

Design and Access Statement

Proposed conversion and change of use of redundant
agricultural stone barn to 3 bedroom dwelling, with
detached garage

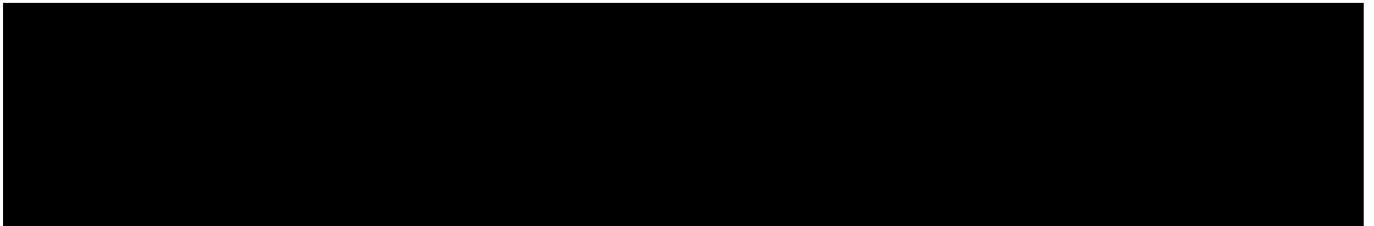
At Land east of Brynafal Lane and North of Yew Tree
Cottage, Rhydspence, Herefordshire HR3 6ET
for Mr L. Vincent and Ms K. Corrales

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The proposal is for the conversion of the existing stone barn into a new dwelling, including the creation of a detached garage/live-work space. A modest enlargement of the curtilage is proposed (relative to the previously approved scheme).
- 1.2 Planning was approved on 1st April 2022 (ref: 202206/F) for the conversion of the redundant stone barn on the site into a holiday-let suitable for 2-4 people.



- 1.4 The proposal therefore represents a 'self-build' In accordance with the 'Self-build and Custom Homebuilding Act 2013'.
- 1.5 Following receipt of supportive pre-application advice from the local Planning Authority, the applicants submitted an application in November 2023 (ref: 233246) for the conversion of the barn into a dwelling (an alternative to the approved scheme for holiday-let). This application was refused in March 2024, on the grounds of design and the technicalities of the drainage proposal.
- 1.6 Since the refusal, discussions and a site meeting have been held with the case officer from Herefordshire Planning department and revised drawings and drainage strategy submitted for additional 'pre-application' consideration. Written support has been received for the updated scheme.
- 1.7 This application incorporates all of the amendments discussed and agreed during the most recent phase of pre-application discussion with Herefordshire Planning department.
- 1.8 The details of the designs proposed for the conversion of the existing barn and the new garage/live-work unit have been carefully considered to take account of the rural setting, the agricultural character of the site, and the scale and proportions of the original building.
- 1.9 Included in the proposal are habitat and biodiversity enhancements, as well as measures to ensure the sustainability of the development in the context of Herefordshire Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.



