

# Welwyn Equestrian Centre, Northeast Barn



## Heritage Assessment

10 – vii – 2026

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This statement is written to accompany the residential conversion of a storage building on the site of a former threshing barn on Arnold's Farm in Codicote parish. The former farm and its neighbours lie in an upland plateau landscape which comprises the Danesbury - Rabley Heath character area – north of Welwyn, east of Codicote and west of the A1. The building is unlisted and is attached to a small Victorian stable. The site has no heritage designation and is not located within or adjacent to a conservation area; it does fall within greenbelt.

The task is to assess whether the barn, rebuilt just a few years ago, retains any heritage significance, the potential effect of residential conversion on that significance and the impact of the development on the heritage significance of several grade II listed buildings located in the vicinity. A handful of non-designated former farm buildings are also assessed for impact. This report sets out the heritage interest of the assets likely to be affected. Full details of the proposals appear on the scheme drawings and in the accompanying Design and Access Statement but briefly, the proposal is for conversion into one house with parking and garden space.

The report will set out how the proposals comply with the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its interpretation in local planning policy. It is accepted that not all parts of a heritage asset are of the same value and that some parts are more sensitive to change; others less so. This will be addressed. In respect of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, we will look at the effect of the proposals on the setting of the heritage assets in the area and on the contribution it (the setting) makes to the assets under scrutiny. National planning policy asks us to have special regard to the desirability of preserving designated buildings, and their special architectural and historic interest which includes the surroundings in which they are experienced – their setting.

This statement sets out to establish the heritage baseline. An impact assessment will then look at the submitted scheme and how it might affect that baseline.

## 2. POLICY

### Legislation

In relation to listed buildings, Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.

### National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out Government's guidance and policy on development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration for decision takers, and all applications are to be determined in accordance with the local plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**Chapter 16** deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment by preserving "significance", defined in Annex 2 as, "The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

**Setting of a heritage asset** is defined in Annex 2 as: "The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."

**Paragraph 207 of the NPPF** places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, in a proportionate way.

The effects of any development on a heritage asset must be assessed against the four 'values' that comprise heritage significance: archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic.

**Para 208** requires LPAs to identify and take into account "the particular significance of any heritage asset" when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, including by development affecting its setting.

**Paragraph 210** requires local planning authorities to have regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

**Paragraph 212** requires that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets and asks for a proportionate approach (i.e. the more important the asset, the greater the weight attached to its conservation). Conservation is defined in Annex 2 as "The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."

Importantly, conservation is not preservation but instead the proactive process of managing change. Change that at least sustains the significance of a heritage asset is allowable.

**Paragraphs 214 and 215** deal with ‘substantial’ and ‘less than substantial’ harm to significance and the need to weigh effects against public benefits in the planning balance. Harm is defined by Historic England as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.

**Para 216** requires us to take into account the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset and applying a balanced judgement in regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

**Para 219** notes that proposals which preserve those elements of the setting of heritage assets that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of that asset should be treated favourably.

## **Local Policy**

### **North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031**

At the local level, Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets – is the principal heritage-related policy within the adopted Local Plan, which states:

Planning applications relating to Designated heritage Assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that: i. Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting; ii. Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and iii. Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms. Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable): a) Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance; b) Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and c) Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset’s optimum viable use. Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

Policy HE3: Non-designated heritage assets Permission for a proposal that would result in harm to, or the loss of, a non-designated heritage asset will only be granted provided that a balanced judgement has been made that assesses the scale of harm to, or loss of significance of the non-designated asset and, where the proposal results in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset: a) The replacement building contributes to preserving the local character and distinctiveness of the area; and b) Where the asset is located in a conservation area a continuous contract for the demolition and redevelopment of the site has been secured, unless there are justifiable grounds for not developing the site.

12.7 North Hertfordshire has a rich heritage of designed landscapes and historic buildings, many of which are not designated, but contribute to a strong sense of place and contribute much to the character of historic towns, villages and the wider countryside.

**Policies HE4 and HE5** protects archaeology similarly.

### 3. MAP REGRESSION



Fig. 1 -1766 map

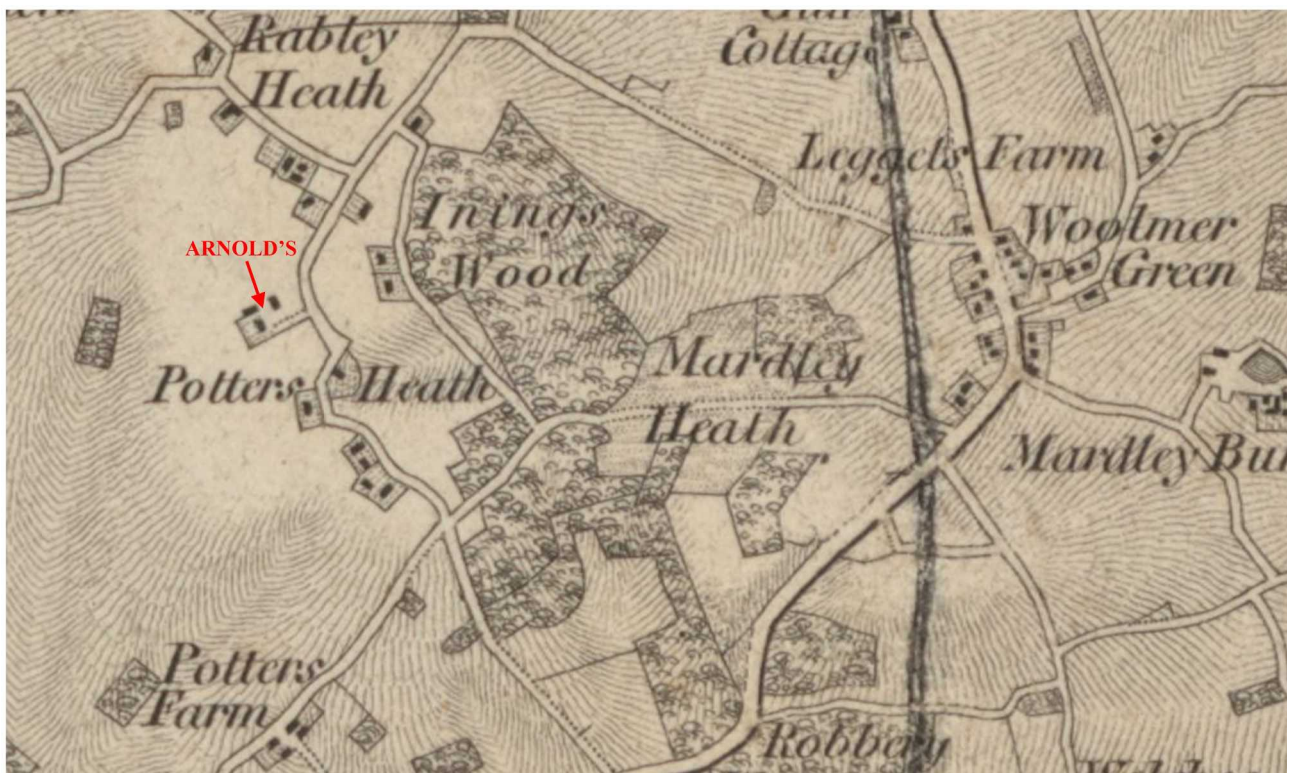


Fig. 2 - 1834 OS Map

The Dury Andrews map of 1766 is the first large scale map of Hertfordshire. It provides evidence of a rural character increasingly succumbing to the effect of its proximity to London. The capital's elite have begun to display their wealth and success in the form of grand houses and parks, at first politicians but eventually lawyers, bankers, city merchants, brewers and retired military. The Danesbury- Rabley Heath area is already well developed (heathland north of Welwyn to Rabley Heath, east of Codicote), although not as densely as Coddicot Street (Codicote). All the properties shown are directly related to the road and all with generous plots . Arnold's is surrounded by grazing land. Rabley Heath farm lies adjacent to arable land. Both farms are set back slightly from the road and have a deeper plot to accommodate the farm buildings.

The 1834 OS map shows the currently listed house and low barn as well as a northeastern threshing barn quite clearly whereas the 1766 map appears to show just the house and low barn, although the house is L shaped and might be attached to a precursor building to the threshing barn.

The C18 enclosed field pattern is clearly shown on the 2" 1766 map whereas no such detail appears on the 1" OS of 1834.



Fig. 3 – 1865-80 one inch Ordnance survey showing track from Arnold's to Danesbury

By 1865, the right angle in the road at the 403ft spot level (see Fig. 3) has been straightened out and the road to Rabley Heath made less of a bow shape. This sets Arnold's back a bit more from the main road. But also *the entrance drive continues down to Danesbury Park*, created by William Blake in 1824. References to Danesbury's rapid expansion suggest that Arnold's became part of the estate soon after 1824 but it was certainly part of it by 1875 when Colonel Arthur Blake inherited. This change in outlook is clearly shown on the 1865/80 OS where a new track from the adjusted drive heads south to Danesbury. Nearby Sisserferns farm was also taken into the Danesbury estate.

