

DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

**PROPOSED CONVERSION AND
EXTENSION OF EXISTING BARN TO OFFICE
AND STORAGE**

**HUNTLEY FILM ARCHIVES, OLD KING
STREET FARM, EWYAS HAROLD,
HEREFORD, HR2 OHB**

May 2021

Job ref 5220

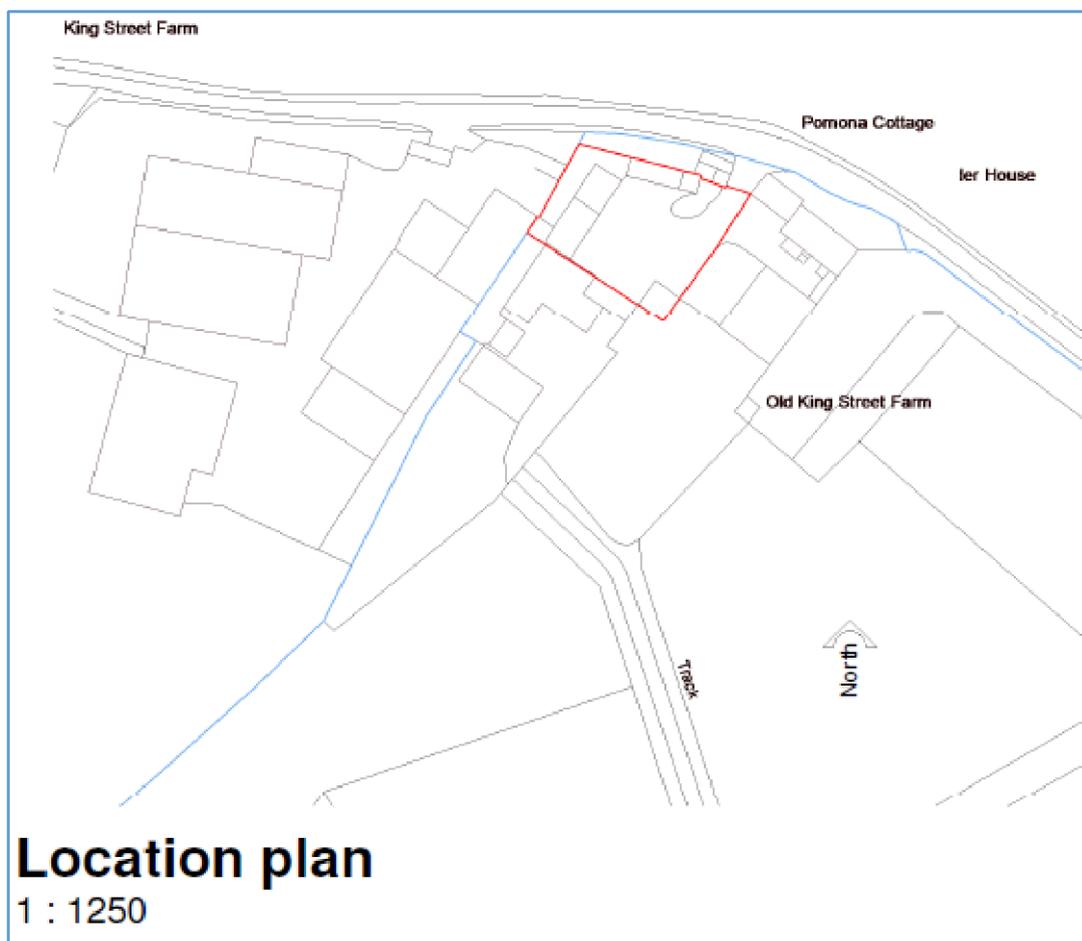


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1 The Site and Surroundings

1.1 Old King Street Farm is situated approximately 0.5KM to the west of the centre of Ewyas Harold, accessed off unclassified highway number 74417 known locally as Wern Ddu Road. This former dairy farm occupies an imposing position on the southern side of the highway as the land rises to the west. Adjoining the site along its western boundary is the working farm of King Street Farm. The site location is outlined in red on the plan below.



