

Crockwell Farm, Great Bourton, Oxfordshire

National Grid Reference SP 4551 4566

Conversion of an existing barn for residential use, and associated matters

Heritage Statement



Figure 1: The barn range to be converted looking south, with building 1 to the left of centre, building 2 to right of centre, and building 4 on the right. The modern extension (building 3) is hidden by shrubs and saplings in the middle. The gable to the left is a separate property behind the farmyard, and not relevant to this report.

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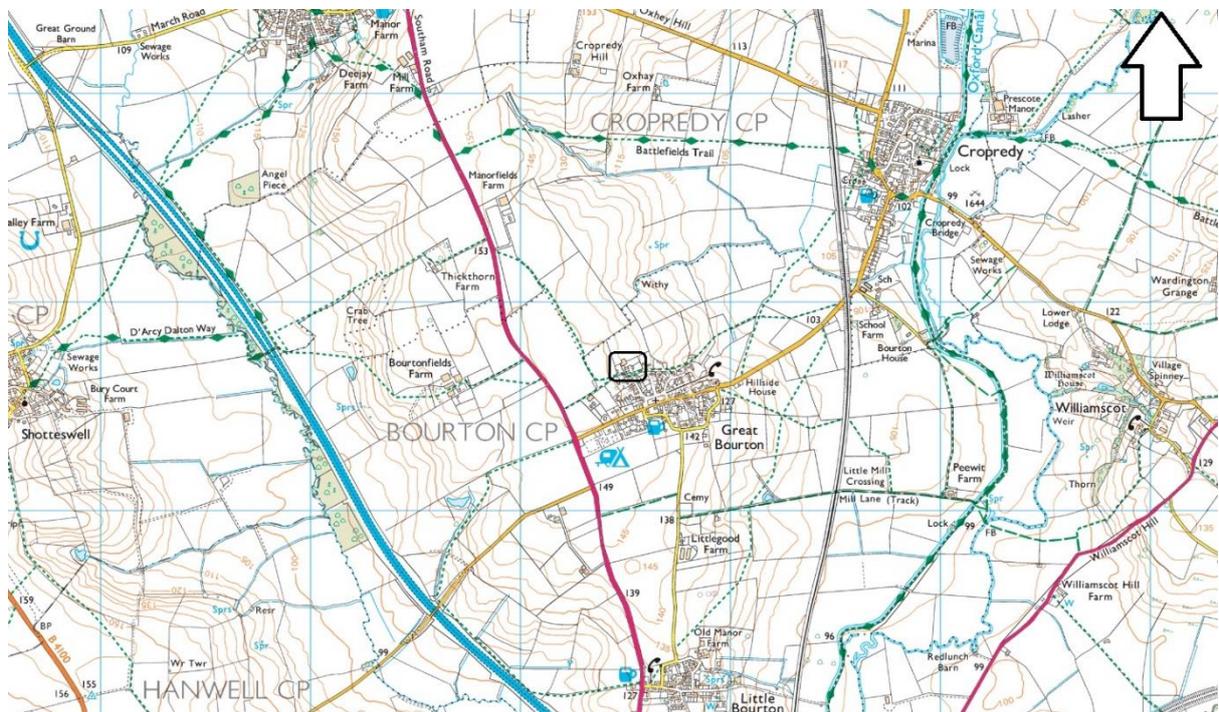


Figure 2: Location plan of Great Bourton, with the mainline railway between Oxford and Birmingham to the right of centre, and the M40 to the left. The site’s position on the north-west edge of the village is highlighted. Ordnance Survey data Crown Copyright 2020. All rights reserved. Licence number 100051221.

Executive summary

Crockwell Farm lies on the north-west edge of Great Bourton, a village c 5km north of Banbury. The site is within Cherwell District, at National Grid Reference SP (NGR) 4551 4568. The farmhouse is a grade II listed building, but the farm itself has not been operational for some years. Outbuildings in the yard immediately to the west and north-west of the house are of mixed dates, and are in varying condition. Some are ruinous. Outline planning permission was granted in 2016, and renewed in 2019, for conversion of a barn group on the south edge of the yard for residential use. The ruinous buildings in the centre of the yard would be demolished and replaced with two new single-storey dwellings.

Crockwell Farm LLP has acquired the farmyard (the farmhouse remains in private hands), with a view to carrying out the permitted development. Detailed permission is being sought for the barn conversion as a first stage in achieving this. A further application will be made in due course for demolition of the ruinous buildings (as permitted under the 2016 and 2019 consents) and the two new dwellings. A separate project on the group of later 20th-century steel-framed barns at the north end of the farmyard is also under consideration. This Heritage Statement has been prepared for the first application, ie conversion of the existing historic barn buildings at the south edge of the yard. The information contained here will be relevant for other applications as well.

The Heritage Statement confirms the findings of a previous report: that the farmyard buildings are of mixed dates ranging from potentially the late 17th century to the later 20th century (post-1948).¹ Some of the buildings – mostly the modern ones but including the historic barn group – are still roofed and capable of rescue/re-use. The modern buildings, however, are at best functional in character and design; at worst they blight the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse. They are not capable of easy conversion for any other use than agriculture, and the farm ceased active use some years ago. Several of the older (eg 19th-century) buildings are ruinous, having already lost their roofs or in imminent danger of doing so. Aerial photography from Google Earth provides dramatic evidence for the rapid (and continuing) decline of their condition. The outline planning permission recognises this. Conversion of the barn group (buildings 1-4) on the south edge of the farmyard will preserve the historically important elements (buildings 1, 2 and 4) while replacing a visually intrusive modern outshut extension (building 3). The development will therefore preserve and enhance the significance of the site, as well as substantially enhancing the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse. The details presented in the new application satisfy the requirements of the outline consent, and will allow its implementation in respect of the historic barn group.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and planning context

Crockwell Farm lies on the north-west edge of Great Bourton, a village c 5km north of Banbury. The farmhouse is a grade II listed building (National Heritage List reference 1215873, location National Grid Reference SP 45536 45685). The farm itself has not been operational for some years, however, and outbuildings in the yard immediately to the west and north-west of the house (site centre NGR SP 4551 4568, total area c 4,500m²) are in varying condition. Some are ruinous. They are of mixed dates, ranging from one or two which may be of the same late 17th-century date as the farmhouse, to others which were erected in the later 20th century. Planning permission was granted in 2016 (Cherwell District Council reference 16/00609/OUT), and renewed in 2019 (reference 19/00250/OUT), for

¹ Soden I 2016, *A Heritage Asset Survey of former farm buildings at Crockwell Farm, Great Bourton, Oxfordshire*

conversion of a barn group on the south edge of the yard for residential use, while ruinous buildings in the centre of the yard would be demolished and replaced with two new single-storey dwellings. As the planning references show, these were outline consents with details to be approved subsequently in writing by Cherwell District Council (the local planning authority). The small group of historic barn structures on the south edge of the farm are located at NGR SP 4551 4566.²

Crockwell Farm LLP has acquired the farmyard at Crockwell Farm, with a view to carrying out the permitted development. The farmhouse remains in private ownership, and is excluded from the plans. The farmyard buildings are not separately listed, but were formerly within the curtilage of the grade II farmhouse. Detailed permission is now being sought for the barn conversion as a first stage in achieving the outline scheme. A further application will be made in due course for demolition of the ruinous buildings (as permitted under consent 19/00250/OUT and its predecessor) and the two new dwellings. A separate project is also under consideration for a group of later 20th-century steel-framed barns at the north end of the farmyard. This Heritage Statement has been prepared for the first application to convert the existing historic barn buildings at the south edge of the yard. The content, however, is also relevant for the other projects.

