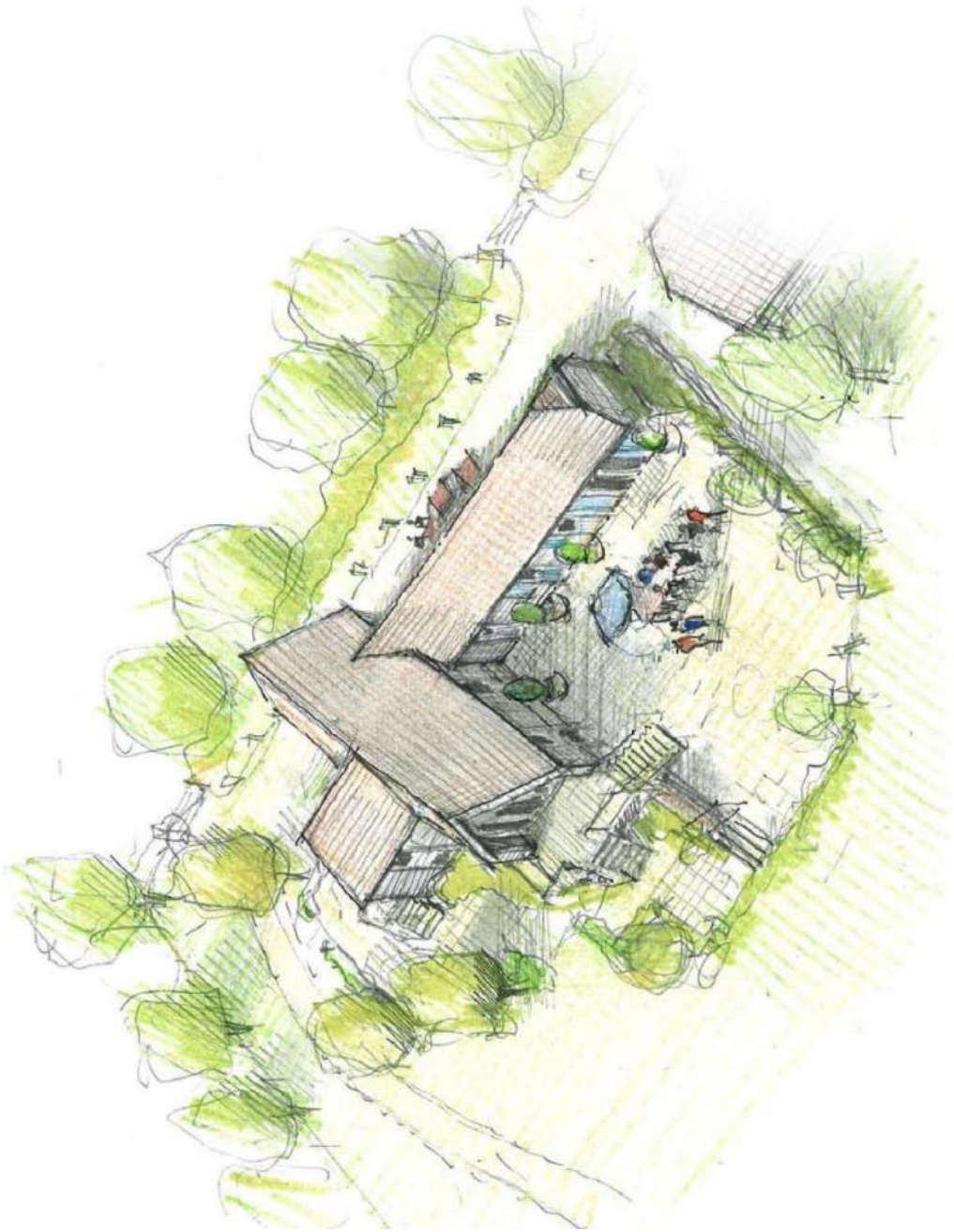
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KEY

- = Application Site
- = Other land / buildings owned by applicant
- = Footprint of dilapidated buildings (approx)



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PROJECT: Elm Hall Farm Main Road Astwood		
DRAWING TITLE: 3d sketch of proposed scheme		
SCALE: nbs @ A3	DATE: Dec 2012	BY: DC
ISSUE STATUS: DESIGN <input type="checkbox"/> B of C <input type="checkbox"/> CONSTRUCTION <input type="checkbox"/> RECORD <input type="checkbox"/>		
DRAWING NO.: 10078 (D) 300		REVISION: -



