Design & Access Statement

Proposed permitted development barn conversion, rear extension and associated works

At

Chapel Farm, Windley, Belper, DE56 2LP



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Revisions

A 22/09/25 – General revisions.
B 22/10/25 – Revisions to Parking Section.
C 11/11/25 – General revisions.
D 12/12/25 – Revisions to Heritage Consultants comments
E 03/03/26 – Material section revised in line with planning officer's comments.

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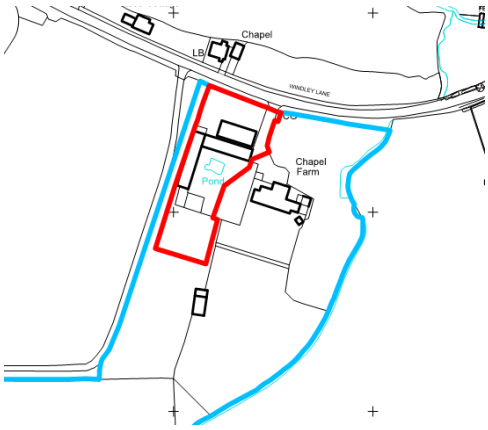
1. Summary

The proposed application is to convert the existing cattle barn for use as a commercial property, with both holiday accommodation and ancillary rooms with space to provide coaching and training sessions for guests. The proposal will provide high quality holiday accommodation as well as providing an option for wheelchair users to comfortably visit Windley and other attractive areas. This will also provide employment for the local area due to the need for services to be provided on site. The accommodation and ancillary conference facilities will bring visitors to the area and provide valuable business development opportunities and inward investment in Windley and the surrounding areas.



The proposal will include demolition of the existing corrugated metal hayloft, as well as conversion of the existing barn building. There will also be a small amount of parking to the front of the site, adjacent to the road.

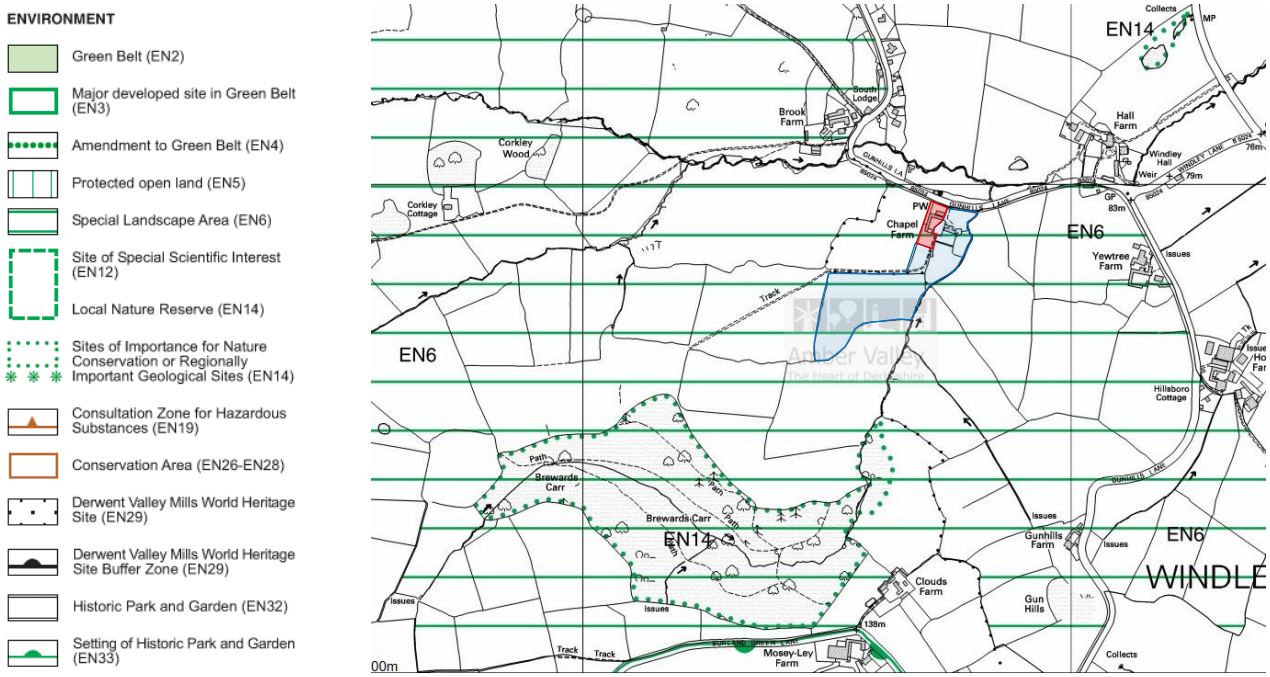
Under the Permitted devopment rights owners are encouraged to convert agricultural buildings for use as commercial or residential properties. Although the barn conversion is being submited for full plans approval to allow for the addition of window openings extension and site alterations, the principle of converting existing agricultural building for commercial use is allowed by the permitted development rights. As such in principlal the barns could be converted for commercial use under prior approval.



