

DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Change of use and extension of former Dutch hay barn to 1 no. dwelling, conversion of former piggery to ancillary home office, means of access and external landscaping works.

Former Coach House Farm, Cut Lane, Knowsley, Lancs, L33 3AQ

(Alternative to 23/01833/FUL)



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1.0 Purpose and Brief

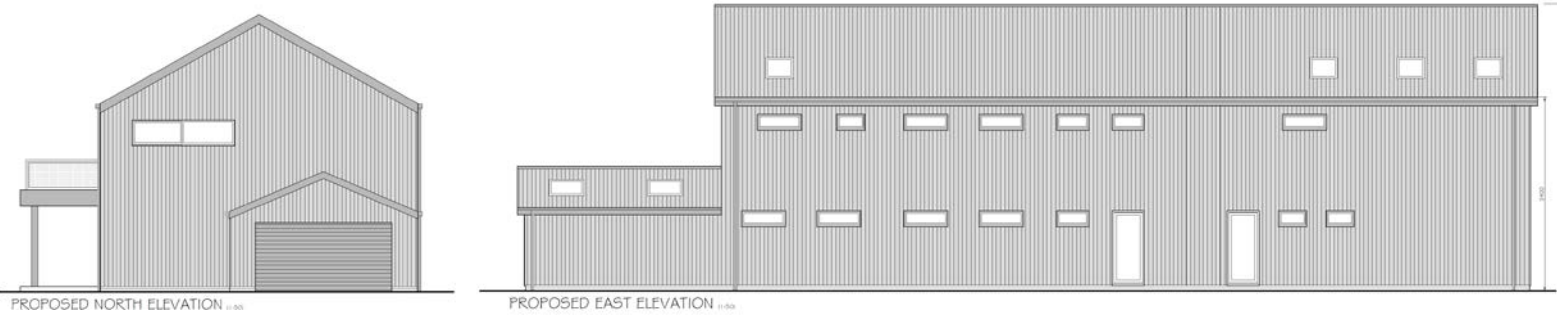
This Design, Access & Heritage Statement has been prepared to support an application submitted to Knowsley Council relating to Coach House Farm, Knowsley. The description of development given on the application form is:

“Change of use and extension of former Dutch hay barn to 1 no. dwelling, conversion of former piggery to ancillary home office, means of access and external landscaping works”

Following the refusal of 23/01833/FUL, the design of the proposal has been amended as follows:

- Revised external elevations in response to the planning officer's previous observation that the design of the development is unattractive, lacks harmony, symmetry and consistency and is incongruous to the surrounding built development.
- Amendments to the window configuration and clarifications in relation to obscured glazing to ensure the privacy of neighbouring occupiers.
- Omission of the previously proposed 200mm roof uplift.
- Reduction in car parking from 5 to 3 spaces and reduction in external hardstanding.

Comparison between previous and new revised elevations



Above: Previously proposed elevations (23/01833/FUL)

Below: Revised proposed elevations, key changes highlighted in red



2.0 The Site and its Context

Site Location

The site is located in the open countryside 2 km north east of Knowsley Village. The OS Grid reference for the development site is SJ 45572 97381.



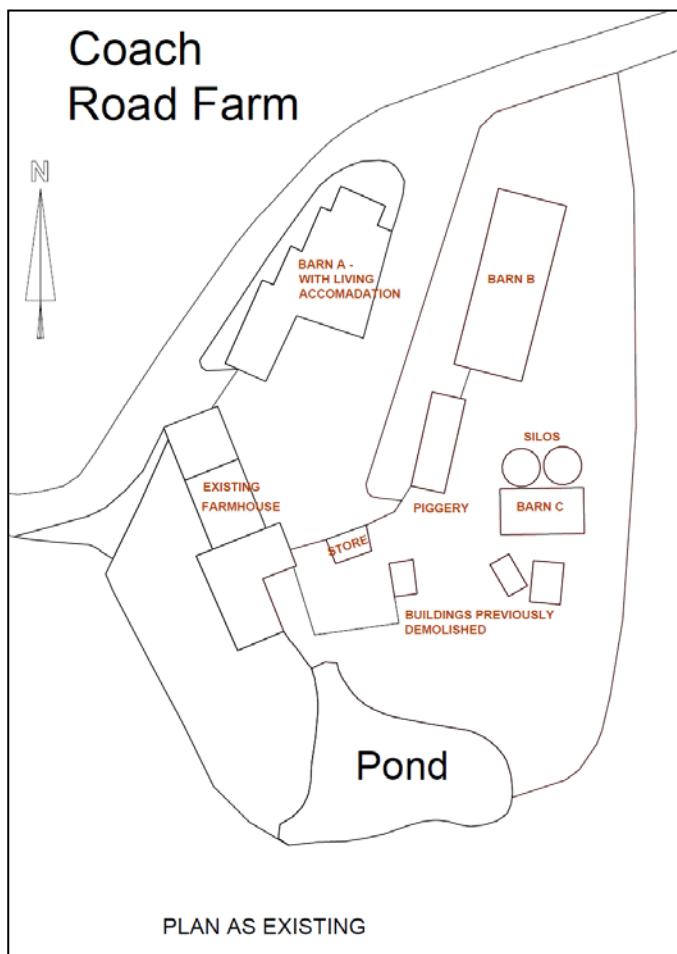
Images taken from Google Maps.

Description of the Site

The application site area measures 0.21 hectares (0.52 acres) and currently accommodates a brick-built piggery, hardstanding areas and a steel-framed Dutch barn relating to the site's former use as a farm.

The site was formerly part of a larger agricultural holding, but has since been split off and the fields were sold to a neighbouring farm leaving the former farm buildings within an 'island' plot. The adjacent stone barn has been granted consent under 22/00299/FUL for conversion to a dwelling.

