

Heritage Statement

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Description of development: Proposed outbuilding

Site address: Oakley Barn, Rudwick Hall Barns, Barley Beans Road, Peters Green LU2

8PG



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.0 This heritage statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the erection of a single storey outbuilding at Oakley Barn, Rudwick Hall Barns, Barley Beans Road, Peters Green LU1 8PG.
- 1.1.1 Oakley Barn is a curtilage listed structure formerly part of the land holding associated with Rudwick Hall Farm, a Grade II listed building.
- 1.1.2 The application proposal was the subject of a pre-application enquiry to North Herts Council reference no. 24/02507/PREH. A response dated 13/01/2025 indicated that there was not any planning objection in principle to the proposal subject to some design changes and the detailed scrutiny of the Conservation Officer.

2.0 SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

2.1.0 The application site is set in open countryside approximately one mile north of Peters Green. It is part of a small complex of buildings formerly associated with Rudwick Hall Farm. The group now comprises the Grade II listed building, Rudwick Hall Farmhouse, located to the west of the application site; two barns now in residential use, the application site, Oakley Barn and the adjacent converted barn, Rudwick Hall Barn and a third barn lying to the west, which is used for garaging and ancillary domestic storage.

2.1.1 Rudwick Hall Farmhouse was added to the lists of buildings of architectural and historic importance on 21/03/1984. The list description is as follows;

'Farmhouse. Circa 1840 in a late Georgian Style. Chequered red brick. Slate roof. 2 storeys. Square plan. 2 gable ends each side, divided by banded brick piers. Angled brick eaves. N elevation is 3 bays. Central gabled porched with gauged brick elliptical arch. Panelled door with 2 glazed lights in chamfered surround. 3 square windows with gauged brick lintels. Tripartite lights with central sash windows. 4 central chimney stacks. Similar style to Lawrence End.'

2.1.2 The Hertfordshire Environmental record (HER) reports that the existing farm complex represents the remaining or altered form of an earlier farmstead under varying names, quoting a number of historic maps as source materials. It states,

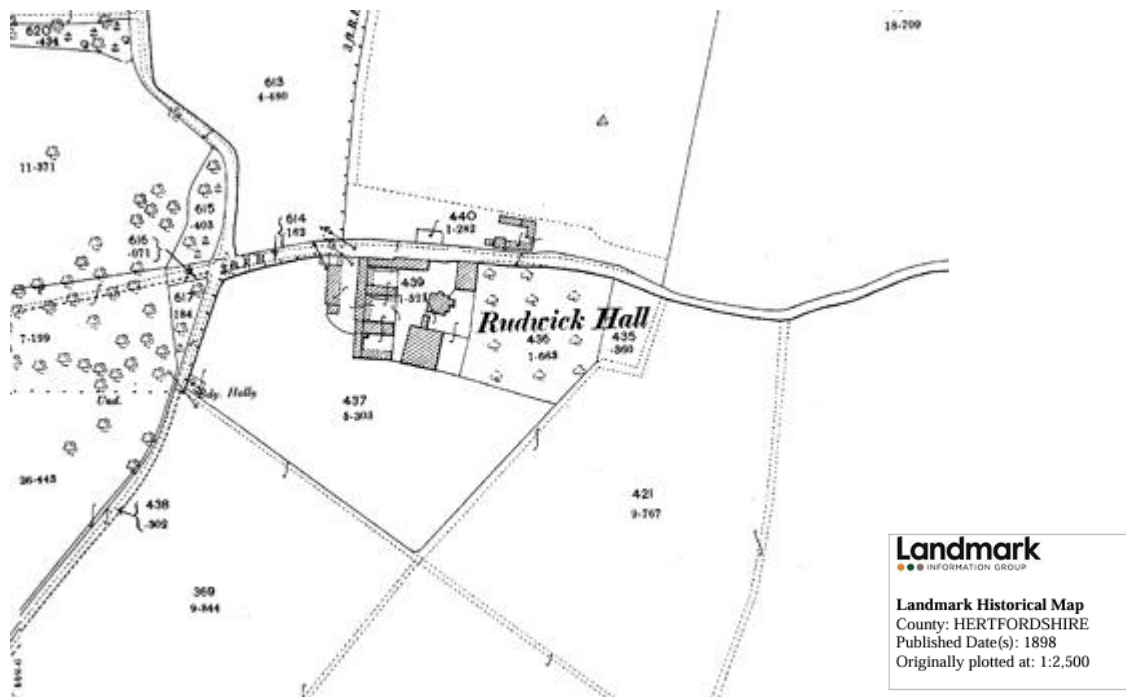
'The Hall has earlier origins; it is shown on the 1766 county map as Redock Hall, and on the 1822 map as Ruddick Hall. It was also documented in 1791 as Ruddick Hall (presumably reflecting its pronunciation), but in 1665 as 'Ludwick Hall' It is uncertain whether any part of the older house survives within the 19th century building'.