This submited application is for the conversion and relatively minor alternations to the existing and associated site works.

2. Location & context

Chapel Farm is located on Windley lane. It is across the road from The Windley Baptist Chapel, which was founded in approximately 1809, which is still in use including by the Turnditch and Windley parish Council. It is surrounded by fields to the rear and both sides, with the east boundary of the site bounded by a stream, which flows onwards to the Brewards Carr, an ancient woodland noted as a site of importance for nature conservation. To the west is Brook farm, which has converted a barn building to form Brookley Barn holiday cottage, and has a current planning application for the construction of six glamping pods. To the east is Windley Hall, a grade II listed building (list entry number 1233185). The site is within a special landscape area as outlines in planning policy EN6. The site also has a bridle path, which leads towards Mugginton, and can also be used to access Brewers Carr, a local nature conservation site.



Although the site is within a Special Landscape area, there is no article 4 direction on the site, so no PD rights have been revoked. It is also considered that the proposal will improve the quality of the special landscape area.



3. Site Evaluation

The site consists of one L shaped building consisting of two connected barns. The Barn bounds a courtyard area separated from the fields behind by a retaining stone wall. The barn was originally used for agricultural purposes, specifically as cow sheds, so they are spaciously sized and have an accompanying metal frame hayloft which is clad in corrugated metal. The site is visible from the road, although the hayloft obscures the view of the barn building. There is also a small well and a small pond in the courtyard, as well as a paved area along the perimeter of the building.

3.1. Hayloft

The hayloft sits between Barn 1 and Windley Lane and is made of corrugated material over a metal frame. It is a prominent structure on site and is clearly visible from the Chapel and Windley Lane. As it is incongruous with the setting and is in a state of disrepair, it will be removed as part of the proposed works.





3.2. Barn 1

Barn 1 is a single storey barn with solid brick walls, and a pitched open roof with trussed rafters. The barn also contains cow byles with an access corridor and feed trough, and a feature round window on the southern elevation. This barn is the most visible from the road and is to be retainined almost entirely. The proposal includes new rooflights above the purlin on the northern side of the building, as recommended by the heritage consultant, in order to light the spaces without inserting additional windows on the North elevation. These proposed rooflights will be visible from the road, however no rooflights are proposed on the courtyard side, again as recommended. One new door opening will be required on the Southern elevation to provide fire egress from the building, and this door will be finished in timber to match the retained timber doors to the cow shed.





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3.3. Barn 2 (two storey)

Barn 2 is a two storey barn with a pitched open roof. Part of the barn has an existing first floor structure accessed by a sandstone staircase. This portion of the building also has two trusses. The areas of first floor to the remainder of the building has been previously removed, and the first floor has both standard openings and blind windows.