SOUTH ELEVATION



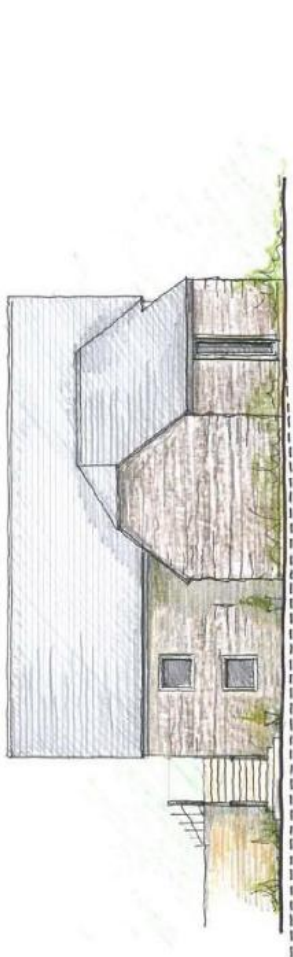
NORTH ELEVATION

EXISTING GROUND LINE (APPROX) - - - - -

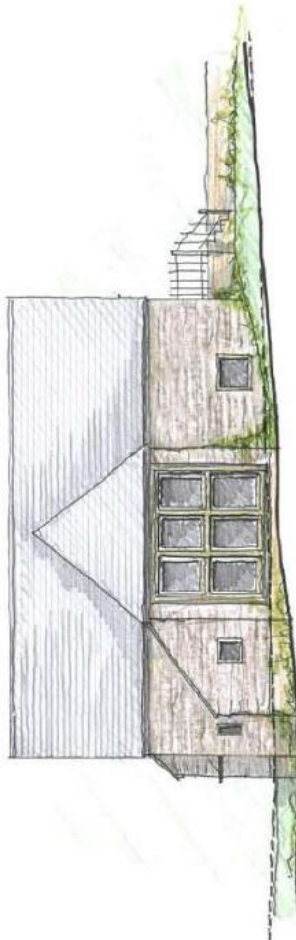
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PROJECT:	Elm Hall Farm Main Road, Astwood	DRAWING TITLE:	Elevations (as proposed)
CLIENT:		SCALE:	1:100 @ A3
DESIGNER:		DATE:	Dec 12
REVISIONS:		BY:	AT
DESIGN <input type="checkbox"/> B of O <input type="checkbox"/> CONSTRUCTION <input type="checkbox"/> RECORD <input type="checkbox"/>		DRAWING NO.:	10078 (D) 101
REV.:		DATE:	
		DETAILS:	



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

EXISTING GROUND LINE (APPROX) - - - - -



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PROJECT: **Elim Hall Farm
Main Road, Astwood**