Access is gained from Cut Lane, which is paved and adopted as far as the site, before becoming an unadopted track which connects to Coach Road. A group of trees and hedges separate neighbouring agricultural land and provide the southern and eastern boundaries and Cut Lane provides the northern and western boundary.



Surrounding Area

The site is in open countryside within the south west Lancashire Green Belt, which has existed since the 1960's and last updated in 1983 and exists to protect the open countryside between the large settlements of St. Helens, Kirkby, Skelmersdale and Prescott.

The site does not lie within any defined settlement boundary within the settlement hierarchy for the Borough and is therefore a countryside location. However, the buildings within the site form a discernible group with the dwellings immediately to the south west of the site (Moss Cottages) and, to a slightly lesser degree, the house at the junction of Coach Road and East Lancashire Road.

The form of development in the vicinity of the site is characterised by sporadic buildings, often one or two houses and agricultural buildings. This is typical of the dispersed and sporadic groups of buildings dotted around the surrounding flat agrarian landscape that is typical of this part of the Green Belt. It is interesting to note (see Section 6 Heritage Statement) that there were at least 4 other farmsteads within a half mile radius of the site; and these are recorded on historic maps surveyed between the early 19th and early 20th centuries, but have since disappeared from the landscape. This is probably a consequence of those farms being combined into larger units resulting in the redundancy of those farmhouses.

The site has been used as a working farm for several hundred years. The stone barn is dated 1759 with later additions, the farmhouse has been recorded since 1769. The current Dutch barn is believed to date from the mid-20th Century and is approximately 50 or 60 years old.

3.0 The Proposed Scheme

The proposal is for the conversion of the Dutch hay barn to provide 1 no. new dwelling, including garage extension and porch with balcony above, together with conversion of the existing piggery to provide a garden office / study / store for the new dwelling. There is a new area of domestic curtilage centred on the existing hardstanding area.



Above: Current Dutch barn



Above: Current Piggery

4.0 Heritage Statement and Archaeological Assessment

Heritage Assets

There are no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments within or adjacent to the development site and it is not within a conservation area, but there are two Non-Designated Heritage Assets adjacent to the proposed development site. These are recorded on the Historic Environment Record as 'MME12046 - barn or outbuilding of Coach Road, Cut Lane, an 18th century building' and 'MME6139 - farmhouse of Coach Road Farm, Cut Lane, an 18th century building'.

NPPF states 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.

The farmhouse (MME6139) does not form part of the development, but is immediately adjacent to the development site and the proposed development has the potential to impact upon the setting of this building. The stone barn (MME12046) has consent for conversion to a new dwelling, granted under 22/00299/FUL. This includes a planning condition for a Level 2 Building Recording Survey to be completed prior to conversion. The potential impact of the proposed development of these NDHA's has been assessed.

Archaeology

In the determination of 22/00299/FUL, the potential for below ground archaeology was assessed by reviewing historic maps to understand how the whole site (including the current application site boundary) and immediate surroundings have evolved since these records began. This identified one earlier structure last shown on the 1907 OS Map, but no longer present above ground. MEAS' Planning Archaeologist was consulted during the determination of the application, and in their response of 14th July 2022,

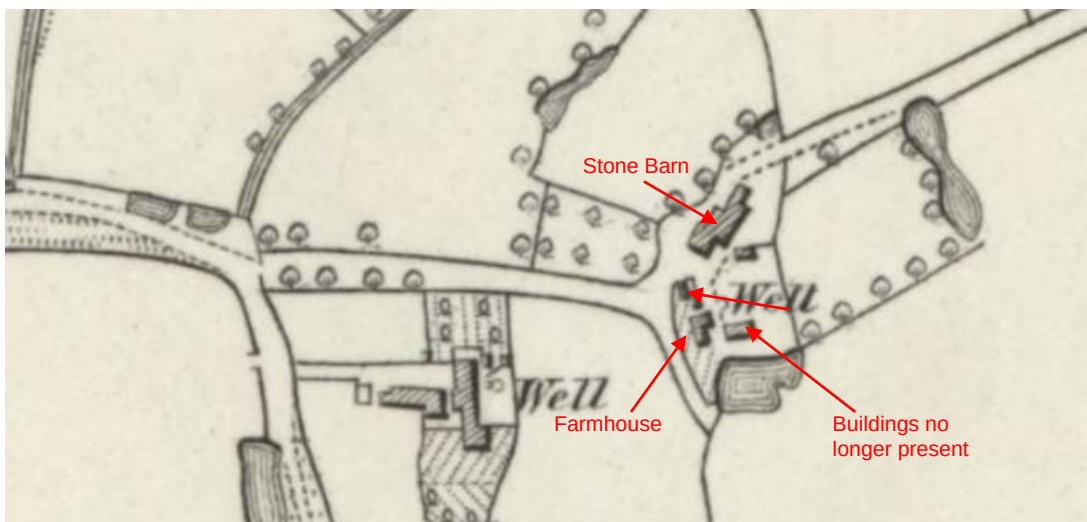
stated *“the document also makes recommendations for below-ground archaeological investigations of a possible barn shown on the 1907 historic mapping. We do not agree the investigation of this late structure is warranted”*. Consequently, we do not propose to undertake any trenching or excavations to ascertain below ground archaeology.

