

Heritage, Home and Impact

Gopsall House Farmhouse

Heritage Impact Assessment



Prepared in relation to proposed external and internal works to Gopsall House Farmhouse, 15 Bilstone Road, Twycross, CV9 3PP

Jane Catterall BA, MA, MSc

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced to support a submission for works proposed in relation to Gopsall House Farmhouse, a Grade II-listed dwelling set on the outskirts of Twycross, within the district of Hinkley and Bosworth. The purpose of this document is to assess the impact of the proposal on the listed building and to establish the suitability of the proposed scheme, with a focus on protection and preservation of significance, character and integrity.

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. Its history however is intertwined with the former Gopsall Hall, a grandiose stately home set in a vast estate which fell into disuse and ruin before its subsequent demolition in 1951.

Gopsall House's legacy is as a Dower House to a lost estate but it has developed into a family home and part of the contemporary rural community within the district. The intention of this proposal is to ensure that the fate of Gopsall Hall remains a sombre footnote of Gopsall House Farmhouse and this heritage asset is secure in its occupation and protection, both at present and in the future. The scheme of works are intended to not only retain character and significance but also restore and better reveal elements of importance through contemporary additions and sensitive alterations.

The works included in this proposal include

- Replacement of 2017 Conservatory
- Replacement of solid rear extension with glazed infill
- Side addition with glazed link
- Internal alterations including formation of en-suite and dressing rooms to both first and second floor and removal of non-original staircase
- Installation of a new front vehicular access

This document will first establish relevant the Legal and Policy information, both national and local, before considering the significance and history of the heritage asset. The works will then be reviewed with a consideration of impact and suitability, both in terms of principle and design. This Heritage Impact Assessment will aim to weigh the balance of the proposal in terms of potential impact, the prospect to safeguard a future for the heritage asset and the opportunity to better reveal the significance and character of Gopsall House Farmhouse.

This document follows on from encouraging Pre-Application advice from Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council and the scheme which has been progressed is considered to align with those positive recommendations.

Overall, upon review of the proposal and as will be established in this document, it is considered that the impact to the building will be neutral, with positive elements in regard to improved energy efficiency, and that the works will be in accordance with local and national policy. It is considered that disturbance to historic fabric will be low, the heritage asset and its setting will be maintained and that the works will ensure a continued future for

an important piece of local heritage, meeting contemporary needs without compromising historic character and significance.

2.0 Legal and Policy

There is a large amount of national and local policies which have been determined as relevant to this proposal. These policies will be listed below to enable a greater understanding and referenced within the wider document.

- Section 66 of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Section 20 of the NPPF August 2026
- Policies DM10, DM11 and DM12 of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Local Plan
- The Good Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council 2020
- Historic England Guidance including 'GPA1: Local Plan Making' (Published 25th March 2015), 'GPA2: Managing significance in Decision-Taking in the historic Environment' (Published 27th March 2015), 'GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition Published December 2017) and 'HEAN18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency'.

3.0 Gopsall House Farmhouse Considerations

3.1 Gopsall House Farmhouse overview

Gopsall House Farmhouse is an isolated farmstead, set on the outskirts of the village of Twycross, with historic connections to the Gopsall Hall estate. Believed to have been constructed in approximately 1740, it is noted in the listing description as a 'Dower House' to the former Gopsall Hall, which was demolished in 1951.

The building was listed on 10th August 1989, 38 years after the demolition of Gopsall Hall, at the same time as a number of farmhouses in the area, including Manor Farmhouse, Lagos Farmhouse and Bilestone Hill Farmhouse. The closest heritage assets to Gopsall House Farmhouse are 3A Bilstone Lane, the Pump southwest of 3A Bilstone Lane and the remains of the Garden Temple nr Gopsall Hall Farm and all were listed 7 years later on the 26th November 1996.

The surrounding heritage assets have little association with Gopsall House Farmhouse, with the exception of the Garden Temple as this was also part of the former Gopsall Hall Estate. The Garden Temple was believed to have been constructed in 1767 and ruined in 1835, though many of the original stones are still located around the site. This heritage asset is often cited as the location in which Handel is said to have written "The Messiah" however this is much disputed due to discrepancies in dates. Whilst a reflection of the grandeur of the estate, it also considered to have little connection to Gopsall House Farmhouse, which is a distinct site with its own individual character.

