

Supporting Planning Statement
incorporating Design Analysis

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CONVERSION OF A DETACHED BARN TO A
SINGLE DWELLING HOUSE

Site at:

Meadow Brook Barn, Saccary Lane, Mellor BB1 9DW

Submitted on behalf of:

Mr. Z. Collinge

&

Prepared by Nigel Robinson Dip Tp (Leeds)

August 2018

1.0 Background & Introduction

1.1 This Statement accompanies a planning application that relates to the conversion of a single building on a strip of land off Saccary Lane and which previously would have been a stock building and implement and machinery store which was designed and extended for purpose. The building is represented physically by a long barn building which has not been used in association with it's original farming purpose although there are some domestic chattels currently stored within the building. The location of the site is accessed via Showley Road runs from the A59 Clayton-le-Dale to the north and from Ramsgreave to the south.

The current proposals are to completely refurbish the building adding a consistency of materials, a new roof and internally add an upper level to the building.

The application submission documents will show that the building has had a structural survey undertaken and is currently regarded to be in a somewhat run-down state through the lack of maintenance to the fabric of the building, but not derelict nor in a degraded state.

The site and building, being set in a raised location given the site's topography, can be clearly seen from distant views from some public vantage points when not obscured by trees in the landscape. The site though rurally located in a countryside situation cannot be adjudged as being an isolated one with a grouping of residential properties, farms and stables along Showley Road to the north and then further similar natures of properties in the close locality of the site of the property to the south of it off Saccary Lane. The nearest property being 'Throstle Croft' & 'Throstle Nest'. The cluster of properties at various locations along both roads are identified on the plan forming [Appendix A](#).

There is an existing access to the site from Saccary Lane is by a field gate with a single track running up from that access point west to east up to the building. The individual track is not shared with any other property although a further property at the access nib onto Saccary Lane. The route of the access road will remain largely unaltered but it will be improved to support the new use of the building as a dwelling, with root protection measures where closest to the tree canopy at the west of the site. There are no public footpaths crossing the application site.

1.3 The built development on the land, is formed by a longstanding existing building collaborated by the 1960's aerial photograph of the locality which clearly identifies it, ([Appendix B](#)), and as such that conclusively proves the existence of the property as a part of the rural landscape here for over half a century and has not been a recent introduction contrived to seek a residential permission through conversion.

1.4 The application site is set within the administrative district of Ribble Valley Borough Council. The site is set within a countryside location but is not within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1.5 Pre-application engagement with a Council is normally recommended. In this case there was a hypothetical exercise some time ago upon the possibility of a conversion and without a structural survey available for consideration or design proposals open for discussion. The Council's starting point appeared that they did not consider the building capable of conversion but the officer in question, who has now left the authority did not qualify why this was the case. This negative conclusion may indeed have just been drawn from looking at a single photograph or series of photographs presented in a short interview with the then acting architect and without a site visit but this was unbalanced and without the benefit of further information. As such it is not considered that the current proposals were subject to a pre-application exercise.

1.6 There is no apparent relevant planning history to the site or subject building.

1.7 The following policy publications have been considered or referred to in preparing this statement and will be considered in the policy section to this statement:

- The Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2018
- The Ribble Valley Adopted Core Strategy - December 2014

1.8 This nature of this proposal would not normally require the submission of a Design & Access Statement, but nevertheless this statement incorporates Design Analysis and how the submission drawings to redevelop the building have been arrived at.

1.9 In regard to required information to support the application, the application drawings apart, the submission documents include a topographic survey, a structural report and recommendations, an ecology report and recommendations, a tree survey and recommendations, a short sustainability statement given the nature of the development as a conversion of an existing building, a waste storage and recycling statement and a parking statement. Landscaping proposals are set out within the site layout plan and a schedule for detailed works as a separate written document. There is no requirement for a flood risk assessment in this location, while an archaeological evaluation is considered unnecessary as the site / building has no significant historical / archaeological importance.

