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Gopsall House Farmhouse

Design & Access Statement:

Proposed External & Internal Works to Gopsall House Farmhouse, 15
Bilstone Road, Twycross, CV9 3PP

July 2026

Rev: 01



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Revision History

Revision	Date	By	Checked	Note
01	30.07.2026	CK	--	First Issue

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Date : 30.07.26

Information

This document has been produced to accompany a Planning Application and is to read in conjunction with all drawings and documents submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

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Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared for Jenny & Robert Wright in support of a Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application(s) submitted to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council for proposed works to Gopsall House Farmhouse, a Grade II-listed dwelling located on the outskirts of Twycross, Leicestershire.

This concise statement sets out the design rationale and principles underpinning the proposals, demonstrating how the scheme has been developed in response to the architectural and historic significance of the listed building, its setting, and relevant planning policy. A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared separately by Jane Catterall of Heritage Home and Impact and accompanies this submission; it provides a detailed assessment of the building's significance and the effects of the proposals on historic and non-historic fabric. This Statement should be read alongside the HIA.

Following positive pre-application advice from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (ref: 25/10185/PREHMO), our proposals have been developed into a full planning application and listed building consent application, in collaboration with our consultant design team.

Site & Context

Gopsall House Farmhouse dates from approximately 1740 and the principal dwelling is relatively substantial in size for a domestic rural building. The site in question is an isolated farmstead, with associated outbuildings, set on the outskirts of the village of Twycross.

Design Principles

The proposals have been informed by a conservation-led design approach, underpinned by the following key principles:

- **Preservation of Significance:** Safeguarding the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- **Legibility of Change:** Ensuring that new interventions are clearly identifiable as contemporary additions while remaining respectful and subordinate to the historic fabric.
- **Subordination and Hierarchy:** Maintaining the visual and architectural dominance of the original farmhouse.
- **Reversibility:** Designing new works to be reversible wherever reasonably practicable, minimising long-term impact on historic fabric.

- **Enhancement through Repair and Reinstatement:** Removing or rationalising unsympathetic later additions and reinstating historic features where evidence supports this.
- **Sustainable Long-Term Use:** Enabling the building to function as a comfortable and viable dwelling, supporting its continued conservation.

Design Evolution

The proposals have evolved through a detailed understanding of the building's historic significance, developed alongside our heritage consultant and informed by discussions with the Local Planning Authority through the pre-application process. A number of options were explored with our heritage consultant, with successive revisions reducing the scale and visual impact of the extensions, increasing setbacks from historic elevations, and adopting a lighter architectural language to ensure the listed farmhouse remains the dominant element.

Amount & Scale

The proposed development has been carefully sized to ensure the original Grade II listed farmhouse remains the dominant architectural element on the site. The scale of the new interventions is directly informed by the historic string course of the main building, ensuring the extensions are visually subordinate. To provide clarity on the extent of the works, the following area schedule is provided:

- **Existing GIA (Retained and Refurbished):** 460 sqm.
- **Proposed Demolition (Total GIA):** 62.7 sqm (consisting of the 2017 conservatory, an existing infill, and a brick shed).
- **Proposed New Build (Total GIA):** 149.4 sqm (consisting of Extension 01, Extension 02, and a new glazed infill).
- **Total GIA After Works:** 609.4 sqm.

The net increase in floor area is modest and has been distributed across the site to reveal, rather than obscure, the historic elevations of the farmhouse. Note the areas exclude the porch, terrace areas and basement.

Description of Proposed Works

Replacement of 2017 Conservatory

The replacement of the existing 2017 conservatory has been carefully designed to establish a more appropriate relationship with the listed farmhouse in terms of scale, height, and architectural expression. The height and massing of the proposed replacement are directly informed by the existing string course present on the historic house, which provides a clear and legible datum and ensures that the new structure remains visually subordinate to the host building.

The proposed extension is intentionally set back from the façade of the building. This approach reduces the prominence of the addition in key views and allows the historic form of the farmhouse to remain clearly legible. The replacement conservatory adopts a refined and lightweight architectural language, with an increased proportion of glazing, allowing it to read as a recessive and contemporary intervention when viewed in relation to the historic fabric.

A glazed terrace is incorporated within the form of the extension and is set in from the boundary of the building envelope to minimise its visual impact. A green roof and integrated planting are proposed to soften the appearance of the addition, reduce its perceived mass, and enable it to blend more successfully into the surrounding rural landscape.

