

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

on behalf of Mr B Williams

Change of use of agricultural buildings to commercial (E(g)) and storage/distribution (B8), with access, parking, landscaping, and barn alterations including roof increase, recladding, and new openings

Land at Hill Farm, Fenn Lanes, Fenny Drayton

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For and on behalf of Brown&Co.

Brown&Co is a leading provider of agency, professional and consultancy services across the whole range of rural, commercial, residential, and agricultural markets.

Date: October 2025

Reference: 062676

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Brown&Co to support a full planning application submitted on behalf of Mr Williams for the raising of the roof and installation of new doors and windows to an agricultural barn and ancillary car parking to support the part implemented change of use to flexible commercial use at Hill Farm, Fenn Lanes, Fenny Drayton. Although the change of use has an extant permission, the proposed alterations to the existing barn have resulted in changes to the car parking layout and therefore the description of development includes all other works as part of the original permission for completeness.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to set out the background to the applicant's proposals and the key planning issues raised by them. The statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2:** describes the physical characteristics of the **site and its surroundings**;
 - **Section 3:** outlines the **proposed development**;
 - **Section 4:** summarises the national and local **planning policy context**;
 - **Section 5:** provides a **planning assessment** of the key considerations raised by the proposal; and
 - **Section 6:** sets out in brief our overall **conclusions** on the proposal.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Planning application forms;
- Site Location Plan (25.027.L0101_P1)
- Site Plan As Existing (25.027.S0001_P1)
- Plans As Existing (25.027.S0011_P1)
- Elevations As Existing (25.027.S0012_P1)
- Site Plan As Proposed (25.027.K0001_P1)
- Site Plan As Proposed Detail (25.027.K0002_P2)
- Plans As Proposed (25.027.K011_P1)
- Elevations As Proposed (25.027.K0012_P1)

2. Site and surroundings

Site Description

- 2.1 The application site comprises of an irregular-shaped parcel of land and agricultural buildings located to the east of Fenny Drayton. The focus of this application however is on the agricultural barn located within Hill Farm to the east of the site. Access to the site is taken from Fenn Lanes. The barn is located adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building "Hill Farmhouse", occupied by the Applicant's family.



Figure 1 – Photographs of the barn as existing

- 2.2 Fenny Drayton is classified as a Rural Hamlet approximately 1.7 miles east of Witherley, 6-mile northeast of Hinckley and 4.4 miles from Nuneaton. Public transport services include a two hourly bus service, to Wetherley, which further connects to Nuneaton and Measham. The site is half a mile away from borough's biggest existing employment site, MIRA on Watling Street in Higham on the Hill.
- 2.3 The barn is currently used for agricultural storage associated with the wider farmyard. Permission was granted in 2024 for the change of use of two agricultural buildings into a flexible commercial use (use classes E(g) and B8) as well as an additional area to the south of the barn to be used for open storage (B8). This permission has been commenced and is extant, with the diverted access route now complete.