There is also a raised brick feeding trough on the ground floor, pictured below, and ventilation slots, some of which had been infilled. Two new window openings are to be fitted to provide fire escape for rooms on the first floor. One of these will be reopening a blind window, which is considered the least harmful location to place the required opening. Previously proposed windows will also be replaced by some rooflights on the East elevation as recommended by the heritage consultant.



One of the existing trusses is set 1.5m above finished floor level and is to be removed be replaced with a new raised tie king truss in order to allow appropriate head room. The new staircase is to be below the most damaged portion of floor, as this area is currently unsafe and the floor is unsuitable for retention. One of the existing ceiling beams visible on the ground floor will be cut back by 1.2m to allow the staircase, however the remainder and the second beam will be retained. ¼ of the existing trough will be removed to allow space for the lower treads of the stair. A further 1/4 of the trough will be hidden below the stairs and the two left hand bays will be retained as a decorative feature.



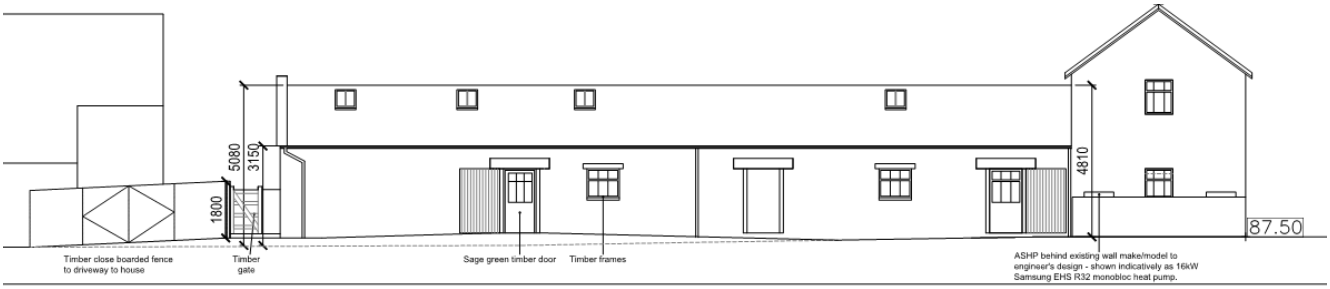

3.4. Barn 2 (covered area)

The third part of the barns is the open portion at the southernmost point of the Barns. This is a single storey structure, however due to the open nature of this part of the barn the trusses are in poor condition. Also the external ground to the rear of the barn is raised in this area, with the internal floor level significantly lower than the external ground level. As such the brick walls in this area have been damaged by water ingress and frost and a retaining wall and external drain will need to be installed to protect the structure. The existing will be repaired where possible.





4. Design



Front (North) Elevation

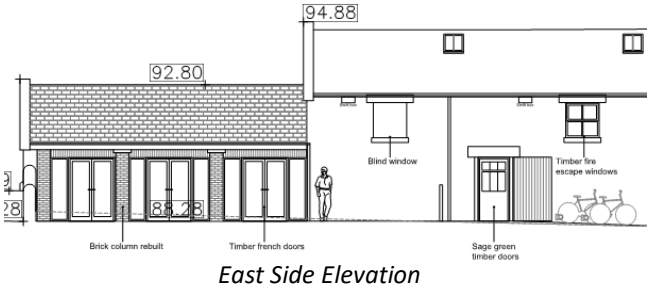
4.1. Layout, massing and scale

Because the site was chosen for its attractive barn buildings the proposal intends to make minimal changes to the existing structure. As such other than the single storey portion of barn 2 which requires extensive repairs, the existing shell of Barns 1 and 2 will only be altered by the addition of windows and doors, as well as rooflights to the North and East elevations as recommended by the heritage consultant.