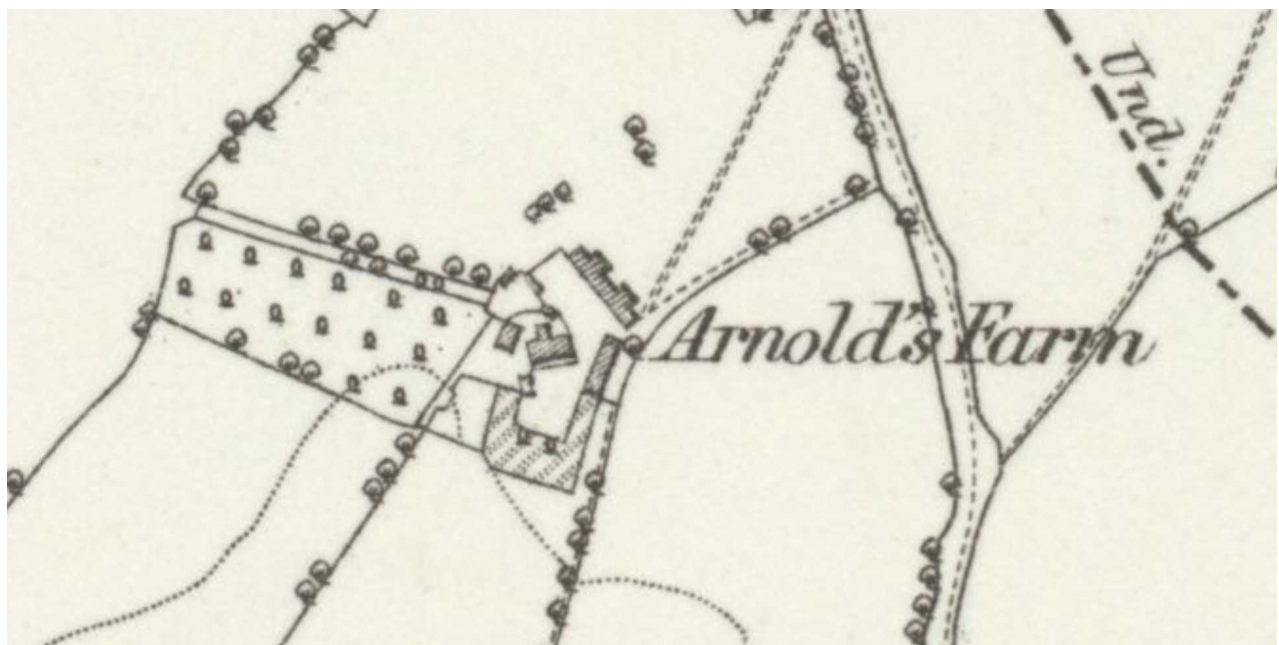


Fig. 4a,b– 1881 OS Map

The 1881 25" map shows great detail of the Danesbury to Rabley Heath area as well as the layout of the farm itself. The house at Arnold's is shown with a U shaped garden and extensive western orchard. The little listed granary currently on its NE side is there as well as the current outbuilding to the NW. The

original late C18 NE threshing barn with 2 midstreys is also detailed. It appears to turn its back on the farmyard, fronting the NE fields.

The actual positions of buildings are set out at scale for the first time and the layouts of the settlements along the heath are well illustrated. Building is on generous plots and widely spaced. There are five clusters – Danesbury, Potter's Farm, Potter's Heath, Arnold's and Rabley Heath Farm. The neat C18 enclosure has been fragmented as Danesbury holds sway. The angled footpath to the farm entrance has created what is now the triangular north paddock to the drive – this is the Danesbury track continuing NE to Rabley Heath.

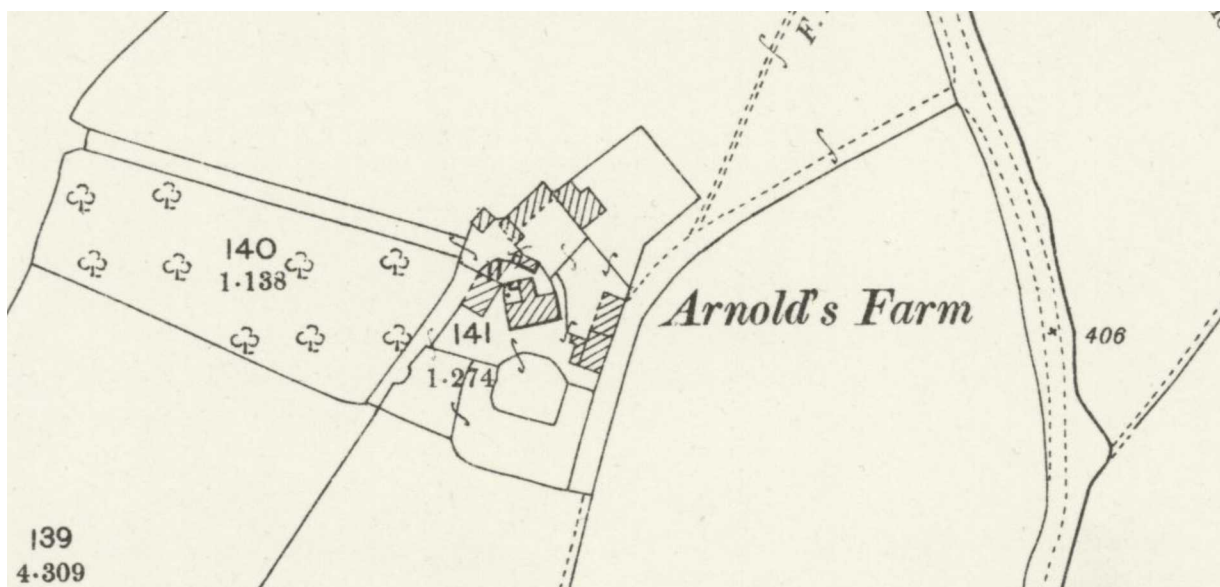


Fig. 5 – 1897 OS detail

By 1897, the threshing barn at Arnold's has been half demolished and a shelter shed built to the north of the farmyard attached to its north end. A ricking yard is shown to the east of the remnant barn and some other outbuildings are attached to the shed. By 1922, the shed has become a solid building.

The farmyard layout is noticeably different under the ownership of Colonel Blake. The house now has its own forecourt, gated from the old farmyard and the original entrance. A separate entrance south of the low barn has been created. The low barn itself is clearly shown as a semidetached building, the northern end being a shelter shed for animals.

The settlement of Potter's Heath expanded greatly following the building of about a dozen Danesbury estate labourers' cottages around 1900. This heralded the building of rows of housing either side of the main road.

The Danesbury estate was broken up in 1919; the boundary markers on the Arnold's footpath as it nears Danesbury house show that the land to the east is now separate. Other changes in the landscape as a result of fragmentation begin to show up on the 1922 map.