2.0 The Nature of the Application Site

2.1 The application site is located beyond existing settlement pockets, with the village of Ramsgreave in Blackburn to the south being the closest, and has been identified is located within an area of open countryside, with the character of that area being typically rural with longstanding residential properties or farms with agricultural buildings. This is illustrated by the submitted 1:2500 location plan.

2.2 The site is located within an area of open countryside as previously defined by the

Districtwide Borough Proposals Map and this did not alter in the adoption of the Core Strategy.

2.3 The land, as already stated, sits at a reasonably high level in the local landscape at around 100m aod but there is also a quite a high degree of hedgerow landscape and woodland cover as shown on the aerial photograph in [Appendix C](#) & within the Supplementary Photographic Appendix to this statement. In regard to screening and appearance of the application site, there are hedgerows and trees closest to the site access onto Saccary Lane but much fewer closer to the subject building itself where the site is more open. Though having the appearance overall of an unused site, the land does not have an especially degraded appearance. The narrow, long site has a maximum width, east/west, of approximately 95m and maximum depth, north/south, of approximately 14m. The application building is centrally located within the site.

2.3 The subject building and its condition is fully described in detail within the submitted structural survey. The building is not derelict nor abandoned, and is considered to be one of solid construction utilising brick, stone and rendered sections with timber cladding to the gable ends of the main, taller structure which has fallen into some disrepair. The building has clearly been added to over time as its functions have necessitated. It is considered that a solid structure of this nature in reasonable condition is a sustainable asset in the environment and to let the building fall into dereliction with subsequent demolition is a consideration that the Council as decision maker here ought not to take lightly, and its re-use ought to be a fundamental consideration. The building is currently a single floor structure but clearly with sufficient height within the eastern part of the building to have capacity for an upper level for a new use with intelligent design and the good utilisation of space. The measured dimensions of the building are 15m x 6m for the rectangular portion of the building & 4.65m x 5.3m for the easterly segment. The first floor element includes the easterly portion and 7.4m x 6m of the central section. The measured eaves and ridge heights of the building are, and would be retained at:

- **Front, north elevation** - Eaves heights of 4.4m & 2.75m & ridge heights of 4.2m & 5.87m
- **Rear, south elevation** - Eaves heights of 2.7m, 3.65m & 4.4m, plus ridge heights of 4.2m & 5.87m

3.0 Development Evaluation

3.1 The following matters and objectives have been set by the assembled development team in determining what would be required in reutilising the site of Meadow Brook Barn and its building for permanent residential use are set out as follows over page:

- To ensure an environmental enhancement of the site with a significant visual improvement that would involve the complete remediation of the building from its current impaired state.
- To secure the perpetuation of the site's social history of a building upon it prominently set within the local landscape for over half and century which ought to warrant being retained.
- To convert an existing redundant solid building into a new dwelling
- To fully assess and consider the development proposals in the light of the landscape value of the site in its setting.
- Optimising short and distant views of the surrounding landscape which is of high quality.
- To ensure that any ecological impact on the site, as a result if the development, is absolutely minimised by re-utilising just the existing building. New landscaping and features will be introduced in order to promote habitats and enhance the appearance of the site.
- To ensure the use of environmentally friendly and sustainable materials throughout, sourced from local suppliers.

4.0 The Form, Nature and Design of the Development Proposal

4.1 The submitted proposal seeks full planning permission for the change of use of and conversion details for the detached barn building to a 2 bedroom dwelling laid out in a linear form, with the introduction of an upper floor to part of the building that would afford the bedroom suites and a bathroom. The accommodation is detailed in floor plans and sections, while identified specialised roof lights, appearing as just a plate of glass in the roof, are intended to maintain the original character of a simple building of this nature. The ground floor would be compartmentalised into a entrance hall / lobby area; a kitchen, living dining area; and a small snug area in the lower end element. Overall the finished development would be a relatively simple building intended to suit a couple or even a single person with aspirations to live in the country, but it would not appeal as or be appropriate for family accommodation and as such there is no need to consider that factor against the capacity for primary and secondary schools in the wider area.