Gopsall House Farmhouse is a building of red brick construction, laid in a Monk bond which consists of alternating double stretchers and single headers, with a central projecting section with a pediment which has a circular window set in the tympanum. The fenestration to the front elevation is comprised of two storeys and an attic, with the two storeys consisting of three bays to the central section, flanked either side by a single bay. To the attic, two flat dormers are set to either side of the pediment.



The building has elements of the 'Queen Anne' style in its decorative, Palladian-derived arrangement of a central pediment, flanked by dormers with symmetrical bays and its red brick construction. It is noted however that the decorative elements are almost entirely in brick, with the only use of stone to the sills, resulting in a comparatively modest building when compared to the overwhelming grandeur of Gopsall Hall which was to be built only ten years later.

The windows are six-over-six sashes however no original sashes survive, having been replaced by the Crown Estate in the twentieth century. The oeil-de-boeuf window to the tympanum appears to be historic with a historic cover. The historic principal elevation has a timber trellis porch with low lead roof, the age of which is unknown however it is considered to be a later addition as it does not sit comfortably with the building, set low over the door, disrupting the symmetry of the façade.

The building was put up for auction in 1927, with the details below taken from the archives held by the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland.

Lot 225

First Class Stock Rearing Farm lying compactly between the Twycross/Bilstone Road and Gopsall Park.

The Superior Farm House of a very attractive design is double fronted and of brick and tile construction. It is well placed in the centre of the holding and has the following accommodation:

Ground Floor: Hall, Dining Room, Drawing Room, small Sitting Room, Front and Back Kitchens, Large and Small Pantries, Dairy

First Floor (approached by two staircases): Five Bedrooms

Second Floor: Five good sized attics suitable for use as bedrooms. 2 E.C.s, 3 Pumps

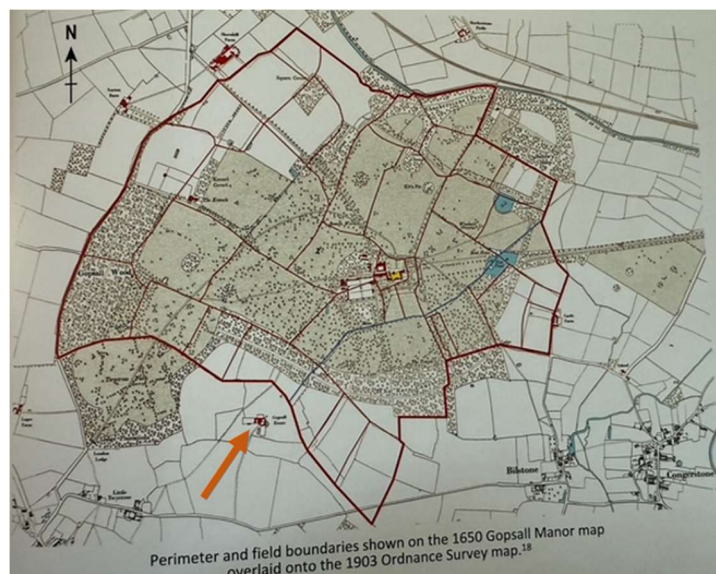
Lawn in front and kitchen garden at side of House

Excellent buildings chiefly of brick and tile.

The building was noted as being used as a stock rearing farm, with the outbuildings consisting of sheds for young beasts, pig pens, pig sties, a goose pen, a cowshed for 18 as well as a cowshed for 6 and a 5 bay open wagon hovel. The plot was 200 acres and was being farmed by Messrs W.F. Lord and H Brown. The lot was actually withdrawn from this sale and ended up in the ownership of the Crown, alongside Gopsall Hall itself. In the late twentieth century, the Crown Estate sold the ownership of the site to the family of the applicant, who have occupied the site throughout the majority of the twentieth century and seek to continue to do so throughout the twenty-first.