Maps Review

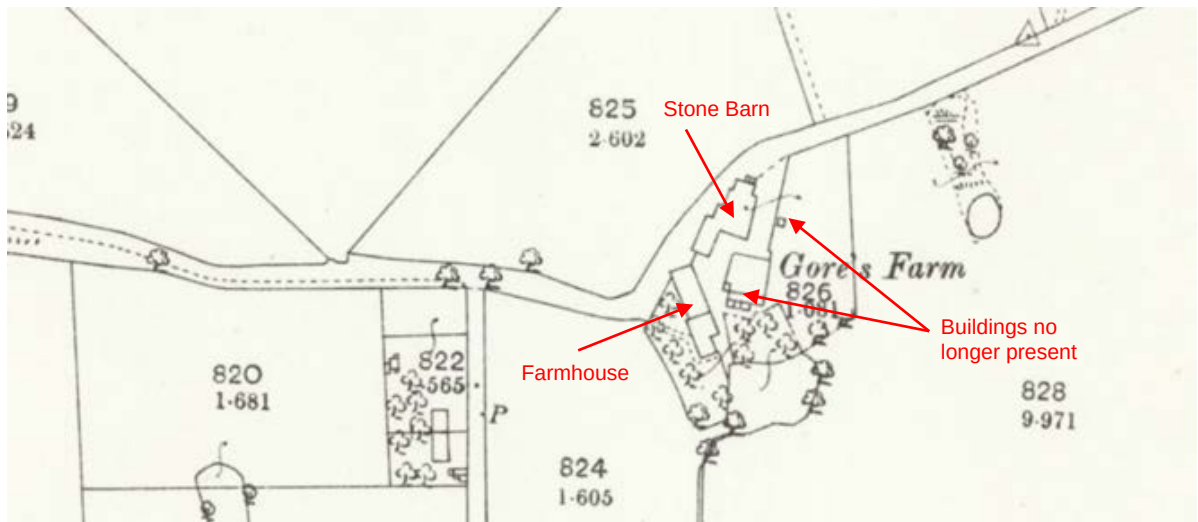
A review of historic maps published since the early 19th Century has been undertaken to determine how the site and immediate surroundings have evolved. The stone barn and farmhouse are shown in their entirety since the first historic map record dated 1845 and this footprint remains constant up to the most recent historic map of 1939 and this is the footprint currently present on site.

The piggery, although not a designated heritage asset, first appears on the 1907 map and by this time, the farm had developed with a number of other structures. A large open-sided structure to the north of the Piggery had appeared after 1907 and is present on the 1939 map. This is roughly in the same location as the current Dutch Barn, although the present structure dates from the mid-20th Century.

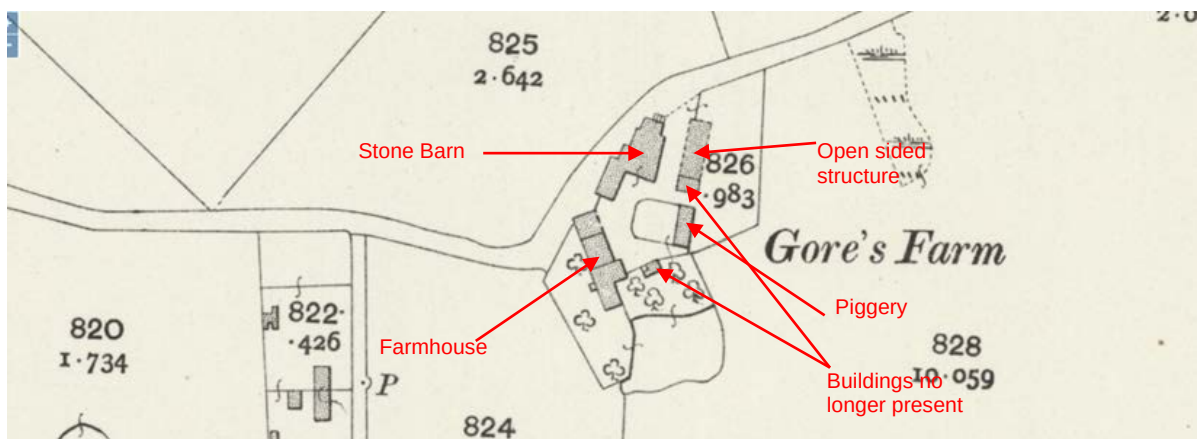
The historic maps also show that within a half mile radius of the site, there were three other named farmsteads, for example "Cut House", but these had all disappeared by the mid-20th Century. This is probably a consequence of smaller farms being amalgamated into larger land units, leading to the redundancy of these dwellings.



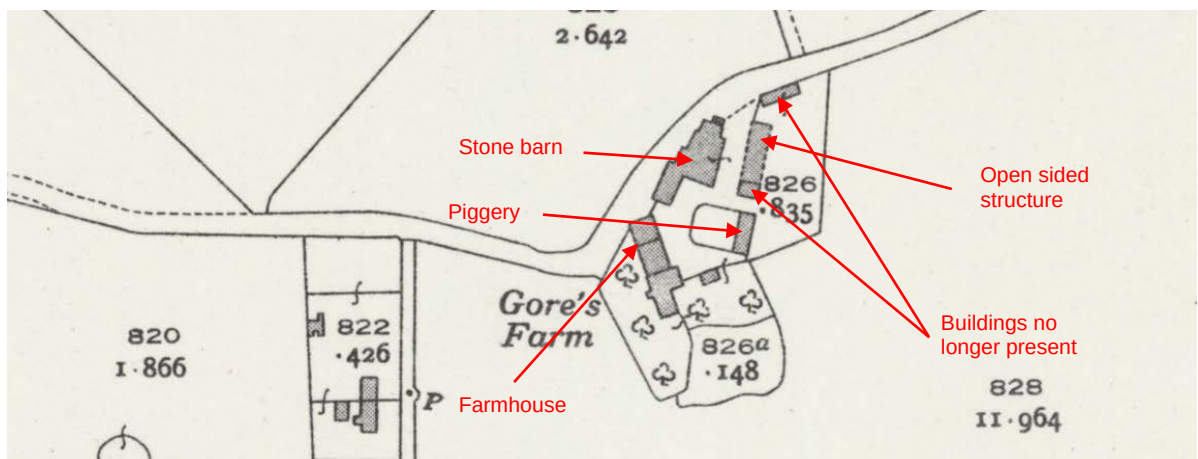
1845 Map



1892 Map



1907 Map



1939 Map

Architectural design philosophy – revised proposal

The architectural design, scale and materials for the conversion and new additions, particularly for the Dutch barn, has been carefully considered to minimise any adverse impact on their setting. The architectural design has an 'agricultural / industrial' aesthetic to avoid taking on the appearance of a suburban dwelling which would be visually incongruous.