It continues to describe the farmstead in record 11009 thus,

'The farmstead at Rudwick Hall is shown on the later 19th century OS maps as a planned farm in 19th century style and may be contemporary with the c.1840 house. It had four parallel rows of barns perpendicular to another range joining them at their west ends, and open-fronted sheds in the yards between the rows. Another complex stood south of the house.

This arrangement is either a rebuild of an existing farm, or piecemeal updating of older buildings; for its earlier origins. Since 1898 the layout shown on has been partly altered to suit more recent farming practices, but some of the buildings appear to survive.'

2.1.3 The 1898 ordnance Survey map, a section of which is reproduced below, illustrates the arrangement of the farmyard. This grouping of buildings subsisted until at least 1974.



- 2.1.4 The fragmentary history of the development of the site assists in understanding the age and disposition of the buildings that currently remain on the site. Oakley and Rudwick Hall Barns each now comprise a two-storey height timber clad section on a north-south axis with a brick projection wing to the east. The interiors of the two storey height buildings were not available for inspection but from the physical appearance it is assumed that these are timber framed buildings and most likely late C17th/early C18th in date. A timber frame of this nature is partially exposed in the partly open fronted barn to the west. The single storey brick ranges to the east are clearly C19th in date and appear to be contemporaneous with the building of the main farmhouse.



Oakley Barn: timber clad north-south range with brick wing to the east.

- 2.1.5 The planning history of the site indicates that listed building consent for the conversion of outbuildings within the site of Rudwick Hall Farmhouse was granted under applications 10/00166/1LB on 29/07/2010 for the following development,

'Removal of modern farm buildings and conversion of traditional barns to create 2 dwellings, conversion of existing detached barn on west boundary to provide associated garaging and garden storage.'

The two barns have a separate access to Barley Beans Road. There is a parking area between the converted barns and the barn on the west boundary which has been converted to garaging and storage areas for the conversions.

- 2.1.6 Each of the barn conversions has a two storey westward facing wing which is timber clad under a tiled roof, with a single storey brick-built wing, providing additional accommodation, projecting to the east. On the application site this wing forms the north boundary of the site on the Barley Beans Road highway frontage. For the adjacent property, Rudwick Hall Barn, the projecting wing forms the site boundary with Oakley Barn. At Oakley Barn, the roadside frontage is a simple brick wall and there are windows and doors overlooking the enclosed rear garden to the property. It is evident that the flat rear gardens to the two barns were formerly enclosed or semi-enclosed yards for the former farm barns. At Oakley Barn, the rear garden is enclosed by a brick wall and gate to the west side. The gate would have accessed the curtilage of the former farmhouse.



The rear elevation of Oakley Barn with the projecting wing to Rudwick Farm Barn to the left, and its own projecting wing to the right.