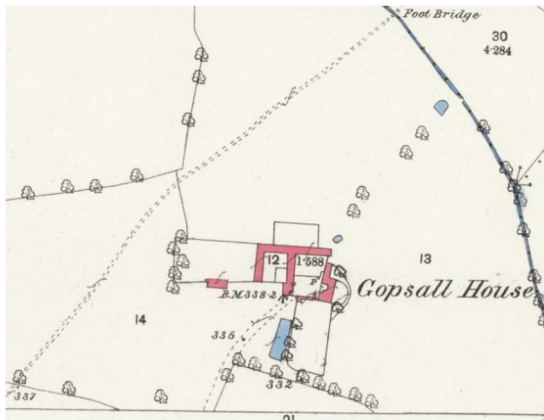
3.2 Gopsall House Farmhouse Site Development

Gopsall House Farmhouse is set to the south of the former Gopsall Estate. It lies outside the boundaries of the 1650 Gopsall Manor map, as noted on the estate map below with a red line, overlaid on a 1903 OS map, with the Farmhouse indicated by an orange arrow (upper image). The building date of 1740 would indicate that the architect was Charles Jennens Snr, the then owner of Gopsall and the father of Charles Jennens Jr who refurbished and redeveloped Gopsall Hall into the grandiose stately home of memory. The 1835 Map (lower image) shows a historic access to Gopsall House Farmhouse, leading from the front elevation to a road which proceeded to a west access to Gopsall Hall. This access to the front of the farmhouse was no longer visible on OS Maps from 1888 onwards, with the sole access being to the rear through the farmstead. The loss of this access resulted in a shift in daily importance from the historic principal elevation to the rear elevation which became the primary entrance to the house. This loss of usage to the front elevation was reflected in internal alterations which will be discussed in the following section.

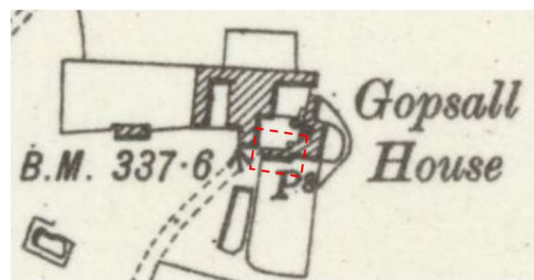
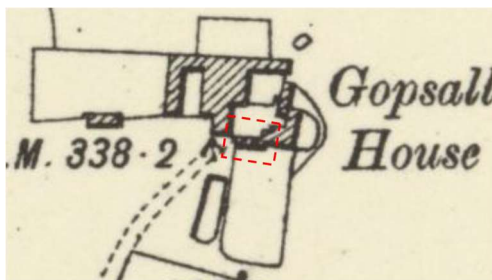


The below OS map and photograph highlight that the relocation of the site entrance resulted in the principal elevation acting as the rear of the house, with an enclosed wall being erected around a garden area that was accessed through the trellised porch. Whilst the elevation was

still recognised as the attractive face of the house, its value in regard to everyday usage of the building decreased. The land to the side of the building, to the south of the farmstead, is enclosed as an amenity area on all of the OS Maps likely as a garden to serve the house, separate from the wider open farmland.



The 1903 and 1924 OS Maps (images below L-R) are an important consideration in regard to the impact of the proposed extension. This indicates that structures were present to the rear of the house and that they projected beyond the building line of the house. This built form set on the edge of the courtyard but extending beyond the side elevation highlights that the form and views of the heritage asset today only reflect one period of the history of the site. It also highlights that structures to either side of the building would be a form reminiscent of historic footprints and reflective of the character of the farmstead, which is important to consider when weighing the impact of a potential side extension.



The site has evolved over time, with outbuildings being erected and being lost, however this is not considered to have diminished the value and significance of the heritage asset. In 2017, a conservatory was approved to the right-hand side of the principal elevation and whilst it is set close to the façade, it does not reduce the sense of balance to the form, nor does it detract from the historic integrity of the heritage asset itself. Due to the poorly performing material and energy efficiency of the extension, it is proposed to replace this with an even greater lightweight element, to maintain the character of the site and setting whilst also ensuring that the space is usable and futureproof.