View A



View B



View C



View D



View E



View F

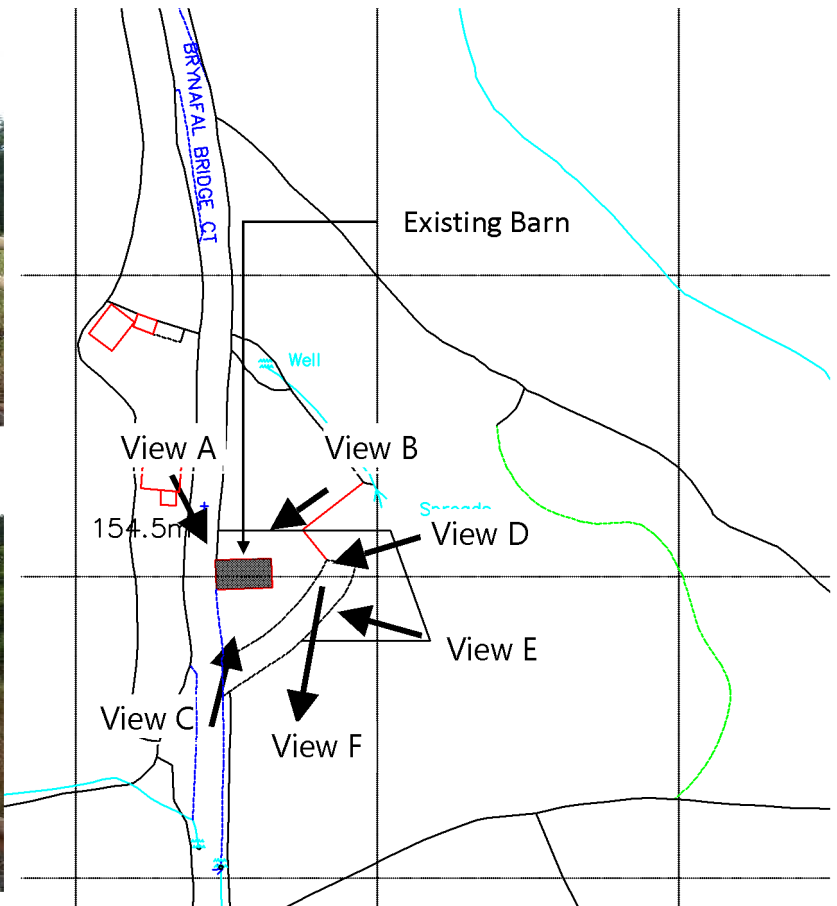


Figure 1: Views of existing barn and surrounding site
(mapping taken from Ordnance Survey © (Crown Copyright) 2023. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432)

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Location - the site is located between Whitney-on-Wye and Clyro, to the north side of the A438, north-east of the Rhysdence Inn, on the east side of the unclassified road known as Brynafal Lane (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).
- 2.2 The site is part of a larger area of agricultural land, and there is only one nearby neighbouring building, a residential property to the north-west.