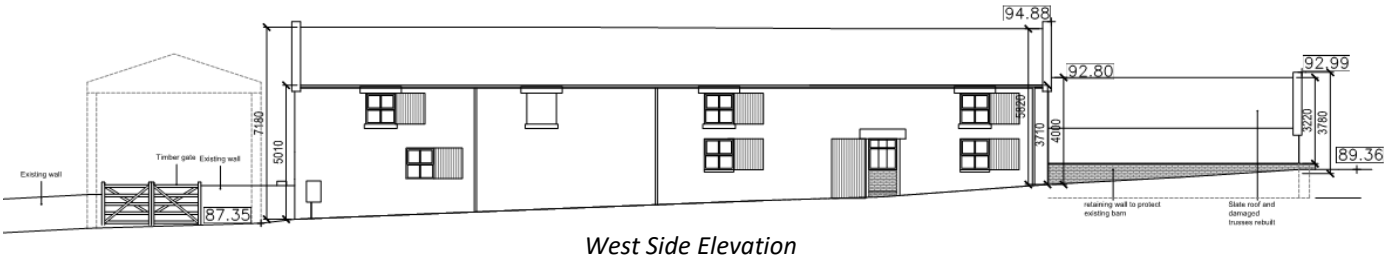
The proposed accommodation will consist of 4 suites and ancillary services. The details are listed below.

Suite no.	GIA	No. of Beds	Accessibility notes
Suite 1	72 m^2	1	Accommodates wheelchair users.
Suite 2	91 m^2	2	GF Bedroom with en suite with walk in shower. Level access to ground floor.
Suite 3	59 m^2	2	Level access to ground floor.
Suite 4	78 m^2	2	Level access to kitchen/diner and level access to living room. 1 step between rooms.
Reception / office	27 m^2	N/A	Self-contained WC accessed from reception area. Level access to ground floor.
Conference room	24 m^2	N/A	Accessible WC close to conference room. Level access.
Breakout space	17 m^2	N/A	Accessible WC close to breakout space. Kitchenette for drinks and pre-prepared food only
Meeting room	12 m^2	N/A	Stepped access only, Self-contained WC close to meeting room.

During a structural appraisal of the existing barn moisture damage was noted to the external walls of the covered area of barn 2, due to the higher ground level and lack of water proofing. This portion of the building will need to be repaired with a retaining wall built around it to protect the structure.



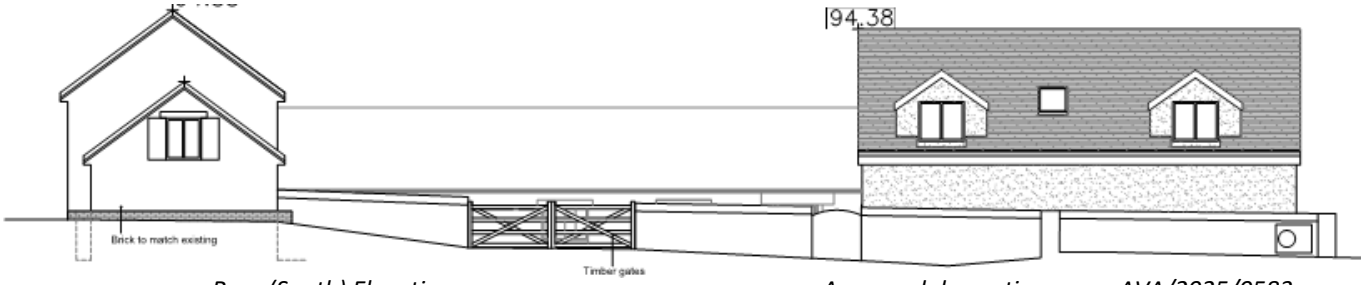
East Side Elevation



West Side Elevation

4.2. Materials

Where the existing building is being altered the wall and roof finishes are to match the existing. Where the covered barn area is being repaired and surrounded with a retaining wall a closely matching reclaimed brick is to be used. The repairs to the roof will be re-used existing slate. The doors and windows will all have timber frames finished in a sage green paint which is considered appropriate for the rural barn, and the countryside setting. As recommended by the heritage consultant the opening will be fitted with shutters, either existing shutters refitted or new shutters to match the existing, fixed in an open position unless otherwise indicated on the plan.