This Heritage Statement assesses the historic development of the farmyard and the significance of the existing buildings (both old and modern). It examines the potential impacts of the proposed development on nearby designated heritage assets (the village is not a Conservation Area, so this has not been a consideration). It also assesses whether there are any non-designated heritage assets within the site, and finds that some of the farmyard buildings fall into this category. The report has been prepared in full accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019 revision). Paragraph 189 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 is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.³

The planning report for consent 19/00250/OUT noted that no comments had been received from Oxfordshire County Council's archaeology team during the consultation period for the planning application. The county archaeology team had no objections to the 2016 application either. Thus an archaeological desk-based assessment has not been necessary for this study, but the Heritage Statement has taken account of the potential for archaeological remains on the site. This included a review of archaeological information on the Heritage Gateway (Historic England data and the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record). The report therefore complies with the NPPF.

The *Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031*, adopted on 20 July 2015, includes Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment. This states that new development proposals should:

- Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the

² All but a small corner of the farmyard and buildings described in this report lie within postcode OX17 1QT.

³ This replaced paragraph 128 of the 2012 NPPF.

heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's⁴ at Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged.

- Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Further information on the local plan is provided in the Design, Access and Planning Statements for the application, and is not repeated here.

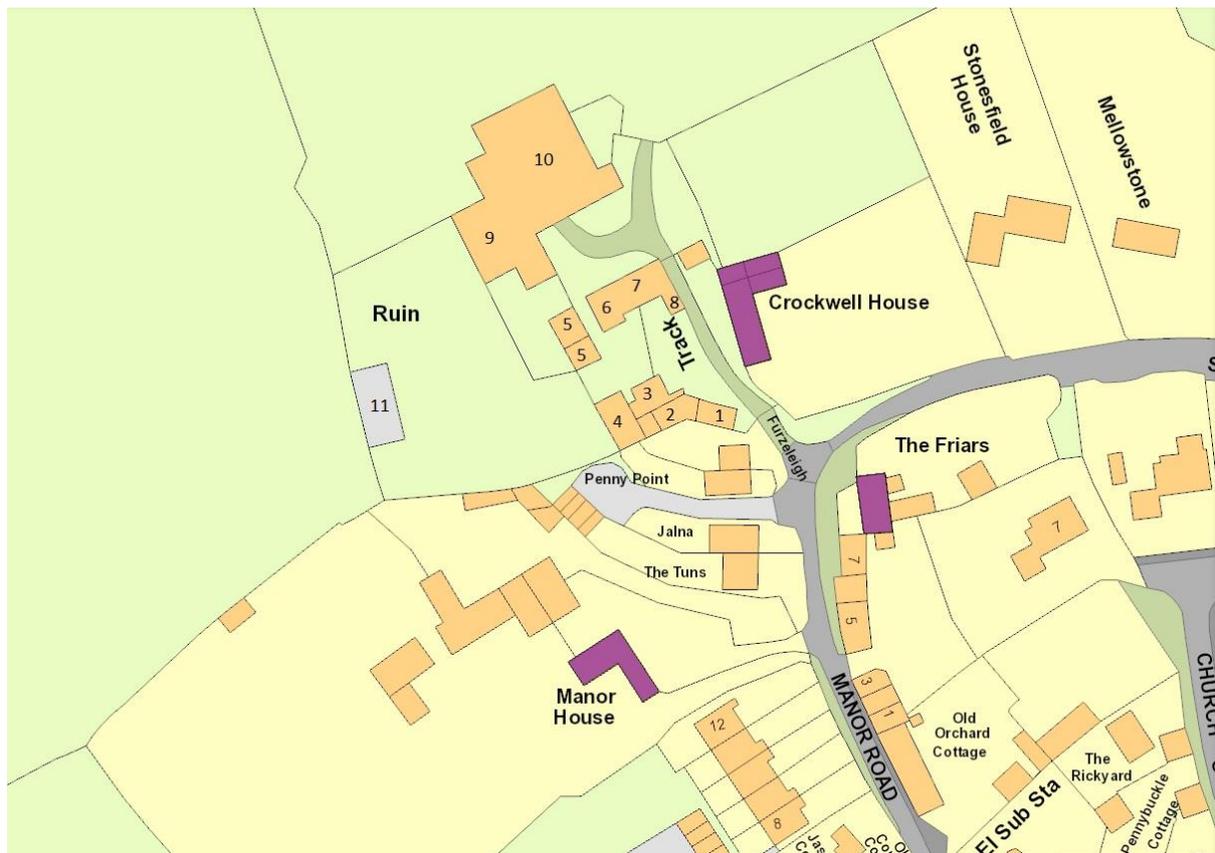


Figure 3: Plan of the farmyard with the building numbers included, after Soden 2016. The farmhouse, Manor House and The Friars are also shown; all three are Grade II listed.

1.2 Sources and methods of the study

The proposed development of buildings 1-4 is shown on Blake Architects Ltd's drawings 20.08.02-03, 07-08, 10-13, and 3D visualisations. The site and village were visited on 29 April 2020 to examine and assess the historic character and values of the site, and its relation to the village. The nature and extent of the proposed development was examined, and its potential impact on heritage assets was assessed in detail. The weather was overcast with some rain (heavy at times), but also some sunny intervals. The photographs used in this report were taken during the site visit unless otherwise stated.

Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd prepared a detailed survey of the farmyard buildings for the 2016 planning application (Soden 2016). This provides a catalogue of the outbuildings and an assessment of their heritage value. The report provides a valuable description of the character of each individual

⁴ This should now refer to Historic England.

building and does not need to be repeated here. The buildings are therefore summarised in part 2.2 of this document, and the 2016 report should be referred to for further details. The building numbers used in the 2016 report are followed here.