Replacement of Solid Rear Courtyard Infill with Heavily Glazed Infill

The existing solid infill within the rear courtyard is non-historic and detracts from the legibility of the original courtyard arrangement. Its replacement with a heavily glazed infill is intended to re-establish visual permeability within the courtyard and to better reveal the historic elevations of the farmhouse.

The proposed glazed infill is designed to read as a lightweight and subordinate intervention, reducing visual mass and allowing the historic fabric to remain the dominant element. The increased use of glazing improves natural daylight internally while maintaining a clear distinction between historic and contemporary fabric.

Side Extension with Glazed Roof Terrace

The proposed side extension has been developed following a detailed analysis of the historic form and evolution of Gopsall House Farmhouse. Its scale and height are defined by the existing string course of the listed building, ensuring a disciplined and proportionate relationship between the historic structure and the new addition.

The extension is set back from the principal façade and located to the rear of the side elevation, adjacent to the historic position of a former outbuilding. This siting strategy has been deliberately

adopted to minimise any impact on the significance of the listed building and to reinforce the established hierarchy of the original form. The positioning allows the primary historic elevations to remain visually dominant and ensures that the legibility of the farmhouse is preserved.

The extension incorporates a recessed, glazed roof terrace that is set back from the edge of the extension to reduce visual prominence. The use of glazing, combined with a green roof and associated planting, creates a lightweight and recessive architectural response. These measures are intended to soften the intervention and enable the proposal to integrate sensitively with the landscape and setting of the listed building.

New Cast Stone Flat Roof Portico

The proposed porch is intended to replace an existing timber structure. It is proposed to instate a porch which will be relatively plain but provide cover through a proportional design that sits comfortably with the building. The stone will align with the window sills to the elevation.

Internal and External Alterations

Internal and external alterations are proposed to both historic and non-historic fabric. Interventions to historic fabric are limited, carefully justified, and focused on repair, reinstatement, and improved functionality. Alterations to non-historic fabric provide greater flexibility, allowing later additions to be rationalised and the overall coherence of the building to be improved.

All proposed works have been informed by a detailed understanding of the building's development and significance, as set out in the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment.

New Driveway Track to Historic Front Entrance

The proposal will reinstate the prominence of the historic front elevation, which has fallen out of use in recent years due to access being primarily from the rear. It is proposed to construct a new access driveway from Bilstone Road. The new track makes use of an existing track as shown within the architectural plans.

The new tree lined driveway forms part of a wider strategy to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the building's historic setting and approach.

The proposed track has been sensitively designed using appropriate materials and detailing, reinforcing the historic hierarchy of the site and the legibility of the principal entrance, without introducing suburban or overly engineered elements. Please refer to accompanying Transport Statement for further information regarding the new access and driveway.

Extensive New Landscaping

As well as the new tree lined driveway, the proposed landscaping includes a new orchard, kitchen garden, inner courtyard, tree avenue, garden terraces, and hedgerow boundaries which forms part of the overall strategy to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the building's historic setting. Please refer to Landscape Architects Drawings for proposed trees and hedgerows and boundary treatments.

Proposed Materials

The selection of materials for the proposed works has been informed by a detailed analysis of the existing farmhouse and its historic fabric, with the aim of achieving a sensitive and high-quality relationship between the listed building and the new interventions.

The new extensions incorporate large areas of glazing, employed to create a lightweight and recessive architectural character. The extensive use of glazing reduces the perceived mass of the additions, allows historic elevations to remain visually prominent, and reinforces the legibility of the original building form. Glazed elements are carefully detailed and set back where appropriate to minimise their visual impact and to ensure a clear distinction between historic and contemporary fabric.

Masonry elements to the new extensions are proposed in carefully detailed brickwork, drawing direct inspiration from the existing monk bond found on the historic house. While clearly contemporary in execution, the brickwork references the proportion, texture, and rhythm of the original construction, allowing the new work to respond positively to the listed building without resorting to pastiche.

Green roofs and integrated planting are proposed to the flat roof elements and terraces, further softening the appearance of the extensions and enabling them to blend more effectively into the rural landscape. All materials will be specified to complement the colour palette and material quality of the existing farmhouse, with samples and detailed specifications to be agreed at the appropriate stage.

Required Repair Works

Repair works are proposed as part of the overall works to secure the long-term sustainable use of the farmhouse.

The existing electrical installation has been observed to be approaching the end of its service life and does not meet current safety standards or modern regulatory requirements. The entire electrical installation is proposed to be fully replaced by a qualified electrician. This will include all wiring, sockets, switches, distribution boards, and associated components, with certification provided upon completion.