1.2 Old King Street Farm comprises a group of buildings which includes a grade II listed farmhouse together with a series of surrounding barns. The grade II listed three storey farmhouse dates from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and is built in Herefordshire sandstone under a twin pitch slate roof. The house faces west into the former farm yard area with its central entrance being accessed through a walled courtyard and formal gardens to the north.

1.3 The set of barns (the Cider House and Pomona Cottage) located parallel to the highway have been converted for use as two holiday lets. A further set of barns is situated to the west of the farmhouse, orientated north south and being partially converted for use by the applicant's principal business 'Huntley Film Archives'. The partially converted building known as 'The Dairy' is used for office and storage purposes, housing a vault of historic and vintage film footage and providing office space from where this established independent film archive business operates. A concrete block and timber clad extension running south from the dairy was constructed in approximately 2005 as part of the original permission for the business to be operated from the site.



Above: Existing business premises.

Below: Barn the subject of this application

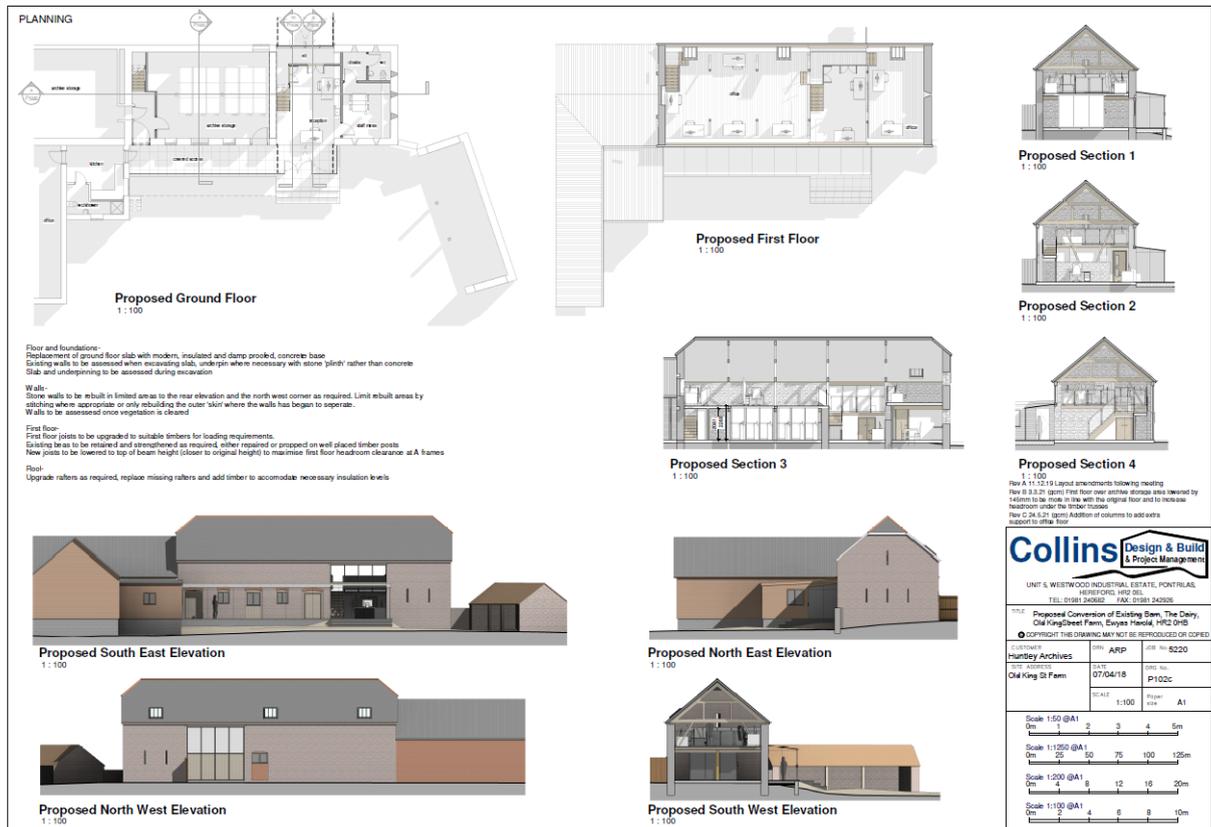


1.4 North of the former dairy is a stone barn with a pitched partially stone tiled roof and oak trusses. This barn is proposed for conversion and is subject of this