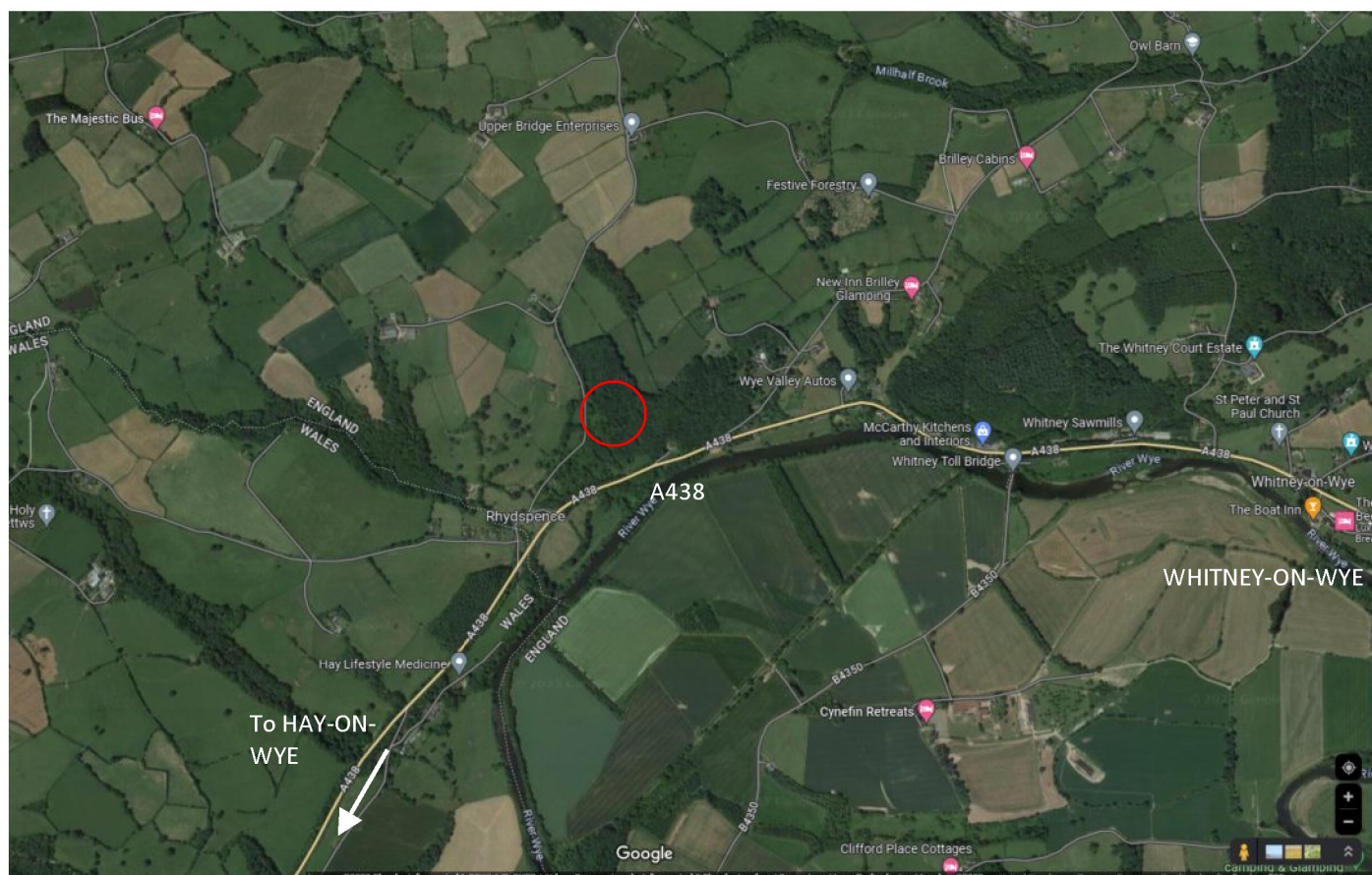


Figure 2: Aerial photograph (Google maps) showing position of site (circled in red)

- 2.3 The site does not lie in a Conservation Area (nor are any of the buildings within or adjacent to it listed).
- 2.4 Vehicular access to the site is via an existing splayed entrance to the south of the existing barn (see Figure 1). A public footpath passes through the land to the south of the proposal site (part of the wider grounds owned by the applicants). This path is approximately parallel with the A438 connecting Brynafal Lane with the unclassified road further east.
- 2.5 Description - the site of the proposed barn conversion and new detached garage building is part of a larger parcel of land in the ownership of the applicants. The land has recently been cleared of shrub (by the previous owner) and is a mixture of pastureland and woodland, along with a fenced and stone driveway adjacent to the existing barn.

- 2.6 Relatively steeply sloping down from north to south, the site is broadly level in the position of the existing barn and gravelled parking area to the east of it.
- 2.7 The existing barn is located adjacent to Brynafal Lane on the western boundary. Of simple rectangular form, this building is of solid stone construction, with corrugated sheet roofing, orientated with gables facing east/west and longest elevation (containing the two largest openings/doorways) facing south.
- 2.8 A wooden post and rail fence borders the existing stoned driveway/parking area on its south and east side. It should be noted that this does not sit in the position corresponding to the 'site curtilage' approved in the recent planning application (ref: 202206).
- 2.9 Wooden railway sleepers are used to form retaining walls supporting stepped ground levels adjacent to the existing barn, to the north and south of it.
- 2.10 A single mature oak tree is located on the northern side of the existing gravelled driveway. Within the surrounding grounds associated with the site are more mature trees, scrub and hedgerows.
- 2.11 A spring exists to the north-east of the existing barn, being visible above ground in a brook that passes through the site on the eastern side, heading southwards (downhill).
- 2.12 The public highway (lane) that provides vehicular access to the site on the western side is unclassified, and being narrow and single-track, is infrequently used by traffic.

3. **Development proposal** *(to be read in conjunction with drawings P1 to P6, 3/24)*
- 3.1 The application approved in April 2022 (ref: 202206/F) established that the existing barn could be converted to residential use (as holiday-let use is viewed).
- 3.2 While minimising changes to the original fabric of the existing building, the approved designs included a raised roof, with the insertion of clerestory style windows, resulting in improved headroom at first floor internally.
- 3.3 This new proposal seeks to retain this sensitive approach to the original building, taking a matching approach to the raising of the roof and retention of all other features of the original barn on its principal elevations.
- 3.4 To achieve suitable accommodation for the applicants and their family, and to ensure it provides a sustainable living space for permanent residential occupation, a single storey extension is proposed to the rear and side (north and east).
- 3.5 The position and design approach of the proposed single storey extension has been chosen to minimise the visual impact of this addition, both from outside as well as from within the site boundary (see Figure 3). The architectural styling and materials proposed reflect the agricultural character of the site and existing barn; simple mono-pitch roof to the rear and side; raised seam sheet metal roofing; traditionally jointed oak-framed structure; horizontal timber weather-boarding.
- 3.6 The proposed detached garage/workspace building shares the same cladding material choices as the barn conversion, and is lower and of smaller footprint to it, to ensure it has a subsidiary appearance. It is designed and positioned to create the character of a suite of agricultural buildings, when seen alongside the original barn.
- 3.7 Along with the obvious benefit of providing adequate living space for the occupants, the addition of the single storey extension to the rear and side has an additional advantage of making the solid stone walls on these sides almost entirely internal within the finished building, overcoming the problems associated with adding insulation to them. The west and south facing walls of the original barn remain unchanged externally, to avoid negative visual impact and changes to its character and appearance from key viewpoints in the surrounding landscape. Insulation will be added to the internal face of these walls as much as is possible, taking a balanced approach to avoid reducing the usable internal space too much (in an already small building).
- 3.8 To facilitate the new layout and connection between the original barn and proposed extension, two new openings are proposed in the north and east walls. These will not be visible externally.
- 3.9 The finished dwelling will be served by a ground or air-source heat-pump, providing space and water heating. This, coupled with proposed ground-mounted solar-pv panels, and high levels of insulation throughout, will contribute to low energy demand from the finished building.
- 3.10 The inclusion of the 'work-from-home' space within the detached outbuilding will help towards making the development sustainable, allowing the occupants the opportunity to be economically