In terms of alterations to the barn to form the new dwelling house, the designer has taken an approach which considers it both as a utilitarian rural building, as many barns and outbuildings are, and one which has evolved over a period of time as distinct from say a country farmhouse. The un-worthwhile elements of the building would be removed leaving the physically solid shell intact and able to be utilised for conversion. There are only limited existing openings in the front elevation and these are at ground floor level as with buildings of this nature. The proposed main facade facing north, and as the main aspect, now shows new & repositioned window positions, and they still appear comparatively random in their location as one might expect with a utilitarian building. The end elevations, which currently have no real openings, now do introduce some feature contemporary glazed elements, incorporated into a steel frame, as corner wrap around features to benefit from east and west views and to give additional light to the main rooms given their north facing aspect. To the rear elevation close to the southern

boundary, where there are some existing openings, some new secondary windows are introduced. Three specialist roof lights ('Neo', by the Rooflight Company), details of which are an application document submission, would be introduced to the front roof plane. It is considered that the architect has dealt with all this treatment in a sensitive but realistic manner given that this part of the building would now be re-utilised for domestic occupation and the needs that accompany that in terms of layout and access to light.

In regard to the palette of materials chosen for the renovation and refurbishment exercise, the mixture of materials that has seen the building evolve as it has have been largely retained but all would be refinished within their portions of the elevations with the stone and brick sections refurbished, sections of new cedar cladding that would be both vertically and horizontally hung and lime render to the basic rendered section. The roof higher section of roof would be finished in natural slate while the lower section of building as probably the most recent add on would have the roof clad in a more contemporary zinc sheeting to reflect some modernity into the development circa 2018. The window frames would all be timber and the front and side doors timber boarded.

It is felt that the 'domestication' of the barn structure has been minimised in terms of new openings and irrelevant domestic features. Positions of existing openings have been re-utilised where possible and the general character of the building has been maintained. The introduction of additional elements such as porches and chimneys has been resisted. There are no modern design appendages such as conservatories to consider. Natural conservation issues have also been dealt with in the submission papers, and any issues identified will be mitigated.

Similarly the 'domestication' of the site overall has been minimised with just a short terraced area and then a low wall in front of the building and a small grassed area beyond that in part planted with tree species common to small gardens. The land to the east of the converted building would be sown as a wildflower and grasses meadow land and not manicured in many way to encourage wildlife. Land to the north west would be planted as an area new woodland trees with uncover mulching. A small implement store in connection with the maintenance of the relevant part of the grounds would be located at the rear of the dwelling as would an area for clothes drying, with both being out of view, while the bin area at the side of the house would be concealed by a small enclosure of willow or hazel fence - all thereby minimising any impact from their introduction. The dwelling is not suburban in nature while there are no areas of urban style lengths of screen panel fencing panels, no expanses of lawn, no children's outdoor play space or equipment, no tennis court nor a swimming pool. All designed out for purpose and to support an acceptable

In respect of hard surface details permeable paving flags will be utilised for the terraced area in front of the created dwelling and for the circulation area around it while the drive area will be laid out in a subtle coloured countryside gravel which is considered to be environmentally sustainable through its permeability and thus enhancing the surface water drainage credentials. Landscaping proposals are submitted with the application and these are inclusive of new

hedgerow planting, tree planting and a laurel hedge just fronting the terraced area.

There are no specific constraints to the redevelopment that have been found to be expressed. All the design elements and laying out of the site have been undertaken to minimise the impact of what is proposed and not detracting from the immediate countryside location.

5.0 Relevant Planning Policy and the Case for Granting Planning Permission

5.1 Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless over-riding factors are shown to be necessary to be given to other identified material considerations which have been shown to carry greater weight than the normal policy presumption.