Fig. 6a - 1922 – Potter's Heath and Arnold's

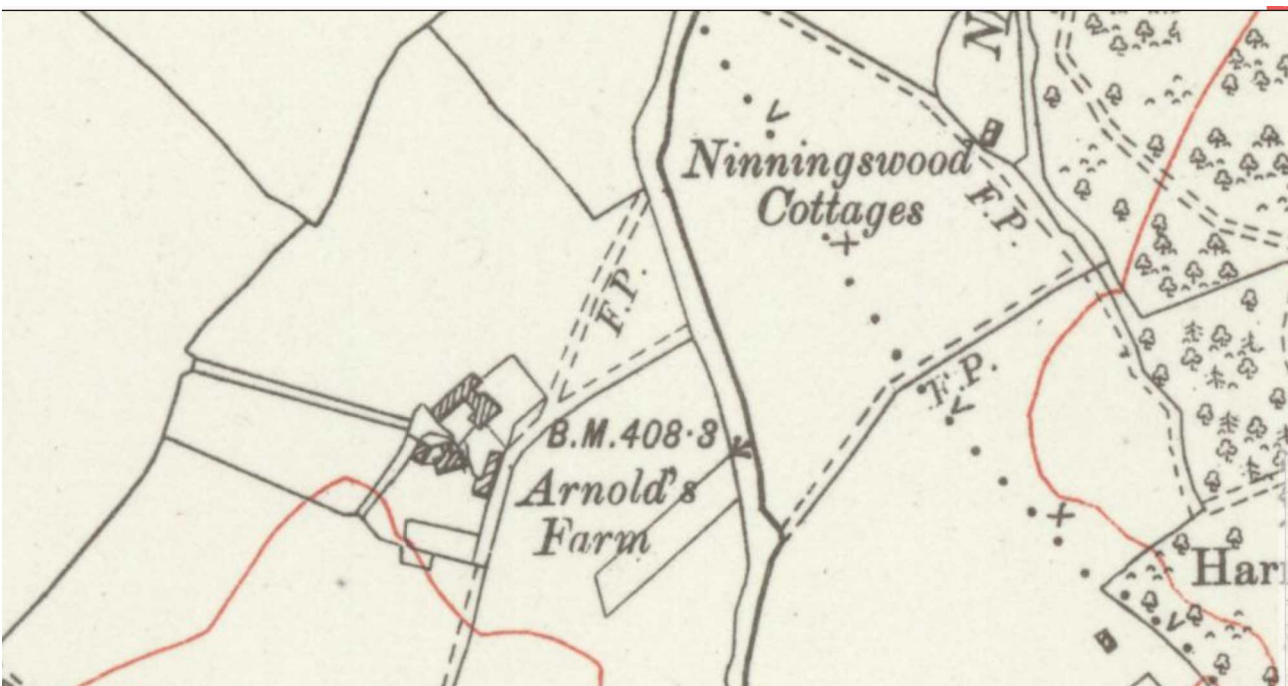


Fig. 6b - 1922 – detail of farm

On the 1922 maps a new plot for a house is shown to the south which encloses the farm away from its east and SE view from the street thus drawing the farm into the incipient Potter's Heath suburbia albeit with a decent set back.

The NE barn has been re-extended to the south, part in the ricking yard and part in the old farmyard. The old yard has been split in two by a wall attached to the new extension.

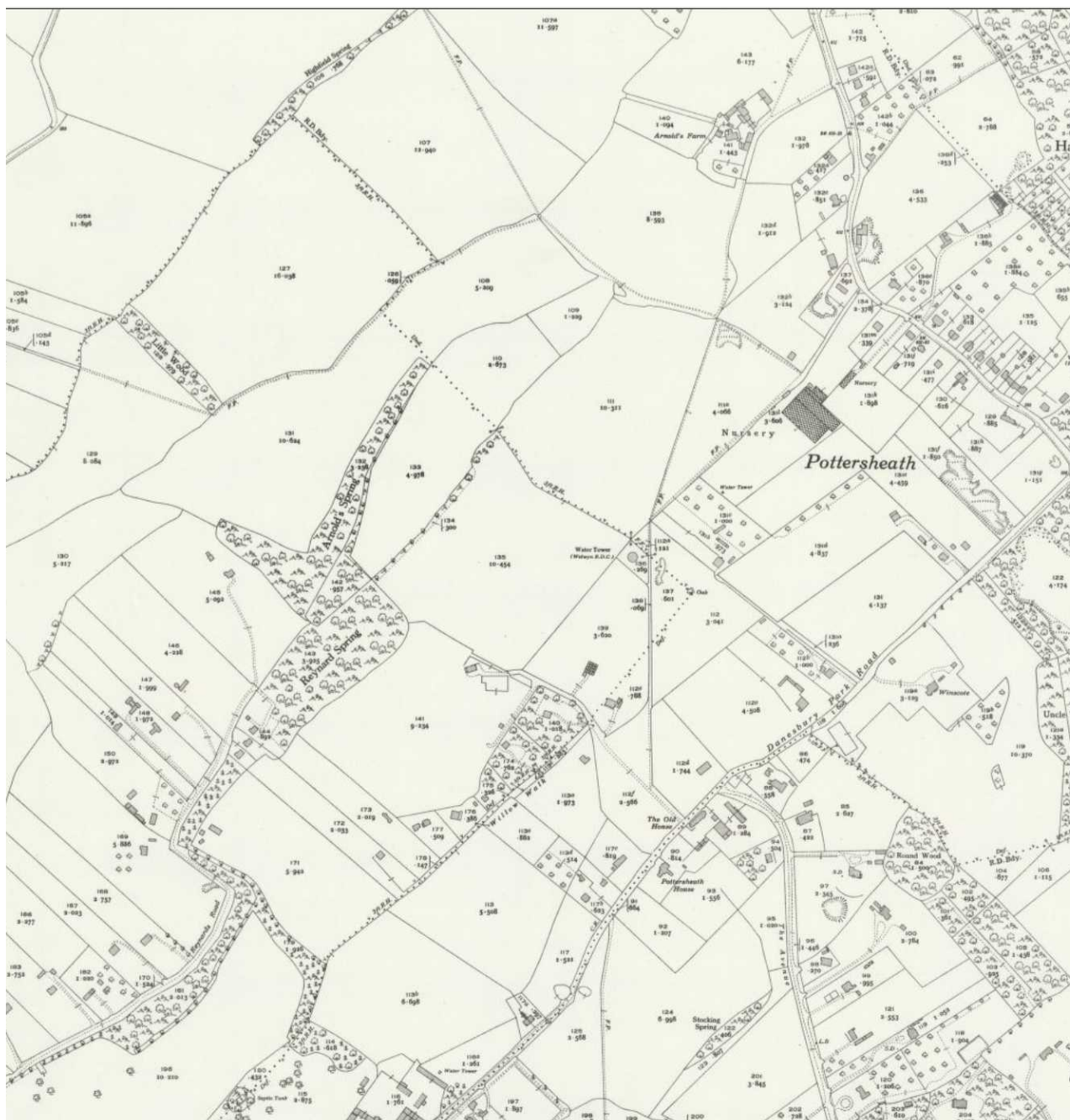


Fig. 7a – wider area in 1937

By 1937, the main road has been built up on both sides with well spaced ribbon development in extensive plots, all the way from Danesbury to Rabley. The plot to the south of Arnolds shown on the 1922 map has been joined to the low barn's hedge thus creating the current south paddocks. A house has been built in it; it now accommodates two. The ricking yard has acquired a barn on its east side and the old threshing barn has been expanded even further south again as well as to the west. The farmyard division is very obvious at the larger scale; the northern yard has acquired even more buildings.



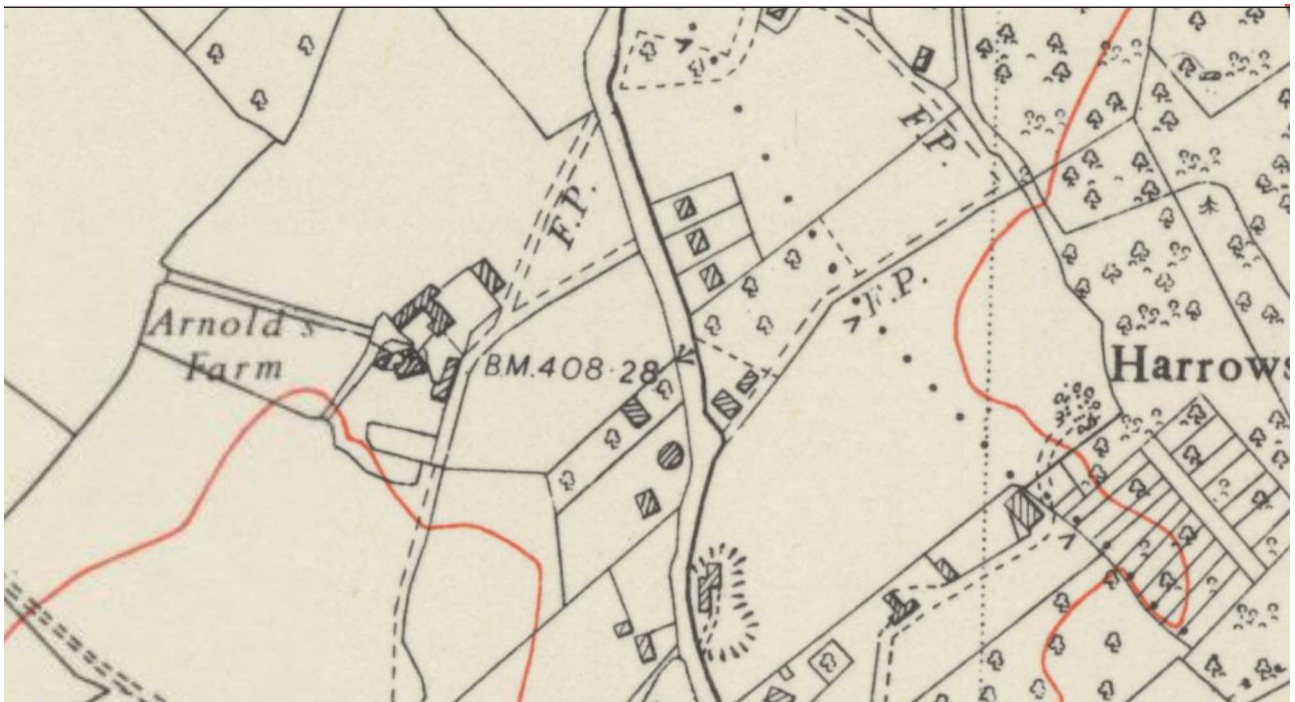


Fig. 8 – 1947 OS

By 1969, the farm has expanded eastwards again with a triple pile structure. The entire east side of the main road at Arnold's has been filled up with houses. At Danesbury, much of the estate to the east of the house has become a housing estate. The old farmyard has been reunited, the wall across to the barn removed.