application. Attached to this is a single storey open fronted three-bay corrugated sheeted roof cart shed.

2 The Proposal

2.1 Planning and listed building consent is sought for the conversion of the barn to create further archive storage and office space for Huntley Film Archives. The second element of the proposal is the erection of glazed link along part of the south east elevation.



2.2 Internally some minor partitioning is proposed to create staff facilities on the ground floor but primarily the layout will remain unaltered and open plan on the ground and first floor. The entrance area will remain full height with existing openings being utilized to provide movement and light within and between the adjoining building. A new stairs is proposed to create first floor office space.

2.3 Externally, the south east elevation fronting the farmhouse will be unaltered with the exception of the replacement of the corrugated clad doors with full height glazing and replacement of a window with a timber door. In addition, a light weight fully enclosed glazed link to create covered access between buildings is proposed. This link is proposed to a height in line with the existing

single storey kitchen block ensuring existing windows and doors are unaltered. The stone tiled roof will remain unaltered.

- 2.4 To the rear and sides no new wall openings are proposed. The metal sheet roof at the rear will be replaced with slate and three rooflights are proposed to allow light into the first floor office space.
- 2.5 The application is also accompanied by a full bat survey and structural survey.

3. Huntley Film Archives - Business Background and Future Needs

3.1 Huntley Film Archives was started in London by the applicant's father over 35 years ago. Father (John) and daughter (Amanda) relocated the business to Ewyas Harold 17 years ago, from where it has continued to grow. The core of the business is the supply of archive documentary film clips to commercial users, typically those in the broadcast, educational, corporate, feature film, and website development industries, both in the UK and internationally. The film archive works in this niche industry, its competitors often supported by large broadcasters or companies with significant international backers, but the reputation of Huntley Film Archives is excellent and the company is respected by producers and broadcasters the world over.

3.2 Currently the company employs 2 directors, 4 full-time and one part-time member of staff. The high-tech nature of the industry means there are few personal visitors to the site. Four of the five company staff walk to work.

3.3 Looking to the short to medium term future, business growth is predicted to continue. Specialist film scanning machinery was purchased in 2018 and this has encouraged existing and new customers to source more footage from the company. The expansion into overseas markets, particularly the USA, has matched the increased offering of newly scanned film. The company will attend tradeshows in France and the USA which are expected to generate many new leads and much work. The company plans to employ additional staff who will be highly skilled machine operators. The predictions of steadily increasing sales in 2019 have proved correct, and with the proposed new office space and new staff to process more film footage the company confidently expects to see further sales increases creating new part and full time jobs.

Business Needs - lack of space

3.4 As the company has expanded, space has become a problem. The collections have grown with more archive arriving regularly and staff numbers have increased. Before the pandemic, the company had its best results in 35 years of

business and as it breaks new international markets, space to accommodate new employees as well as storage is required. Consequently, the applicants need to convert the adjoining barn to additional office, film storage area and specialist film preparation areas. Without the additional space, the growth potential including new job creation cannot be realised.