Other research for this report included consultation of various sources such as the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (via the Heritage Gateway), the National Heritage List, the Historic England Archive, historic mapping, and published or archival sources such as the Victoria County History,⁵ all referenced as necessary in the report. A search of the online Britain from Above collection of early aerial photographs did not reveal any photographs of the site,⁶ and unfortunately the Covid-19 crisis precluded examination of the Historic England aerial photography collection.⁷ These might have been useful in confirming the detailed chronology of the farmyard in the inter-and post-war years of the 20th century, but the historic Ordnance Survey mapping is sufficient to confirm whether buildings were erected before or after 1948 (an important date in listed building legislation). A full set of historic Ordnance Survey maps for the site was purchased for this project via Groundsure. A selection of the maps is used to depict the development history of the site in section 2.1 of this report. The online resource England's Places was also checked: this contains digitised/scanned versions of all the historic photographs formerly housed in the 'Red Boxes' at the Historic England Archive.⁸ Two photographs of the farmhouse are included, both from 1962; there are none of the farmyard and its buildings.



Figure 4: A photograph of the farmhouse in 1964 from the Red Boxes. Contrast with Figure 5.

⁵ C Colvin, J Cooper, N H Cooper, P D A Harvey, M Hollings, J Hook, M Jessup, M D Lobel, J F A Mason, B S Trinder and H Turner, 'Parishes: Great and Little Bourton', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 10, Banbury Hundred*, ed. Alan Crossley (London, 1972), pp. 175-184.

⁶ www.britainfromabove.org.uk

⁷ The Historic England Archive closed in mid-March 2020 and remains so at the time of writing, mid-May 2020.

⁸ The photographs themselves can now be seen by appointment only, having been removed to full archive storage conditions. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/>



Figure 5: Crockwell Farmhouse today.

The author is a professional archaeologist with 39 years' continuous experience, most of it in senior roles. He is the Cathedral Archaeologist for Rochester, Salisbury, Christ Church (Oxford) and Blackburn. He carries out archaeological assessments, historic building surveys and heritage statements across England at a wide variety of locations and types of site, on both ecclesiastical and secular sites. He is a fully member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA) and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

1.3 Designated heritage assets

Blenheim Palace (Woodstock) is the nearest World Heritage Site to Laurels Farm farmstead, but at c 27km to the south it has no relevance to this Heritage Statement. There are no Scheduled Monuments (designated archaeological sites), registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historical Significance or Registered Battlefields within 1km of the farmyard. The site of the Battle of Cropredy Bridge (NHL 1000008) is 1.5km-1.75km to the east and south-east, but as Soden pointed out it "has no bearing on the farmyard nor does the farmyard relate to the battlefield in any way). Neither is discernible from the other". There are several listed buildings in the village of Great Bourton, including of course the farmhouse (NHL 1215873). Two others are nearby: The Friars (NHL 1215931) and Manor Farmhouse (NHL 1285875). All three were listed on the same day (8 December 1959), at Grade II. The list description for the farmhouse is included in Appendix 1. In summary, it is of late 17th-century date, built of ironstone ashlar (dressed masonry) under a steeply pitched slate roof. The village of Great Bourton is not a Conservation Area.

2 Crockwell Farm: development and buildings

2.1 Historical summary⁹

The bedrock geology at Crockwell Farm is shown as the Dyrham Formation - Siltstone and Mudstone, Interbedded. This formed approximately 183 to 191 million years ago in the Jurassic Period, in a local environment dominated by shallow seas. No superficial (drift) deposits are recorded.¹⁰ The farmyard is on the north-west edge of Great Bourton, on ground which slopes southward towards the village centre. Modern steel-framed buildings at the north end of the yard occupy the edge of a flat paddock; the ground then falls away to the north and west, so that this part of the site has commanding panoramic views.

The village of Great Bourton lies c 5km (3 miles) north of Banbury, the major market town in North Oxfordshire. The village is the largest settlement in the civil parish of Bourton. Great Bourton had a recorded population of 614 in the 2011 Census. The parish was merely a chapelry of Cropredy village, its near-neighbour to the east, until the late 19th century when it gained its independent status, and Bourton does not appear separately in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The Church of All Saints was originally of 13th-century date but was almost entirely rebuilt in 1863 by William White; the lychgate and bell tower at the south-west corner of the churchyard were also by White, of 1882. Great Bourton was evidently an ancient settlement, with 121 inhabitants assessed for the poll tax in 1377. The place-name - *tun* by a *burh* - first occurs between 1209 and 1212, with the full Great Bourton in 1265. Ironstone and thatch were the main building materials in the village, although many of the older buildings have been repaired or added to in brick and blue slate, and thatched roofs are now rare. The church occupies a central position in the village, and its tall 19th-century belfry and vaulted gateway dominate the village street.

2.2 History and date of the farmyard buildings

The agricultural land at Great Bourton was the subject of inclosure under a private act of Parliament in 1777; the award was signed in 1778. Unfortunately there does not appear to be a Tithe award, perhaps because of the village's subservient position to Cropredy. The earliest useful historic map is therefore the 25inch to one mile (1:2500) Ordnance Survey edition of 1882. This shows all buildings then present.¹¹ Further 25inch editions followed in 1900 and 1922, but there was a hiatus from then until the next large-scale map was published in 1972. Fortunately a 6-inch (1:10,560) edition of 1955 fills the gap, although the smaller scale inevitably means that the buildings on any given site are not shown in as much detail. The accuracy, however, is still good. Extracts from the Groundsure-sourced copies of all these editions, as well as those of 1989 and 2003 (1:1250 mapping), are provided on the following pages. Short commentaries in the captions describe points of interest for the site's historic development. Reference should also be made to the building numbers from the Soden 2016 report, as shown on Figure 3.

⁹ Source: VCH, note 5.

¹⁰ Information from the British Geological Survey <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?>

¹¹ In most cases the maps were published between one and three years after they had been surveyed, sometimes longer. The dates provide a useful 'shorthand' for the timeline of development at the farm despite this slight lag.