Rear (South) Elevation *Approved domestic garage AVA/2025/0583*

The rooflights will be Velux conservation rooflights fitted with a recessed flashing. The rainwater goods will be cast iron, and the gutters will be rise and fall gutters.

4.3. Design Development

In the first draft of the scheme it was proposed that the roof to the single storey area parallel to the road would be raised and altered in order to allow first floor accommodation in this area. It also suggested installing a first floor across the entire building, including the raised roof close to the road, and rebuilding the southern single storey barn with a flat roofed extension. To retain as much of the existing charm of the buildings as possible it was decided to revise the proposal to instead have high quality single storey suites in this area, including a wheelchair accessible suite. The proposed suites in this part of the barn will have pitched ceilings, and the existing trusses and internal walls will be retained where possible to create a distinctive and luxurious holiday let with the traditional features of English barn buildings. The new first floor rooms in the main part of the building will also have pitched ceilings and visible purlins, again to retain the attractive character of the building.

4.4. Sustainability

A fabric first approach to sustainability is paramount in this proposal with high levels of insulation and good airtightness required to ensure that the energy demands of the proposed new building are kept to a minimum. Low energy lighting will be used throughout, and construction materials will be carefully considered before selection for their environmental impact. As the proposal focuses on reusing the structures of the existing barn buildings, the project has a low carbon footprint as it will reduce the need to construct an entirely new shell. The proposal will also ensure the barns are repaired and will be retained for the future, increasing the life of the structure and reusing it for a new purpose. The proposal will also utilise on site generation systems including air source heat pumps.

4.5. Accessibility

One of the proposed holiday suites will be suited for a wheelchair user, which provides a valuable local resource, as the closest wheelchair accessible hotel room or holiday unit is Makeney hall hotel, Duffield or Tyger Inn, Derby. The proposed ancillary meeting room area will be wheelchair accessible, however there will only be stepped access to first floor meeting room. Level access will also be provided between the holiday accommodations and the breakout space and training facilities, to allow access around the site.

5. Access to site

5.1. Site entrance

The existing site has two points of vehicular access, although the approved planning application AVA/2025/0583 proposed to separate the sites and provide a private driveway for the house. However following comment from the highways consultant all access to the site will be made via the Eastern entrance. Inside the site all parking relating to the holiday accommodation and training facilities will be accessed to the west of the drive in the area which currently houses the hayloft, and the private drive will have a 1.8m fence and gate to separate it from the shared access.

5.2. Visibility

Windley Lane is an unrestricted 60mph road, however due to the curve of the road the visibility distances are limited. When leaving the site the visibility distance to the right (in the SE direction) is limited to 93m due to the curve of the road. The visibility distance to the left (in the NW direction) is limited to approximately 225m. However the 85% percentile speed is expected to be below 40mph due to the bends limiting visibility when approaching chapel farm from either direction.



The visibility towards the North West



The visibility towards the East

As such the existing visibility splay is considered to be appropriate. Windley Lane is also noted as being unsuitable for HGVs at the junction with the A517 and at the junction with the B5023. There are also no bus lines which travel along Windley Lane.