4. Planning Policy and Design

The Development Plan

- 4.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, this proposal must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 In Herefordshire, the Development Plan consists of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) which was adopted in October 2015 and runs from the period 2011 to 2031. In November 2020, a decision was taken to prepare a new plan but this is likely to be several years to achieve adoption and so the current Core Strategy remains the relevant development plan for decision making purposes.
- 4.3 Also relevant is the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. This is a material planning consideration and introduced a national policy framework that requires a positive and proactive approach to the consideration of development that is sustainable. This is facilitated through applying a policy test of a presumption in favour of sustainable development into decision making.
- 4.4 The site also falls within Ewyas Harold Parish which forms part of the adopted Abbeydore and Bacton, Ewyas Harold Group and Kentchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan, which contains several criteria based policies that will also be referenced in this report.
- 4.5 The principal development plan policy for consideration of the conversion including the design detail is CS policy RA5 - Re-Use of Rural Buildings complemented by CS policy SD1 – Sustainable Design and Energy Efficiency and NDP policy G2-Design.

Core Strategy Policy RA5 – Re-Use of Rural Buildings

- 4.6 Policy RA5 supports the principle of re-using former agricultural buildings where the proposal makes a positive contribution to rural businesses and supports the local economy. This is subject to five criteria as follows:

1) The design proposals respect the character and significance of any redundant or disused building and demonstrate that it represents the most viable option for

the long term conservation and enhancement of any heritage asset affected, together with its setting;

4.7 The barn is curtilage listed and thus of architectural interest in its own right and as part of the group comprising the grade II listed farmhouse and holiday let barns. The barn is thus worthy of retention and conversion to an alternative use and given the attached barn has already been converted to a business use, the proposal represents the most suitable and viable option to secure the long term conservation of this heritage asset.

4.8 In terms of the proposed design, the barn already contains a number of openings and a first floor through the majority making it well suited to accommodate the proposed use and the plans demonstrate the business requirements can be accommodated through largely working with the features of the barn and making full use of existing openings.



4.9 The large slab barn door apertures are to be fully glazed to maximise light avoiding the need to introduce new openings in the elevations and at ground floor, all openings are to remain as existing with the exception of converting one window

to a door. The arrow slit openings will also all be retained and recessed glazing introduced within these openings to bring in additional light.

4.10 Internally, the proposed use works around the existing room proportions thereby minimising the need for new partitioning and subdivision. Two stairs are proposed to make full use of the first floor. However, these have been designed and positioned to work around the height constraints imposed by the first floor trusses. At the request of the conservation officer, the stairs is also recessed from the rear wall to remove the need for a large transom. Rooflights are only proposed on the rear roof slope to allow the front stone tile roof to remain unbroken and these have been reduce in number again to address the conservation officer recommendations.

4.11 The design of the conversion works respect the character and significance of the barn.

2) The proposals make adequate provision for protected and priority species and associated habitats;

4.12 An ecology and bat survey were carried out during the optimum survey season last year including winter hibernation surveys. The results are explained in detail within section 6. The ecology report recommends various measures to ensure the biodiversity interest of the barn are mitigated, compensated and enhanced.

3) The proposal is compatible with neighbouring uses, including any continued agricultural operations and does not cause undue environmental impacts and;

4.13 The site is already set up to accommodate a mix of uses, with businesses operating harmoniously alongside the applicants dwelling and the holiday lets in the adjacent barns. The high-tech nature of the business means there are few visitors beyond staff and the business itself generates no environmental impacts such as noise or air pollution. Additionally, no conflict has arisen between the operation of the business and the neighbouring farming operations and this proposal will not alter this situation.

4)The buildings are permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;

4.14 The application is supported by a structural survey which verifies that the barn is structurally sound and can be converted without the need for substantial reconstruction. Additionally, the proposed business use means less alteration is required compared with the introduction of a residential use, for example.

5) The building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use without the need for substantial alteration or extension, ancillary buildings, areas of hard standing or development which individually or taken together would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or have a detrimental impact on its surroundings and landscape setting.

4.15 The proposed design has been sympathetically created to minimise the level of internal and external alteration and reinforce the agricultural character of the barn.

4.16 The proposed glazed extension creates a functional link between current offices and new reception and principal offices avoiding the need for internal partitioned corridors and new openings to link the different parts of the buildings as well enabling the storage areas to be maximised.