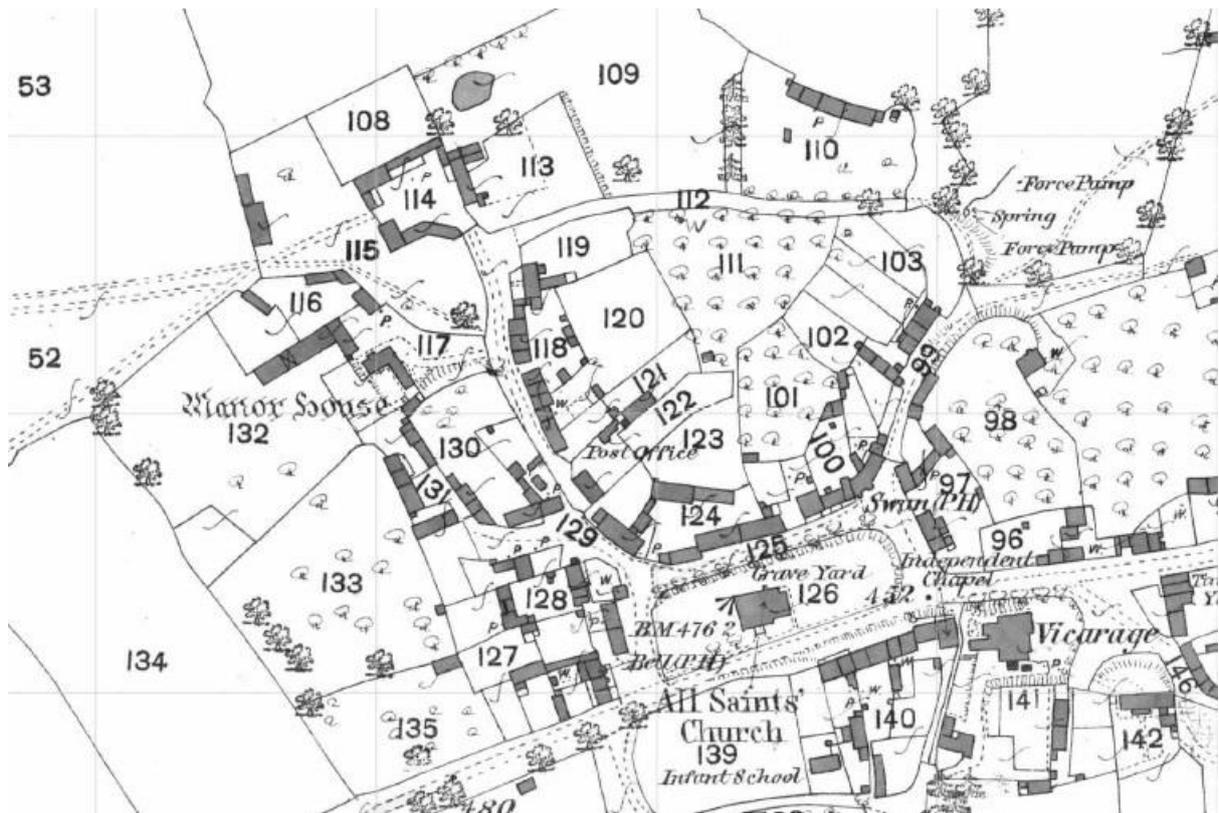


Figure 6: The 1882 OS 1:2500 map. Crockwell farmyard is shown around the number 114, with the farmhouse on the east (right) and buildings 1-3 to the south. The buildings to the north are not those extant here today, except possibly for part of building 5. The rest are of completely different plan and layout. Several of them are also clearly of modern materials (see below). Building 11 (or a structure on its site) is also shown.



Figure 7: The OS 1900 1:2500 map. No changes but note the dotted line to the front of building 2 – this confirms that it was open-fronted. Note also the tone showing the extent of the village settlement.

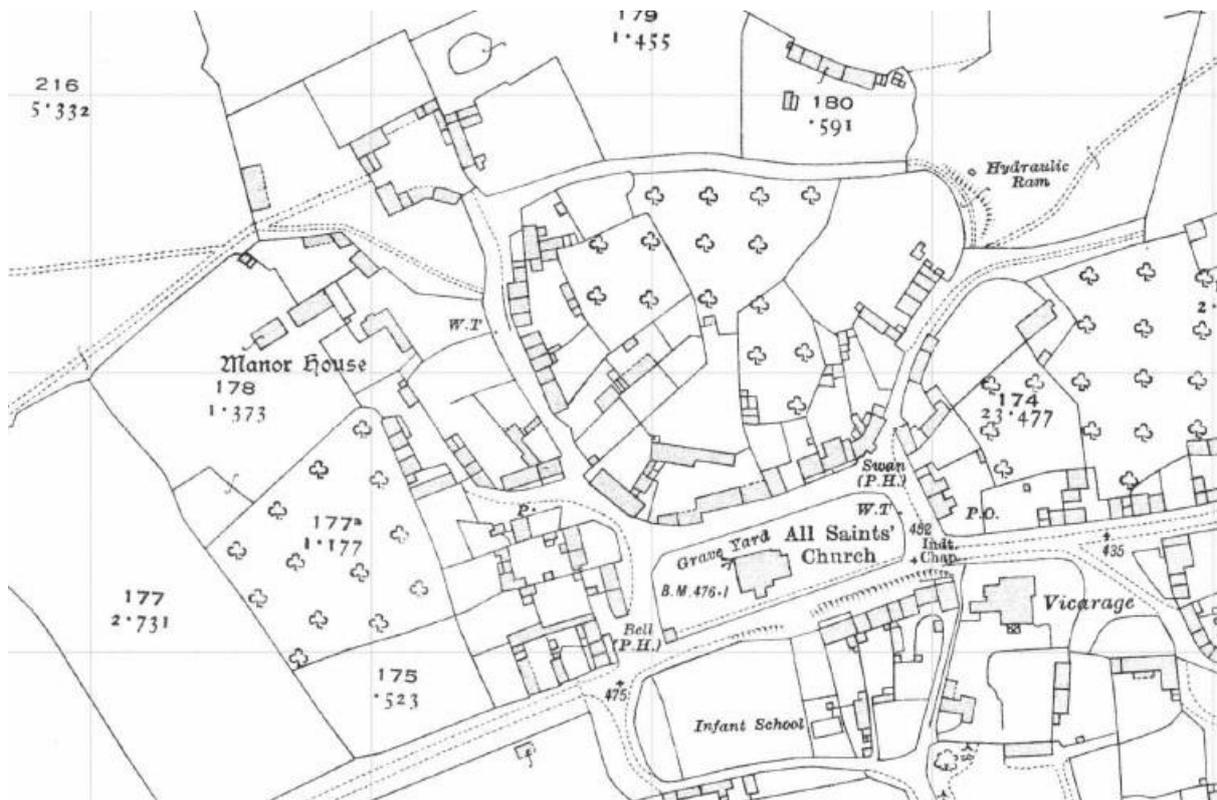


Figure 8: The OS 1922 1:2500 map. The north half of building 11 is no longer shown, but this is the only change in the farmyard. Indeed the village as a whole had changed very little in 40 years.