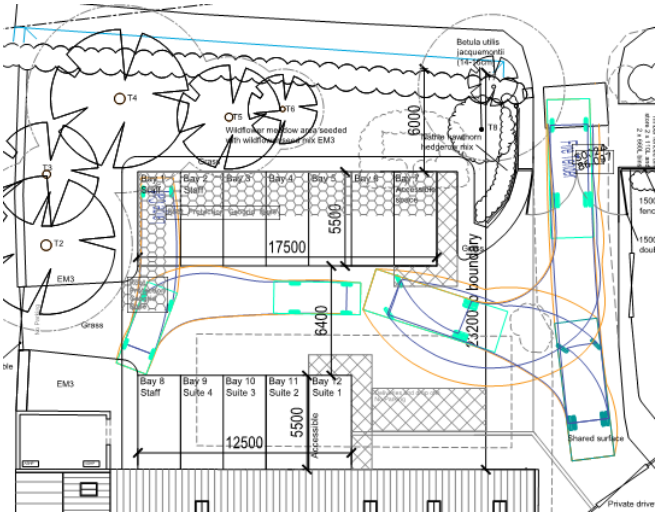
5.3. Hours of operation

The building will be operating 24/7 to allow access for guests to use the holiday let as they would like, and come and go at will. Because the on site meeting rooms will often be providing day long training for the guests, their movements on site will be predictable, with visitors either staying on site and needing no additional journeys, or arriving in the morning and leaving in the afternoon to allow a day long use. As the site is outside Windley Village boundary the operation should not disrupt the village itself, as the site is located close to the B5023. It is also separated from the residential centre of Windley by Brooklea Barn, another site with holiday accommodation closer to the village.

Withing the site the L shaped massing of the barns, its courtyard walls and the approved domestic garage will create a semi-enclosed courtyard area, and any enjoyment of the outdoor spaces associated with the building will be within this courtyard, and the structure will create a sound barrier between these spaces and the surrounding area.

5.4. Manoeuvring within the site

The proposed access is an existing access, but in line with the comments from Derbyshire County Highways where the existing vehicle crossover is being widened the existing ditch crossover will be fitted with an appropriate pipe, to be sized by an engineer, and laid in accordance with Derbyshire County Highways specification.



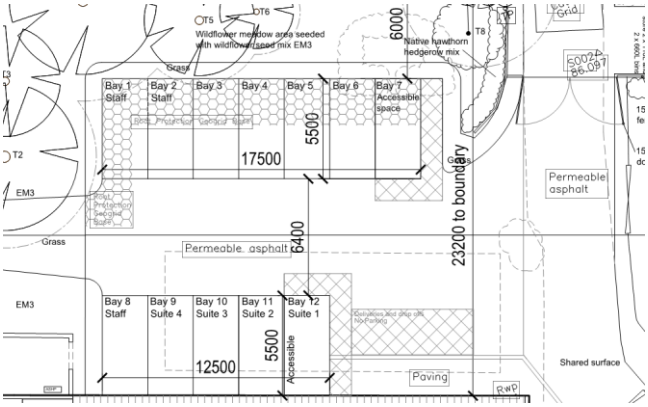
It is proposed that the drive be extended to allow a width suitable for simultaneous access into and out of the site. The turning area adjacent to the holiday accommodation will allow both cars and larger vehicles to leave site in a forward position and will also have a turning space suitable for use by fire tenders.

The driveway gates will be automated to allow quicker access to the site, and for cars to wait off the road for the gates to open when visiting site, to ensure there is no disruption to the drivers on Windley Lane. There will also be space for turning access in the private driveway area to allow the residents to enter the shared surface in a forward position. The turning access into the carpark is to be bounded in a permeable asphalt.



5.5. Parking

The proposed scheme includes 4 self-catered holiday suites, as well as an office/reception area which is expected to be staffed by 1 site manager. There are also ancillary conference facilities accommodating up to 12 attendees in the meeting room which is expected to primarily be attended by people staying in the holiday lets. However in line with the comments from Derbyshire highways, for the purpose of assessing the parking requirements for the site these are assumed to be used separately from the holiday lets.



5.5.1. Holiday let parking

There is no specific guidance for holiday lets with multiple bedrooms given in the Parking Guidance for new Developments (PGND) published by Derbyshire County Highways. As the holiday lets consist of 4 suites, each will be provided with 1 parking space, in line with the recommendations for domestic residences with 1 to 2 bedrooms. This will include 1 accessible space, which will be associated with the wheelchair accessible suite 1.

5.5.2. Ancillary facilities parking

In line with the PGND the parking provision for non-residential (commercial/industrial) use is decided on a case by case basis and should be considered separately to the holiday lets.