Fig. 9 – 1969 OS

By 2000, the ricking yard and easternmost barn have been replaced by a series of buildings which continue northward. New building continues to the west of the house and the orchard has been cleared. The NE barn's southern extension has reappeared.



*Fig 10 – 2000 aerial view (Google Earth)*

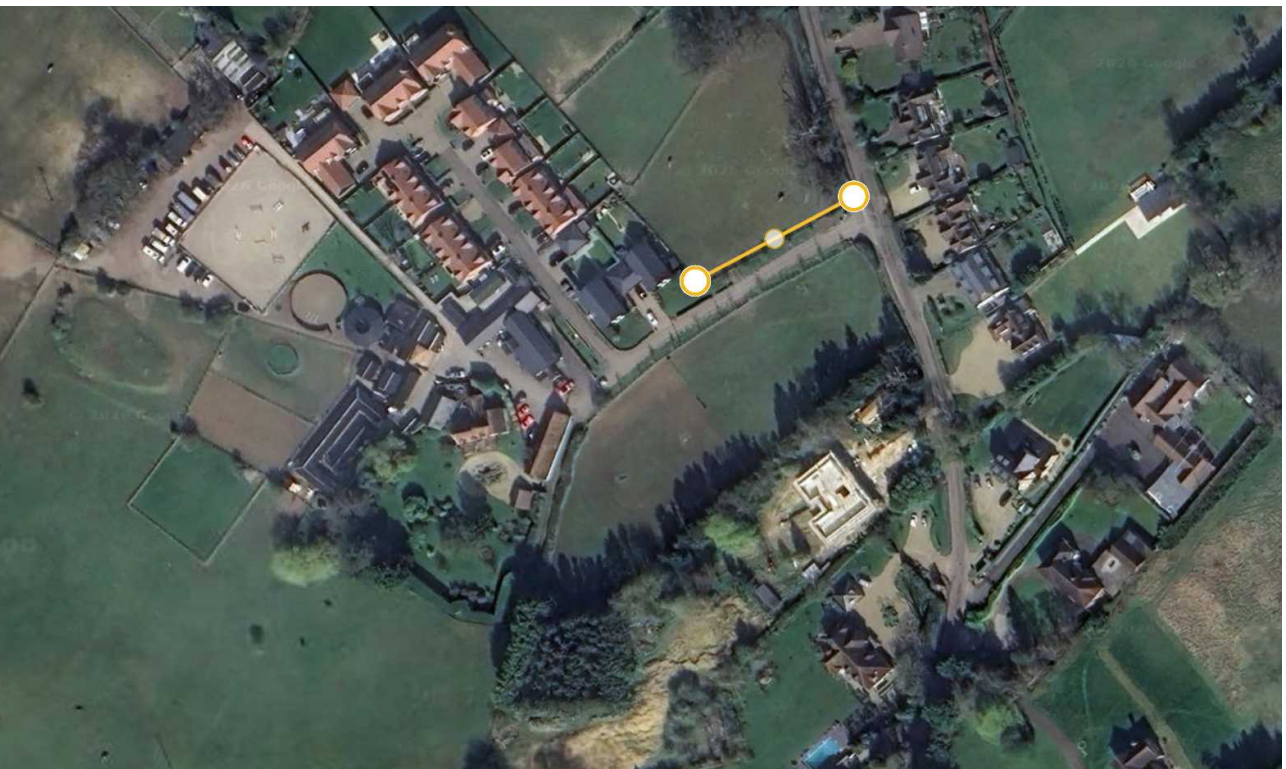


*Fig 11 – 2018 aerial showing barn razed to the ground*

The 2018 aerial view show the old threshing barn burnt out and the development to the east and north completely cleared. The satellite image shows that the SE and SW walls survived the fire as did the shelters to the north.



*Fig. 12 - Aerial view of 2020 – barn rebuilt and north of farm redeveloped*



*Fig 13 - View of 2024. There is a new house on the 'Paddocks' site to south of south paddock*

By 2020, the entire east side development has been replaced with executive housing known ironically as ‘The Stables.’ The NE threshing barn rebuilt as a store but without its midstrey and cart doors. The site below the south paddocks known as ‘The Paddocks’ has acquired a new large house.

## 4. DEFINING SIGNIFICANCE AND MEASURING IMPACT

### The Concept of Heritage Significance

The subject is covered in detail in the pre-app HA but briefly, articles of the ICOMOS Burra Charter define ‘significance’ of a place as the sum of its qualities or ‘values.’ These articles give rise to a values-based approach to conservation used worldwide and incorporated into UK practice. A core principle of the NPPF is to “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.” The official definition of Significance is given above in the section on the NPPF.

ICOMOS’s five values are aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual. The NPPF uses “archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic”, the first of which is captured under “scientific”, the second and third under “aesthetic”; the last is equivalent. Social and spiritual value are not identified in the NPPF or primary legislation but are captured, HE say in their understanding of ‘historic.’ The characteristics of each value are explored in the HA.

| Table 1: HERITAGE VALUE TYPOLOGIES |               |                |                                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| This Document                      | Burra Charter | NPPF           | Historic England Conservation Principles (2008) |
| artistic and architectural         | aesthetic     | artistic       | aesthetic                                       |
|                                    |               | architectural  |                                                 |
| historic                           | historic      | historic       | historical                                      |
| archaeological                     | scientific    | archaeological | evidential                                      |
|                                    | social        |                | communal                                        |

James Semple Kerr’s The Conservation Plan imagines significance as a continuum i.e. there is a scale of significance. In order to be able to describe where on this scale an element is deemed to lie, and to compare the relative significance of elements, notional points on the scale are usually grouped together and a simple hierarchy of levels of significance set out.

Assessing the level of significance of an element is not a precise calculation – a building may be significant in a number of ways and each of these may be at a different level (e.g. it may demonstrate an aspect of a site’s history very well, whilst being of low architectural interest, and at the same time very harmful to the setting of another building, resulting in it being assessed as being of little significance overall. Hence deciding on an overall level of significance involves weighing up all the variables and

reaching a subjective conclusion. For this reason, consulting over the appropriateness of levels of significance of particular buildings and their elements can be extremely useful to ensure consensus.

Listing and significance: Thinking specifically about listing, to understand a building's significance relative to others, the following correlation can be considered:

| <b>Table 2</b>          |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Listing grade</b>    | <b>Significance</b> |
| <b>grade I</b>          | <b>very high</b>    |
| <b>grade II*</b>        | <b>high</b>         |
| <b>grade II</b>         | <b>medium</b>       |
| <b>grade II GV</b>      | <b>medium / low</b> |
| <b>grade GV II</b>      | <b>low</b>          |
| <b>undesigned asset</b> | <b>low</b>          |

Occasionally LBs are listed GVII, whilst other LBs may be designated IIGV. The notation of grade II GV indicates that a building is listed in its own right and has group value. GV II indicates that the building is listed for its group value only.

The levels of significance used in Burra are as follows:

**Exceptional significance**

**Considerable significance**

**Some significance**

**Neutral significance (i.e. neither positive nor negative)**

**Intrusive (i.e. has a negative impact on visual amenity, character or views).**

For the purposes of this report, the threshold for inclusion on the national list or schedule is 'Some' or above. Elements with 'some' significance include those on the Local Authority's 'local list.' It is important to note that these levels of significance do not correspond exactly to particular grades of listing and the assessment may point to the inappropriateness of a listing grade already assigned. A site will not necessarily have elements covering the entire hierarchy. The resulting 'statement of significance' for a site and its parts should comprise an indication of the way or ways in which it is significant, and of how significant it is (i.e. its level of significance). For practical reasons, at complex sites, an explanation of the nature of significance is sometimes not included for the last two levels. An assessment of significance may need to be revised in the light of new information.