The client's brief was to incorporate natural light and views out over the open countryside into the design. The existing Dutch barn structure will be retained and re-cladded. The ground floors, walls and roofs will be highly insulated to ensure the provision of a thermally efficient building envelope. The structural engineer's assessment included in the application documents concludes that the buildings are permanent and substantial and capable of conversion.

In regard to the appearance of the Dutch barn, the form is determined by the existing structure, but has been adapted to create a simple contemporary barn style design to reflect the agricultural character and form of the existing building.

The existing barn is of steel portal frame construction with some blockwork infill, over-clad with a mixture of timber boarding, steel sheeting and corrugated cement board. The barn has a corrugated metal sheeted roof and a substantial concrete floor.

The new cladding materials blend brick and profiled metal cladding and are intended to be a modern reflection of agricultural buildings with zinc or similar standing seam metal roofing and wall cladding giving the barn a more cohesive appearance more appropriate for the surrounding area. The new design utilises minimally-framed powder coated aluminium doors and windows recessed into the wall structure. While the materials have been carefully considered it is acknowledged that these can be subjective and as such the applicants have indicated that they would be happy to consider alternative external finishes.

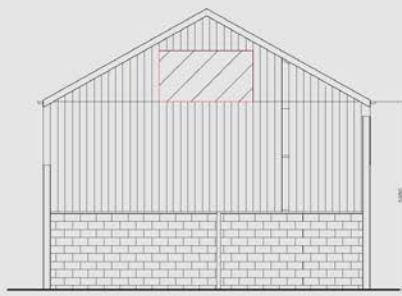
Minimising impact on heritage assets

The following design responses have been incorporated to reflect the existing 'agricultural' aesthetic and minimise adverse impact on the nearby heritage assets:

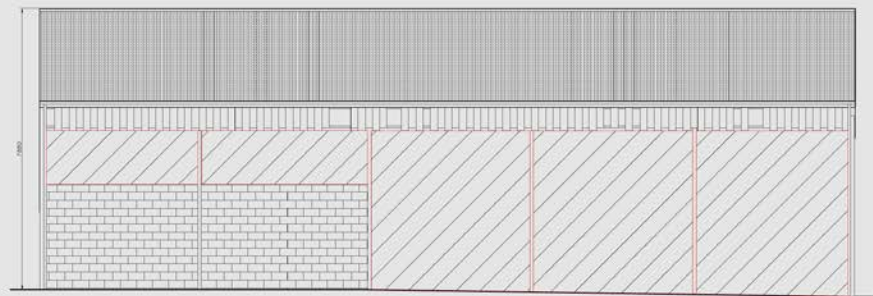
- Selecting cladding materials for the Dutch barn conversion that reflect the former agricultural aesthetic – by using a vertical profiled exterior cladding material, including the roof, and blending this with solid brickwork to reference the adjacent traditional farmhouse dwelling.
- The fenestration has been designed in a minimalistic regular format with clean lines and proportions appropriate to reflect the agricultural nature of the Dutch barn and to avoid appearing too residential in its vernacular;
- Positioning of the Dutch barn garage extension on the northern side, so that this is shielded by the new garage consented under 22/00299/FUL and is not visible from the stone barn Non-Designated Heritage Asset;
- Similarly, positioning the Dutch barn porch and balcony on the east elevation, so this is not visible from the stone barn;
- We have omitted the previously proposed 200mm roof uplift.
- Car parking and hardstanding has been reduced in size.

Residential amenity

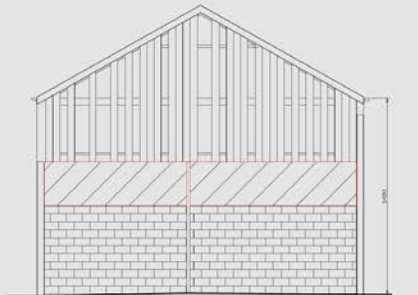
The window interface distances between the proposal and the existing stone barn approved for residential conversion are compliant with the planning authority's standards and include obscured glass.



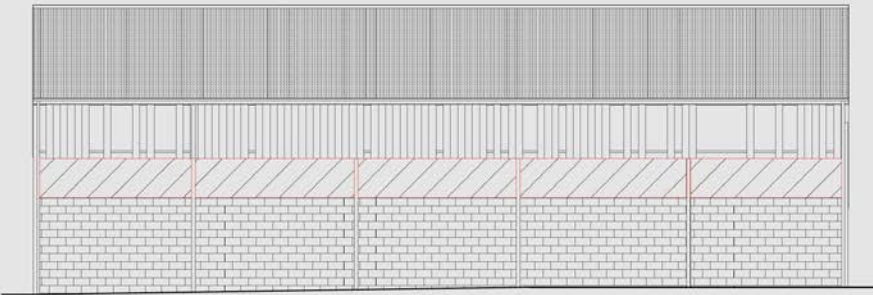
EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION (1/20)



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION (1/20)



EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION (1/20)



EXISTING EAST ELEVATION (1/20)

Above: Existing Dutch barn elevations

Comparison between previous and new revised elevations



Above: Previous proposed elevations (23/01833/FUL)

Below: Revised proposed elevations, key changes highlighted in red



5.0 Design Statement and Assessment of Landscape Character

Green Belt Openness

Consideration must be made as to whether the proposal would affect the openness of the Greenbelt.