The blank brick wall of the rear wing to Rudwick Hall Barn along the application site boundary



Rear projecting wing along north side boundary to the application site



Enclosing rear boundary wall and gate to the application site

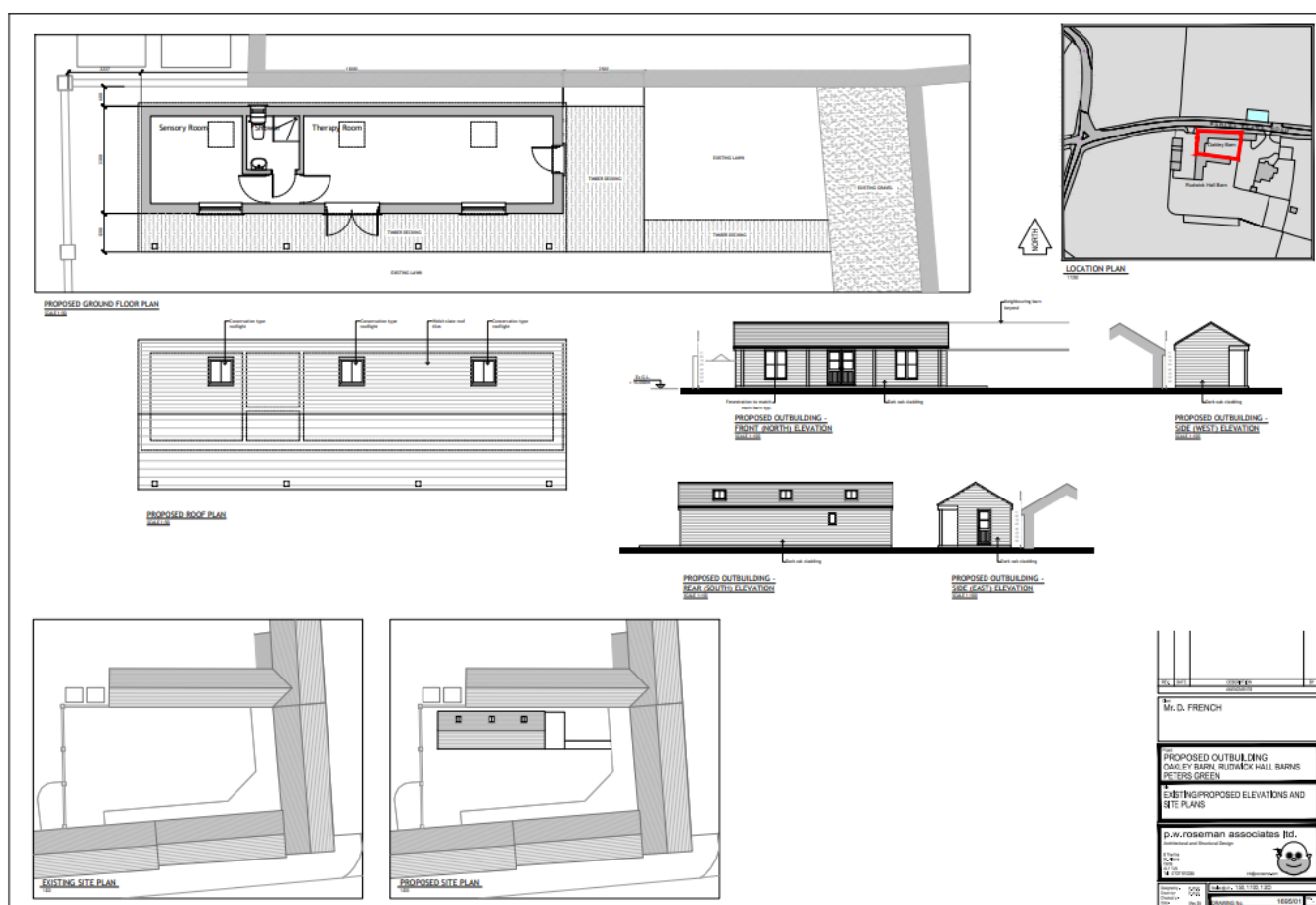
- 2.1.7 The brick barns both have slate roof and fine brick detailing with a decorative dentil course at eaves level. On the Oakley Barn wing there are also decorative brick arches to windows and doors as illustrated above.