In a countryside area, new housing would only normally be permitted if required in association with and where substantiated in being needed in practising agriculture, horticulture and forestry. However, the use of redundant rural buildings can often benefit from changes of use to a new residential use. In the case of Ribble Valley, Policy **DMH4** of the Adopted Core Strategy (The Conversion of Barns & Other Buildings to Dwellings) gives specific policy practice upon the conversion of redundant rural buildings to residential.

The fundamental premiss of the policy is a proactive one to grant permission subject to complying with 6 listed criteria in part one of the policy substance. The following analysis has been undertaken against those six criteria:

- ***Firstly whether the building is isolated in the landscape or already within a grouping of buildings.*** It is considered that it is the latter here. The building is not in an isolated location. It is on a road linking Ramsgreave to the south with the heavily trafficked A59 to the south whose passage is south west to north east easily linking Preston with nearby towns in Ribble Valley. The submitted location plan identifies a large cluster of existing dwellings to the north west along Showley Road even though the short initial belt of land to the north down to Tottering Brook is largely undeveloped. And then again a further cluster of built development to the south in which the application site can included as part. The location plan has been enhanced to show the location of dwellings in relation to the subject building. This plan forms Appendix A already referred to. The aerial photograph forming Appendix C is also relevant in this regard. *However as an aside to this strand of the policy, paragraph 79 of the new NPPF 2018, as discussed on page 8, would appear to rule out the need to justify that the site is not isolated.
- ***Second, that no new infrastructure under the 'public purse' would be necessitated to fulfil the conversion.*** The undertaking of the development requires no new infrastructure. In terms of vehicular access there is an existing one and in regard to services there is electricity and water while the new dwelling would also have access to use oil as a heating fuel if so desired. Sewerage would be to a new sewage treatment plant and surface water to a soakaway. Adjacent dwellings will already have internal communication links - telephone and the internet and provision to this site would not be an issue.
- ***Next, there would be no material damage to landscape quality or harm to nature conservation.*** Again this has been demonstrated conclusively. The site would be enhanced by

a remediated building on the land and subtle landscaping proposals with new hedgerows and indigenous species planting. Nature conservation is dealt with elsewhere. Viewing the site from public vantage points will observe a vast improvement in its appearance whereas at the same time introducing new elements to it that are wholly consistent with enhancing a countryside area. The trappings of domestication of the use of the building / site have been completely minimised and where needed would be undertaken to a limited level and hidden away as best possible. Not being a family dwelling, the nature of the curtilage layout and treatment can be dealt with in such a way that it respects its location and simple nature of the former use without urbanising the site.

- ***Fourth, that there would be no detrimental effect on the rural economy.*** The building has no current economic purpose being no longer used in association with agriculture. It is inconceivable that the building would be required for any new agricultural use on the land, while there is no significant encouragement that a change of use of the barn building to any sort of employment use would be a realistic option for its regeneration. The circumstances are that with the extent of work involved in achieving a discernible return on the property after conversion is highly relevant and material in assessing that a conversion to an employment use is currently very unrealistic and unachievable. If the application building is to be converted into any sort of bona fide business or employment use it would require considerable initial fitting out investment [in addition to the external ground works to be undertaken] in order to offer accommodation levels and standards that will complete with that which is currently available and vacant elsewhere. For a financial institution to lend a considerable capital sum under these circumstances, for both conversion works and business set up or expansion, would involve enormous risk and one which would not be warranted or likely to be forthcoming now nor probably in the next few years. A prospective lender would also take into account factors such as the availability of other existing premises and the likely potential failure of the new venture against that criteria and the other general financial circumstances that would normally be taken into account. With regard to a possible opportunity for conversion of the barn to a tourism related use, in terms of either tourist accommodation [self-contained or in the form of bed & breakfast] or a shop or possibly a café, - none appear likely or appropriate on this site or in this location and the following comments are made. The property is probably not large enough for a separate bed and breakfast establishment or holiday let while such uses would not be viable ones given both the investment required to afford an expected reasonable 'home from home' standard of accommodation that is normally required under such circumstances. A major factor would also be that the level of guest occupancy could not be sustained fully over the majority of the 12 months of the year in order to make a restoration project viable as a business. Such accommodation, despite more flexible working arrangements for the public, tends to be let only seasonally and in holiday periods. It is concluded therefore that a holiday let use, involving such a significant initial conversion investment in the property would not be appropriate or viable in this location, while it is not felt that any other sort of recreational use would be appropriate for the re-use of the application barn. A cafe would appear to be inappropriate and an non-viable proposition & nor is it likley that a gift shop use would be appropriate in this location as they tend to be developed alongside an existing tourist style attraction on an overall site rather than a random standalone development as this would. A