The Burra designations used in this report are as follows:

| <b>Table 3: Hierarchical Definition of Significance</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Exceptional:</b>                                     | important at national to international level, reflected in the designations of World Heritage Site, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Grade I and some II* Listed Buildings and registered gardens, plus equivalent sites including those of ecological/nature conservation value; |
| <b>Considerable:</b>                                    | important at regional level or sometimes higher, including Grade II and some Grade II* listed Buildings and registered gardens;                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Some:</b>                                            | of local to regional significance, often for group value; including lesser Grade II listed buildings and registered gardens                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Little:</b>                                          | of limited heritage or other value;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Negative or intrusive:</b>                           | those features which detract from the value of a site;                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Neutral:</b>                                         | neither positive nor negative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

### Sensitivity

Conservation practice worldwide recognises that not all parts of a heritage asset contribute the same amount to the overall significance of a heritage asset. Thus in order to be able to assess change, it is useful to analyse the buildings for their sensitivity to accept change and to use that analysis to inform the proposals for conservation. Planning Practice Guidance says, "Analysis of relevant information can generate a clear understanding of the affected asset, the heritage interests represented in it, and their relative importance." [Para: 008 Reference ID: 18a-008-20190723. Rev: 23/07/19]

While 'listing' applies to all of a building, inside and out, and to all fittings attached to the building, the implementation of the controls arising from listing should be applied proportionately to the sensitivity of the area or fabric under consideration. The level of sensitivity to change is based on the vulnerability of the component to loss of heritage values through change. Changes to historic fabric should be directed to less sensitive areas of a building or site and change to more sensitive areas should be a justified and well-designed exception. The plans will be marked up to show the following classifications:

- High sensitivity - major threat to a specific heritage value or overall significance = substantial loss of that value
- Moderate sensitivity - moderate threat to a specific heritage value or overall significance = a lessening of the ability to understand or read that value
- Low sensitivity – no appreciable threat to a specific value or overall significance
- Detrimental – conceals or mars significance; removal would be a heritage enhancement.

### Setting

The NPPF notes that significance derives not only from the physical presence of a heritage asset, but also from its setting, the surroundings in which it is experienced.

Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edn 2017), or GPA 3 for short, states that setting is not a heritage asset nor does it have significance; it can only contribute towards the significance of a heritage asset. Thus, an assessor must consider the physical surroundings of an asset, its topography, relationship with other heritage assets, formal design, openness, enclosure and boundaries, history and degree of change over time.

Setting is most commonly conceived in terms of how an asset is experienced, thus a settings assessment must look at views from, through, and to the asset, including the way the asset is appreciated, intentional inter-visibility with other historic and natural features, associative relationships, dynamism and activity, associations and finally, patterns of use.

### **Measuring change (impact)**

British Standard 7913 Guide to the conservation of historic buildings suggests that the magnitude of any changes should be assessed in relation to their heritage significance [i.e. their value to society]. The magnitude of impact of any proposals for change can range from a neutral impact where significance is low or negligible and there is no change, through slight and moderate, to very large where the heritage values are very high and the impact is then classified as major. The strictly regimented and tabulated approach is more suited to EIA and is not used here. But it stands to reason that where an historic building is listed for its group value, the effect of minor alterations would not have the level of impact as the same intervention to a grade I listed building, such as removing its panelling from its principal rooms, say, or its colonnade.

## 5. LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Heritage Significance of the 'barn' and its surroundings

The significance of the barn has never been an issue for the planning authority, dating back as far as 1992 when permission was granted for a riding school; it has no heritage designation. The structure is largely c. 2018. The rest is of various dates dating from the late C19. The phasing can be understood from the map regression and site inspection. The NE projecting stable for instance, is first seen on the 1897 OS. Looking at it on site, the SW stable's rear wall retains the same monk bond brickwork as the barn's SW wall.

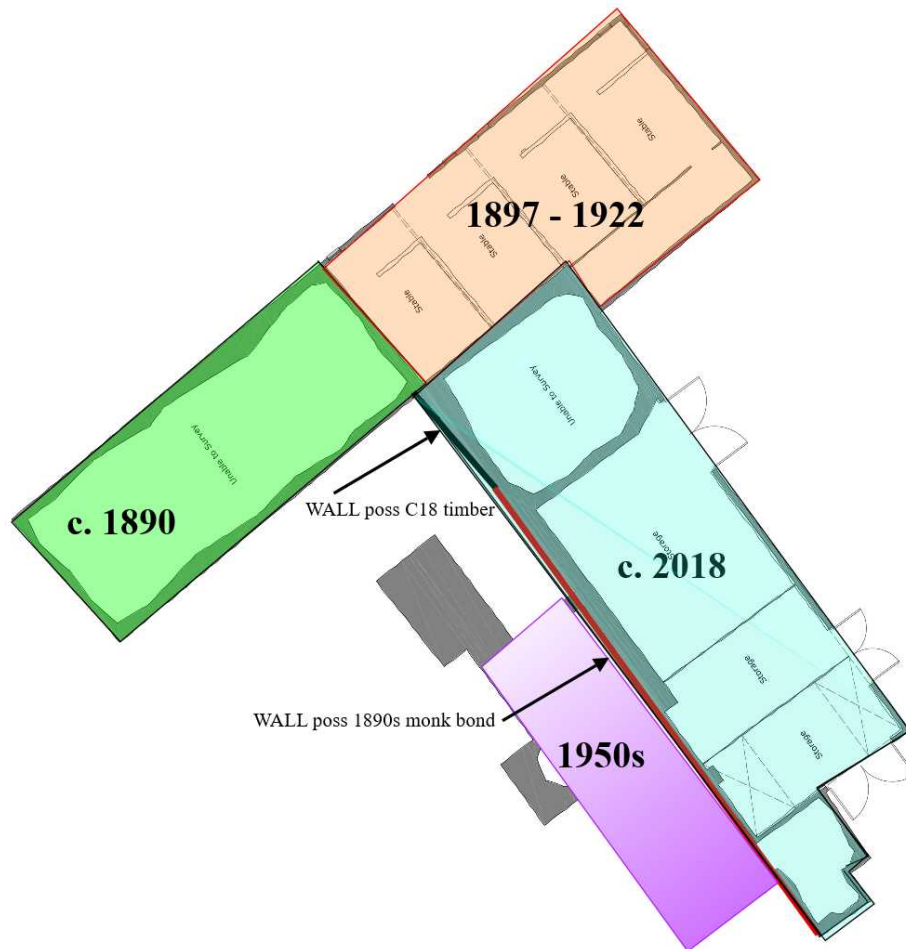


Fig. 14. Phasing of the 'barn' and attached stables



*Fig. 15a – possible C18 timber section remaining at junction of SW wall and NW structures*



*Fig 15b – the rest of the SW wall in late C19 monk bond brick with piers concealed on inside*



*Fig 15c 1950s extension in front of continuing brick wall. New barn rises above. Barn house beyond.*



*Fig 16 – Interior of stables attached to NW elevation of barn. Rafters of different scantling. Later partitions*



*Fig 17 – barn rebuilt in sterling board and off the peg trusses*



*Fig 18 – smooth lines of new structure rising above small retained section on SW wall*



*Fig. 19 – entrance to house forecourt off lane*



*Fig. 20 – back entrance from house into old farmyard – no functional connection with barn*

The heritage significance of the rebuilt barn is almost zero. Over 95% of it is brand new; it is a collation of volumes which says nothing about farm practice over the years either. It is a marker of a former use but it is impossible to read the size of the original or how it worked with the land. Only the SW wall gives a clue about the former yard so is of a little historic value. The attached stable is similarly of value too as a structure of the late C19/ early C20.

The stable immediately to the NW elevation is still in use. The one to the SW of this stable has been converted into residential accommodation.



Fig. 21 – Converted projecting SW stable

### Curtilage issues

Whilst no one has entertained the idea of the former NE barn being listable, it is worth examining if it might be argued that it is sufficiently close to the listed group to be curtilage listed. Using the *Jews House (R v Taunton Deane Borough Council, 2008)*/ Calderdale rationale, I deduce that it is not but only the Courts can pronounce on this definitively.

- Physical layout;

The House has separate access, a wall to the farmyard and does not front the farmyard as in a farmstead - so it shares similarities with the house in the *Jews* case. The granary and low barn do back onto the garden and forecourt of the house but are not entered from them. The curtilage of the other two LB s is the farmyard and the lane to the south. The NE barn has never addressed the farmyard which looks always to have been a space for animals. The midstreys (loading porches) were always to the NE and to

a ricking yard there. A blank wall backed onto the yard with a Victorian personnel door, long boarded up in the northern part of the old barn.

- Ownership, historic and current;

The ownership of all the buildings has been the same since the 1950s. From soon after the 1830s (but certainly by 1875), the farm may have been run as separate operations under the auspices of Colonel Blake who was keen to build up livestock rather than arable holding but this is only a deduction as I do not have the Danesbury papers.

- Use or function, historic and current.

The barn on the historic maps certainly addresses the arable land to the NE, so was in farm use. More recently, before and after the fire of 2018, it was used for commercial storage and not as an adjunct of the house. It appears therefore not to have ever been in domestic ancillary use. Similarly, the attached stable has always been a farm/equestrian rather than a residential building.