Gopsall House Farm is a historic site but it is not static. Rather it has adapted to a contemporary use which has ensured a successful business within the district and continued occupation of the farmhouse itself, however it is fair to acknowledge that the farmhouse is at risk of falling into disrepair and needs attention to ensure its sustained future usage. Alteration, adaptation and even expansion without loss of integrity and significance is attainable and that is a balance that this proposal seeks to achieve to ensure that the optimum viable use of this heritage asset as a family home is safeguarded for a long time to come.

3.3 Gopsall House Farmhouse Development

Reviewing the floor plan of Gopsall House Farmhouse, it is considered that the historic core of the building is laid out in a U-shape, with a historic range to the right-hand rear, outlined in yellow on the image below. Later additions to the building have been indicated in red and comprise of a rear infill and a conservatory to the right of the front elevation. The overall footprint of the building remains evident, with the front elevation retaining prominence and the additions considered subservient. As such, the building has undergone alterations yet it has retained its character and significance.



Internally, the house has been subject to a number of alterations within the footprint of the historic building, with the listing description noting that the interior has been modernised (Appendix A).

The applicant has resided at the property throughout their lifetime and as such, an oral history has been provided of alterations and works to the property within the twentieth century which, once understood, become visible in the fabric of the building. This is a wealth of information which is often not available for heritage assets and alterations can often only be determined through the careful examination of material and the drawing of conclusions, though this is not always correct.

The applicant confirmed that in the mid-twentieth century, the central portion of the house was subject to water ingress and dry rot which required the central section of the building, noted as the living room on existing plans, to be stripped out and replaced, with large sections from the ground floor to the “sky above being visible”. The subsequent chamfered posts to the sitting room area are comprised of timber taken from trees on the farm to provide support to the surviving sections of the upper floor, a claim supported by their lack of signs of age. A wall to the right of the entrance door was removed and the wall between the lounge and the hallway was opened up.

It was also noted that previously a steep enclosed staircase was located in the current kitchen area, with the hallway previously continuing, thereby echoing the opposite side of the building, with an enclosed partition providing separate doors to the kitchen and Dining Room. The second staircase is supported by the sales particulars of the 1927 auction description which notes that the first floor is approached by two staircases.

The removed walls are noted below in black, with the removed staircase indicated in red and the areas subject to alteration shaded in green.



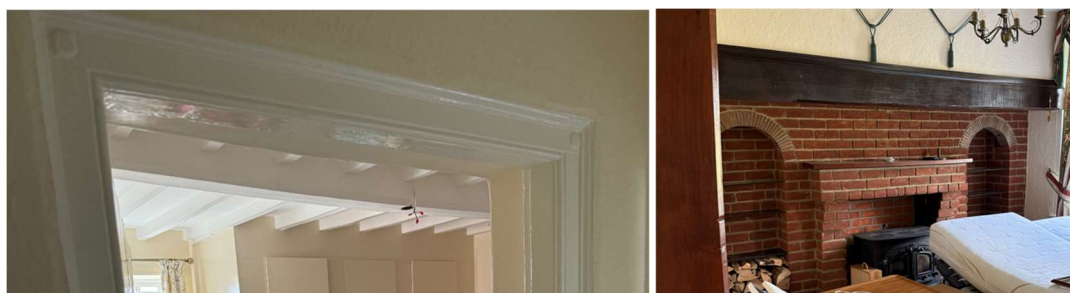
The existing staircase from the ground floor to the first floor has also been subject to substantial change and alteration, with evidence suggesting that its current location is likely to have been altered.

The current banister has been cut and placed against the wall, with the square newel post having been cut and set on a rounded column. The stairs now intersect the ground floor window which has resulted in the loss of the historic shutters to this location and replacement with smaller shutters. Externally, the window to the lefthand side of the entrance door is now obscured to the lower three panes of the sash. Internally, the ceiling has been altered to allow for headroom for the stairs to change direction. At first floor, this has resulted in the floor level to a small chamber above this area to be set higher than the surrounding floor level, with steps required to access. The chamber is accessed by an arched opening which has no relationship with historic low square architraves to be discussed.