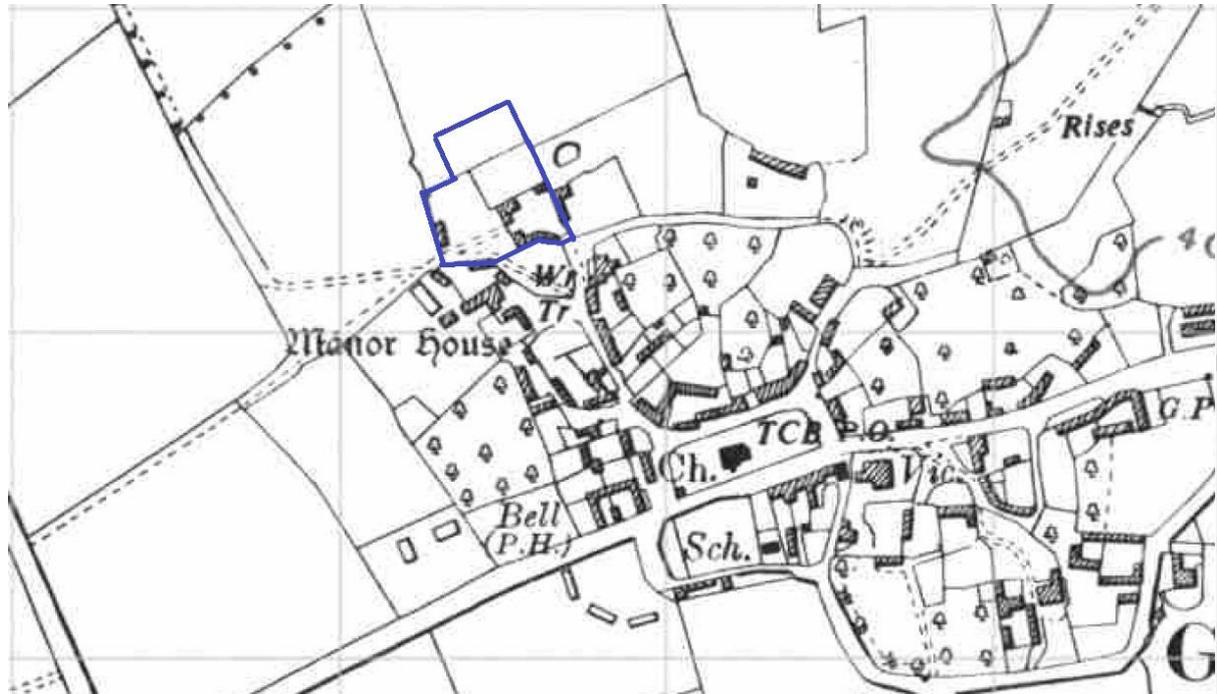


Figure 9: The 1955 1:10560 OS edition, site outlined in blue. Even at 6 inches to the mile it is clear that very little had changed at Crockwell Farm. The central and east parts of the building range on the north side of the yard had evidently been demolished, but the garage next to the farmhouse was still in place. A few new buildings are shown in the village, in open outline (under construction?).

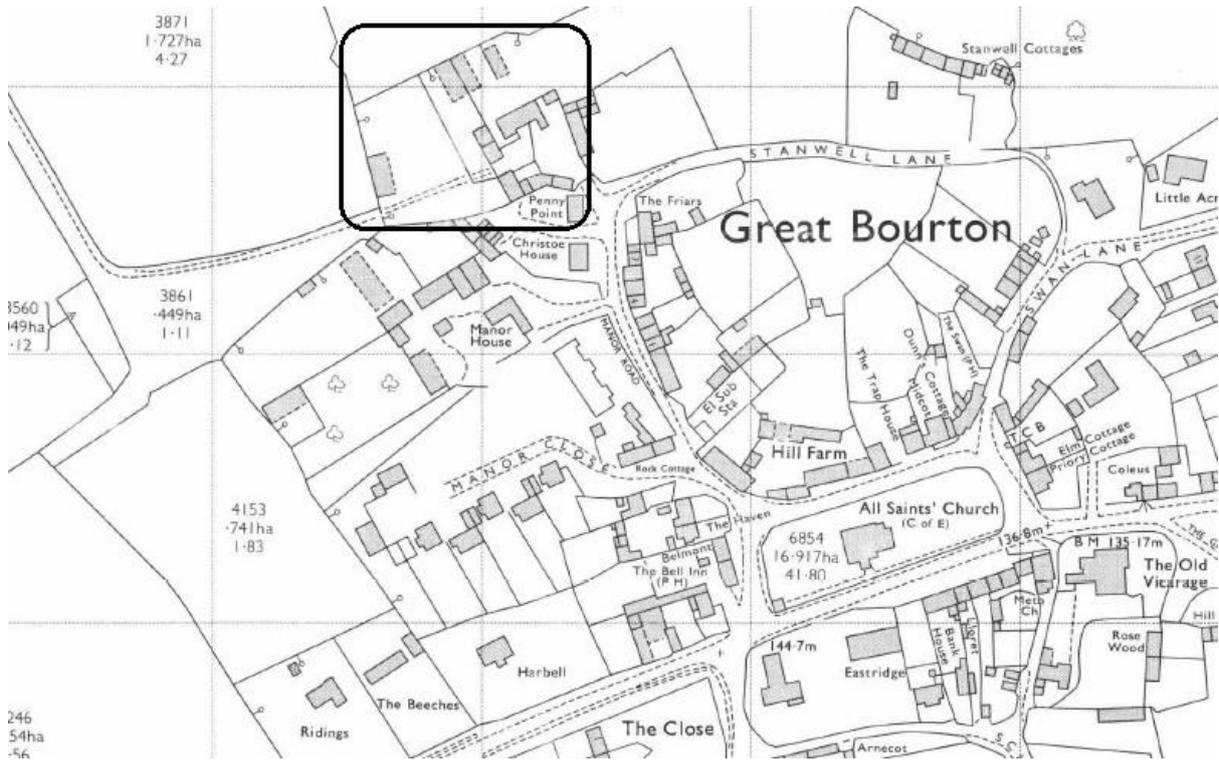


Figure 10: The OS 1972 1:2500 map, site outlined. Major changes had taken place at Crockwell Farm. Building 5 is shown in its current form, but the old range on the north side of the yard has been demolished in full and replaced with new buildings. The farmyard has also been extended north, with new buildings: the dotted outline shows that these were open 'Dutch' barns.