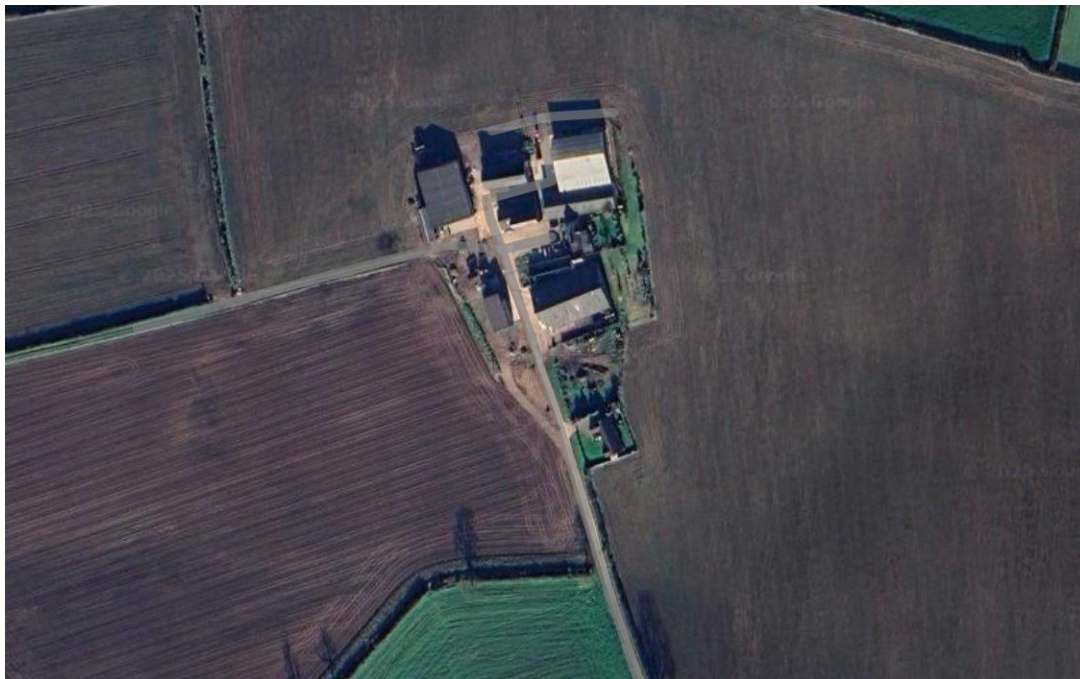


Figure 2 – Satellite image of the site

Flood Risk

- 2.4 The application site is in Flood Zone 1 and there is no risk of surface water flooding, as shown in the Figures below.

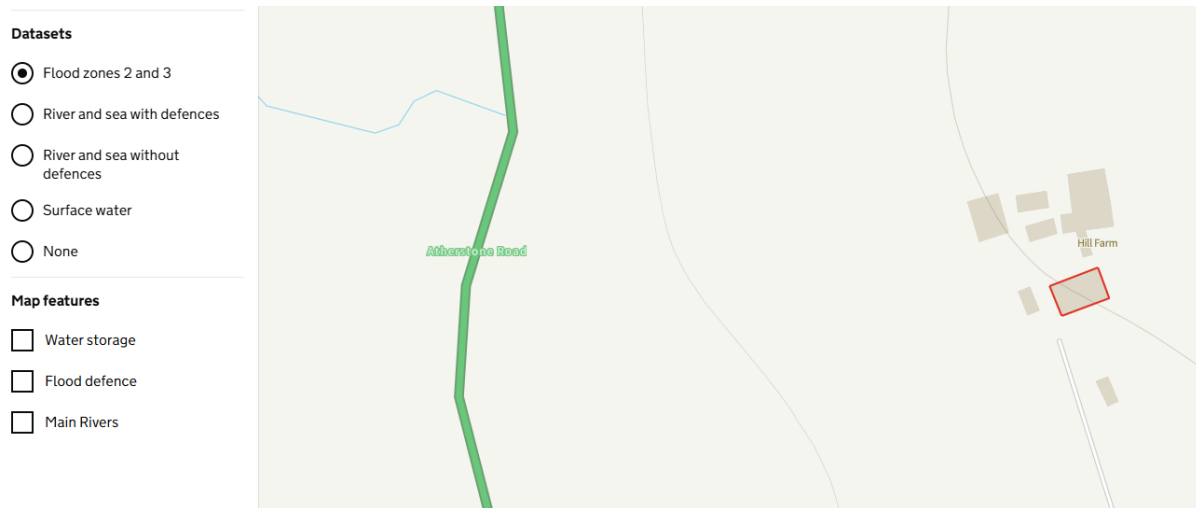


Figure 3 – Flood Risk Map (Gov.uk)