Proposed South East Elevation
1 : 100

4.17 A contemporary, seamless fully glazed structure is proposed. The scale is in proportion with the host elevation and the light weight transparent appearance will ensure the existing barn features are not obscured or affected.

Furthermore, the structure will ultimately be reversible and will not lead to the loss of any existing building fabric.

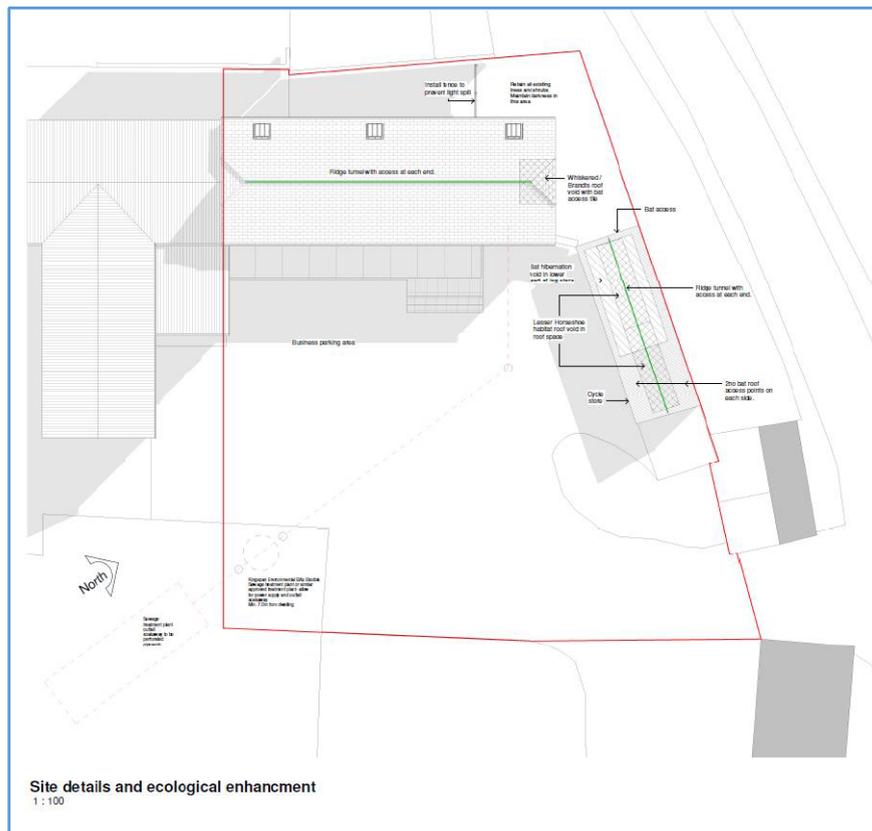
- 4.18 No new hardstanding or other structures are required thus there will be no harm to the setting of the designated heritage assets or wider landscape impact.
- 4.19 This assessment demonstrates that the requirements of CS policies RA5 and SD1 and NDP policy G2 have been met.

Rural Economy - Core Strategy Policy RA6

- 4.20 This policy supports proposals that strengthen and diversify the rural economy through supporting the continued growth of existing rural businesses.
- 4.21 Huntley Film Archives have been established in rural Ewyas Harold for 17 years, are successful and employ a small, skilled workforce. Their market position, investment in new scanning machinery and strong business opportunities indicate the business is set to grow further including the creation of new jobs. Crucially, they would also be utilising historic barns to become a valued asset of the business, conserving and enhancing them in the long term. This dual business and conservation benefit would meet the requirements of Policy RA6.
- 4.22 With regards to the specific criteria of this policy and NDP Policy G9 Rural Business and Homeworking, the scale of the business will remain commensurate with its location on the fringes of Ewyas Harold and no amenity or transport issues will arise.