The test of 'substantial harm' to openness is a high bar. Paragraph 64-001 of The National Planning Practice Guidance, regarding the assessment of the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, states:

“Assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgement based on the circumstances of the case. By way of examples, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

- openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
- the duration of the development, and its irremediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and
- the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation”.

Spatial impact of openness

As the proposal is for a conversion, there will be no impact on openness and more so now that the roofline will remain as existing. The proposal includes the construction of a small extension to the barn to house a garage. These additions represent an increase in volume of 76 cubic metres or 5.5% over the original volume of 1,380 sqm. These are not considered to be disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building in terms of NPPF 154 (c). The guidance notes to Local Plan Policy G6 states that as a guideline, increases of less than 10% in the volume of the building will not normally be considered to have a materially greater impact on the openness of an area.

The Dutch barn is a distinctive feature in the landscape and the conversion and retention of this building maintains the former agricultural aesthetic. It is not correct to describe the barn as 'open with only a frame covering the top half of the building'. 77% of the external elevations are enclosed (except for missing and broken cladding panels that can be replaced) and it has a solid appearance and contrasts strongly with the landscape. The solid roof is particularly visible and the barn when viewed in this context certainly not transparent.

The 'solid to void' ratio			
Elevation	Overall (sqm)	Solid (sqm)	Void (sqm)
North	62.5	58.5	4
South	62	51.5	10.5
East	122.5	98.5	24
West	122.5	49	73.5
Roof	126	126	0
Total	495.5	383.5 (77%)	112 (23%)

Visual impact of openness on the surrounding landscape

The barn forms part of a distinct 'island' group of buildings and is not itself an isolated structure in the Green Belt. The assessment identified key views from up to 500m away in which the group of buildings coalesces to create a strong visual contrast to the surrounding landscape. The barn forms part of

this grouping and cannot be viewed in isolation. The perceived effect upon openness is negligible because the site is well-screened and the barn is also screened by its juxtaposition with adjoining buildings.

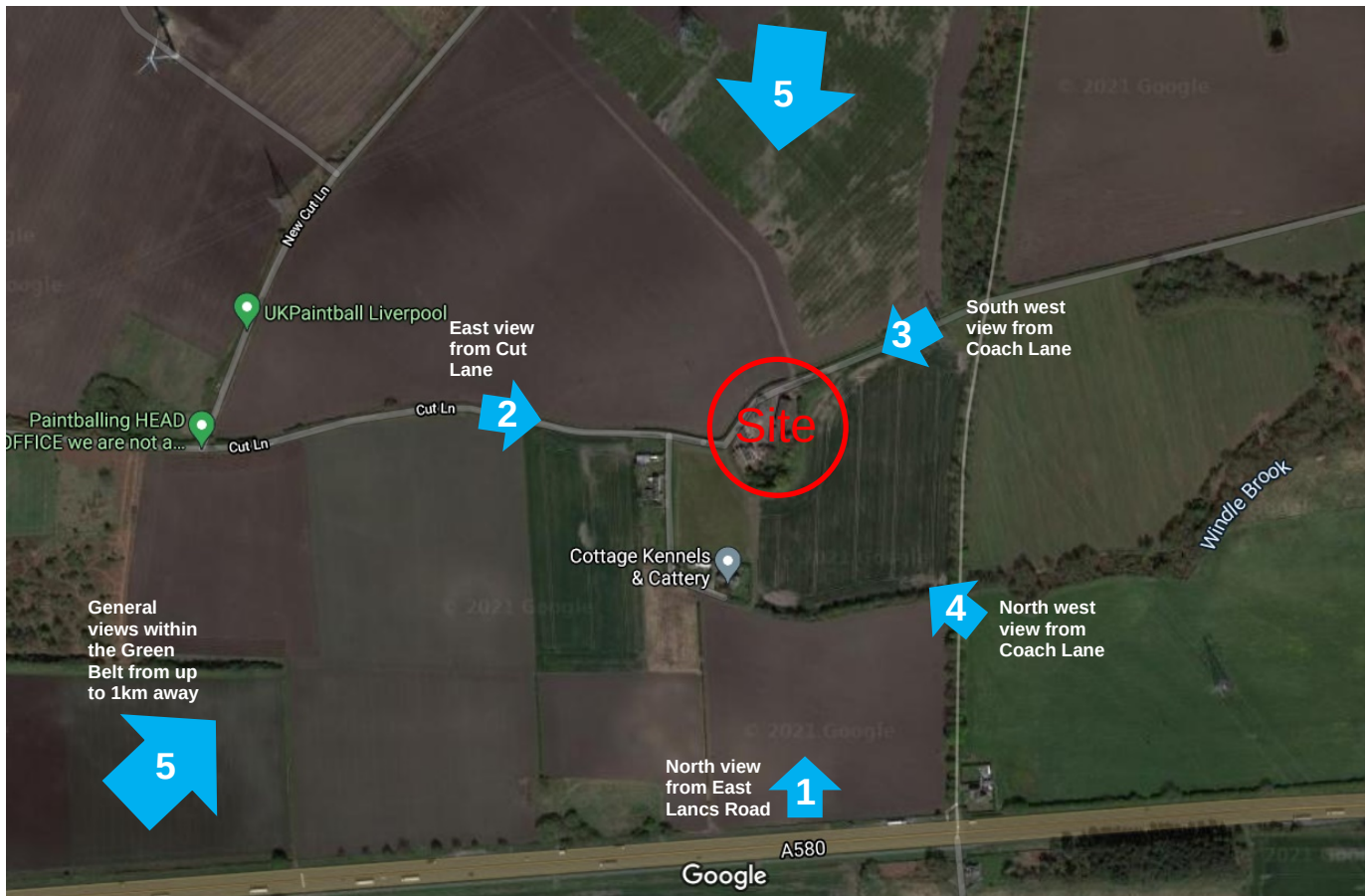
The following key views, shown in Figure 1 below, from surrounding routes and publicly accessible land have been plotted:

- View 1 - looking north from East Lancashire Road;
- View 2 – looking east from Cut Lane;
- View 3 - looking south west from Coach Lane;
- View 4 – looking north west from Coach Lane;
- View 5 – general views from within the Green Belt from up to 500m away.