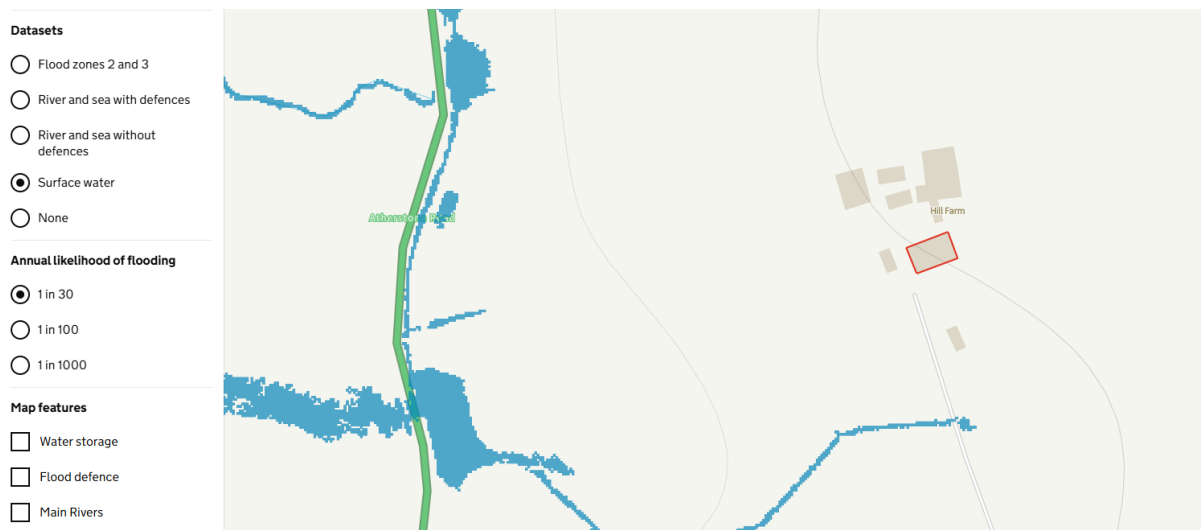


Figure 4 – Surface Water Flood Risk Map (Gov.uk)

Vegetation and Boundaries

- 2.5 The barn is situated within an established farmyard at Hill Farm, which is characterised by a mix of agricultural buildings, hardstanding areas, and functional infrastructure. Vegetation within the immediate vicinity of the barn is limited, reflecting the operational nature of the farmyard environment.
- 2.6 To the north, the barn is enclosed by a range of agricultural buildings associated with the wider farm operations. To the west lies Barn 2, which forms part of the approved commercial conversion scheme. To the south is an area of grass currently used for farm-related storage, beyond which lies a bungalow. To the east, the barn is bordered by a maintained grassed area and hedgerow, forming part of the garden curtilage of the listed Farmhouse.

Access and Parking

- 2.7 Access to the barn will continue to be taken via the existing track from Fenn Lanes, which will serve the commercial site, whilst the implemented diverted track will serve both the

farmhouse and wider farmyard. This established access point has been used safely for many years without issue.

- 2.8 As approved under the 2024 permission, the farmyard provides sufficient space for vehicle parking, manoeuvring, and servicing to meet the requirements of the flexible commercial uses. The proposed alterations to the barn, including the repositioning of doors, necessitate an update to the parking layout.

Planning History

- 2.8 The farmstead has various planning history dating back to 1977, as outlined below:

77/00831/4M – Erection of farm building – Approved 26/07/1977

79/00477/4 – Erection of agricultural building – Approved 30/05/1979

95/00208/FUL – Agricultural building – Approved 16/05/1995

07/00543/GDO – Extension to agricultural building – General Development Order 14/06/2007

11/00525/LBC – Alterations to listed building – Approved 15/09/2011

21/00245/AGDO – The proposed building is to be a steel portal framed structure for agricultural use – General Development Order 22/03/2021

21/00325/LBC – Replacement of 2 external doors in a Grade II Listed Building – Approved 05/05/2021

23/01172/FUL – Change of use of agricultural buildings and associated hardstanding to flexible commercial/business use (Use Class E(g) and storage and distribution (Use Class B8), including diversion of access road, ancillary car parking, landscaping, and other works – Approved 19/04/2024

24/00667/CTPO - The attached sketch plan for the "TPO Fenn Lanes MAP Section 1" outlines several issues with the Ash tree. The tree has a weak fused union with fungal brackets, which needs to be reduced by 3 meters. The tree has also fallen to ground level and is leaning towards the road. The tree has major deadwood present in its crown, which needs to be removed and reduced to an 8ft habitat pole. The tree has a weak union at its base, which needs to be reduced by 3 meters. The tree has a canker present, with defects on its main stem, which needs to be removed and reduced to a 6ft habitat pole – Recommendation Only 24/07/2024

24/00675/DISCON - Application to discharge condition 3 (Written Scheme of Investigation) for planning application 23/01172/FUL – Partial Discharge of Conditions – 07/08/2024

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of an agricultural buildings and associated hardstanding to flexible commercial/business use (Use Class E(g)) and storage and distribution (Use Class B8), together with alterations and enhancements to an existing barn at Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton. The proposed works include:

- Raising the roof height of the barn by 2.5 metres;
- Installation of new brown corrugated polyester powder coated cladding to the external walls;
- Introduction of new windows and doors to enhance the functionality and visual appearance of the barn;
- Reconfiguration of the approved parking layout to reflect the repositioning of barn doors and to ensure efficient servicing of the site.

