



PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

Planning - Permitted Development - Architectural Design
Development Consultancy - Conservation



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WHITFIELD COURT

New Self Build Dwellings

Heritage Impact Assessment

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1. The Site

1.1. This document refers to the 'site' – for the avoidance of doubt the site is defined as the land illustrated in the image below:

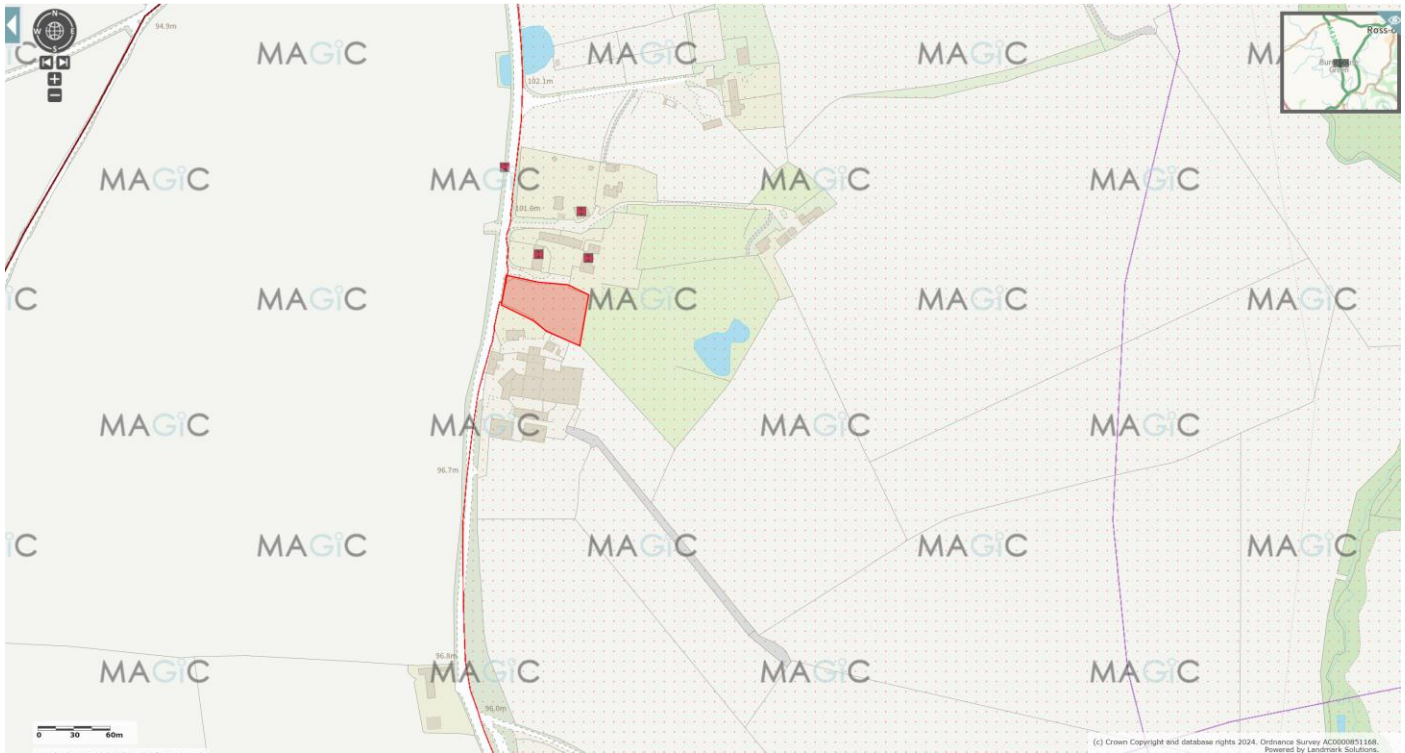


Figure 1: Screenshot from DEFRA MAGIC Map app showing the site location and extent.

1.2. This report provides a summary of the research findings relating to an application for planning permission for new, residential development in the form of self/custom-build plots on the site. It is intended to make available relevant information to facilitate strategic decision making.

2. Introduction

2.1. This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) evaluates the potential impact of proposed new build dwellings on the environment surrounding Whitfield Court, a Grade II listed 17th-century farmhouse located in Marstow, Herefordshire. The new buildings will be situated outside the curtilage of Whitfield Court but within its broader landscape context. This HIA is prepared in accordance with the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023** and **Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance** guidance.

2.2. The assessment follows a structured approach:

- Understanding the significance of the heritage asset.
- Describing the proposed development.
- Assessing the potential impacts on the heritage asset and its setting.
- Proposing measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any harmful impacts.
- Providing a justification for the proposal.

3. Understanding Significance at Whitfield Court

Historical Background

3.1. Whitfield Court is a Grade II listed farmhouse with origins in the 17th century, reflecting the typical Archenfield style characterized by substantial farmsteads constructed from Old Red Sandstone with hipped slate roofs. It is historically significant for its evolution as a large farmstead and has had some association with prominent local figures, including the Rev. Thomas Jones.

Architectural Significance

3.2. The building's architectural significance lies in its Georgian south wing, with notable features such as:

- A four-flight, late-17th-century dog-leg staircase with half-landings and bulbous balusters.
- Intricately plastered ceilings in the southeast drawing room.
- Symmetrical Georgian façade.

Setting and Context

3.3. Whitfield Court is located within a rural landscape typical of Herefordshire's Sandstone Farmlands. Its setting is integral to its significance, with the agricultural landscape enhancing its historic and aesthetic value. The house forms the focal point of a traditional farmstead, surrounded by barns and ancillary buildings.