The photographs overleaf demonstrate that when viewed in this overall context, the barn does not have an entirely open and transparent appearance.

There is no discernible effect upon perception of openness from beyond the boundary of the site.

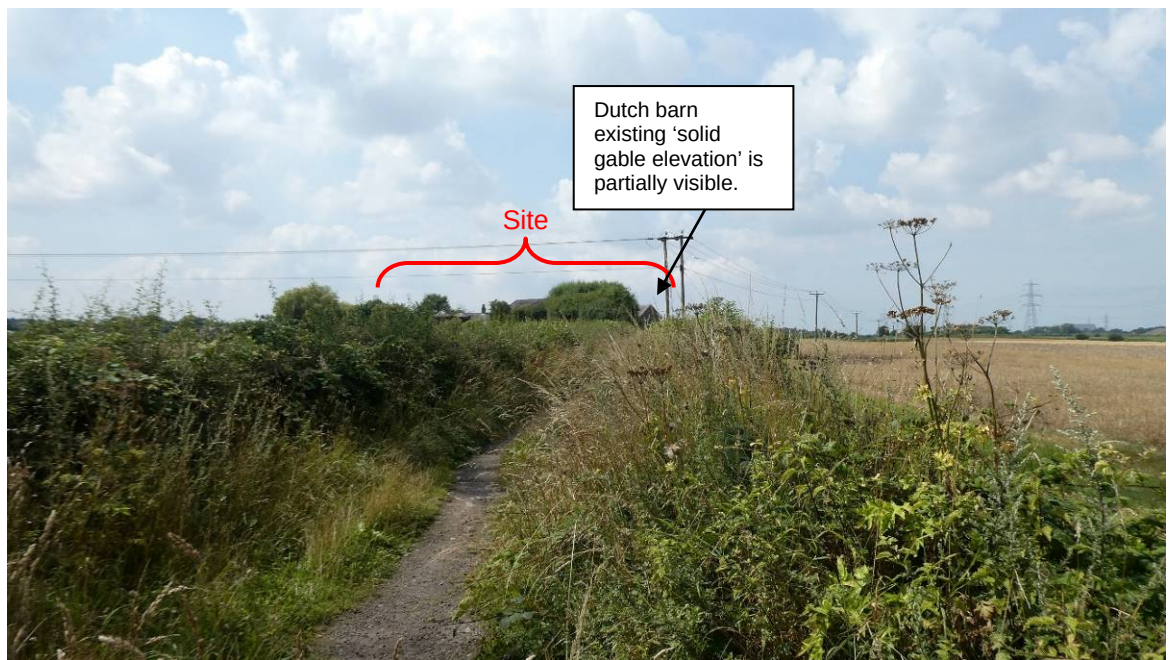
The visual appearance of the barn will change due to the application of new cladding, but given the site's context, there would be no impact on the visual openness of the Green Belt. It must therefore be concluded that the proposal is a type of development that is not inappropriate in the Green Belt and no 'very special circumstances' need to be demonstrated.



View 1: Looking north from East Lancashire Road. The existing buildings to be retained provide the dominant features. This view will remain unchanged.



View 2: Looking east from Cut Lane. The existing buildings to be retained provide the dominant feature and this view will remain largely unchanged



View 3: Existing view looking south west. The perimeter landscaping effectively screens the site



View 4: Looking north west from Coach Lane



View 5: Typical longer range view from within the Green Belt

Impact on the Green Belt

The site is screened along the southern and eastern boundaries with perimeter landscaping comprising mixed deciduous trees and hedges. These coalesce together to screen the site from the east.

The guidance notes to Local Plan Policy G6 states that as a guideline, increases of less than 10% in the volume of the building will not normally be considered to have a materially greater impact on the openness of an area. However, in all cases the design of a scheme must be of high quality and preserve any intrinsic architectural qualities of the building and its setting. It is considered that the retention of the former agricultural design aesthetic satisfies the test of preserving the intrinsic architectural qualities of the building.

There will be no increase in coalescence between the farmhouse and barn buildings from the key views. The dense perimeter landscaping, which will be strengthened, will obscure views of the modest single storey garage extension.

The earlier removal of the silos and other agricultural structures will see a reduction in the overall building volume and building footprint within the site. This will result in a more open site and it could be argued that the proposal would increase openness and would therefore go beyond the Framework's requirement to merely preserve openness.

The current massing of the structures on site would be unchanged when viewed against the backdrop of the existing landscape. The dominant features would still comprise the retained existing farmhouse and barns. The site would retain its compact 'island' appearance against the vast openness of the Green Belt and there would be little discernible difference. The residential use will also see the removal of large farm vehicles and other machinery from the site which would result in some visual improvement.

When considering the visual or perceived impact on openness, the site is set back at the end of the lane. The site is contained by the existing trees and hedges that grow along its boundaries. The proposal would improve site permeability by opening up views into the site by the removal of the silos, the size of the vehicles using the site would reduce and the balance of hardstanding and garden would represent an improved level of visual openness compared to the existing agricultural yard use.