3.2 These alterations are designed to improve the quality, commercial viability, and long-term sustainability of the barn within its farmyard context.



Figure 5 – Photograph of the barn as existing in relation to the Farmhouse

- 3.3 The barn has previously been granted permission for change of use to commercial (Class E (g) and Class B8) under application reference 23/01172/FUL. Following approval, the applicant has discharged the sole pre-commencement condition relating to archaeology and has commenced hard landscaping works on site in accordance with the approved plans.
- 3.4 The proposed works aim to enhance the visual character of the building within the wider farmstead, improve the attractiveness of the unit to potential commercial tenants by increasing the internal height and deliver a cohesive appearance consistent with the wider site. As a result of these alterations, it has become necessary to update the parking layouts associated with the three potential commercial options, as required under conditions 6, 7 and 8 of the extant permission (23/01172/FUL), which are set out as follows.

Condition 6: No part of the development hereby permitted that falls within Use Class B8 (General Industrial) as defined within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) shall be brought into use unless the parking arrangements as set out within the Proposed Site Access Arrangements K0008 P1

(submitted: 15.03.2024) have been provided in full. Once provided, these should be maintained and available for use in perpetuity.

REASON: To ensure that adequate off-street parking provision is made to reduce the possibility of the proposed development leading to on-street parking problems locally (and to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward direction) in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

Condition 7: *No part of the development hereby permitted that falls within Use Class E(g) (Commercial, Business and Service) Research and Development, as defined within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) shall be brought into use unless the parking arrangements as set out within the Proposed Site Plan (Phase 2a) K0004 P2 (submitted: 15.03.2024) have been provided in full. Once provided, these should be maintained and available for use in perpetuity.*

REASON: To ensure that adequate off-street parking provision is made to reduce the possibility of the proposed development leading to on-street parking problems locally (and to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward direction) in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

Condition 8: *No part of the development hereby permitted that falls within Use Class E(g) (Commercial, Business and Service) Light Industry, as defined within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) shall be brought into use unless the parking arrangements as set out within the Proposed Site Plan (Phase 2b) K0006 P2 (submitted: 15.03.2024) have been provided in full. Once provided, these should be maintained and available for use in perpetuity.*

REASON: To ensure that adequate off-street parking provision is made to reduce the possibility of the proposed development leading to on-street parking problems locally (and to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward direction) in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

3.5 It is suggested that the same conditions be imposed, relating to the revised parking layouts which utilised the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide, in relation to the revised parking layouts following the alterations to the existing barn. See below in Figures 6 and 7 the revised parking layout for the B8 Use following the alterations to the barn. Revised layouts are also provided for the Class E(G)(ii) Research & Development and Class B2 Light Industrial uses.



Figure 6 – Site plan as proposed (existing permission – B8 Use)



Figure 7 – Site plan as proposed (this application – B8 Use)

4. Planning policy context

- 4.1 Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise¹. The development plan is, therefore, the starting point for the assessment of all planning proposals.
- 4.2 The Government's planning policies, as set out in the latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), are also a significant material consideration in deciding planning applications. For the purposes of this proposal, the Development Plan comprises the Hinckley & Bosworth Development Plan, of which the policies of relevance to the proposal are set out below.

Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan to 2026

- 4.3 In Hinckley and Bosworth, the Development Plan (2006-2026) currently comprises the Core Strategy (2009), Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD, along with Supplementary Planning Documents. For the purposes of this proposal, the Development Plan comprises the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan 2026, of which the policies of relevance to the proposal are set out below.

Core Strategy

Policy 13 (Rural Hamlets) identifies Fenny Drayton as a Rural Hamlet and sets out that in Rural Hamlets, development will be confined to infill housing, local choice schemes and conversion of agricultural buildings to employment uses.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD

Policy DM1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) sets out that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy DM4 (Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation) states that development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where the proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting or it significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses.

Policy DM10 (Development and Design) confirms that developments will be permitted provided that the requirements are met relating to amenity, character of the surrounding area, use and application of building materials, landscaping, energy, parking, drainage, and natural surveillance.

Policy DM11 (Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment) sets out that all development proposals with the potential to affect a heritage asset or its setting will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, the impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset and its setting, measures to minimise or avoid these impact, how the benefits outweigh the harm, and any impact on archaeology.