CLIENT: _____

SCALE STYLE: _____

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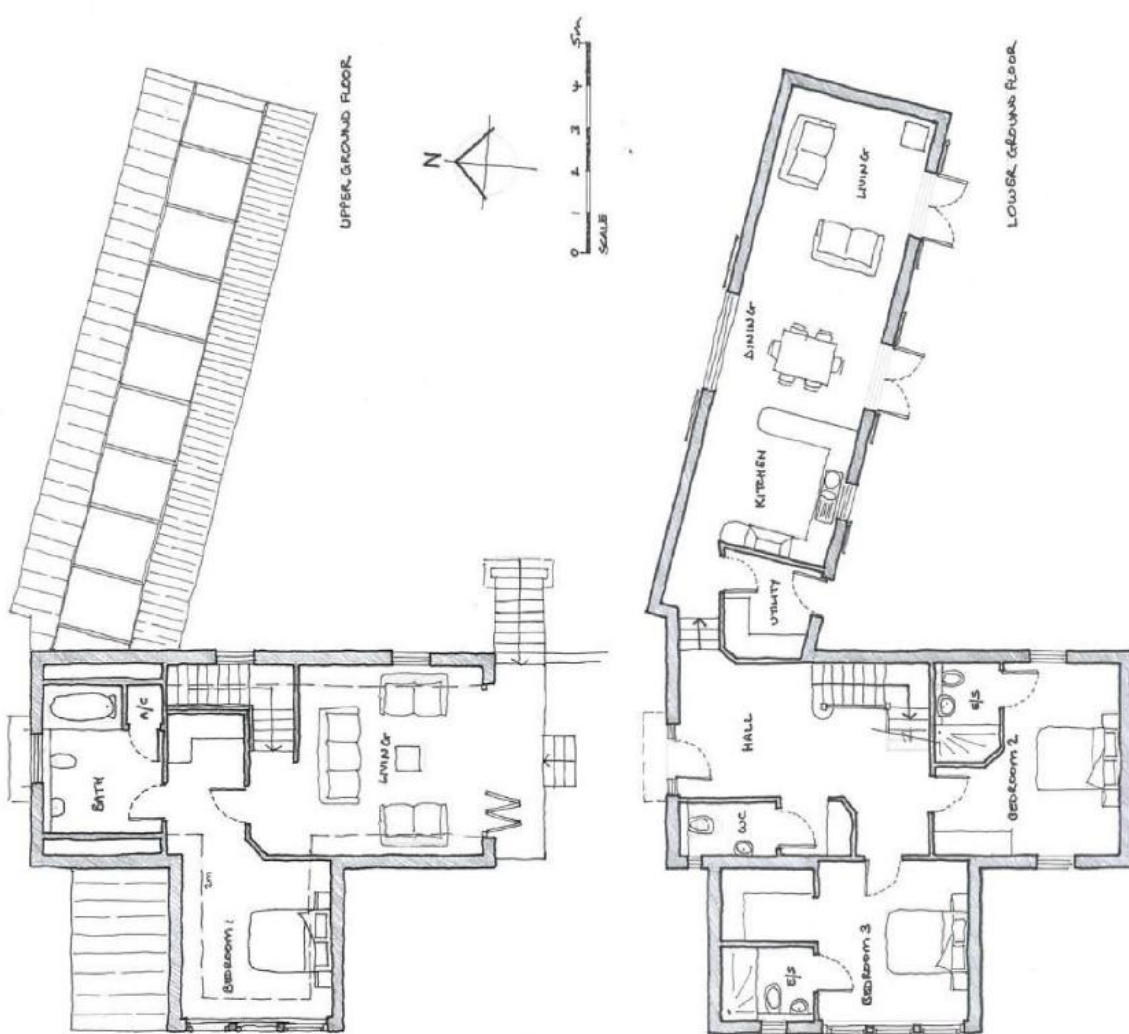
DRAWING TITLE: **Elevations
(as proposed)**

SCALE: **1:100 @ A3** DATE: **Dec 12** BY: **AT**

DRAWING NO: **10078 (D) 102** REVISION: _____

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PROJECT: Elm Hall Farm Main Road Astwood			
DRAWING TITLE: Floor Plans (as proposed)			
SCALE	1:100 @ A3	DATE	Dec 12
		BY	AT
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DRAWING NO: 10078 (D) 100			
REVISION:			

A1.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

(A brief outline of previous planning decisions affecting the site – this may not include every planning application relating to this site, only those that have a bearing on this particular case)

A1.1 None.

A2.0 ADDITIONAL MATTERS

(Matters which were also considered in producing the Recommendation)

A2.1 None.

A3.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

(Who has been consulted on the application and the responses received. The following are a brief description of the comments made. The full comments can be read via the Council's web site)

Comments

Officer Response

A3.1 Highways Development Control:

'Application 12/02643/FUL is for the conversion of an existing barn and erection of other buildings on the Elm Hall Farm Site.

Noted. See 5.9 for Highways considerations. Policy T10, T15 and Parking Standards.

A3.2 Elm Hall Farm is on the south side of Main Road, Astwood. This section of Main Road is a single carriageway two ways. Traffic can not access the A422 in an easterly direction and is subject to a 30 mph speed limit in this location. There are residential dwellings on the north side of Main Road in this location. Elm Hall Farm is on the inside of a curve in Main Road.

Noted. See 5.9

A3.3 The Design and Access Statement proposes the retention of the two existing accesses off Main Road shown on Plan 10078 (D) 099. The access on the western side of the development is a hardened footway/verge crossover on the highway to the buildings. The access to the centre of the development is an old agricultural farm access with no obvious crossover constructed on the highway. This access is not suitable for serving the proposed dwelling and details of a new crossover if required at this point should be submitted for approval. Please see Informative.

Noted. See 5.9

- A3.4 The visibility splays for both accesses should be shown on the approved plans. Based on my site visit on 29/1/13 the traffic flows are low with the 85 % speeds within the 30 mph limit. On this basis minimum 2.4m x 43 splays with unrestricted visibility are required for both accesses. Noted. See 5.9
- A3.5 This application is in Zone 4 for the application of the Milton Keynes Parking Standards 2005 amended 2009. For a 3 bedroom dwelling 2 number parking spaces are required. Plan 10078 (D) 099 indicates that there is adequate space to park the required number. The parking requirement excludes the garage for these calculations. Parking for visitors although not shown could be provided within the access driveway to avoid cars parking on Main Road. Noted. See 5.9
- A3.6 I have no objection in principle to this application. There are however further details required for approval not included in the information provided by the applicant. ' Noted. See 5.9
- A3.7 **Cllr McLean**
- Cllr McLean requested that the item be considered before a DC Panel meeting to allow for a full discussion. Noted.
- A3.8 **Councils Archaeologists:**
- "While I do not object to this proposal in principle I do feel that it would have been better informed had the applicant / their agent produced a record and assessment of the barn, a vernacular structure which likely dates to the 18th or early 19th century and as such should rightly be considered an undesignated heritage asset. Additionally the site is within Noted.