No specific parking provision is given in the PGND for parking spaces for non-residential sites, however in both the Leicestershire highways guidance, and Nottinghamshire highways guidance the provision for conference facilities is 1 per 5 spaces, as such this is considered a reasonable starting standard for the site. As the small meeting room would not be used independently from the conference facilities, allowing 1 parking space per 5 attendees would require 3 parking spaces on site for use by attendees staying elsewhere. In rural settings the parking requirement for many councils is multiplied by 1.2 times to allow for a higher reliance on cars. As such 4 parking spaces will be required for the ancillary facilities, which is less than the proposed 5 spaces for the ancillary conference room. There is also space close to the reception which will not obstruct the fire tender turning and will be available for use as short term delivery/drop off space which could be used by larger vehicles including by minibuses. As such the parking provision proposed for the ancillary training facility is considered appropriate.

In line with the PGND's guidance requiring 'Trip rates accumulation should either be derived from first principles or from existing data, for example … comparison to land uses of similar size and geographic circumstance'. We have compared the parking provision to the nearby Lubrizol ltd conference centre, which is the same use so would have a similar trip accumulation rate to the Chapel Farm Site, although on much larger scale. We have also compared the site to new proposed detached building for the Briars residential Youth Centre which is of a comparable scale to the proposal.

- In 2017 planning permission was granted for the application AVA/2017/1262 for a new 2890sqm office building and conference building on the site of the Lubrizol Ltd site on Nether Lane in Belper, a 4 minute drive from the site, with the same similar rural setting.
  In this scheme the new facilities were approved with a provision for 30 new parking spaces all of which were assigned for the new 1490sqm office building. The proposal also included a 1400sqm conference centre including 3 x 12 person conference rooms, 2 x 16 person conference rooms, as well as a 320sqm auditorium. The conference/training centre was granted permission with no additional parking spaces required beyond the existing 12 visitor spaces and 300 employee parking spaces elsewhere on site. The building was described by the architect as accommodating 'up to 200 people, predominantly staff and customers' and the design and access statement listing the conference centre as providing training events for 10-15 people.

As this proposal was granted permission with no additional parking spaces over the existing 12 visitor parking spaces, the 5 spaces provided for the chapel farm site are well above the number approved for the Lubrizol site.

- Planning permission was also granted in 2020 for The Briars Residential Youth Centre, 20 minutes from the site and located near Fritchley, for their application AVA/2019/1117. The application sought to provide 5 new glamping pods and a new 347sqm detached building to house a 154sqm function room. In this application new parking was proposed on site, with 15 parking spaces and bus/coach drop off. Assuming 5 of the parking spaces are associated with the 5 glamping pods, this would leave 9 parking spaces for the new building. This would give 1 parking space per 38.5sqm. If this same metric were applied to the proposed conference rooms at Chapel farm, the 53sqm GIA would require 1.3 parking spaces, which would round up to 2 parking spaces. Allowing an extra parking space to allow for the rural location and higher reliance on vehicles, the resulting spaces required would be 3, while 5 spaces are proposed at Chapel Farm.

5.5.3. Employee parking

Due to the scale of the project reducing in line with the planning officers' comments, with the removal of 20% of the accommodation 50% of the meeting/breakout space, the number of full time staff on site will reduce from 4 full time employees to 2 full time employees who will each be provided with a parking space. There will also be one parking space provided at the front of the site for the part time employee.

5.5.4. Bicycle parking

In line with LTN1/20 there is parking for 7 bicycles spaced close to the front o for use by the holiday lets, and parking for 5 bikes at the rear relating to the ancillary conference facilities, to allow occasional use by people staying elsewhere.



There are also wall mounted bike racks provided close to the entrance of each holiday let, at a rate of 1 space per bedroom. When not in use they will be less noticeable than a Sheffield bike rack with 4 stands, as it is assumed people travelling to visit the holiday lets are unlikely to regularly bring Bicycles with them. Also by placing the mounts close to the entry of each holiday let they will be more secure due to passive observation providing more security than a shared bike shelter elsewhere on site and not overlooked.