To the ground and first floors, historic architraves are apparent with large square nails set into them, though the doors themselves have been altered. These architraves can be found at ground floor to the entrances to the basement access and only the two lefthand rooms from the

historic front entrance (annotated as the ground floor bedroom and the living room on existing plans). At first floor, they are present to all bedrooms except for the central bedroom and the accesses to the ground and second floor, areas the applicant identified as having been previously altered.



It is noted that to the ground floor existing living room, a wall was historically set between the righthand and central bays and this aligns with a truss to the roof space which has been cut and strapped, further highlighting the internal reconfigurations that have been undertaken. To this area, likely the small sitting room noted in the Auction Lot listing, a large twentieth century brick fireplace, as seen on the right-hand photo above, has been installed which is considered to be pastiche in character.

To the ground floor front lefthand room, the outline of a closed aperture is also noted to the lefthand side of the current 1930s fireplace, likely indicating an access to this area, further highlighting the level of alterations that have been undertaken to the property.

To the second floor, the banister to the stairs is of twentieth century construction however the stairs themselves are of an unknown age, with a small internal window visible in the staircase but blocked externally, further attesting to the likelihood of alterations to this area of the house. To the second floor, there are historic architraves and doors of some age set on pintles and gudgeons, indicative of the history of the space but also that it has fallen out of use and has been left uninhabited due to a lack of servants to reside on the upper floor, resulting in undetected water ingress to the rear lefthand room.

To the rear, a brick courtyard infill has been constructed which is the principal access to the property at present. It is considered to be relatively heavy and to sit uncomfortably with the building. It replaces previous built form in this area however, as a two-storey brick element was previously set to the righthand side of the courtyard and a twentieth century conservatory was set to the left, with a wall enclosing the space. These aspects were all removed to accommodate the infill to the site as they were not considered to contribute to the significance of the property.



From reviewing the property, it is evident that whilst there has been a considerable amount of alteration to fabric, the evolving history of the heritage asset remains legible, and that these alterations and evolution has not diminished the importance or significance of the site.

Whilst a significant amount of the fabric of Gopsall House Farmhouse has been retained, much has also altered, not only to the house but to the farmstead, which is now a transport yard rather than a stock rearing farm. These alterations may have removed fabric or altered form but they have also provided a sustained usage for the house and the surrounding buildings, ensuring that they have not fallen into disrepair, or in the instances that repair is required, this has been undertaken rather than allowing the site to fall into ruin.

Overall, Gopsall House Farmhouse is a heritage asset which has clearly evolved over a period of years, yet these developments form the legacy of a site that has been in sustained use and as such, has adapted over time to meet the needs of its owners, the changing and falling demand of a farmstead and the challenges and opportunities of its location. It is clear however that some of the alterations to the building have intended to imitate past construction and detailing, which has somewhat obscured the timeline of these alterations. Contemporary conservation theory supports an honest approach to alteration or addition to historic fabric, to allow for sensitive, high-quality development that is clearly legible as a product of the current era whilst preserving and protecting historic character. As such, the proposed works, which are contemporary in nature, are considered to have the potential to contribute to the building itself as well as its evolving legacy.

3.4 Gopsall House Farmhouse and Gopsall Hall

Gopsall Hall is an interesting aspect of the history of Gopsall House, as well as a cautionary tale in that function and relevance can be more important than grandeur and size, as nothing is more dangerous to a historic building than a loss of purpose and occupancy.