an Archaeological Notification Area and the proposed new build, services and landscaping may impact on significant buried remains, particularly of the medieval and post-medieval periods. I am satisfied that this aspect may be addressed through an archaeological watching brief.'

A3.9 Astwood & Hardmead Parish Council:

Raised objections to the application on the following grounds: Noted. See paragraph 5.3.

- Dwelling is outside the village envelope.
- Application sets an unwelcome precedent.
- Impact upon village infrastructure.
- Dwelling is large and not in keeping with the village.

A3.10 Senior Landscape Architect:

Raised no objections to the application subject to a landscaping condition being attached. Noted.

A3.11 Civil Aviation Authority

Raised no objections to the application. Noted.

A3.12 Conservation Officer:

'The barn has been identified on the draft 'Heritage at Risk' list and as such a suitable repair and reuse of the barn would be welcomed. Noted. See paragraph 5.8 for conservation considerations.

A3.13 This barn is not listed or within a conservation area, however it is clearly of historic interest, and is considered to be an undesignated heritage asset, in accordance with the Noted. See paragraph 5.8

NPPF. As such it is concerning that the historic interest of the building has not been fully assessed by the applicant as part of their application to inform the proposals.

- A3.14 The barn has a timber frame, with some pegged joints and carpenters marks. The main barn has a cart entrance projection, and is then characterised by its open space, and the lower wing is subdivided into smaller stabling areas, some retaining wide timber boarding to walls, and some areas of timber boarding to ceilings. It appears it may have been constructed in different phases, and historically was part of a larger group of buildings. The pitch of the roof and the roof structure would suggest the building was historically thatched. Noted. See paragraph 5.8
- A3.15 A full assessment of the building is required prior to further consideration of this application. Its significance needs to be described by the applicant, in accordance with the NPPF (see paragraph 128). As such I request that the applicant provides a full assessment of the historic significance and development of the building, written by an appropriately qualified specialist in historic buildings. All elements of the barns should be considered, including an assessment of the former roof materials. Noted. See paragraph 5.8
- A3.16 Low-key uses are often preferable for such buildings, as residential conversions often have a harmful effect on the character and fabric of barns. Whilst a full assessment of the acceptability of the proposals would follow the receipt of the historic building report, from an initial view of the plans I would have some concerns over the proposed elevations, and the internal use of space/ floor plans, which contributes Noted. See paragraph 5.8

to some of these external features - such as positioning and form of windows and doors. ‘

A3.17 The Ecology/Countryside Officer:

Provided extensive comments regarding the application and summarised with the following statement:

A3.18 ‘The proposal will not minimise impacts on biodiversity and will miss opportunities to provide net gains in biodiversity. (NPPF’s paragraph 109).

A3.19 A Great Crested Newt survey of the site needs to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. If found an appropriate mitigation plan outlining how the works can proceed without negatively impacting upon them will need to be produced before planning permission is granted, as required by the policy set out in the NPPF and ODPM 06/2005.’

Noted, see paragraph 5.10

A3.20 Local Residents

The occupiers of the following properties were notified of the application:

- 12, 14-16, 19 21, 23, 23A, 23B, 25, 27 31 and 33 Main Road Astwood
- 7 Lewens Croft Astwood

A3.21 Three letters of support were received relating to the application which stated:

‘This is not a development but a renovation which will undoubtedly improve the village aspect. As such I do not

Noted. See paragraphs 5.1 to 5.4.

accept it will form a significant precedent. There are a number of residents living close to the site who support the proposal. In the interest of a village which is slowly socially deteriorating there is a need to support anything which improves both its appearance and population.'

In addition comments were raised that the converted building would help to support existing local facilities and the benefit of repairing the building in order to secure its long term future.

One letter was received in objection to the application which raises concerns regarding:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| - Development being set outside the village envelope. | See Paras 5.1-5.5 |
| - Limited facilities to support a new dwelling. | Noted |
| - Risk of setting a precedent. | Noted |
| - Scale of development. | See para5.6 |