5.6. Public Bridle Way

There is also a second access to the site which is an existing bridle path, recorded by the council as Windley Bridle Way 29 (route code AV30/29/1). As the existing bridlepath has been a recorded public bridle road, and during the life of the building as a working agricultural site prior to the year 2000 the access has been in regular use to obtain vehicular access to the land by persons with an interest in the land and visitors to the land, and no changes are proposed to this entrance to the site in order to continue to allow access to the site be all terrain, agricultural and emergency vehicles as existing. The existing gate at the entrance of the bridle path is to be retained, and the existing metal fence between the hayloft area and bridle way is to be replaced with a more attractive timber gate.



An extract from an ordinance survey map Derbyshire XL.10 published in 1898 showing the bridle way (BR)

6. Planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 27th March 2012 updated July 2021, sets out national planning policy, providing local planning authorities with a framework from which to develop their local plans. The proposed works will be in line with the policies in several key ways.

6.1. Tourism

The adopted local plan notes the importance of tourism in the economy of Amber Valley. As such the proposed development of the barns at chapel farm will support the local tourist industry, focusing both on developing businesses in the training facilities and encouraging country tourism in the beautiful setting around Windley. This proposal is an opportunity for the reuse of an existing agricultural building as tourist accommodation, in materials and scale to complement the existing buildings on site. It will also improve the quality of the environment of Windley, as the work includes removing the hayloft which is damaging to the character of Windley due to its size, materiality and proximity to Windley Lane.

6.2. Landscape Character & Features

The character of the site includes a large amount of hedging, as well as some silver birch trees planted in view from the road. As part of the driving motivation of the proposal is to create a luxurious accommodation where visitor can enjoy the quintessential features of the British countryside, retaining and improving the landscape around the existing buildings is very important. As such the proposal includes retaining as much of the existing hedgerow as possible, and the addition of further hedgerow and trees in keeping with the existing. It also introduces large areas of British wildflower planting around the building which will be enjoyed by the site's visitors and users of the bridlepath alike.

This is also in line with the strategic objectives of the adopted local plan regarding protecting and enhance the environmental quality and local distinctiveness. The additional landscaping planned around the bridleway will improve the character of the area, and will create a more desirable public route incorporating areas such as Breward's Carr. The existing stone walls are also being retained where possible, and where the proposed site layout requires portions of wall to be removed, this local stone will be retained for reuse on site.

6.3. Impact on the locality

In line with Policy S29 of the adopted location plan the proposed extension of the barn is rebuilt at a lower scale compared to the retained portion of Barn. The impact from this material change will be minimal to the character of the area, as this portion of the building is only visible to people using the bridleway. The proposed work will also have no impact of the openness or appearance of the countryside, as the proposed works are primarily within the shell of the existing building, except for the two storey extension which is attached to the rear of the building and is a diminished scale compared to the existing shell.

6.4. Rural employment

The development's use will be for tourism/leisure purposes, and the associated shared facilities can be used for a wide array of events. As policy ED4 of the adopted local plan described, these uses will support a prosperous rural economy. The proposal will bring tourists to the area, and can also provide business training services and support for both local and non-local people and companies. The scale of the proposal does suit the area, as it is focused on training sessions

for small groups of individuals. Any larger scale events associated with the ancillary meeting room's services will be held elsewhere.



East side elevation (courtyard elevation)

7. Conclusion

The proposed development will provide a valuable tourist destination outside of the village of Windley, as well as providing accessible accommodation and facilities which are needed in the area. It will also have on site facilities which can be used by the guests, but can also be used for business development focused training events, to provide specialised teaching for guests, as well as providing a venue option for local gatherings.

The proposed works will also greatly improve the site, as the incongruous hay barn will be demolished to make the area look more open and more attractive, which will be supported by the addition of local wildflowers and planting. The proposal will also include the re-use of the existing barn building. This will ensure the attractive building is repaired and retained for years to come.