5. Access

- 5.1 The current traffic generation is low with four of the five existing staff walking to work. Being located only 0.5KM from the edge of the village, the business offers further genuine opportunities for new employees to cycle or walk to work. Current vehicle movements encompassing staff, deliveries, collections and visitors are an average of 6 visits (12 trips) per day. It is anticipated this will increase to around 10 visits (20 trips) per day. These being cars or small vans. This modest level of traffic can be accommodated on the local road network and will not create any *severe* highway capacity or safety issues, which is the policy test for determining acceptability set out in para 109 of the NPPF.
- 5.2 The access has adequate visibility that is commensurate with the character of the highway and likely average traffic speeds. The business has also operated from the site for over 17 years without any highway issues and the modest increase in vehicle movements will not present any unacceptable highway safety issues associated with the intensification in the use of the access.



- 5.3 Within the site, adequate manoeuvring space exists to ensure vehicles can enter and leave in forward gear. A large gravelled parking also exists between the

house and barns providing ample parking for staff and visitors. Covered cycle parking will also be created within the cart shed barn. The traffic, access and parking meets the requirements of CS policy MT1, NDP policy G6 – Highways and Transport and Section 9 of the NPPF.

7. Heritage

- 7.1 Core Strategy policy LD4 and Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by the development including the contribution made by their setting. There is also a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve a heritage asset, its setting or any features of special architectural or historical interest.
- 7.2 This section therefore considers both the significance of the asset and the impact of the development on its significance.
- 7.3 The application site includes no designated heritage assets but King Street Farmhouse adjoins the application site to the east and is Grade II listed. This was listed on 28th May 1987 and is a three-storey late C18 or early C19 former farmhouse constructed from dressed and squared sandstone rubble with a twin pitched slate roof and chimney stack on each of the four gables. There is a parapet eaves detail on each pitch of the roof and two string courses to the main entrance. The principal front and rear elevations have reducing scale multi pane sash windows from ground to second floor and central entrance with 6 panelled door.



Source: English Heritage listing (date approx. 2005)

- 7.4 The barn the subject of this application is not listed in its own right but undoubtedly falls within the curtilage of the King Street Farmhouse and therefore qualifies as being curtilage listed.

Significance

- 7.5 The barn appears on the first edition OS map (below) and forms part of the original courtyard group of farm buildings and would appear to be a planned farmyard. This normally comprising of a farmhouse and several farm buildings forming a broadly square enclosed yard.



- 7.6 The definition and appearance of the courtyard has been diminished when the adjacent barn was altered and extended in the 1970's and original courtyard ground levels have historically also been lowered to create parking areas. However, the barn the subject of this application and adjacent stable/cart shed still allow the courtyard to be interpreted.

- 7.7 The application barn is a former threshing barn. With increasing grain yields in the 17th and 18th centuries, farmers built larger barns in which cereals were not only stored but also processed. The barn has two doors opposite one another in the long side of the building. The grain was threshed in the space between these doors with the use of flails. The grain storage area was raised off the ground to keep the grain dry and safer from vermin.



7.8 The application building retains many original features such as the stone tile roof on the front elevation, internal timber framing, arrow slit windows and threshing door apertures. The quarter hips on the roof are a particularly distinctive feature. Some features such as the stone tiles on the rear roof slope and threshing barn doors have been removed but the building is a good example of a Herefordshire threshing barn. Consequently, it is of historic and architectural significance both in its own right and as group alongside the farmhouse and adjacent barn.

Impact on Significance

7.9 The proposals do not entail the loss of any part of the building or fabric. The design of the works have been informed by and respect the key features of the barn such as retention and working with existing openings, minimising internal partitioning to retain the open character and retention of the unbroken stone tile roof on the front elevation. The design has also been modified to accommodate the majority of the recommendations of the Council conservation officer. In particular, the size of the rooflights has been rationalized enabling a reduction in the number of rooflights and they have been changed to conservation flush fitting style and the first floor walkway has been recessed from the glazed barn door openings to remove the need for a mid-level transom.