### **Heritage values**

Whilst it is argued that the structures are not curtilage listed, they should still be assessed for heritage values owing to the history described in Section 3 above. In light of the foregoing analysis, those values may be described as follows:

#### **BARN**

Architectural – none  
Artistic – none  
Archaeological – little  
Historic – little

#### **EASTERN STABLE**

Architectural – little (owing to retained footprint and roof)  
Artistic – none  
Archaeological – little (use)  
Historic – little

#### **WESTERN STABLE**

Architectural – none (owing to conversion)  
Artistic – none  
Archaeological – little  
Historic – little

The other adjacent buildings are of considerably more value and this is set out below.

No LBs will be harmed in the development but impact may be indirect, affecting the ability of the setting of nearby heritage assets, as well as the contribution that that setting makes to their significance.

There are three obvious heritage assets of concern but this assessment will look at a slightly wider scope. Given the compartmented, mature nature of the landscape around and the proximity of the site to the built up area of Pottersheath itself, an initial scoping exercise of 1km, identified 10 LBs and 16 HER entries. Given the limited nature of the work and its location, this was reduced to a 500m radius, i.e. immediate surroundings and enough of the wider setting to properly inform the assessment. This is consistent with GPA3, paras 21 and 22 which recommends using the immediate setting where the zone of theoretical visibility is confined and development is not likely to be prominent. This identified 5 LBs and 6 HER entries, the latter including the listed farmhouses.

The HER entries are mainly field features, archaeology below ground and as such unlikely to be directly affected by development; there is one house. On this basis and visual and map evidence, the lists of the closest LB and HER sites are as follows:

#### Listed Buildings

|                                                                                                                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>THE OLD OAK COTTAGE, POTTERSHEATH ROAD, POTTERSHEATH, Codicote, North Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire</b>                             | <b>II</b> |
| <b>GRANARY IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF ARNOLD'S FARMHOUSE, POTTERSHEATH ROAD, POTTERSHEATH, Codicote, North Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire</b> | <b>II</b> |
| <b>ARNOLD'S FARMHOUSE, POTTERSHEATH ROAD, POTTERSHEATH, Codicote, North Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire</b>                              | <b>II</b> |
| <b>ANNESGARTH, POTTERSHEATH ROAD, POTTERSHEATH, Codicote, North Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire</b>                                      | <b>II</b> |
| <b>BARN ON EAST SIDE OF ARNOLD'S FARMHOUSE, POTTERSHEATH ROAD, POTTERSHEATH, Codicote, North Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire</b>         | <b>II</b> |

Annesgarth and Old Oak cottage do not contribute to the significance of the Arnold's buildings so these are not analysed further. This leaves the buildings of Arnold's Farm to be considered.

#### Arnold's Farm

Arnold's farm is an ancient site with a range of buildings, three of which are listed and are of great interest, the rest pretty ordinary fare including a modern cul de sac of executive housing. The listed buildings are all GVII on account of their tight-knit group in a hollow at the end of a short drive off Pottersheath Road. They comprise:

Listed Building (II) 162005: BARN ON EAST SIDE OF ARNOLD'S FARMHOUSE (the low barn)

Listed Building (II) 162003: ARNOLD'S FARMHOUSE

Listed Building (II) 162004: GRANARY IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF ARNOLD'S FARMHOUSE

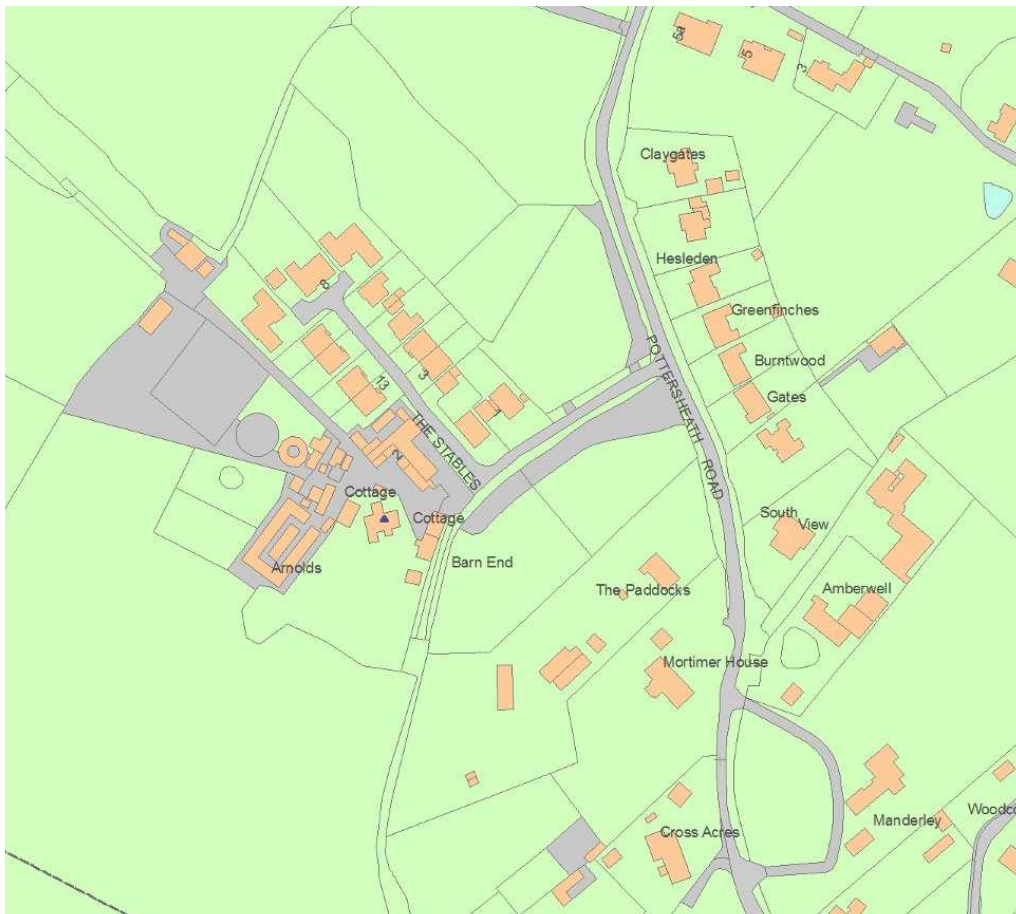


Fig. 21 – Plan of former farm with later development around. House shown with arrowhead. Barn to E.

**The farmhouse at Arnold's** is said to be of the 16th century but an inspection of the living room revealed the remains of a cross passage and a prominent moulded late C15 beam. It may have earlier fabric as the name dates it to the reign of Henry III, i.e. C13. It is a rough cast, storey and a half building, which appears to be an open hall house with an inserted floor. The 2 1/2-storey short cross wing at the east end is early 17th century, as is the central ridge chimney stack, rebuilt in the early C21. The roof is steeply pitched and plain tiled with three C19 gabled dormers. The cross passage led from the current garden room on the SW front to the rear scullery. All gables have scalloped bargeboards. There is a newel stair on the west side, and a rear, centrally located, much altered brick and flint rear extension, both of the C17.

### Significance

Architectural: some (Group value - considerable)

Artistic: none

Historic: some

Archaeological: some

### Contribution of setting to significance

The setting comprises an equestrian centre with a mass of modern structures to the north and west, the listed 'low' barn to the south, the listed granary to the east and a Victorian outbuilding to the NW. The rebuilt barn of the C21 flanks the east side of the farmyard where the C18 threshing barn once stood.

Beyond that to the east is the 'Stables', a collection of brick executive homes introduced by two massive 'barn houses' which compete with the old farm buildings and detract from their heritage significance. The barn houses cut across the 1820s foot path extension of the Danesbury track to Rabley Heath and establish the wrong site hierarchy where the farm drive off Potters Heath Road now leads to the residential development rather than the farmyard. West of the house is more equestrian development before open countryside. The 'Stables' firmly hem the historic group into the suburbia that is Potters Heath Road. The development to the south started in 1920 exacerbates the enclosure.



*Fig 22- The drive showing 1930s houses to east, 1920s deep plot to south (right) and 'Stables' to north*



*Fig. 23 – Urbanised entrance to 'the Stables' development and the old farm buildings*

Taken together, the houses on the entrance side of the farmyard, to north, south and east, swamp the historic group. The 'Stables' does not read as a development isolated from the 1930s Pottersheath Road ribbon development but an extension of the same. Compare the drive to Rabley Heath farm which maintains its open countryside views only metres away.