¹ Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

Policy DM12 (Heritage Assets) states that all development proposals affecting heritage assets and their setting will be expected to secure their continued protection or enhancement, contribute to the distinctiveness of the area in which they are located and contribute to the wider vibrancy of the borough.

Policy DM20 (Provision of Employment Sites) confirms that development for new employment site will be supported where they stand within settlement boundaries or on previously developed land.

Emerging Policy

- 4.4 The new Local Plan to 2045 is under preparation and at the time of writing is being updated to reflect the updated NPPF (December 2024) with an aim for adoption in 2027.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.5 The Government's planning policies, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), are also a significant material consideration in deciding planning applications. The NPPF was revised in December 2024 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The paragraphs relevant to the proposed development are as follows:

Paragraph 8 explains that there are 3 objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The economic objective requires planning to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy and foster growth. The social objective clarifies that planning should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring a sufficient number of houses are built to meet current and future needs. The environmental objective states that planning should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.

Paragraphs 10 & 11 state that at the heart of the planning system lies a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 12 reaffirms that the planning system is plan-led, and planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, but proposals that depart from the plan may be supported if material considerations in a particular case indicate the plan should not be followed.

Paragraph 39 states that, with regards to decision-making, Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 55 states that planning conditions should not be used to restrict national permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so.

Paragraph 85 clarifies planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 88 under the section "Supporting a prosperous rural economy" the Framework states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all

types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. They should also enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Paragraph 89 clarifies planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

Paragraph 116 states development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Paragraph 207 outlines that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including 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.

Paragraph 208 sets out that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking into account the available evidence and any necessary expertise.

Paragraph 210 confirms that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 215 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.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.6 Originally published in March 2014 this provides continuously updated practical guidance that explains statutory provisions and the planning system.

5. Planning assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The principle of development for the change of use of the barn and associated hardstanding to flexible commercial/business (Use Class E(g)) and storage/distribution (Use Class B8) has already been established and approved under planning permission 23/01172/FUL. This current application seeks to build on that consent by incorporating modest external alterations to the barn and associated revisions to the approved parking

layout, required as a direct result of the repositioning of doors and the enhanced design of the barn.

- 5.2 It is acknowledged that the application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and is therefore located in the countryside in planning policy terms. However, the site forms part of a long-established farmyard at Hill Farm, which has historically accommodated agricultural operations and, more recently, has begun transitioning into a rural employment hub, following the grant of planning permission for commercial use of the barn (application ref: 23/01172/FUL).
- 5.3 The proposal is consistent with Policy 13 (Rural Hamlets) of the Hinckley & Bosworth Core Strategy, which supports the conversion of agricultural buildings to employment uses in Rural Hamlets such as Fenny Drayton. The proposed works involve improving an already-approved commercial unit, raising the roof height by 2.5m and enhancing the external appearance with new cladding and fenestration to ensure it is fit-for-purpose for future tenants.
- 5.4 The scheme also aligns with Policy DM4 (Safeguarding the Countryside) in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. This policy supports the re-use and extension of existing rural buildings where development enhances the site's appearance or significantly contributes to job creation, economic growth, or rural business diversification – all of which apply in this case.
- 5.5 Furthermore, the proposal contributes to the sustainable use of rural land without requiring new-build development or the loss of greenfield land. The improvements will facilitate the building's continued viability as a commercial space, supporting rural employment, and enhancing the character of the existing farm complex. While countryside protection policies remain important, Paragraphs 85 and 88 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) recognise the need to support economic growth and rural diversification, highlighting that planning decisions should *"help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt."* Significant weight is to be placed on the development of rural businesses, particularly those involving the re-use of existing buildings, such as the proposal here.
- 5.6 From a heritage perspective, Hill Farmhouse (Grade II listed) is located nearby and forms part of the visual and historic context of the site. However, the proposal has been carefully designed to preserve the farmhouse's setting, using sympathetic materials and scale. The accompanying Heritage Statement confirms that any impact on the significance of the listed building is less than substantial, and is clearly outweighed by the public and economic benefits of the scheme, in line with Paragraph 215 of the NPPF and Policies DM11 and DM12.
- 5.7 In the context of the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph's 10-11), the proposed works support all three dimensions of sustainability. Economically, the proposal will improve the commercial viability of an existing barn, supporting rural employment opportunities. Socially, the proposal promotes local enterprise and ensures efficient re-use of existing built form. Environmentally, the proposal enhances the visual appearance of the farmyard and avoids encroachment into the countryside.
- 5.8 In conclusion, the principle of development in terms of the change of use to flexible commercial use has already been accepted, and has only been included for completeness. The proposed alterations and updates to the parking layout are considered acceptable and consistent with both local and national planning policy. The proposal represents a

sustainable and positive form of development in a rural location that will contribute to the continued success and diversification of Hill Farm as a rural business hub.