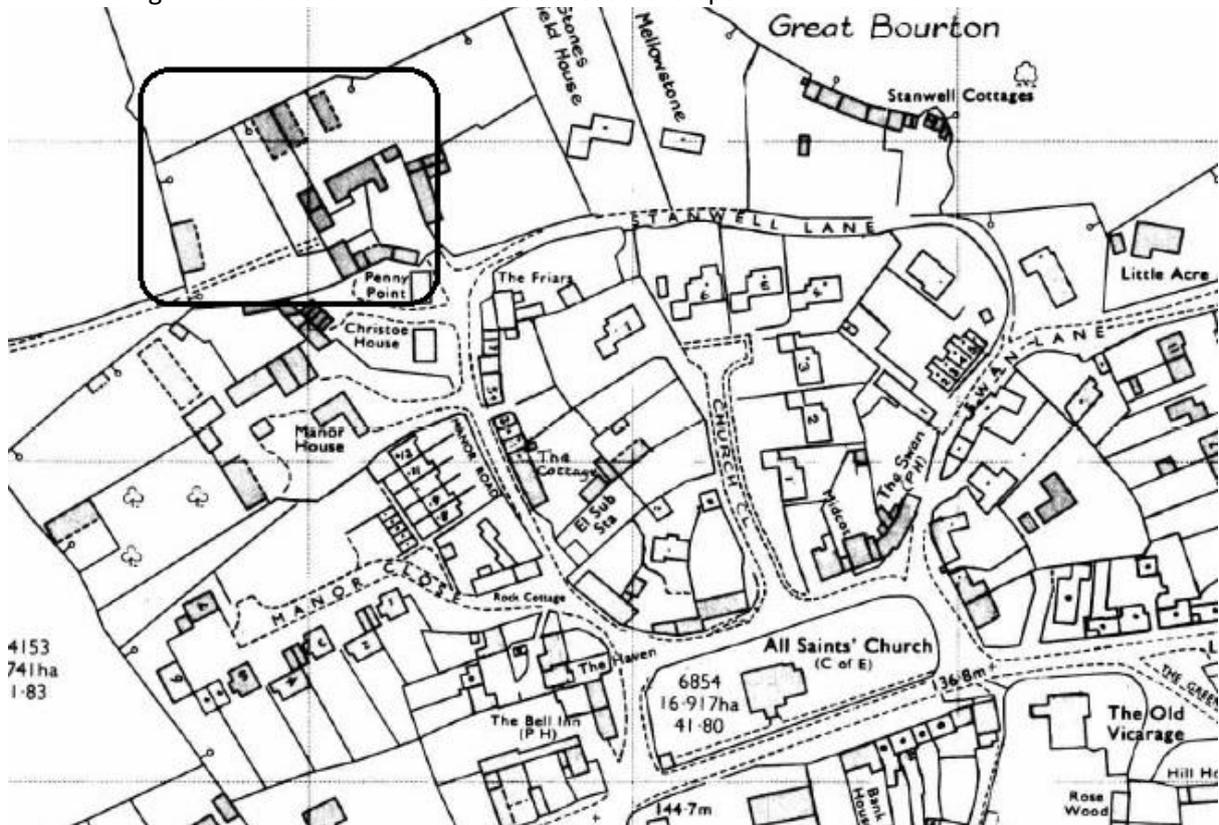


Figure 10: The OS 1989 1:2500 map, site outlined. Crockwell Farm is unchanged. This map shows an increasing pace of new housing development within the village, started after World War II and evident on both the 1955 and 1972 editions.



Figure 13: Google Earth images from 2009 (above) and 2017 (below) show the dramatic pace of decline in the largely abandoned outbuildings. In the earlier photograph building had lost its roof 6 in full, but only the north end of building 11 was unroofed. By 2017 its roof had gone completely, and the interior had been invaded by greenery.

2.2 The fabric of the barns

The historic maps demonstrate that the buildings in the farmyard fall into two categories. A number of structures pre-dating 1948 survive in various stages of decay. Most of these are clearly identifiable on the 1882 OS map (there is some uncertainty over the age of building 5). The rest only appear after the 1955 OS map, and are predominantly of obviously modern construction and/or materials. The first group would fall within the category of curtilage listing if the farmyard was still in the same ownership as the farmhouse. The second group clearly would not, as they post-date 1 July 1948. Section 1(5)(b) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 therefore would not apply to these modern structures. The following table briefly summarises the character and date of all the farmyard

buildings, using Soden's 2016 catalogue allied to our own assessment of the historic map evidence. Photographs then illustrate the buildings individually or in groups.

Bldng	Date	Character/materials
1	Pre-1882	Open-fronted cart shed of three bays, ironstone rear, gable and dividing walls; late 19 th /early 20 th -century roof structure, modern roof covering and floors. The layout is pre-1948 but much of the detailing is later.
2	Pre-1882	Continuation west of building 1, part of same structure and with the same construction character. OS maps confirm that it was open onto the yard. Layout pre-1948 but much of the detailing is later.
3	Post-1972	Ramshackle addition on north side of building 2, a mixture of recycled timbers and sheet metal. Physically and visually intrusive.
4	Pre 1882: may be late C17	Large barn/shed, formerly open to the yard, ironstone ashlar similar to the farmhouse so possibly contemporary. Modern roof as with buildings 1-2. Brick infill to east and concrete floor inside are modern, the floor of 1962 (date scratched into the concrete when still wet)
5	Part may be pre-1882	Walls partly of ironstone rubble with later additions in brick to both the north and south halves. Modern (post-1948/1955) roofs. Buildings are shown here in the early OS editions but with a different configuration – only shown in current plan from 1972. West wall and other elements may pre-date 1882 but building is largely later than 1948.
6	Part may be pre-1882	Roofless ruin, partly ironstone walls, partly replacement brick. Smaller building on similar footprint shown on early OS maps, but like 5 only shown in current plan from 1972. May incorporate elements of the earlier building but much altered and in very poor condition (has deteriorated since 2016).
7	Post-1955	Animal pens, modern blockwork and concrete floor under corrugated metal roof. Replaced narrower building on same site. First shown on 1972 OS map.
8	Post-1955	Small two-room building off SE corner of 7, modern blockwork, concrete floor, corrugated metal roof. First shown on 1972 OS map.
9	Post-1989	Modern steel-framed agricultural shed, haphazard adaptation and conversion. Now derelict. Not shown in this form until 2003 OS map. Much smaller building present 1972-89, but maps and later air photos show that the current structure replaced this rather than incorporating it.
10	Post-1989	Modern steel-framed agricultural shed, contiguous with NE side of 9, used for ad hoc storage. Not shown in this form until 2003 OS map. Two much smaller buildings present 1972-89, but maps and later air photos show that the current structure replaced these rather than incorporating them.
11	Pre-1882	Brick animal shelter at extreme west edge of yard, now completely roofless. On 1882 OS map, character of the brickwork suggests post-1850 date.

Table 1: Summary catalogue of the farmyard buildings at Crockwell Farm

In summary, buildings 1, 2, 4 and 11 certainly pre-date 1948. The first three are the earlier of these, and part of building 4 might be of late 17th-century date. Building 11 lies well to the west of the other yard buildings, and is not included in the current development plans. Buildings 5 and 6 may also retain some pre-1948 fabric, but with extensive later work. They are in very poor condition and incapable of viable/sustainable adaptation or re-use. The remaining buildings all post-date 1948.



Figure 14: Views of building 4 – top, the rear (west) elevation showing ironstone ashlar construction but with some rebuilding in brick; bottom left, the late 19th/early 20th-century roof trusses and modern roof covering over them; bottom right, the date 1962 in the concrete floor. Vegetation is engulfing this elevation – compare with Soden 2016, figure 9.



Figure 15: Views of the 'ramshackle' extension, building 3, in front (north) of building 2.



Figure 16: Buildings 5 (top, looking north-west) and 6 (looking south-east). The latter's condition has deteriorated since 2016 – compare with the same view in Soden 2016, figure 12.