View across side boundary wall between Rudwick Hall Barn and Oakley Barn of storage shed and greenhouse within the garden of the former.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1.0 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a free standing, single storey outbuilding within the rear garden to Oakley Barn. The building will have dark oak stained cladding under a pitched slate roof. The north facing wall of the building will be inset under the roof to create a shallow covered veranda. The pattern of the windows will be similar to those on the converted barn. Three conservation rooflights will be fitted on the south facing slope of the roof, along the boundary with Rudwick Hall Barn. The details of the proposal are shown below.



- 3.1.1 The outbuilding is intended to provide much needed additional space to support the needs of a child in the applicant's family who is blind and receives specialised therapy from several medical practitioners. The use will be entirely ancillary to the main residential use of the application site.

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.0 National Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - this is the key legislative control for the historic environment. Section 66 (1) imposes the following duty on decision makers;

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authorityshall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting....'

4.2.0 National Planning Policy Framework (as amended December 2024)

A core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) is to conserve heritage assets, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life for this and future generations.

4.2.1 Paragraph 207 states that

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'

4.2.2 Paragraph 210 provides directs that local authorities consider, inter alia,

'c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local distinctiveness.'

4.2.3 In considering potential impacts of development paragraph 212 states that,

'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.'

4.2.4 With regard to less than substantial harm, paragraph 214 states that,

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

4.3.0 Local Plan Policy

The relevant local plan is the North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031. The process of review has commenced but the existing plan remains in force. The plan comprises strategic and development management policies. The pertinent policies are as follows;

Strategic Policies.

SP9: Design and Development

The Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. We will:

- a) *Support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context;*

SP13: Historic environment

The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:

- a) *Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance;*
- b) *Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or on the Council's 'At Risk' register;*
- c) *Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and d)*
- Publication of detailed guidance.'*

Development Management Policies.

D1: Sustainable Design

Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:

- a) *Respond positively to the site's local context;*

HE1: Designated heritage assets

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.'

4.4.0 Policy Guidance

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance. English Heritage (now Historic England) April 2008.

This is the core document which sets out the approach to the protection of the historic environment. It states that the idea of significance lies at the heart of the principles.

'Significance is a collective term for the sum of all of the heritage values attached to a place.'

4.4.1 Since people can value historic places in many ways, this document shows how they can be grouped into four categories of values i.e., evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

4.4.2 Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 2. March 2015

The purpose of this advice note is to provide information to assist all parties involved in the implementation of historic environment policy in the NPPF. It points out at Paragraph 4 that:

"Development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets that they may affect. The first step is for all applicants to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and if relevant the contribution of its setting to its significance."

4.4.3 The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition). Historic England December 2017.

This document sets out guidance on managing change within the setting of heritage assets. It provides general advice on understanding setting and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated. Part 1 of the document sets out the definition of setting provided in the glossary to the NPPF;

'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 a negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'

5.0 ASSESSMENT

5.1.0 Introduction

The heritage issues that require assessment are.

1. The impact of the proposals on the setting of the curtilage listed barns, Oakley Barn and Rudwick Hall Barn.
2. The impact of the proposal on the setting of the Grade II listed Rudwick Hall Farmhouse.

5.1.1 Significance/Character

The Policies of the NPPF and guidance provided by Historic England indicate that an assessment of the potential impact of development on heritage assets requires an understanding of the significance of any given heritage asset as a basis for sound decision making. The level of detail

‘should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on (their) significance.’ (NPPF p207).

Assessment also requires the identification of those assets that may be affected and an understanding of the significance of any given heritage asset as a basis for sound decision making. The significance of the heritage assets with potential for impact by the application proposal as detailed in 5.1.0 above are examined below under the guidance of Historic England as defined in Conservation Principles Guidance note referred to in paragraph 4.4.1.