Visual Amenity and Impact on the Countryside

- 5.9 Due to the site's location within an established farmyard, and its close functional and visual relationship with surrounding agricultural and commercial activity, the proposed alterations to the existing barn will not result in any material harm to the character or appearance of the local area or wider countryside. The modest increase in roof height and use of external materials are in keeping with the rural context. Furthermore, the proposed landscaping enhancements, as shown on the submitted site plan, will help to soften views of the development and further integrate the building into its surroundings, ensuring a visually acceptable and well-contained scheme. The refined parking layout will not impact on visual amenity.

Amenity

- 5.10 Given its location within an established farmyard and the existing approved flexible commercial use of the building, the proposed alterations will not result in any adverse impacts on residential amenity or the amenity of the wider locality.
- 5.11 The proposal will not result in any unacceptable overshadowing or loss of sunlight or daylight to neighbouring properties, including Hill Farmhouse to the north of the barn. The existing barn is positioned at a lower ground level, approximately 1.5 metres below the ground floor window of the farmhouse, and sits around 9 metres away. Currently, the eaves are level with the centre of the hallway window, as shown in Figure 7. By increasing the height of the barn by 2.5m, the building would accord with the 25 degree rule. Accordingly, the development will not give rise to any unacceptable overshadowing or loss of daylight or sunlight. It must be noted that the window identified by a yellow star in the figure below is not a habitable room as it is used for storage.



Figure 8 – Photograph showing the relationship between the farmhouse and the barn

- 5.12 In addition, there are no windows proposed on the southern elevation, thereby preventing any potential overlooking on the bungalow to the south. Importantly, a disused barn lies between the application site and the farmhouse, which the applicant intends to reconstruct in the future, providing a further physical and visual buffer between the two buildings.
- 5.13 The revised parking layouts remain contained within the hardstanding areas of the farmyard, ensuring that vehicle movements and activity are consistent with the site's established commercial character and do not impact neighbouring properties. Overall, the proposed development will not result in any loss of amenity to the occupants of Hill Farmhouse or the bungalow to the south.

Highways & Access

- 5.14 The proposal will not create an increase in traffic movements, as they will be operated in line with the original permission.
- 5.15 As approved under the 2024 permission, the farmyard provides sufficient space for vehicle parking, manoeuvring, and servicing to meet the requirements of the flexible commercial uses. The proposed alterations to the barn, including the repositioning of doors, necessitate an update to the parking layout. The revised plans demonstrate that appropriate provision will be made in accordance with the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide. The updated layout retains flexibility for the three potential commercial options

approved under the extant consent. It is suggested that the same conditions be used as under the extant permission.

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 5.16 The application site is in Flood Zone 1 and therefore the proposal is acceptable in flood risk terms and will have no adverse impacts on drainage.

Biodiversity

- 5.17 The proposal has no adverse impact on biodiversity nor protected species and there is no requirement to provide 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

Heritage Assets

- 5.18 The site is not within a conservation area. The nearest listed building is within the farmstead, a Grade II Listed Farmhouse “Hill Farmhouse”.

6.0 Heritage Statement

- 6.1 Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”

- 6.2 Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.
- 6.3 As part of this assessment, heritage assets have been identified by reviewing the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).
- 6.4 The application site is not located within a Conservation Area, however it lies immediately to the south of a Grade II listed building (Hill Farmhouse). Given its proximity and visibility, Hill Farmhouse is the only designated heritage asset considered to be potentially affected by the proposed development. This assessment therefore focuses on its setting and significance.