Figure 17: Buildings 7 and 8, front (top) and rear – note the very poor condition of the back wall.



Figure 18: Buildings 9 (top, seen from the south) and 10 (bottom, seen from the north-east).

3 Statement of Significance

This part of the Heritage Statement identifies the significance of the site. The assessment follows standard professional guidance, eg Historic England's Conservation Principles. The primary concern is not simply to say that something is important, but to define and determine a hierarchy of significance – how important is a site or a part of it? A simple sequence of high (national), medium (local/county) and low (slight) or no significance is used, as well as neutral (not important but also does not detract from a site's value) and detrimental (where something has a negative effect on significance) or visually intrusive. These assessments cover the historic, evidential, aesthetic and community values of the heritage asset in question if appropriate.

Statutorily designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings are of national significance. They will usually be defined as having **high significance**, and this certainly applies to Crockwell Farmhouse (grade II listed). It has high values historically due to its late 17th-century date; evidentially as an example of the gradual changes and adaptations that occur in most historic buildings; and aesthetically due to its design quality and materials. The building would benefit from careful conservation (including removal of invasive vegetation) and refurbishment, but that is beyond the reach of this project. The farmhouse has low communal value because it is private property (it will remain so) with no public access; it is not visible at all from the highway (eg Manor Road), and barely so barely from local footpaths.

The farmyard buildings at Crockwell Farm are not listed; only those pre-dating 1948 could have been defined as curtilage listed while they followed the same ownership as the house. The post-1948 buildings could not qualify for curtilage listing. Building 4 appears to be the earliest of the farmyard structures, with buildings 1 and 2 being slightly later. Buildings 5 and 6 might include some early fabric, while building 11 is of mid-19th century date. These structures are of **medium significance** individually and for their group value – historically for their construction dates, evidentially because they demonstrate the development of the farmyard and past refurbishment of it, and aesthetically due to their visually pleasing character and (largely) local vernacular materials. They also have low communal value because they are private and inaccessible. Buildings 11 and 6 are in extremely poor, ruinous and roofless condition, and building 5 is little better. Their condition is clearly **negative**; they are beyond economically viable repair even if they still had potential for farm use, but that is no longer the case. The modern buildings are of **no significance** for any heritage-related values.

Building 3 was described by Soden (2016, 9) as a “ramshackle out-shut formed entirely of re-used railway sleepers, telegraph poles and miscellaneous timbers around original front and wall-plate of Building 2. Covering is a mixture of corrugated iron sheet, Trafford tile sheet and similar re-used sheeting. Sides are equally haphazard”. It might win prizes for ingenuity but not for use of authentic vernacular materials. It is **visually and physically intrusive** on building 2 in particular, as well as on buildings 1 and 4. Historic map evidence demonstrates that it was added after 1972, and therefore is not within the date range for consideration under curtilage listing. The materials used in building the extension are wholly consistent with its modern origin.

The very poor condition of buildings 5-8 is **visually intrusive** upon the setting of the listed farmhouse. The materials, character, function and ‘design’ of buildings 7 and 8 are also harmful to the setting of the farmhouse. The secluded and isolated nature of the farmyard, however, means that the buildings do not have any effect or impact on other nearby listed buildings (eg the Manor Farmhouse and The Friars).

4 Development proposals: impact appraisal

Section 16 of the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework deals with the desirability of conservation and enhancement of the historic environment within the planning process. Preserving or enhancing heritage assets is highlighted. Paragraphs 192-6 deal with the potential for developments to harm a designated heritage asset (such as a listed building) or its setting. Paragraph 196 states that

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

Paragraph 197 deals with non-designated heritage assets. It states that

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

This is reflected in Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell District Local Plan 2011-2031, quoted above.

The proposed development of buildings 1-4 is shown on Blake Architects Ltd's drawings 20.08.02.02-03 (existing site and floor plans), 07-08 (existing elevations) and 10-13 (proposed site and floor plans, and proposed elevations). 3D visualisations have also been prepared. The rendering of masonry on these is generic rather than showing the characteristic ironstone of the local vernacular, but the plans and elevations show that the existing masonry is retained and will dictate the palette of materials for necessary stone replacements or new fabric (eg the stone masonry replacing the 1960s or later brick infill on the east side of building 4). The historic barn buildings (1, 2 and 4) will be retained, refurbished, and converted into a dwelling. Building 3 will be replaced by a new structure comprising a kitchen, utility room and entrance courtyard with timber-clad construction and a corrugated metal roof. It will occupy the same footprint as the modern extension and have the same roof formation, thus ingeniously preserving a memory of agricultural character while meeting modern standards of environmental sustainability and energy conservation. The courtyard element will also open up the true character and visual attractiveness of buildings 1, 2 and 4.

The as-existing and proposed plans and elevations provide a clear demonstration of the work needed to preserve and refurbish the historic buildings so that they are capable of viable and sustainable re-use. The new accommodation will be entirely at ground-floor level. No attempt has been made to introduce a first floor or mezzanine in building 4, the tallest of the barns and the only one where a new floor might have been achievable. The inserted brickwork partition wall across the north end of building 4 will be retained, with the space to its north becoming bedroom 4 of the new dwelling. The low-level brick and blockwork stall to the south of the cross-wall will be replaced with new partitions on the same footprint, but divided internally to create new WC and bathroom facilities. The existing stall is wholly modern (1962 or later) and of no historic interest or significance. The new fabric will retain a memory of its position while also providing essential facilities at this end of the building. The conversion of buildings 1 and 2 also retains the majority of the historic fabric, with new openings to allow access between the new accommodation kept to the minimum necessary for practical living in the spaces. A full-width pair of timber gates and timber screen at the east and west ends respectively of building 2 will be removed to create spacious open-plan living areas in the centre of the dwelling. The roof trusses are retained, re-covered with appropriate materials as necessary. The walls will be insulated internally after necessary conservation. The development will therefore retain the historical character and volume of the buildings intact, which is correct and appropriate - especially for building 4 - while creating excellent living spaces and bedrooms. The external envelope is largely unchanged by the conversion: conservation rooflights are the only new feature on the south elevation, the gables of buildings 1 and 4 are unaltered, and changes to the remaining elevations are largely restricted to new glazing and doors – necessary for use of these largely open-fronted structures. The development

therefore respects the historic character and fabric of the buildings, and treats them sensitively while ensuring that conversion will provide a visually and physically attractive dwelling. The 3D images show this particularly well, even with the generic rendering of masonry.

Landscaping around the buildings has been kept to a minimum, providing small private spaces to the front (north) and both sides. A low-level (600mm) stone wall provides a small area of garden to the north of the angle between buildings 1 and 2, while most of the remaining space will comprise stone paving or granite cobble setts. Two parking spaces will be located to the west of building 4, with a space for visitors and drop-off point to the north-east of the dwarf wall around the small garden. The landscaping is thus discrete and restricted in extent; the 3D visualisations show this very well. It will have a positive impact on the setting of the barns themselves, and on the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse.