active without the need to travel off-site on a daily basis. Both applicants have occupations that they carry out fully or partly from home (evidence can be provided as necessary).



Figure 3: 3d View from site entrance (computer visualisation and 'as existing' photograph)

4. Planning History

- 4.1 Planning application ref: 202206/F titled “Conversion and change of use of a small redundant agricultural stone barn into a luxury 2-4 person holiday let” was approved on Friday 1st April 2022, following an extended period of negotiation after it was first submitted in July 2020.
- 4.2 Application 202206/F was made by the owner of the land at the time. The land and site has since been sold to the current applicants.
- 4.3 In July 2023, the current applicants made a formal request to Herefordshire Council for pre-application advice (with ref: 232342/CE) in relation to the current proposal - for the conversion of the existing barn into a single residential dwelling, and including a detached ancillary outbuilding (garage/live-work).
- 4.4 The feedback received by Herefordshire Council Planning Department was supportive, stating: *“The principle of the conversion of this barn to residential accommodation is considered acceptable and established under planning application P202206/F”*. Design guidance was provided, recommending that *“any new extension scheme should ensure that the respects (sic) the original dwelling in terms of its character, design, height, scale and massing”*, and continuing *“it is suggested that a simple, single storey lean-to style addition”* be most appropriate in the context of the existing building and setting. With regard to the garage/live-work space, it was accepted that its presence would not be *“at odds with the character of the area”*. Guidance was given regards scale. The materials proposed were deemed to be *“suitable for its use and context”*.
- 4.5 Following receipt of the supportive pre-application advice from the local Planning Authority, the applicants submitted an application in November 2023 (ref: 233246) for the conversion of the barn into a dwelling. This application was refused in March 2024, on the grounds of design and the technicalities of the drainage proposal.
- 4.6 An updated drainage proposal had been submitted during the course of application ref: 233246, and the applicants’ agent had made themselves available to discuss and negotiate any issues. However, the refusal notice was issued without acknowledgement of these factors.
- 4.7 Since the refusal, discussions and a site meeting have been held with the case officer from Herefordshire Planning department and revised drawings and the revised drainage strategy have been reviewed. Written support from the case officer has been received for the updated scheme: *“I have reviewed the proposed plans and I am content to support them”*.
- 4.8 The key change to the design proposal has been to amend the detailing of the proposed roofs. The drainage strategy has been accepted by the Council Ecologist, and has been passed to Natural England for comment and they have written to confirm they are happy with its contents.

5. Policy Context

- 5.1 The proposal has been put forward with consideration given to current national, regional and local (neighbourhood) policies, and these include The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised June 2021), the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy including policies SS6 - Environmental quality and local distinctiveness, RA3 - Herefordshire's countryside, RA5 - Re-use of rural buildings, MT1 - Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel, SD1 - Sustainable design and energy efficiency, SD3 - Sustainable water management and water resources, SD4 - Waste water treatment and river water quality, LD1 - Landscape and townscape, LD2 - Biodiversity and geodiversity, LD3 - Green Infrastructure, and the Brilley Neighbourhood Development Plan (made 16th June 2017) policies BR2 - Scale and type of new housing development in the Parish of Brilley, BR3 - General Design Principles, and BR4 - Landscape Character.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) states a 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'. It sets out three interdependent objectives that the planning system must have in order to achieve sustainable development - economic, social and environmental. The proposed conversion of the barn to a single residential dwelling will provide benefits in all these areas.