It is accepted that the creation of an enclosed residential garden for the new dwelling and vehicular parking bays would alter the character of the former farmyard to one which is more domestic in character, but it would not take on the appearance of a suburban housing estate due to the sympathetic re-use of the existing buildings and wider agricultural character. The proposal would bring vehicles onto the site and these would include private cars and other vehicles associated with a residential use such as trade and delivery vehicles. Other domestic paraphernalia sited in the open such as garden furniture, children's play equipment and refuse bins would also be a feature, however, the proposal would not encroach into the countryside. Rather, the extent of the garden would be contained within the existing farmyard curtilage and the dense screening would obscure low height domestic paraphernalia.

Building Volumes

DUTCH BARN

Existing = 1,380m ³	Proposed = 1,456 m ³	% Increase = 5.5%
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PIGGERY

Existing = 187 m ³	Proposed = 187 m ³	no change
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6.0 Access and Traffic

Access, traffic generation and parking

Access is from Cut Lane which forms the northern boundary of the site. During the assessment of 22/00299/FUL, the Council's highways officer raised concerns around the intensification of vehicular use as Cut Lane is narrow and single track for much of its length. The highway officer was concerned that vehicles would either mount the verge or likely reverse for a significant distance should they meet head on. We submitted a full highways justification for 22/00299/FUL and this remains relevant.

The proposal is for a minor development of 1 new dwelling house formed from the barn conversion. Additional trip generation factors of 0.7 or 0.8 vehicle movements in the peak hour would suggest up to 1 additional vehicle movements along Cut Lane during the busiest hour, which will have no material impact on traffic flows on the wider highway network.

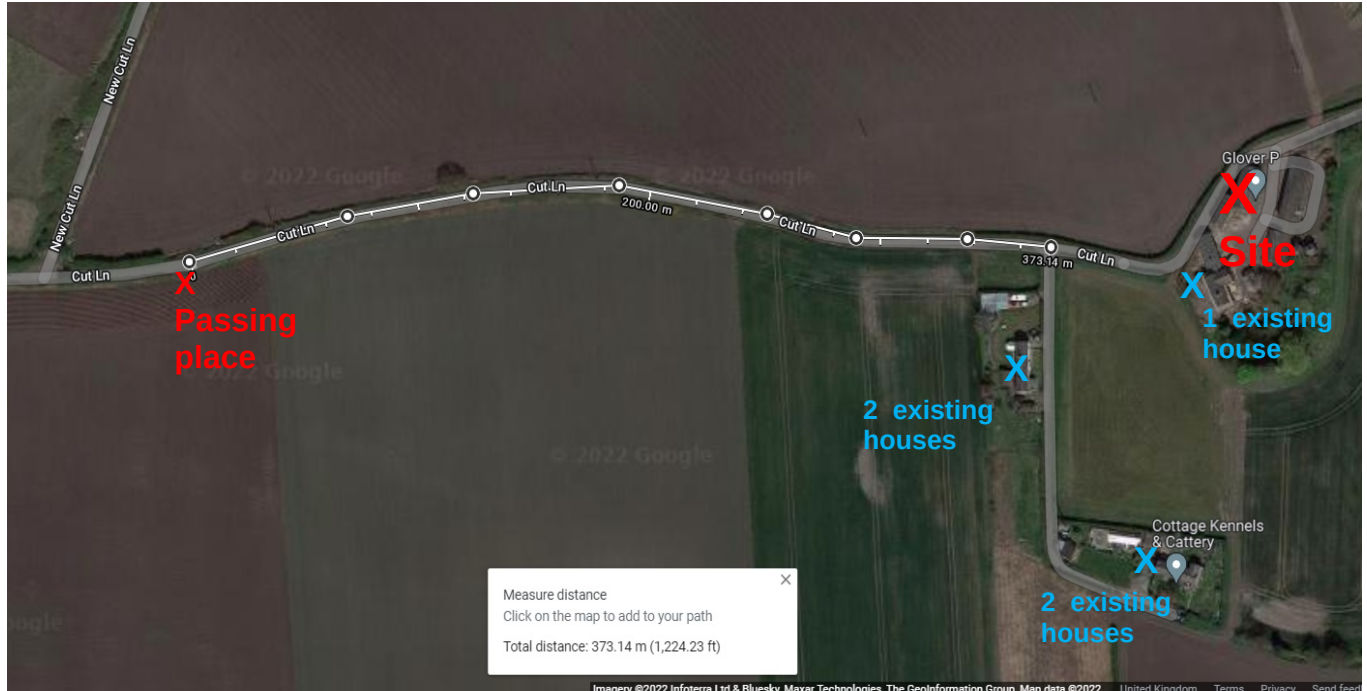
The applicant has assessed the implications of the development on the highway network. There will be a low rate of trip generation arising from conversion of the barn to domestic use for one new dwelling, which will have no material impact on traffic flows or highway safety. It must be stressed that the current agricultural use of the barn, which is still lawful and unrestricted, has the potential to create many more movements than re-use as a dwelling.

There are presently 6 dwellings served from this section of adopted highway (including the stone barn conversion approved under 22/00299/FUL), which would increase to 7 if this proposal is allowed. The eastern section of Cut Lane between its junction with New Cut Lane and the application site is not a through road, which is an important point, as the only traffic using this section will be associated with these properties.

Applying a generous 2-way combined trip generation factor of 0.8 (which is a 4-bed house with 5 or 6 persons in a rural location) during the peak hours, 7 dwellings (6 existing + 1 new) generate up to 6 vehicle movements per hour.

This equates to an average of one movement every 10 minutes combined, or one every 20 minutes in each direction. The length of this section of road (between passing places) is 373m. Vehicle speeds are low, so a car travelling at 15 mph would travel this distance in 55 seconds (say 1 minute). Therefore the probability of two cars (out of six movements) passing each other over this section in a 1 hour period is extremely low at 0.25% ($\frac{3}{60} \times \frac{3}{60} \times 100\%$). This also assumes the 6 movements are always opposing, but in reality, during peak periods the residents will probably be commuting to and from work and therefore be travelling in the same direction – outbound during the peak AM hour, and inbound during the peak PM hour, which minimises conflicting movements. Visibility along this 370m stretch of road is good in both directions.

