

Meeting Date: 21 January 2021

Project	Whitley Farm		
Meeting	Pre-Application	Meeting Time:	10:00 to 11:00
Location	Virtual - Microsoft Teams		
PRESENT			
Geraint Jones (GJ)	Savills (Planning)	Steven Sims (SS)	Wiltshire Council
Victoria Button (VB)	Savills (Planning)	Russell Brown (RB)	Wiltshire Council
Natalie Aldrich (NA)	Savills (Heritage)		

1. Introduction / Site History

Attendees introduced themselves. VB outlined purpose of meeting was to have detailed heritage discussions on heritage status of various buildings to determine scope and appropriate level of redevelopment of site. It was confirmed that, while the forum for the meeting was the Council's pre-app process, acceptability of the principle of development would need to be agreed through the Development Plan process and so this discussion sets aside principle and focuses on design evolution.

VB / GJ outlined the site context and history, including promotion through Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan since November 2016 and recent Reg.14 consultation feedback.

VB shared photos of the site, including the slurry store at the rear of the site, and highlighted the poor condition of the modern agricultural buildings.

2. Site Layout

Site layouts were shared, to show how the site has evolved since the original layout was produced in November 2018.

The latest layout shows ad-hoc courtyard layout opposite the listed building, with more modern dwellings of a converted Dutch barn style at the rear of the site.

3. Listed building

NA outlined that there was already internal division in the Listed barn. The design approach was to utilise existing openings to sensitively convert the building to form 3 dwellings and remove modern additions.

RB considered the conversion appeared logical and ground floor layouts remain open which is encouraged.

RB reviewed the proposed elevations and thought south elevation could work well. North elevation appears too domestic and could incorporate shutters on some windows.

GJ asked if amended listed building plans can be issued to RB and SS for comment as, to allow the site to move forward, we require confidence that officers feel a suitable design outcome can be achieved for conversion of buildings and the wider redevelopment of site.

RB confirmed willing to review revised listed building plans.

4. Heritage assignment of significance

NA outlined dating of structures, noting majority of site is post-1940, with listed building and single stone outbuilding pre 1940. There has been a loss of traditional buildings over the years.

RB has been unable to visit the site, however, he has been through the map regression and has no reason to disagree with dating of structures.

NA outlined Assigned Significance, with greatest significance limited to Grade II listed barn and farmhouse, medium significance the single storey building at site entrance and stone outbuilding, and the remainder including all modern buildings of no significance. RB confirmed in agreement with assignment.

VB shared photos of stone post-1940 outbuildings. RB acknowledged finished floor level and roof were significantly low and discussed potential alternative uses for the building, if retained, including raising roof to provide access as a bin store. GJ agreed detail to be explored further.

5. Existing and proposed layout of site

VB shared breakdown of floorspace plan which shows total floorspace (4,285 sq m) and floorspace to be retained (724 sq m) which correlates to Assigned Significance. Represents a 48% reduction of floorspace.

VB outlined lack of NP policy support prevents ability for detailed discussions through application route to progress, as principle of development is not considered acceptable. Keen to resolve with WC heritage issues and reach agreement on potential scale of development.

GJ set out proposed layout drawn up having regard to the Historic England Farmstead Assessment. Questioned RB whether there is any specific design preference – e.g. traditional courtyard appearance and / or modern interpretation.

RB stated has significant experience in farm conversions in Wiltshire over years, referencing example on outskirts of Trowbridge. Acknowledges each site and approach is different. Incorporating modern elements would work well, given map regression and current ad-hoc nature of modern buildings. Replication of historic timeline with traditional courtyard and modern buildings.

GJ asked RB for his thoughts on wider layout and extent of development. Noted original comments considered development should be focused to north-west of site. Questioned whether providing a defined edge to the settlement would work.

NA acknowledged the layout had a defined southern edge, whereas existing has a more linear alignment. Layout is subject to further amendments which could accommodate different edge.

RB would like to visit site before giving a definitive answer. His view will be influenced by how gardens will be arranged. He is keen to see gardens on perimeter of site with hardstanding / yard centrally to reflect a traditional farmyard approach. Potential to orientate buildings to provide views to listed building and countryside.

GJ outlined desire to get to broad agreement on design principles to be shared with NPSG demonstrating conversion of 10 dwellings can be accommodated.

RB confirmed no significant heritage issues with proposed layout.

GJ to move forward requested a note assessing the broad design response within the updated plans to be issued after the meeting, confirming that there were no known issues that would prevent development in excess of 10 dwellings being brought forward (subject to the principle of redeveloping the site being established through the Development Plan process).

SS confirmed that as part of the paid pre-app service officers would provide a follow-up response. Setting the principle of development aside, can support the residential redevelopment of the site (subject to impact of additional dwellings in listed buildings being considered) and happy for additional details to be provided. Agrees site needs to be allocated in neighbourhood plan to allow detailed discussions to take place, and that this could be achieved through a broad redevelopment policy.

RB asked that, to help him assess the key design/heritage issues, that the indicative plans to be submitted would show key design principles, building heights, land uses and materials.

Savills agreed to further review comparable previously approved schemes in Wiltshire to inform the scheme review, and then share detailed evolved plans for comment.

END.