farm shop would also be inappropriate as there is no farm on the land or associated land. All produce for a farm shop would have to be imported to the site for sale and this would unreasonably undermine businesses within the existing retail centres, while such a use would also prejudice bona fide farm shops who are actually trying to sell their own produce as a diversification of use of an existing farm enterprise to assist in the rural economy. It is according contended that the building could not support the rural economy, and developing it as a conversion of the existing building for a residential use appears appropriate and accords with other building uses in the locality. It is considered that it has been duly shown that all potential non-residential uses have been fully investigated and would not be viable, appropriate or satisfactory for the subject site/building.

- ***Five, that the proposals would be consistent with the conservation natural beauty of the area;***
The site improvements and building proposals referred to would demonstrate this.
- ***And finally in this section that the natural conservation aspects are surveyed and mitigated against as applicable.*** An ecology appraisal has been undertaken. The findings are in a standalone submission document. The main conclusions being that no protection or mediation are required against / for bats, but evidence of previous occupation by a barn owl means that measures are required to mitigate and afford future occupation on site. Initially, a barn owl box is required to be affixed to a nearby tree which has been chosen to at least a temporary 'home' which building works are undertaken, and then a permanent area of the roof space has to be nominated and a barn owl 'loft' area established in perpetuity. The application drawings have now revised to show these - again demonstrating how the development proposal has evolved to take relevant factors into account.

5.2 Part 2 of the policy substance requires that the consideration of the building itself dictates that 4 criteria be considered and warranted as being acceptable:

- a) That the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without major alteration;***
- b) That the building be of sufficient size to provide all the required living accommodation without extension;***
- c) The nature of the proposals & materials relate to the character of the building;***
- d) The building has a genuine background in agriculture or other rural enterprise.***

In regard to [a], the submitted structural survey identifies that the building is capable of conversion to the proposed use. As a correct exercise in continuity in the preparation of the application, the same consultancy undertook the structural survey and then the design work upon the building, identifying what issues needed to be addressed in achieving a converted dwelling. The building is largely intact and would not entail substantial extension or rebuilding work. * It should also be noted that neither the local plan or national planning guidance require, as once was the case, a rural building to have either architectural merit or significant historical background.

Upon [b] and the sufficiency of the size of the building to facilitate a suitable and internally workable conversion without the need for for major alterations including extensions, no

extensions are proposed and an acceptable internal layout for a two bedroom dwelling has been achieved.

On [c], that nature of the proposals and materials reflect the rural character of the building, this has been discussed in section 4 and it has been put forward that the character of the building has been preserved and enhanced by the architects' design proposals and the recommended use of materials. Some roof integrated, slimline pv panels have been added in a portion of the rear, south elevation with a view to assist in heating water sustainably. The sustainable credentials of these ought to be taken into account circa 2018, and are a necessary ingredient of current house design even in the countryside, whether new build or conversion.

Finally in regard to [d], there is no question about the longevity of the building which was last used in association with the agricultural use of the adjoining land. There has been no intervening use apart from the current owner storing chattels within it.

It is contended that the proposed conversion meets the requirements of the various elements of policy DMH4 as has been analysed herein.