- 5.1.2 The only statutorily designated heritage asset in the vicinity of the application site is the Grade II listed Rudwick Hall Farmhouse. The significance of this building is linked to the buildings that formed part of the historic farmstead, i.e. Oakley Barn and Rudwick Hall Barn. The former farmhouse provides evidence of the continuous occupation of the site as a farmstead since at least the C17th. Its value lies in its design, architectural detail, materials and retention of a largely unchanged form. The retention of three of the barns from the historic farmstead, now viewed as curtilage listed buildings contributes to the historic and cultural significance of the site.

5.2.0 Impact

The proposed outbuilding will be set parallel to the existing east wings of both Oakley and Rudwick Hall Barns. It thus follows the historic pattern of development that has already been established within the historic farmstead. It will be set back from the rear elevation of Oakley Barn so that it will not disguise or detract from the rear elevation of this building which will remain open to view. The design and materials of the building have been carefully developed

so complement all existing buildings on the site. The proposed outbuilding will not have any physical impact on the curtilage listed structures on either the site or the adjacent site, Rudwick Hall Barn.

5.2.1 Advice provided by Historic England recognises that the settings of heritage assets may change as assets and their surroundings evolve. The proposed outbuilding is required to support the residential occupation of Oakley Barn. It will be in a broadly comparable manner that reflects the historic development of the farmyard, complementary to the existing building forms but capable of being understood as a contemporary addition. It will not confuse the understanding of the historic farmstead and will not result in any harm to the significance of the curtilage listed barns.

5.3.0 **The impact of the proposal on the setting of the Grade II listed Rudwick Hall Farmhouse:**
The residential conversion of the barns of the former farmyard has resulted in the creation of two clearly identifiable curtilages with a separate access from Barley Beans Road. Rudwick Farmhouse has a considerable fringe of open garden and drive which separates it physically and visually from its former farmyard. The boundary is delineated by a brick wall and gate. The photograph below illustrates the space between the rear garden of Oakley Barn and the west facing elevation of listed building. The siting of the proposed outbuilding is such that it will protrude just into the right side of the photograph.



5.3.1 It is considered that the proposed outbuilding will be visually subsumed into the group of existing buildings to the west of the listed building and will not have any impact on its setting or significance.

5.4.0 **Adherence to planning policy**

National and local planning policies are committed to the preservation of the historic environment, for its own sake and for the social, cultural and economic benefits that its conservation can bring. The 1990 Act imposes the duty on decision makers to,

‘have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.....’

The proposal will not threaten the listed building adjacent to the application site, nor have any impact on the significance of the curtilage listed barns. It will not result in any ‘harm’ in NPPF terms. Moreover, the proposal will fully comply with Local plan Policy HE1, specifically it will,

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,

It is concluded that there is no conflict with national or local planning policies.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.0 The application site, Oakley Barn, is part of the former historic farmstead at Rudwick Hall Farm that is thought to have origins in the C17th. The existing Grade II listed farmhouse dates from 1840. Oakley Barn, the neighbouring Rudwick Hall Barn, and the associated garage/storage buildings are the only remaining structures from a larger farmstead.
- 6.1 The current residential use of the two barns results from listed building consent and planning permission granted in 2010. Each unit comprises a two-storey height, timber clad wing with a brick single storey wing to the rear. These wings each enclose the private garden for the buildings.
- 6.2 The application proposal seeks permission for the erection of a single storey outbuilding within the rear garden of Oakley Barn. This will be timber clad under a slate roof to match the timber clad wing of the main building. It will be located adjacent and parallel to the existing brick rear wing of Rudwick Hall Barn, inside the boundary of Oakley Barn.
- 6.3 The proposed outbuilding will be used as ancillary residential accommodation for the plot. Specifically, it will provide space for the therapy needs of a disabled child resident on the site.
- 6.6 The proposed outbuilding will be subsumed into the established historic pattern of the existing buildings on the plot. Thus, it will not have any adverse impact on the setting of the grade II listed building, Rudwick Hall Farmhouse nor the curtilage listed barns.
- 6.7 The proposal is fully compliant with established national and local planning policies for the locality.

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