The 1.4km length of Cut Lane between the application site and its junction with Molly's Lane / Sandy Brow Lane and Hewitt's Lane has 11 passing places, roughly one every 130 metres.

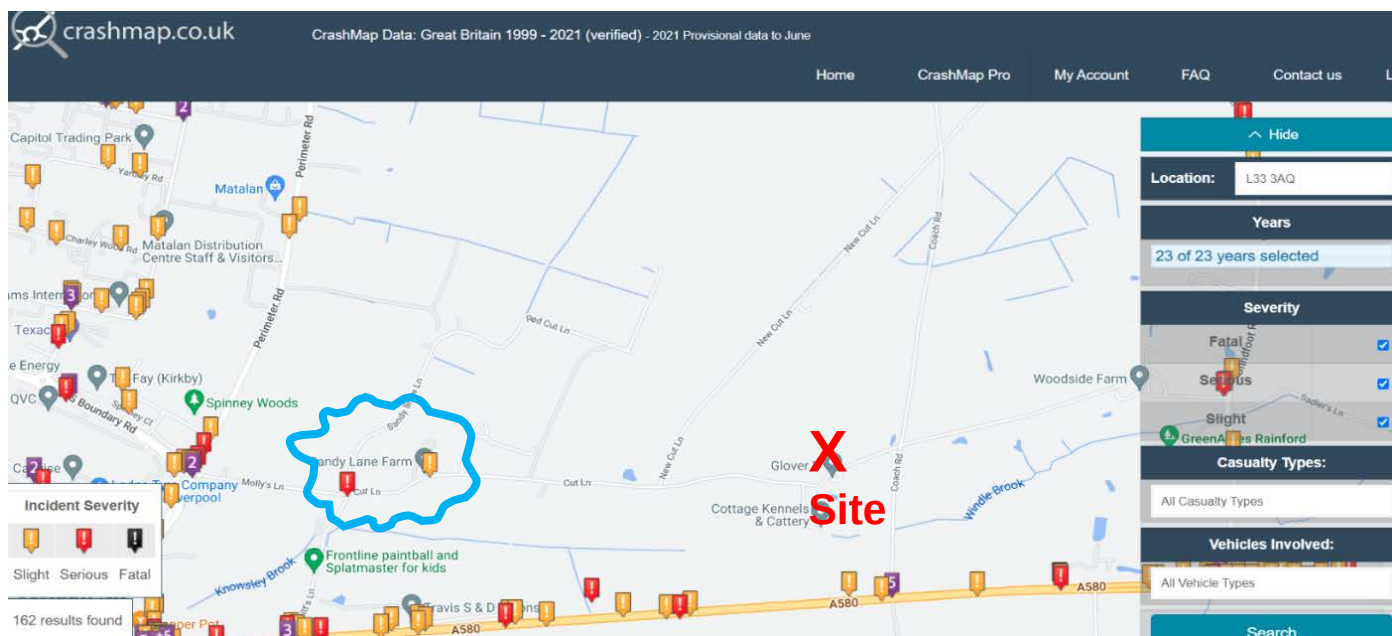


We have undertaken a comparison of these total flows against the theoretical carrying capacity of the road in line with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standards. The road is categorised in the DMRB as a “poor” single-track rural road and this is the lowest standard of road which can be assessed within the DMRB for capacity. The DMRB states¹ that the bi-directional total capacity of a (poor) single-track rural road of up to 4.0m in width is 140 vehicles per hour (vph). Given the 6 existing dwellings create up to 5 vph in both directions, this is less than 4% of the theoretical road capacity.

The additional trip generation of one additional dwelling (rounded up to 1 vph) represents only 0.73% of the remaining highway capacity and is therefore negligible. A total of 7 dwellings would result in Cut Lane operating at less than 5% of its theoretical carrying capacity. We reiterate that vehicle speeds are low (less than 20 mph) and speeding is not a problem that needs to be considered in detail for this site. KMBC has approved similar rural conversions accessed via single track roads – see applications 16/00563/PDC and 20/00064/FUL.

We have also examined publicly available collision statistics (Crashmap extract below). This confirms that in the 23 years since 1999 there have not been any collisions in the immediate vicinity of the application site. During this period there were two incidents (a car / motorcycle collision in 2014 and a single car collision with a fence in 2010) and these were both 1.4km away at the junction of Cut Lane with Molly’s Lane / Sandy Brow Lane and Hewitt’s Lane. Therefore, regular serious collisions are not a feature of the immediate single-track highway network.

¹ Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 15, Section 1 Part 5: Traffic Modelling in NESA, Chapter 3: Road Network, Table 5/3/1: NESA Road Categories, Link Speeds and Link Capacities (pages 5-3-3 to 5-3-4).



Above: Crash Map Data

With regard to additional vehicle movements resulting from deliveries etc, some of these would be combined with the neighbouring properties - particularly Royal Mail and parcel services such as DPD etc, as they operate on pre-determined 'rounds' to make the best use of their resources. This is also the case with Council waste collections. Supermarket deliveries simply substitute shopping trips made by private car; and across the network are far more efficient than numerous individual car journeys and may also be combined with the neighbouring properties. We have included space within the curtilage for deliveries and visitors to turn around and always egress in forward gear.

The red line boundary has been extended to meet the adopted highway as requested during the consideration of the previous application 22/00299/FUL. We agree that the track also hosts a public footpath and that it is an offence to drive a motor vehicle over a public footpath without the permission of the landowner. We can confirm that the property deeds contain a right of access over this.

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