Gopsall House Farm is considered to be a Dower House to Gopsall Hall, built in 1740 when the estate was under the ownership of Charles Jennens Snr, whose father had made his money in ironmongery in Birmingham and subsequently purchased the hall. What is interesting is that Jennens Snr's second wife had died over 30 years prior to the building of Gopsall House and as such, there was no 'Dower' to inhabit the building. The dower in question would be the widow of the landowner however, as stated, there was no widow in this instance. Charles Jennens Snr was also 78 years old at the time of the construction of the house so it was unlikely he was looking to remarry. The only other surviving child of Charles Jennens Snr was Elizabeth Hanmer however she did not become a widow until 1754 so it is unlikely this was for her. It is possible that it was a speculative Dower House for Charles Jennens Jnr, who then inherited the estate following his father's passing in 1747 and would immediately begin a rebuilding of the estate which would result in a grandiose Palladian stately home which would host lords, kings and queens until its owners succumbed to bankruptcy and the building fell into a state of such disrepair that it was demolished in 1951. It is unlikely that Gopsall House served a widow in its first century, as Charles Jennens Jnr did not marry and died in 1774. The estate was visited by the dowager Queen Adelaide every autumn from 1839 to 1844 however it is doubtful that the queen would have stayed anywhere but directly at Gopsall Hall, due to its size and grandeur.

The below image shows the previous Tudor incarnation of Gopsall Hall prior to its substantial renovations in 1747 which, when compared to the Palladian Gopsall Hall of recent memory, highlights the change in form and style between owners and how little value was placed on the retention of historic fabric or features in previous periods as the building was completely overhauled.



The following painting is dated from 1764 and shows a red brick façade, with minor similarities to Gopsall House, though with far greater decorative details as can be seen in the columned portico with engraved pediment, stone quoining to the wings and the two adjoining service blocks.



The below picture dating from the early twentieth century shows the alterations which were undertaken in 1830s which included a further complete refacing, with roofs hidden behind parapets and render applied to brickwork to reflect the trends of the time.



Gopsall Hall was a building which was no stranger to change, however each stage of renovation appeared reactionary to the period which came before it, with the historic narrative of the building continually being rewritten. Modern policy encourages a much greater relationship with the past, ensuring that alterations work with existing buildings to retain significance and association with the history of the building, whilst ensuring a contemporary use is maintained. As evident from the demise of Gopsall Hall, a loss of relevance and function can lead to ruin, no matter how grand the building and so it is important that a delicate balance is struck to ensure that heritage assets are protected and their significance preserved without preventing them from adapting to the pace and requirements of contemporary living.

3.5. Consideration of Character and Significance

When considering the potential impact on the heritage asset, it's important to consider both the heritage of Gopsall House Farmhouse but also its modern identity. The setting of the farmhouse is not untouched but is a working industrial yard which has evolved to the rear of the heritage asset, yet the prominence of the historic house has remained.

The core of the historic house retains its status through its height and scale but its usage has evolved over time. Its significance is both architectural and historic, with value placed on its balanced front elevation, its historical connections to Gopsall Hall and the overall plan form of the wider farmstead remaining legible. These are aspects which it is important to respect and work towards better revealing if possible.

This is a large house, with at least four bedrooms to each floor, yet with comparatively low amenity space to the ground floor. The requirement for over eight bedrooms, with the cessation of live-in domestic help, has resulted in a large house with a layout which would struggle to successfully accommodate a contemporary family. The scale of the building, and the investment required to maintain a property of this age and size, necessitates a level of expenditure but also a degree of practicality, as the need for this number of bedrooms in a contemporary home is low. Listed buildings are public assets which require private upkeep and personal expenditure and whilst this is not a material consideration in planning, it is a pragmatic contemplation. First and foremost however, listed building owners are custodians of shared pieces of history and it is important that a delicate balance is struck between meeting the needs of the owner and ensuring the significance and integrity of the building is maintained.

As noted in Historic England's guidance, "Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment", change to heritage assets is inevitable but it is only harmful when significance is damaged. The significance of Gopsall House Farmhouse lies in a number of aspects but it is considered that these can be carefully balanced with additions and alterations to ensure a sensitive and sympathetic scheme which will benefit the heritage asset by ensuring it retains historic character whilst also being compatible with contemporary family living.

Value lies in the eighteenth century 'U' shaped floor plan, which remains legible even with alterations to openings and the replacement of the central section internally. The fabric to the interior of the building has been subject to loss and relocation but this has not prevented an overview of the plan form from remaining legible. As such, it is important to retain a legible plan form to the internal layout but it can be argued that additions in apertures will not undermine this significance.