The existing heating and hot water systems have been observed and confirmed as approaching the end of their service life. The hot water calorifiers in the loft space appear to be approaching end of life as is the boiler located in the GF store. Heat emitters appear dated and are approaching the end of their service life. The hot water and heating system is proposed to be fully replaced as part of wider refurbishment works programme. Consideration will be made to introduce sustainable systems as part of such replacements to reduce energy use.

Impact on Heritage Significance

The proposals have been designed to preserve the significance of Gopsall House Farmhouse and, in several respects, to enhance its architectural clarity and setting. The removal or replacement of unsympathetic later additions, combined with the reinstatement of historic features and access arrangements, is considered to result in an overall heritage benefit.

Please refer to the Heritage Impact Assessment.

Access Strategy (Vehicular & Inclusive)

The access strategy for the site addresses both vehicular safety and internal inclusive design:

- **Vehicular Access and Highway Safety:** As outlined above, a new driveway track is proposed from Bilstone Road to reinstate the prominence of the historic front entrance. In accordance with Policy DM17 and the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG), the proposed access provides visibility splays of 2.4m x 215m in both directions, as shown on Drawing 1768-P213-A. While these splays meet the maximum requirement for a 60mph national speed limit road, a 7-day ATC speed survey contained within the accompanying Transport Note confirms that actual 85th percentile speeds at this location are lower. This data justifies a reduced requirement of 168m (east) and 187m (west); therefore, the 215m splays provided represent a significant safety enhancement beyond the technical minimum. The new electronically operated gates are set back 5.0 metres from the highway boundary to ensure vehicles can pull safely off the road, and they do not open towards the highway.
- **Inclusive Access:** A primary design objective is to ensure the long-term viability of the home for users of all mobility levels. Central to this is the installation of a new feature helical stair with an integrated glass lift, providing full level access between the ground and first floors.
- **Emergency Access:** The new driveway is designed with appropriate widths and will have the load-bearing capacity to accommodate emergency service vehicles.

Sustainability & Biodiversity

The proposals integrate modern environmental standards to ensure the building's sustainable long-term use:

- **Sustainability:** The project includes the full replacement of end-of-life electrical and heating systems with modern sustainable systems to significantly reduce the building's energy consumption.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):** In accordance with Policy DM6, the project is designed to achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. This will be delivered through extensive native landscaping, including a new orchard, kitchen garden, and hedgerow boundaries, as well as the use of green roofs on the new extensions.

Waste Storage & Collection

Gopsall House Farmhouse is an existing residential property and benefits from established refuse and recycling collection arrangements.

The proposals do not seek to alter the existing use of the property or its established refuse and recycling arrangements. Accordingly, refuse and recycling collection will continue to operate as existing, with no additional servicing requirements arising as a result of the proposed development.

Planning Policy Context

The proposals have been developed in accordance with:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with particular regard to Section 16
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council local planning policies relating to heritage assets and high-quality design

The scheme seeks to fulfil the statutory duty to preserve the listed building and its setting, while enabling appropriate and well-designed change.

Supporting Technical Documentation

This Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the full suite of technical reports submitted with this application, which provide further detail on the design constraints and justifications.

Conclusion

This Statement demonstrates that the proposed works at Gopsall House Farmhouse have been carefully considered and sensitively designed in response to the building's listed status, historic significance, and rural setting.

The project represents a high-quality, conservation-led approach that moves beyond simple domestic extension to provide a holistic enhancement of the site.

By removing unsympathetic later additions, such as the 2017 conservatory and the solid courtyard infill, the proposals re-establish visual permeability and reveal the historic elevations of the farmhouse that have long been obscured. The new interventions are designed to be visually subordinate, with scales and heights strictly informed by the building's historic string course, ensuring the original farmhouse remains the dominant architectural element.

Beyond heritage benefits, the scheme secures the long-term sustainable use of the building through the full replacement of end-of-life electrical and heating systems with modern sustainable alternatives. The commitment to an inclusive design is further evidenced by the installation of a new helical stair and integrated glass lift, ensuring the home is accessible for users of all mobility levels.

Furthermore, the access strategy provides a significant safety enhancement to the local highway network. By achieving visibility splays of 2.4m x 215m, the design exceeds the technical requirements justified by actual speed survey data, providing a substantial safety buffer for vehicles entering Bilstone Road. Combined with the delivery of a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain through extensive native landscaping and an orchard, the project represents a proactive and responsible response to the local environment.

In summary, the proposals fulfill the statutory duty to preserve the listed building and its setting while enabling the necessary, well-designed changes required for a viable family home.



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