5.2 The new National Planning Policy Framework 2018 just published this month is now the main basis of national planning policy having superseded the former NPPF of six years ago. The new version remains in having a very broad basis of national planning advice and still majors on bringing forward sustainable development in three main areas [an 'economic' objective , a 'social' objective & an 'environmental' objective] for which there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this case, it is an 'environmental' role that is to be considered, and one which protects and enhances the natural, built and historic environment.

This new NPPF is also now the source of the most up to date guidance upon rural housing developments in re-utilising redundant or disused buildings in more isolated countryside locations for that purpose (para.79) where it would result in an enhancement of the immediate setting. In this case, the barn building which is the subject of the application is both disused for its former use and redundant while the space around the building and outbuildings has become untidy and unkempt. The environs of the site would be considerably enhanced by what is being put forward in the schedule of proposals affording a valuable enhancement of the site 'in its immediate setting' as required by the text provisions of the NPPF. In this case the improvement of the appearance of the existing building above that of its existing, somewhat random construction and roofing is the major lever to that enhancement, along with the other measures proposed within the site curtilage.

Sustainable development remains at the forefront of planning policy and re-use of existing redundant buildings saves upon the resources of a completely new build construction to provide a new house elsewhere and hopefully avoiding green field development in countryside areas. Certainly the alternative to granting planning permission for the barn conversion is for the building to remain in limbo without a permanent use, and as such face the prospect of longer term neglect and decline in fabric which undoubtedly lead to greater degradation. It is not the intention of the NPPF to see a wasteful use of a 'resource' such as the application building by being unresponsive to a development proposal such as this being brought forward.

5.3 Other relevant local planning policies in respect of the consideration of this application are:

C.S. Policy **DMG1** of the Core Strategy principally refers to new built development; criterion no. 2 does require development to sympathetic to existing land uses in terms of size / nature / features and building materials; criterion no. 3 looks at density, layout and relationships between buildings with particular emphasis upon visual appearance and relationship to the surroundings. It is considered that it has been demonstrated that the proposals for the conversion accord with these requirements.

C.S. Policy **DMG2** identifies that within open countryside development will be in keeping with the character of the landscape and where possible should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings which is more appropriate than new build. In this case an existing building is being reutilised, while it is contended that there would be no resultant harm to the character of the local landscape - indeed it would be enhanced by what the full nature of what is proposed.

In regard to C.S. Policy **DME1**, trees and woodland areas to the site would be retained.

In respect of C.S. Policy **DME2** [landscape protection] - trees will be retained, a broadleaf woodland plantation exercise undertaken and a wildflower meadow and grasses planted.

Policy **DME3** of the Core Strategy is covered by the Ecology Report and the revisions made to the drawings to accommodate the comments made therein; a permanent nesting habitation for barn owls would be provided in the fabric of the converted building, which would not be achievable if the building were allowed subsequently to just fall down, while other wildlife will be supported by the ancillary undertakings in the site area as has been identified.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The proposed development is for the conversion of a redundant barn to a single dwelling house.

6.2 The design of the conversion has been sensitively undertaken by a local architectural practice familiar with the rural vernacular in Ribble Valley to enhance the character of this existing building. It remains of the same scale with a similar but improved appearance having a positive impact upon the immediate locality. The proposals in terms of the use of the site as a dwelling, by their nature, are confined and do not involve encroachment onto new areas of the site or onto any adjoining land.

6.3 The proposed development in conversion to residential use would not detrimental to the residential amenity of other existing residences in the locality while conversely the future occupants of the converted building, should permission be granted, would not be harmed by any consequences of existing adjacent land uses such as intensive farming activity - as none directly adjoins the site.