Externally, the principle of the conservatory as acceptable has been established in permitted applications 17/00280/LBC and 17/00490/HOU. This is set off the historic front elevation, to the side and though it is set in close proximity to the elevation, it is not considered to result in a loss of significance or character. It can be argued however that whilst the glazing is lightweight, the glazing bars themselves result in a heavy visual impact and so it is proposed to replace this with a lighter structure which will set in the same location but with a reduced visual impact.

Retaining the prominence and balance of the front elevation is important and so works should ensure that any addition is subservient, in height and scale and minimally visually intrusive in regard to materials and form.

This report has been produced in line with proposals to introduce a side extension to the south elevation. This will be discussed in detail in the following section however strong consideration has been given to what holds the most significance and character for this heritage asset.

As noted, the principal elevation is the most sensitive and it is also equally important that the historic U form of the core of the building remains legible. The building has a historic relationship with the outbuildings of the farmstead and, as established in Section 3.2, outbuildings did extend beyond the side elevation of the house, when the farmhouse was viewed from the front. As such, form set back from the front elevation but protruding from the line of the building does have a historic precedent and its potential harm is reduced.

To the rear, the two wings of the building should remain prominent however infill development has been present to the courtyard area between the gables for a sustained period of time, often in the form of brick structures which are relatively heavy. Consideration should be given if there is a better way to retain form in this area but also reinstate the open nature of the space.

Heritage assets will always be subject to change, and it is integral to the consideration of character and significance to remember that to perceive a heritage asset today, both literally and figuratively, is to see only a single stage of its lifetime. The balance that should be achieved is adaptations which retain the core of an asset's historic integrity, character and form whilst also ensuring cohesion with contemporary living, with the overall aim of the works, not only at Gopsall House but to any historic building, to be continued conservation and occupation which benefits the heritage asset whilst also supporting the inhabitants.



4.0 The Proposal

4.1 Outline of the Proposal

The works proposed are as below:

- Replacement of 2017 conservatory
- Replacement of solid rear courtyard infill with predominantly glazed infill
- Side extension with glazed roof terrace
- Reinstatement of track to historic front entrance
- Internal and external alterations to historic and non-historic fabric

These works will be discussed in line with the information established in the previous sections, in order to weigh the balance of the proposal in terms of potential impact, the prospect to safeguard a future for the heritage asset and the opportunity to support or better reveal the significance and character of Gopsall House Farmhouse.



4.2 Consideration of Individual Aspects of Proposal

4.2.1 Replacement of 2017 Conservatory

This proposal seeks the replacement of an existing 2017 conservatory positioned to the side of the principal elevation. The current structure, whilst modern, is visually heavy and poor performing in terms of energy efficiency and materials, which have already started to deteriorate. It is considered that the current structure does not compliment the historic façade and its replacement provides an opportunity to introduce a design which sits more comfortably alongside the listed building, reducing the visual clutter and improving the overall legibility of the farmhouse's form.



The proposed replacement is deliberately lightweight and heavily glazed, utilising minimal framing to achieve a more refined and visually recessive appearance. The design reduces visual competition with the historic elevation, ensuring the façade remains the prominent architectural feature. The inclusion of a glazed roof terrace has been carefully integrated so as not to obscure the historic range set behind it, with the ridgeline of the range sitting well above the new structure, maintaining the relationship between the farmhouse and the outbuildings. It is proposed to insert access at first floor level to the roof terrace which would be set in a blank elevation and would be legible as a modern aperture but would be relatively unobtrusive. The high performance of the materials will also significantly improve energy efficiency without compromising the character of the site.



The existing conservatory is not considered to contribute to the heritage asset. Whilst it is considered to be comprised of sensitive materials in principle, through the use of brick and timber glazing units, it is evident that, in practice, the heaviness of the white timber glazing bars and units results in a more dominant impact than intended. Externally, the principle of built form in this location has been established as acceptable in permitted applications 17/00280/LBC and 17/00490/HOU. It is considered that this proposal results in an opportunity to reduce the visual impact of the built form, whilst also improving its overall performance.

By replacing a heavy modern element with a more sensitive and transparent structure, which is better performing in terms of its material, it is considered that this complies with both national and local policy. As such, it is considered that the impact of this aspect of the proposal will be neutral.