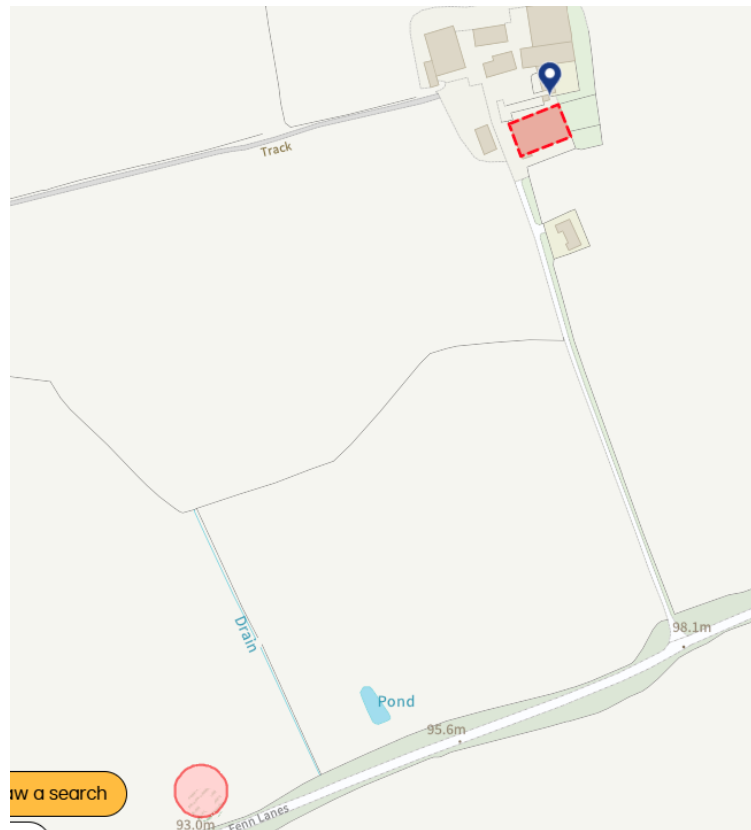


Figure 9: Heritage List Map (Source: Historic England)

Heritage Assets

- 6.5 Significance is described by the NPPF (2024) as “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest”. Planning Practice Guidance further clarifies that significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 6.6 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out a statutory duty for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 6.7 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF 2024 confirms 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. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF 2024 sets out in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Hill Farmhouse

- 6.8 Hill Farmhouse was first listed on 10th August 1989 and is Grade II listed under reference number 1074189. The listing description states the following:

“Farmhouse. Late C18. Red brick, slate roof and brick ridge stack to right of centre and end stack to left. 3 storeys with toothed eaves course; reduced proportions to second floor. Regular 3-window front; 3-light casements with segmental heads to ground and first floors. On the second floor the 2 outer windows are blind but painted in imitation of glazing bar casements. Door to right of centre with rectangular overlight and bracketed hood.”

- 6.9 Hill Farmhouse is of special interest as a well-preserved example of late 18th-century rural domestic architecture, listed for its architectural merit. Although historically part of a working farm complex, its historic setting has been compromised by the introduction of modern agricultural buildings. Consequently, the farmhouse's heritage significance is primarily experienced at close range, within the immediate farmstead.



Figure 10: Photograph of Hill Farmhouse

- 6.10 Hill Farmhouse retains significance for its historic fabric and modest architectural detailing. While it contributes positively to the character of the immediate area, its contribution to the wider village context is limited due to distance, modern development, and topography

Bowl Barrow at Fenny Drayton

- 6.11 Bowl Barrow is a Scheduled Monument, first listed on the 7th July 1952. The listing description states the following:

“The monument at Fenny Drayton includes a substantial earthwork barrow and is situated alongside the Roman Mancetter Road 0.5km east of Fenny Drayton.

The barrow is roughly round measuring 25m in diameter at the base and about 2.5m high with a flat top measuring 8m across. There is no evidence for a surrounding ditch.”

- 6.12 Bowl barrows, the most numerous form of round barrow, are funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age, with most examples belonging to the period 2400-1500 BC. They were constructed as earthen or rubble mounds, sometimes

ditched, which covered single or multiple burials. They occur either in isolation or grouped as cemeteries and often acted as a focus for burials in later periods. Often superficially similar, although differing widely in size, they exhibit regional variations in form and a diversity of burial practices. There are over 10,000 surviving bowl barrows recorded nationally (many more have already been destroyed), occurring across most of lowland Britain. Often occupying prominent locations, they are a major historic element in the modern landscape and their considerable variation of form and longevity as a monument type provide important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisations amongst early prehistoric communities. They are particularly representative of their period and a substantial proportion of surviving examples are considered worthy of protection.