6.4 The proposed conversion offers a suitable new use for a long established building, which has been part of the integral visual rural scene in this locality for half a century. The building does not warrant demolition but does warrant its re-use, and it would be sustainable in

terms of that being achieved. It is accepted that the building is somewhat utilitarian in form and appearance but has evolved over time to the needs of which it has been put. As stated policy no longer require such a building to have any special historical or architectural merits or important features and does not discriminate between materials of construction provided that are structurally sound and capable of conversion from its current shell - which it has been shown that this building is. The majority of barns are utilitarian features in the landscape serving a purpose in association with stock or feed and as such many are no more special than others. The 'organic' progression and alteration of a building such as this over time is a part of the rural scene, and as such it should be equally as appropriate to convert as a brick dairy or stock building or hayloft.

Considerable work has gone into preparing and substantiating of these development proposals, particularly in minimising the impact of the bringing about of a new use for the building and the site itself. In the light of this it would extremely disappointing for the outcome of the application to be a refusal of planning permission.

6.5 The application should be determined in accordance with S. 38.6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and in favour of the Development Plan policies which the proposed development is considered to accord. Planning permission for the conversion of the barn therefore ought to be granted.

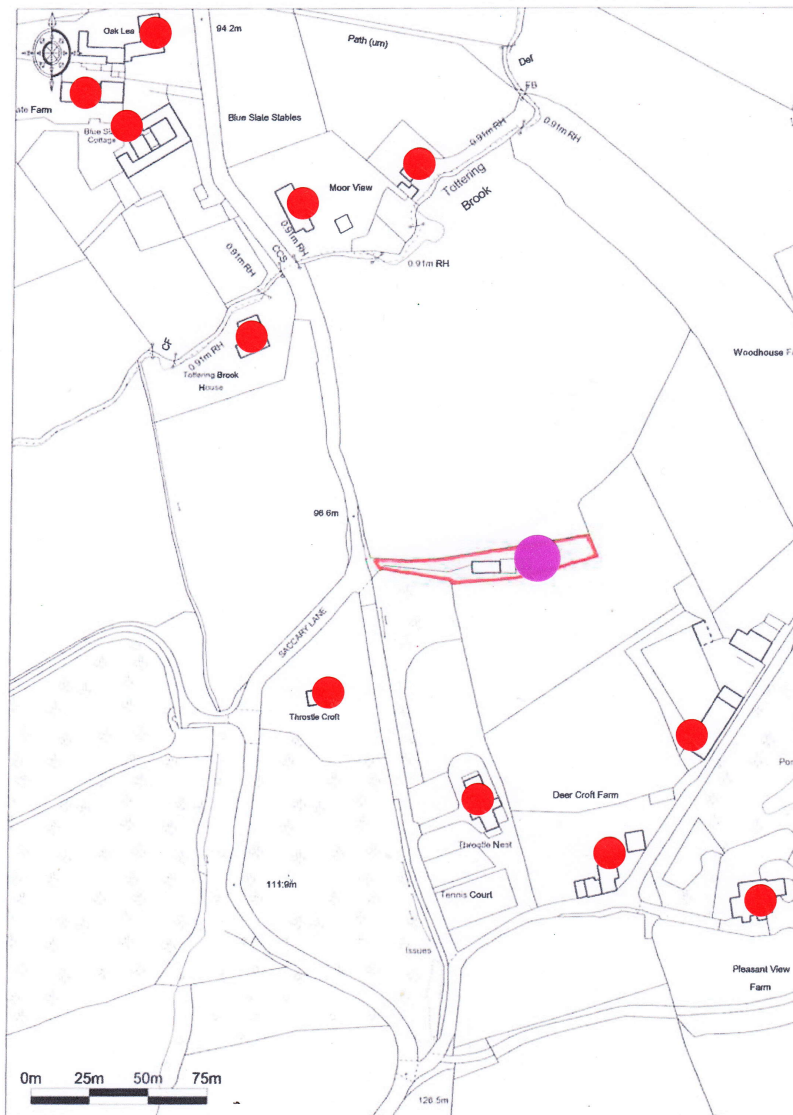
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August 2018

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C