5.2.1 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that sustainable development will be achieved where it meets an economic objective, by supporting 'improved productivity', a social objective, by supporting "strong, vibrant and healthy communities' (...) 'by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs", and an environmental objective, by contributing "to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making efficient use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".

5.2.2 In accordance with the NPPF, the proposal represents sustainable development in a number of ways:

- The proposal is well designed, and will make use of a redundant building, enhancing the local area by improving the built environment and creating a family home whose occupants can participate in the surrounding community, socially and economically
- The proposal will ensure the historic fabric of the existing building is retained, rather than allowed to fall into disrepair and disappear
- By utilising a high proportion of timber in the construction and combining this with high levels of insulation and low-energy heating and lighting systems, waste and pollution will be minimised, natural resources will be used prudently and the carbon impact of the conversion and ongoing occupation will be kept to a minimum
- Biodiversity and habitat enhancements are included in the proposal

- No adverse visual impact, or loss of amenity will be felt by the one nearby neighbour, and the proposal is very much in keeping with the character of the wider rural setting

- 5.3 Core Strategy Policy RA3 - Herefordshire's Countryside. The principal of the existing building's conversion to residential use has already been approved via application ref: 202206/F. This new proposal continues to comply with the requirement of policy RA3, in so much as the revised design as permanent dwelling results *'in the sustainable re-use of a redundant or disused building where it complies with Policy RA5 and leads to enhancement to its immediate setting'*.
- 5.4 Core Strategy Policy RA5 - Re-use of rural buildings. The previous approval (ref: 202206/F) has established that the existing barn is *'of permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction'*. The new proposal continues to comply with the requirements of Policy RA5; the *'character and significance'* of the original building is respected - it remains visually dominant, and the conversion works are designed with sympathetic scale, materials and architectural language; the building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use, and the proposed changes to it do not cumulatively *'adversely affect the character or appearance'* of it, or *'have a detrimental impact on its surroundings and landscape setting'*; conversion to residential use is the most *'viable option'* for its long term conservation; the use of the building as a permanent dwelling is *'compatible with neighbouring uses'* - in this case a single residential dwelling and agricultural land - and is perhaps more so than the approved *'holiday-let'* use previously approved; and suitable provision is proposed for protected and priority species.
- 5.5 Core Strategy Policy SD1 - Sustainable design and energy efficiency, sets out the following requirements relevant to this proposal
- *'ensure that proposals make efficient use of land'*
 - *'new buildings should be designed to maintain local distinctiveness through incorporating local architectural detailing and materials and respecting scale, height, proportions and massing of surrounding development'*
 - *'safeguard residential amenity for existing and proposed residents'*
 - *'ensure that distinctive features of existing buildings and their setting are safeguarded'*
 - *'utilise physical sustainability measures that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of water conservation measures, storage of bicycles and waste including provision for recycling, and enabling renewable energy and energy conservation infrastructure'*
 - *"where possible, on-site renewable energy generation should also be incorporated"*
 - *'create safe and accessible environments'*

- and *'utilise sustainable construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and maximise the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials'*.

5.5.1 The proposed conversion of the existing barn to a new residential dwelling and the addition of the ancillary outbuilding complies with Policy SD1 and the points set out above by and through:

- Using areas of existing hard-landscaping (avoiding impact on un-developed land), and positioning new built forms in visually discreet locations taking account of topography and public viewpoints
- Respecting the scale of the original building, in both height, proportions and massing
- Using an architectural approach (form, details and materials) in keeping with the original building and rural setting
- Safeguarding the distinctive features of the existing building (being its stone elevations with simple openings (windows and doors))
- Prioritising sustainability - by predominantly using timber for structure and cladding of new elements (being low in embodied carbon); creating living spaces that can benefit from southerly orientation combined with renewable energy (solar PV) and a low carbon heating source (heat-pump) to minimise energy demand for space heating; ensuring water conservation measures are included; and providing space for bicycles and recycling of waste
- Protecting the residential amenity for existing and proposed residents - avoiding visual impact for the neighbouring property to the north-west, and creating suitably private outdoor areas for the applicants to the south and east, which are not overlooked.

5.6 Policy SD3 - Sustainable water management and water resources and SD4 - Wastewater treatment and river water quality. Management of both surface water and foul water treatment is addressed in the accompanying report by H and H Drainage. The site is not at risk of flooding. Sustainable treatment on site of both foul and surface water drainage is proposed.