3.4. Whitfield Court was previously largely dominated visually and spatially by a large, steel-framed agricultural building. In the process of converting the more substantial stone farm buildings to dwellings, this steel building was removed, creating a more open environment.

4. Description of the Proposed Development

4.1. The proposed development involves constructing two new self-build dwellings and an associated outbuilding approximately 50 to 100 meters to the West of Whitfield Court. The buildings will be modern dwellings, designed to provide additional residential accommodation.

5. Assessment of Potential Impacts

5.1. The proposed development, located just outside the existing curtilage of Whitfield Court, has the potential to influence its traditional farmhouse setting. Visually, the development's proximity to the courtyard may introduce a modern element into the surrounding rural landscape, potentially altering key sightlines from Whitfield Court and its outbuildings. However, the use of traditional materials and sympathetic design can help mitigate this impact by ensuring the new building blends into the landscape.

5.2. Spatially, the introduction of an additional structure could subtly reduce the sense of openness that defines the area's agricultural character, particularly if the development encroaches on historically significant vistas or disrupts the spatial hierarchy of the farmstead and its courtyard. Changes to the setting's character would depend on the scale and prominence of the new building; careful siting and potentially screening with appropriate native vegetation will be essential to maintaining the traditional farmhouse ambiance and preserving the historic separation between the residential and agricultural domains of the site.

5.3. The heritage asset was, as stated in 3.4 (above) previously closed in by agricultural buildings. The current arrangement of converted stone buildings in a courtyard arrangement provides a more attractive and easily legible

setting than the existence of the previous steel-framed building afforded, so it may be considered that the removal of the steel framed building constituted an enhancement to Whitfield Court's setting.

5.4. Any further development would have the potential to harm the now largely open, agricultural setting of the heritage asset.

5.5. In order to mitigate visual impact, informed choices will need to be made during the detailed design process which will limit visual and spatial encroachment on the curtilage of Whitfield Court which could impact negatively on the heritage asset's setting if not carefully considered.

5.6. The assessment further considers the potential impact of the proposed development on Whitfield Court and its setting under the following categories:

Evidential Value

5.7. The evidential value of Whitfield Court lies in its ability to convey the development of rural architecture and agricultural practices in Herefordshire. The proposed development is located outside the historic curtilage and does not directly impact any physical fabric of Whitfield Court. Measures will ensure minimal disturbance to below-ground archaeology if any is present.

Historical Value

5.8. Whitfield Court's historical value is associated with its role as a significant local farmstead and its connection to the Addis family and Rev. Thomas Jones. The proposed development does not interfere with the historic narrative of the site, and is sited to respect the visual and spatial relationship between Whitfield Court and its surrounding landscape. Further, more detailed design work will need to be undertaken at the Reserved Matters stage in order to preserve this special relationship.

Aesthetic Value

5.9. The aesthetic value of Whitfield Court derives from its architectural design and rural setting. The proposed development will need to utilise a modest scale, traditional materials, and sympathetic design form in an aim to reduce its visual impact. Siting appears to have been carefully considered in order to ensure that the development does not obstruct key views of Whitfield Court or detract from its prominence within the landscape, and the particular arrangement shown has been chosen to resemble a typical cluster of farm buildings.

Communal Value

5.10. The communal value of Whitfield Court is tied to its role as a historically significant structure within the local area. The proposed development enhances the site's long-term viability by maintaining a sensitive relationship with the existing heritage asset. Its construction will not undermine the building's status as a community landmark.

6. Measures to Mitigate Impact

6.1. To ensure the development has minimal impact on Whitfield Court and its setting, the following mitigation measures are proposed:

6.2. **Landscaping:** The existing boundary treatments to the roadside (West) are already substantial and largely visually impenetrable. It is suggested that a landscaping plan be developed at the reserved matters stage to further soften the visual impact of the new development (from the North) and preserve the rural character of the setting.

6.3. **Design and Materials:** The building should utilise materials that reflect the traditional palette of the area, ensuring harmony with the surrounding environment. In this instance that would include largely natural materials such as sandstone walls, painted timber or metal casement fenestration and doors, and natural slate for roof coverings. Height and mass should be subservient to the Whitfield Court cluster overall.

6.4. **Orientation and Siting:** The development is sited to avoid obstructing key sightlines or creating a dominant presence in the landscape. Additionally, the only barns now extant to Whitfield Court are those that have already been converted to dwellings, and these were barns associated with arable farming. It would be unusual for a farm of this scale not to have had any buildings dedicated to the housing of farm hands, livestock and other equipment, so the form and siting of the proposed development has been chosen to reflect a typical arrangement of byres and stabling.

6.5. **Archaeological Monitoring:** Any groundworks will be monitored to safeguard potential archaeological remains.

7. Justification for the Proposal

7.1. The new building supports the sustainable use of land in accordance with the NPPF. It respects the historic environment and avoids any significant harm to the character or setting of Whitfield Court. The design prioritizes minimal visual intrusion while integrating modern functionality with traditional aesthetics. By aligning with local planning policies and heritage guidance, the proposal ensures the protection and enhancement of the area's historic character.

8. Conclusion

8.1. The proposed development has been carefully designed to respect the significance of Whitfield Court and its setting. The measures outlined will ensure that any potential impacts are mitigated, preserving the evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal values of the heritage asset. The development will contribute to the sustainable use of the surrounding land while maintaining the historic integrity of Whitfield Court.