*Fig. 24a Rabley Heath farm from the north – countryside (bottom right) meets suburbia (top left)*



*Fig 24b – entrance to Rabley Heath farm*

East of the 'Stables' and flanking the drive are two grassed areas, commonly referred to as the paddocks. The southern one is split into two and forms the immediate setting of the listed 'low' barn. The resultant paddocks do not read together. The northern one, reads with the urbanised drive to the 'Stables' and is something of a forecourt to it, despite the distance of over 50m. The southern two paddocks are different again. The road front one reads in with the street scene. The 'back' paddock is perceived with the barn and the old Danesbury track which still survives. Despite the hedge to the track, the setting of the listed group at this point seems appropriate as there is a perception that the paddock could be useful for receiving stock. (See Figures 10, 12 and 25). The barn in its Colonel Blake years was a cow house and the current owner used it in this way before converting it to residential use. The obvious insertion of the house to the south (ironically called 'The Paddocks') on its long plot restricts the outlook but nonetheless, the back paddock adds a little to the significance of the Listed group.



*Fig. 25 – low barn with track to Danesbury. Rear south paddock on left*



*Fig. 26 – Looking back down the drive at the 1930s houses. Note drive swinging left to 'Stables'*

The setting which contributes the most to the farmhouse is its garden and farmyard along with the farm buildings. The whole nestles in a hollow and is a topographical delight, recognised in the GV (group value) listings. This contribution is high and includes the west wall of the rebuilt unlisted NE barn.

**The low barn** to the East of the farmhouse started life as a two bay C17 structure with a one bay mezzanine. It was extended by four bays to the west in the C18 and became a shelter shed in the C20 before being converted into a house in the west and two flats in the east. The timber frame sits on a brick plinth, partially rendered. The gable ends are pebble dashed.

### **Significance**

Architectural: some

Artistic: none

Historic: some

Archaeological: unknown

### **Contribution of setting to significance**

The setting comprises the listed farm building group as well as the old farmyard to its north and east. The hedged lane and paddock immediately beyond add to significance as described for the house. The north paddock is neutral as is the front southern paddock to Potters Heath Road. The barn houses of the 'Stables' detract from significance. The modern barn and equestrian buildings whilst of low quality are part of the farm expectation and so are neutral. The listed buildings add to its group value.

**The granary** on the north side of the farmhouse is a single-storey 18th century, timber-framed building of meagre scantling, later infilled with red brick infill. It has a ground floor with a central door, raised on two large staddle stones on the NE side and a brick plinth to the rear SW. The roof is plain tiled and is said to contain a boarded east gable with a pigeon loft but this cannot be seen as the building is smothered with ivy.

### **Significance**

Architectural: some

Artistic: none

Historic: some

Archaeological: unknown

### **Contribution of setting to significance**

The immediate setting comprises the old farmyard and buildings as described above. The paddocks do not contribute to its significance. The Stables development detracts from it. The NE barn is neutral.

**Outbuilding NW of the house** - On an old site yet of the late C19, much altered, timber on a brick plinth under a slate roof and converted for use as stables.

### **Significance**

Architectural: none

Artistic: none  
Historic: some  
Archaeological: unknown

### Contribution of setting to significance

As for setting, the yard and buildings contribute almost all of its heritage significance – so group value is preeminent here. Nothing else adds to significance. The Stables detract from it.

**Modern buildings and rebuilt barn :** These are *Not* of significance

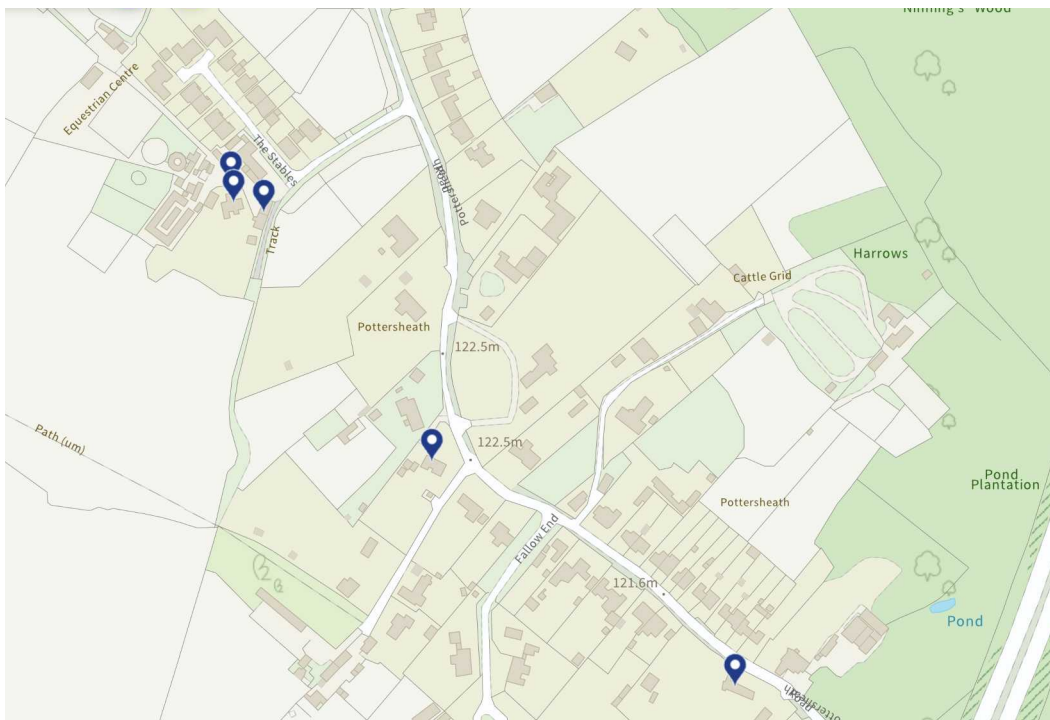


Fig. 27 – the listed buildings S-N – Annesgarth, Old Oak Cott (Well Cott), Arnold's Farm trio

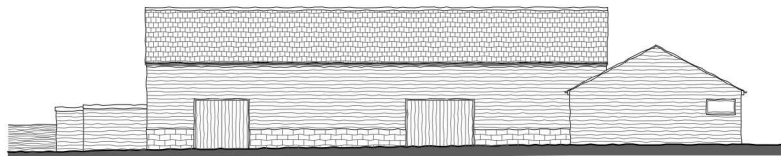
### Field Pattern and Landscape Character

According to the council's Landscape Study (2011), the Danesbury-Rabley Heath area (Area 133) is composed mainly of post 1950s enclosure. Pre 18<sup>th</sup> century and later enclosure lies to the north and pre 18<sup>th</sup> century 'irregular' enclosure, 20<sup>th</sup> century leisure and prairie fields – post 1950's boundary loss – lie to the south. In the centre occur prairie fields with relict elements and pre 18<sup>th</sup> century 'irregular sinuous' enclosure. There are pockets of 19<sup>th</sup>– 20<sup>th</sup> century plantation throughout.

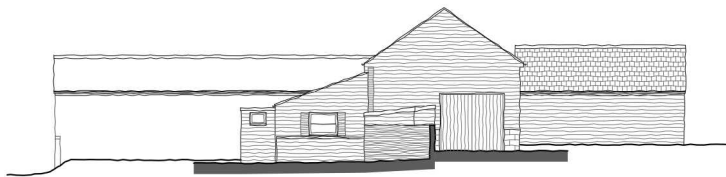
The landscape is described as 'mature', with historic and mature landscape character elements interspersed with extensive but widely dispersed settlement. This is borne out in the analysis of setting above where countryside edge is noted at Rabley Heath and then suburban development is clustered moving south to Welwyn within a mature verdant network of unclassified roads.

## 5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF NE BARN

In the first instance, we look to see what effect the conversion might have on the listed group which is entered past the barn.