5.7 Policy LD1 - Landscape and townscape, states that development proposals should:

- *'demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas'*
- and *'conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (...) 'through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management'*

Policy LD3 - Green Infrastructure, states that development proposals should:

- *‘Protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure’*
- Include *‘the protection of valued landscapes, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, water courses and adjoining flood plan’*

5.7.1 The proposal complies with Policies LD1 and LD3 and the points set out above by

- taking account of the rural setting, and character of the existing building in the choice of architectural forms used for the extension and new outbuilding and the materials specified
- protecting the setting through the careful positioning and appropriate scale of the development
- protecting existing trees on the site, and extending tree cover through the planting of a new orchard style trees

5.8 The proposal complies with Policy LD2 (Biodiversity and geodiversity) by ensuring the *‘protection of, and prevention of adverse impacts on, biodiversity and geodiversity features’*. See the attached report by Ecology Services. Enhancements are incorporated into the proposal to ensure there is an overall bio-diversity net gain as a result of the development (see drawing P2 submitted elsewhere for details).

5.9 Policy BR2 (Brilley Neighbourhood Development Plan) - Scale and Type of New Housing Development in the Parish of Brilley, states:

- *‘New housing development should be: a) proportionate to the size and function of the immediate surrounding area; b) Generally one or two-storey construction; c) Of high quality design and in keeping with the immediate surroundings, environment and rural landscape; d) An appropriate density in context with the immediate surrounding area; and e) Able to achieve appropriate and safe access to the highway network’*
- *‘Housing development outside the Settlement Boundary will only be permitted in accordance with the relevant Herefordshire Core Strategy policies (presently Policy RA3)’*

5.9.1 The proposal complies with Policy BR2 and the points set out above by

- Complying with Core Strategy Policy RA3 (see earlier), and being a high-quality design of a suitably proportioned (two and single storey) building, in keeping with the rural setting (maintaining an agricultural styling for all built forms, and utilising appropriately robust cladding - timber boarding; stone; raised seam metal sheet roofing), and with safe access to the highway via the existing site entrance.

5.10 Policy BR3 (Brilley Neighbourhood Development Plan) - General Design Principles, states that all new development should demonstrate how it:

- *'a) makes efficient use of land and buildings (i.e. gives priority to brownfield sites/retention of buildings; b) does not have an unacceptable detrimental effect on residential amenity by reason of noise or other nuisance; c) does not have an unacceptable detrimental effect on highway safety; d) provides appropriate and safe access to the development site; e) does not result in the loss of an area which makes a significant contribution to public amenity by virtue of its open space character, appearance and function; f) suitability of the overall design and appearance of the proposed development (including size, scale, density, layout, access, lighting) when assessed in relationship with surrounding buildings, spaces and other features of the street scene; g) use, and where appropriate re-use of local and traditional materials or suitable alternatives; h) includes adequate parking; i) inclusion of energy efficiency and conservation measures; j) use of sustainable drainage systems; and k) ensures that any likely significant effect on the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is avoided or adequately mitigated'.*

5.10.1 The proposal complies with all the points made above - retaining and enhancing the existing barn; avoiding any negative impact on neighbours by careful positioning of the development, of windows, and external amenity areas; has safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site that has no negative effect on the public highway; avoiding negatively effecting public views; avoiding significantly altering the impression of the 'street scene' by careful positioning of the development and consideration of scale, and layout; using suitable materials in keeping with the rural and agricultural character of the site; including adequate parking; incorporating energy efficiency measures (high levels of insulation, solar PV, heat-pump technology); using sustainable drainage systems that avoid negative effect on the River Wye.

5.11 Policy BR4 (Brilley Neighbourhood Development Plan) - Landscape Character, states that all new development should show regard to the '*distinctive landscape character*' of this part of North West Herefordshire. The key ways in which this should be achieved, relevant to this proposal are by:

- *'b) conserving ancient and veteran trees with former wood pasture' and 'e) ... managing the existing access network of rights of ways' and 'g) protecting the area's strong rural character, lack of intrusion and high levels of tranquility'.*

5.11.1 The proposal complies with all the points made above - retaining significant trees adjacent to the site, ensuring existing public rights of way are maintained and unaffected, and being

mindful of the rural character of the area, being steered by this throughout the design choices.