- 6.13 The barrow at Fenny Drayton survives well and is one of the few barrows in Leicestershire which still exists as an earthwork.
- 6.14 The bowl barrow is a historic earthwork located around 500m from the application site. The barrow is not easily evident in the wider landscape from long range. From shorter range, when viewed from Fenn Lanes for example, several farmsteads and the village of Fenny Drayton are perceptible. The setting of the barrow is derived from its rural location.
- 6.15 Given its distance, screening, and lack of visual or functional relationship with the site, the proposed development will have no adverse impact on the setting or significance of the Bowl Barrow

Impact of the Application Proposal

- 6.16 The listed building, 'Hill Farmhouse', is deemed to be the most sensitive heritage asset in this assessment due to its proximity to the application site and the potential impacts the proposal could have on its setting.
- 6.17 Visually, the barn is already visible from Hill Farmhouse and forms part of the established farmyard context. The proposed increase in ridge height (2.5m) will introduce a slight change in scale, but this is mitigated by the presence of a dilapidated barn between the two structures which the Applicant intends to restore. This will provide a further visual barrier between the barn and the listed Farmhouse. Additionally, the topography of the site, with the farmhouse situated higher on the hill, means the increase in height of the barn will not result in overbearing on the listed Farmhouse.
- 6.18 The second aspect of the proposal, the cladding, new windows and doors will improve the setting of the heritage asset by modernising the barn to match that of the other existing barns within the farmyard. Special attention has been given to the design and appearance of the building, with a dark brown cladding to match that of the various existing barns within the farmyard. Landscaping under the previous change of use permission (23/01172/FUL) including hedgerow and tree planting will help soften views from wider vantage points.
- 6.19 In terms of determining the level of harm, it is important to consider whether the harm represents "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" to the identified designated heritage assets in the context of paragraphs 214 and 215 of the NPPF.
- 6.20 The NPPF requires at paragraph 215 that where a development proposal would 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 securing its optimum viable use.

- 6.21 In accordance with the NPPF, the proposed works are considered to cause less than substantial harm to the significance of Hill Farmhouse. This level of harm is outweighed by the proposals intention to support the rural economy, enabling the sustainable reuse of existing buildings, and enhancing the visual quality of the farmyard.
- 6.22 In conclusion, the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Hill Farmhouse and no harm to the Scheduled Monument at Fenny Drayton. The limited impact on Hill Farmhouse is appropriately mitigated through sympathetic design, material choice, topography, and landscaping. Furthermore, the public benefits, notably rural economic development and enhancement of the built environment, outweigh the identified harm, satisfying the tests set out in the NPPF. The application is therefore considered compliant with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and relevant heritage policy in the NPPF (2024).

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 This application seeks permission for the change of use of agricultural buildings and associated hardstanding to flexible commercial/business use (Use Class E(g)) and storage and distribution (Use Class B8), together with alterations to an existing barn at Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton. The proposed works include a modest increase in roof height, installation of new cladding, windows and doors, and a revised parking layout to ensure the scheme functions effectively.
- 7.2 The principle of development has already been established through the grant of permission under 23/01172/FUL. This current application simply builds upon that approval by introducing modest design improvements and a necessary reconfiguration of parking. It is requested that the same conditions previously used in the extant permission be reused here to allow for flexibility.
- 7.3 The proposal supports the re-use and upgrade of an existing rural building and will improve the building's functionality, appearance, and attractiveness to potential tenants. In doing so, it aligns with Policy 13 of the Hinckley & Bosworth Core Strategy, and Policies DM1, DM4, DM10, and DM20 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, all of which support sustainable rural development, high-quality design, and rural economic diversification.
- 7.4 The proposal has been carefully designed to respect the site's rural context and its proximity to Hill Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building. The accompanying Heritage Statement demonstrates that any impact on the setting of this heritage asset would be less than substantial, and is clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme, in accordance with Paragraph 215 of the NPPF.
- 7.5 In line with Paragraphs 85, 88, and 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the development supports the sustainable growth and diversification of rural businesses, recognising that such opportunities may arise beyond defined settlements and should be supported where sensitively designed. The proposal also contributes positively to the environmental quality of the site and promotes sustainable development by re-using existing built fabric.
- 7.6 Accordingly, in the planning balance, any limited harm that may arise from the modest physical alterations is not considered to significantly or demonstrably outweigh the substantial economic and environmental benefits. The proposal is fully consistent with national and local policy objectives to support a prosperous and sustainable rural economy, and therefore, planning permission should be granted.