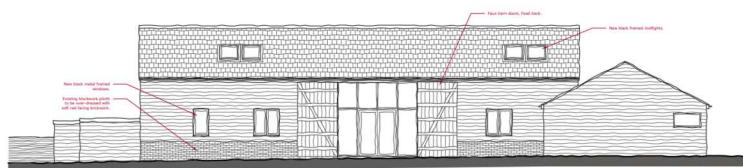


Existing Front (NE) Elevation 1  
Scale 1:100



### Existing Front (SE) Elevation 2

*Fig. 28a – Elevations seen from main drive before entering the farm group*



### Proposed Front (NE) Elevation 1

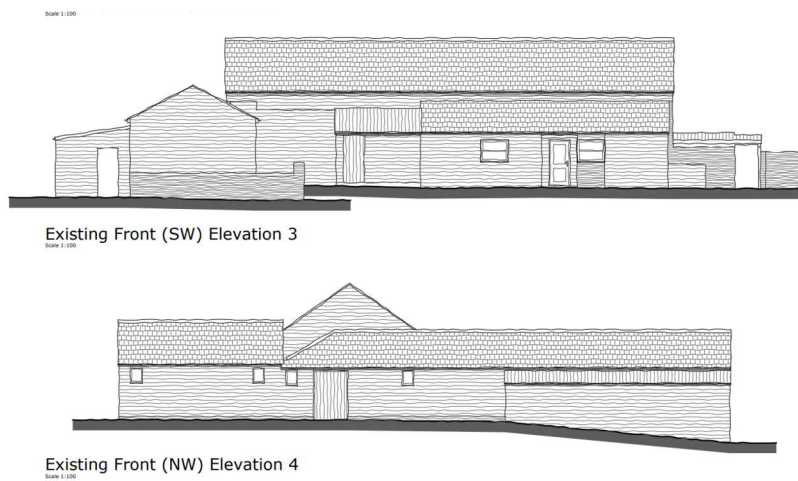


Proposed Front (SE) Elevation 2

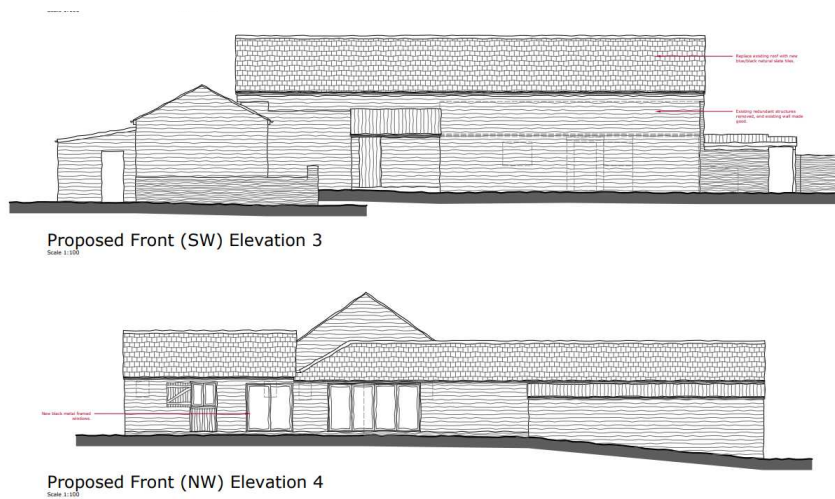
*Fig. 28b – Proposed changes to Elevations seen from main drive before entering the farm group*

On passing the modern barn houses, the visitor to the site will be presented with a barn conversion. A screen is inserted where the cart doors would have been, the plinth faced with red brick and the roof slated. Windows are few and well spaced and in a complementary material and colour. The Victorian stable is slated and a hardwood door added, The conversion presents a better proportioned building, in keeping with the farm group and would be an enhancement over what currently exists.

The stable partitions will be removed but they are later. From an historical view, the roof structure is the most interesting feature and this will be retained.



*Fig. 29a – Elevations seen from old farmyard*



*Fig. 29b– Proposed Elevations seen from old farmyard*

The proposals would strip out the 1950s accretions and return the SW elevation to its 1890s existence when it was part of the Danesbury estate. Restoring the old brick wall would be a heritage enhancement to all the Lbs via its simplicity and handmade materials. It would reinforce historic and architectural values. The NW fenestration is simple and in keeping with the stable block. It will not be seen from the farmyard and does not affect its setting.

Externally, the hard surfacing to the NE front will be replaced with gravel so little change will be discerned. The modern wall to the road will remain. A garden will run east- west, to the north of the little stable and so be contained in the old stable yard where it will not affect the immediate setting of the listed group or its old yard.

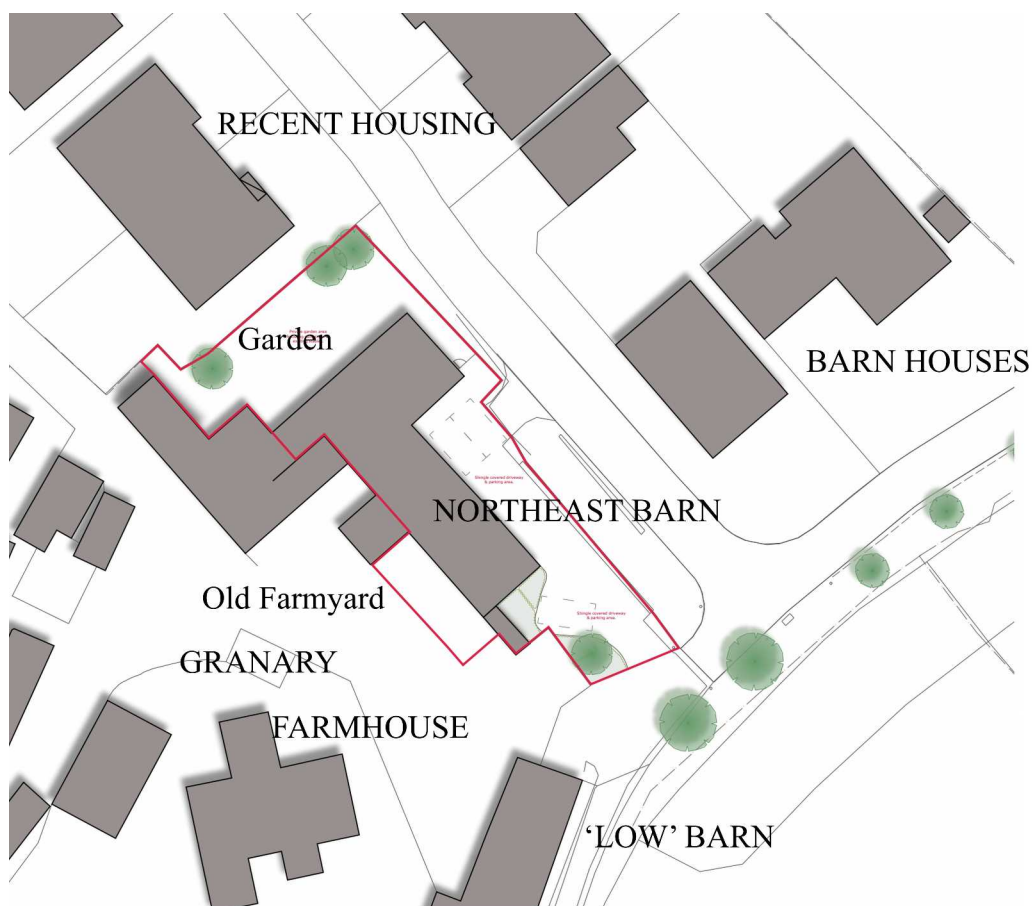


Fig. 30 – proposed site plan

## CONCLUSIONS

The NE former barn and attached Victorian stable are not designated but are in the immediate setting of a listed group of former farm buildings.

The former farm is a tight-knit grouping of three listed buildings and two older but undesignated structures. It has three historic spaces, the farmhouse forecourt, the old farmyard and the later ricking yard, the last of which has been built over recently. These spaces are the *immediate* setting of the group and this extends to the back of the southern paddocks and the 'Stables' housing.

Other structures noted in the HER were examined to see whether they would be affected by the proposals and were ruled out.

The *wider* setting of the historic group – the unlisted equestrian operation and its northern paddock have also been assessed and their contribution to heritage significance has been assessed as neutral.

The drive to the farmyard has been appropriated and urbanised by the 'Stables' development such that it now falls within the general built up area of the Danesbury- Rabley Heath character area which is characterised as extensively developed but in a dispersed manner and in a mature landscape.

The proposed development is a conversion which is in the character of the listed group rather than the modern vernacular of the wider Potters Heath grouping and would not be as intrusive as the barn houses at the start of the Stables development. It would instead form a better entrance to the listed group than currently exists and thus enhance heritage significance.

## APPENDIX

Entries in HER analysed for this report:

|                                                                             |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <a href="#"><u>ARNOLD'S FARM, POTTERSHEATH ROAD, CODICOTE</u></a>           | Codicote |
| <a href="#"><u>NINNINGSWOOD COTTAGE, 2 NINNINGS LANE, WELWYN</u></a>        | Welwyn   |
| <a href="#"><u>POSSIBLE SITE OF QUAKER BURIAL GROUND, RABLEY HEA...</u></a> | Codicote |
| <a href="#"><u>ROMAN POTTERY, RABLEY HEATH FARM, CODICOTE/WELWYN</u></a>    | Codicote |
| <a href="#"><u>NEOLITHIC AXE, MANDERLEY, POTTERS HEATH ROAD, WEL...</u></a> | Codicote |
| <a href="#"><u>NEOLITHIC ARROWHEAD, NINNINGS LANE, RABLEY HEATH</u></a>     | Welwyn   |

## REFERENCES

North Herts Landscape Study 2011

NLS maps.

VCH Hertfordshire

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*Ian Dieffenthaler* RIBA SCA

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