6. Access

- 6.1 The existing site entrance for vehicles and pedestrians from the public highway to the west is to remain unchanged.
- 6.2 Parking will be available within the site for three vehicles, and storage for at least 4 bicycles is provided within the proposed new outbuilding.
- 6.3 Access to the new house will comply with part M of the current Building Regulations.
- 6.4 Internal arrangements within the dwelling will be fully compliant with part M of the current Building Regulations. Means of escape will be in accordance with the Building Regulations for dwellings.

7. Foul and Surface Water Drainage

- 7.1 A comprehensive foul and surface water drainage strategy has been drawn up by H and H Drainage, and their report accompanies this application.
- 7.2 This report with recommendations has been updated following feedback from the Council Ecologist (during application ref: 233246), and during the negotiations prior to submission of this current application, has received written support from both the Council Ecologist and Natural England.
- 7.3 The site lies within the Upper River Wye Sub-Catchment.
- 7.4 The proposed methods of treating foul and surface water drainage have been designed to ensure that the new dwelling does not have an adverse effect on the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 7.5 Foul and surface water are to be managed separately.
- 7.6 Surface water - the proposed development will discharge firstly to above ground storage (rainwater harvesting/water butts), followed by a newly created attenuation basin (see H and H Drainage report), and finally to the existing water course.
- 7.7 Foul drainage - the proposed development will be served by a package treatment plant, discharging to the existing water course.
- 7.8 The suggested package treatment plant is a 'Haba 'Bio Easy Flow 5'; chosen to provide the very highest levels of phosphate stripping - beneficial as the site is in the River Wye Catchment.
- 7.9 Outflow from the proposed package treatment plant will be to a new horizontal flow reedbed.
- 7.10 The outflow from the reedbed system will be to the local permanent watercourse.

8. Ecology

- 8.1 The proposal site and existing building were the subject of an Phase 1 Habitat Assessment and Bat Survey for the previous (approved) application, in July 2020. More recently, a further survey was completed by Ecology Services on Sunday 17th September 2023.
- 8.2 The conclusions of the survey, set out in the report attached elsewhere, is that *'there will be no impact on nearby habitats or associated protected species'*.
- 8.3 With particular regard to bats, the report concludes:
'Two soprano pipistrelle bats and one common pipistrelle bat roost in gaps around the wooden door frames of the barn. These small bat roosts are of no special conservation interest. The loss of these roosting locations will be compensated for by the provision of six bat boxes and the creation of bat roosting sites within the fabric of the renovated barn.'
- 8.4 The report sets out recommended mitigation measures (or enhancements) which have been illustrated on the proposed site plan (drawing P2 submitted with this application). It concludes:
'The development proposals will not impact on the favourable conservation status of common or soprano pipistrelle bats. The proposed bat roost mitigation will increase bat roosting opportunities on the site. The proposed traditional orchard will increase bat foraging opportunities within the site.'
- 8.5 Finally the report states:
'The development proposals and associated biodiversity enhancements will contribute a net gain for wildlife at the site. As such there are no reasons for refusing planning permission on the grounds of nature conservation'.

9. Summary

- 9.1 The proposal has been put forward in collaboration with the Local Planning Authority, taking into account their advice both prior to application ref: 232246 and subsequent to its refusal.
- 9.2 The applicants have engaged openly and proactively with the Local Planning Authority from the outset in order to present a scheme that incorporates their advice and that has received their written support.
- 9.3 The proposal has been put forward in the context of the national and local planning policy.
- 9.4 The applicants will be creating a new home for themselves and their family, encouraged by policy locally and nationally via the 'Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015'.
- 9.5 The principal of a residential property on the site has been established via the recently approved alternative scheme on the site.
- 9.6 This new approach to converting the existing building and site represents sustainable and appropriate development; the design, scale, layout and materials have all been chosen to be

sympathetic to the existing building, the rural setting, and the character of the site and surrounding area.

- 9.7 A detailed drainage strategy as well as a comprehensive set of biodiversity enhancements will ensure the proposal can be accommodated on the site without negatively affecting either wildlife or water quality.
- 9.8 The proposal would result in a high quality development; the layout, materials, and services have all been chosen to minimise environmental impact both during the construction phase and for the lifetime of the building.
- 9.9 The proposal meets the needs of the applicants and their family, and ensures the longevity of the existing building, as an asset for them and future occupants.

AJMW 30.5.2024