7.10 The application is also supported by structural survey which verifies that the barn is generally structurally sound and can be converted to the proposed new use without the need for major works or re-building. Small areas of repairs to roof timbers and rear wall will be required but these works are necessary regardless of the outcome of this application. With a small number of internal post supports, the existing historic beams can also take the additional load of the first floor office use. The structural engineer concludes with the following statement:

Repairs will be required but all of these would be required regardless of the proposed change of use, and are to rectify problems resulting from weathering and prior structural interventions, and subject to these works, I have no hesitation in confirming that this building is structurally suitable for the proposed change of use.

- 7.11 It is considered the proposed works to the barn will not harm the significance of the asset.
- 7.12 The proposals also include the construction of single storey extension on the front (south east elevation) of the barn to provide a pedestrian link between the existing offices and new offices and reception area. In recognition of the sensitivities of accommodating an extension on a barn of this nature, a lightweight contemporary design approach has been adopted. The extension is to be fully glazed with frameless glazing on the yard elevation with glazed roof. This will allow the barn elevation and associated apertures to remain visible. The linear form of the extension follows the rectangular form of the barn and the sleek transparent design complements rather than competes with the host elevation, ensuring this remains dominant.



Proposed South East Elevation
1:100

- 7.13 Without this extension, staff and visitors will have to walk outside to access between the two offices. Other options have been considered. Creating an internal connecting route is not an option as it means regular pedestrian movements through the specialist archive storage facility, which needs to be temperature and humidity controlled. Creating a corridor through this space

would unacceptably reduce the available archive storage facility, which is an integral part of the application proposal.

7.14 It is nevertheless acknowledged that the principle of an extension off the front elevation will result in a moderate degree of harm to the appearance and significance of the asset. In such a situation, paragraph 196 of the NPPF explains that:

‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’.

7.15 Firstly, it is considered the scale of harm is reduced to the lower end of *‘less than substantial’* due to the modest proportions of the extension and proposed design and materials. The extension can also be designed in a manner that would allow it be removed and the host elevation restored should it no longer required in the future.

7.16 Also relevant are the benefits of securing an alternative viable use for the barn. The building is already suffering with lack of maintenance and repair over the last fifty years or so and considerable funds will now be required to undertake even the repair work. However, these are only affordable if a viable alternative commercial use of the barn can be achieved. NPPG Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 18a-014-20190723 confirms this factor is a material planning consideration that can be given weight in considering potential impacts of new development on a heritage asset.

7.17 The development will also secure the sensitive renovation and beneficial use of the designated heritage assets within the site and the protection of key attributes that contribute to its significance. A commercial use is also considered the optimum viable use as a residential use, which is the realistic alternative would necessitate far greater alterations. In any event, a residential use is not a practical option as the barn has no immediate curtilage and it would be undesirable to create garden area within the internal courtyard.

7.18 The National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723) explains that in the context of 'public benefits', the heritage benefits can be as follows:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation

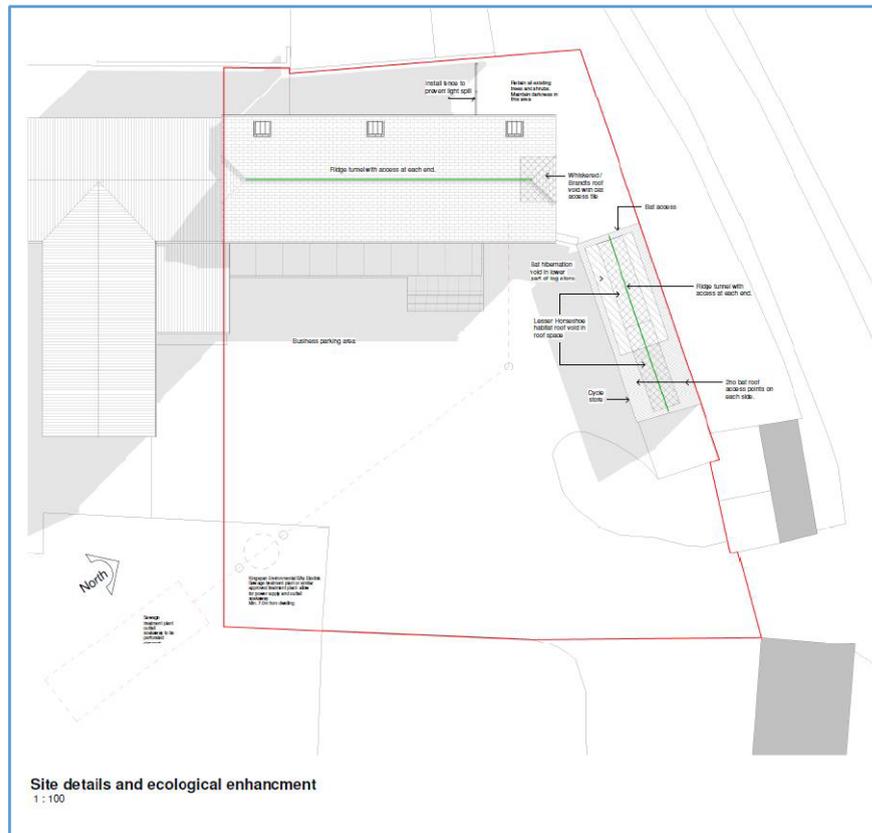
7.19 All three of these heritage benefits apply in this instance.

7.20 Lastly, the other significant public benefit is the fact the proposal will enable the business to continue growing resulting in the creation of skilled and specialist part and full time jobs. This can be given significant weight due to the rural location of the site where skilled well paid jobs are not readily available.

7.21 In summary, the above public benefits are considered sufficient to cumulatively outweigh the moderate *less than substantial harm* to the significance of the asset arising from the introduction of the single storey extension. The proposal therefore meets the heritage policy tests within Section 16 of the NPPF along with CS policy LD4 and NDP policy G1.

8. Drainage

8.1 The site is not at risk of flooding from any source. A new package treatment plant is proposed to manage foul drainage from the barn discharging into a Building Regulations compliant field drain soakaway in the land south west of the farmhouse.



8.2 Surface water will also be managed via soakaways as is presently the case.

8.3 The flood risk and drainage requirements of CS policies SD3 and SD4, RA6 and NDP policy G3 are therefore met.

9. Summary

- 9.1 Huntley Archives is an established, successful independent business serving a niche global market from rural Herefordshire that employs a local skilled workforce, which is set to continue growing. The proposal seeks the sympathetic and sustainable conversion of a former agricultural building to meet existing business needs, support the business continued growth whilst securing the long term conservation and enhancement of this heritage asset.
- 9.2 The principle of conversion is supported by CS Policies RA5 and RA6 and the proposed design of the conversion respects the character and significance of the building in accordance with CS policy LD4 and the NPPF. Although the proposed single storey extension will have minor negative impact on the significance of the asset, this is at the lower end of the '*less than substantial harm*' scale.
- 9.3 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF explains that:
- 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.*
- 9.4 The business use of the barn represents the optimum viable use. Allied with this, the sensitive conversion and adaption of this curtilage listed barn and fact it is facilitating the growth of successful business including the creation of new part and full time jobs will be a direct heritage and public benefit. It is considered that these benefits outweigh the minor impact arising from the proposed single storey extension.
- 9.5 The report also demonstrates that the requirements of other topic specific CS and NDP polices such as ecology, access and drainage have been met.
- 9.6 The development therefore accords with the development plan in so far as the polices can be regarded as up to date and in accordance with paragraph 11(c) of the NPPF, should be approved. Furthermore, assessed against NPPF paragraph

11 d (i) and considering the public and heritage benefits of the development, it is not considered heritage policies of the NPPF '*provide a clear reason for refusing the development*'.

- 9.7 Lastly, having regard to NPPF paragraph 11 d ii, It is considered that there are no harmful impacts that significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits arising from the development, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole and therefore, planning permission and listed building consent should be approved.