The residential conversion of buildings 1-4 is necessary for their retention. They have little prospect of long-term survival if the development does not go ahead, as recognised by the existing outline planning permission. The detailed proposals presented in this application are fully respectful of the buildings' history and visual character but are also inventive and ingenious. They will provide a high quality residence retaining the maximum amount of historic fabric with appropriate new additions architecturally in glazed and clad features. The resulting building will be a major improvement on the current dereliction of the farmstead, and will undoubtedly enhance the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse.

The 20th-century structures (7 and 8, with 5 and 6) on the north side of the core farmyard will be demolished under the existing consent. This will improve the visual character of the site, and thus the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse. It will also improve the outlook of/from the converted barn buildings (1, 2 and 4). The detailed form and design of the replacement dwellings will be the subject of a separate planning application in due course, in accordance with the existing planning conditions.

Demolition of buildings 5-8 is permitted under planning consent 19/00250/OUT (no conditions refer specifically to the necessary demolitions). Drawing No 3561/20E, submitted with the 2019 application, shows the proposed indicative site plan for the development. Building 3 would also be demolished, leaving buildings 1-2 and 4 in their original historic plan form. Paragraphs 8.15 and 8.16 of the planning case officer's report stated that

8.15 A number of the existing buildings on the site are proposed to be demolished under this application, with some of these buildings considered to be curtilage listed. The farm buildings that are proposed to be demolished are in a poor state of repair and are of limited architectural value, with a number of modern interventions and alterations. The applicant has produced an assessment of the heritage value of the buildings,¹² and from reading this and my observations on site it appears to me that the significance of the buildings is primarily derived from their plan form and historic relationship to Crockwell House rather than any particular merit in the fabric and appearance of the buildings themselves. The retention of historic walls would be desirable. However, on the basis of the evidence before me I consider it highly unlikely the buildings would be structurally capable of conversion given their dilapidated state.

8.16 The demolition of these curtilage listed buildings would result in substantial loss or harm and as such the tests of Paragraph 195 of the NPPF must be applied and this was considered under the previous application (then Paragraph 133). It was considered that the nature and condition of these curtilage listed buildings prevents all reasonable uses of the buildings in their current form and that the buildings are no longer useful for modern agricultural working practices and were beyond economic repair. This being the case, it was considered that the

¹² This refers to Iain Soden's report.

second test of Paragraph 195 is also met. The limited architectural and historic value of the buildings in their own right meant that it was considered highly unlikely that grant-funding could be secured to restore these buildings, particularly given the amount of rebuilding and alteration that would be required. Finally, it was considered the application presented an opportunity to bring the site back into a use that, if the development was carried out sensitively, would enhance the setting of the principal listed building. It was therefore concluded that the proposal passed the tests of Paragraph 195 and the harm that would result was justified in this case. The scheme is still extant and I have no reason to go against this judgement.

Building 5, and possibly parts of building 6, might pre-date the 1 July 1948 cut-off for curtilage listing. Buildings 3, 7 and 8 certainly post-date this (as do buildings 9 and 10). They cannot be defined as non-designated heritage assets, and therefore the NPPF tests do not apply to them. Planning permission 10/00250/OUT already allows for the demolition of these buildings (and indeed the pre-1948 ones). It is therefore concluded that the required demolitions are not a planning issue.

5 Conclusions

The Heritage Statement confirms the findings of a previous report (Soden 2016), that the farmyard buildings are of mixed dates ranging from potentially the late 17th century to the later 20th century (post-1948). Some of the buildings – mostly the modern ones but including the historic barn group – are still roofed and capable of rescue/re-use. The modern buildings, however, are at best functional in character and design; at worst they blight the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse. They are not capable of easy conversion for any other use than agriculture, and the farm ceased active use some years ago. Several of the older (eg 19th-century) buildings are ruinous, having already lost their roofs or in imminent danger of doing so. Aerial photography from Google Earth provides dramatic evidence for the rapid (and continuing) decline of their condition. The outline planning permission recognises this. Conversion of the barn group (buildings 1-4) on the south edge of the farmyard will preserve the historically important elements (buildings 1, 2 and 4) while removing a visually intrusive modern outshut extension (building 3). The development will therefore preserve and enhance the significance of the site, as well as substantially enhancing the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse.

The barn range (buildings 1, 2 and 4) is of medium significance as an example of post-medieval to Victorian agricultural buildings. They are of a common type nationally, but with considerable interest as good-quality examples – especially in the context of the listed farmhouse. They are no longer in the same ownership as that building, but clearly their neighbouring status will remain. The buildings have been altered substantially through time (especially in their roofs), and extended northwards (the modern building 3); they are in no better than fair condition (poor in places), and suffer badly from invasive vegetation. Even so they have good visual quality as well as substantial historic interest. Their retention is clearly merited, but they no longer have any viable agricultural function. Residential conversion therefore represents the only means of preserving their heritage significance. This scheme secures their future. Refurbishment and conversion will not cause any harm to the buildings or their significance; on the contrary it will enhance them, as well as enhancing the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse. The new use will provide a viable and sustainable future for buildings which would otherwise be under increasing threat of dereliction and, ultimately, collapse. Therefore the detailed development proposals are commended for planning permission.

Appendix 1: Listed building entry for Crockwell Farmhouse

Statutory Address: **CROCKWELL FARMHOUSE, MANOR ROAD**

Grade II Listed Building, List Entry Number 1215873. Date first listed: 08-Dec-1955

County: Oxfordshire. District: Cherwell (District Authority). Parish: Bourton

National Grid Reference: SP 45536 45685

Details BOURTON MANOR ROAD SP4545 (North side) Great Bourton 17/5 Crockwell Farmhouse 08/12/55

GV II Farmhouse. Late C17. Ironstone ashlar. Steeply pitched slate roof. Stone-coped gables with moulded kneelers, Brick ridge and end stacks. 3-unit plan, 2 storeys plus attic. 3-window range. Entrance off-centre to left has doorway with a moulded stone basket arched head and C20 door. Hood mould with diamond shaped label stops. Entrance is flanked by 3- and 4-light stone mullions. An 4-light similar window to right. Between the floors on the right is a 2-light stone mullioned stair window. First floor has three 3-light stone mullioned windows. Staircase light in attic floor said to have once been gabled. Right gable has 2-, 3- and 4-light stone mullioned windows with hood mould and label stop. Sundial. Interior said to have stop-chamfered beams, inglenooks and original staircase. Interior not inspected. (VCH: Oxfordshire: Vol X. p176)

Listing NGR: SP4553645685

Legacy System number: 401173

Sources: Books and journals - Salzman, L F, *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, (1972), 176