4.2.2 Glazed Rear infill

As discussed in Section 3.3, a brick courtyard infill has been in place at this property for a number of years, which forms the principal access to the property at present. This current two storey infill is considered to be visually heavy and to sit uncomfortably with the building, with the brick elevation closing off the internal courtyard rather than recalling the openness of the space.

There has been a variety of built form to the rear courtyard and it is not considered that the existing infill is either positive or reflective of historic character or form. As such, its replacement

offers the potential to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset and a heavily glazed element has been proposed to better recall the openness of the courtyard.

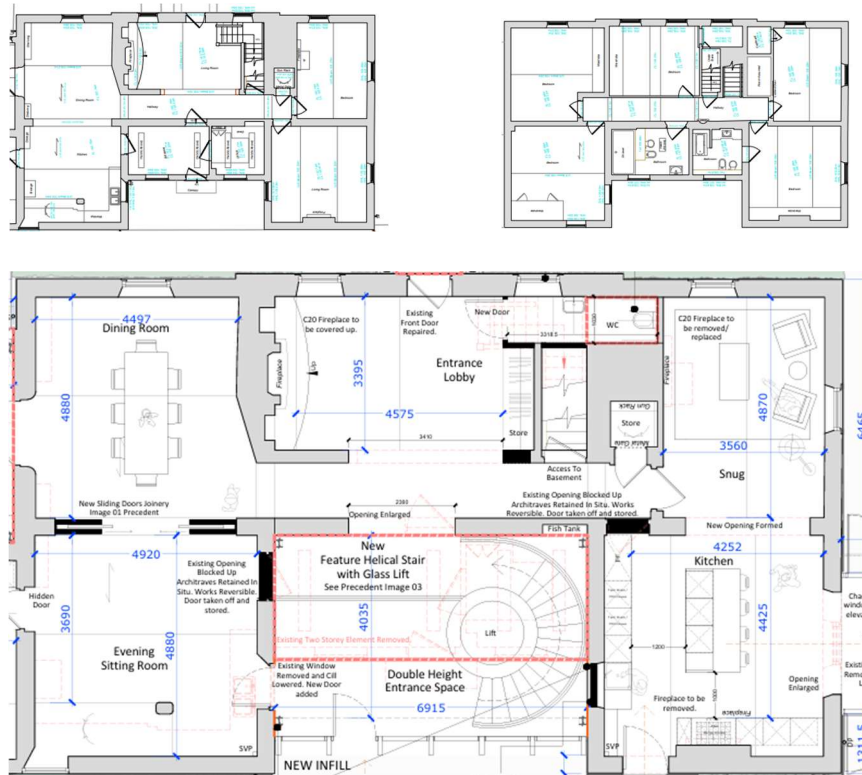
The proposed infill will sit below the historic eaves of each elevation and both internally and externally, will be a clear addition, with the brick walls of the historic rear elevations remaining the focal point. It will be an honest addition, unlike the current brick structure, and will utilise high performing materials and good design to be legible as a later addition whilst remaining subservient to the solid brick structures that form the historic core of the heritage asset.



It is considered that whilst the proposed glazed infill would be situated closer to the gabled ends, the overall impact would result in a greater sense of openness between each wing due its visually permeable nature and its low profile green roof. It would replace the modern, heavy structure which reads as a separate house sandwiched uncomfortably between the two wings and it would return the focus to the historic rear wall, which is currently obscured by the brick infill but would then become visible through the fenestration.

The brickwork to the wings would remain bare to ensure that the space is identifiable as a clear infill, with the historic form of the building remaining prevalent alongside the honest nature of the additions.

The existing layout to the ground and first floor compared with the proposed floorplans can be seen in the visuals below, with the historic plan form remaining clearly legible, if not better revealed, in the new plans which reduce the heaviness of the brickwork infill and replace this with glazing and a double height void to reestablish the open character of the space.



As indicated by the floor plans above which show the existing layout and the proposed below, the infill is intended to be open plan and double height, to better reflect the open nature of the courtyard, with definition to the space provided by the former external walls. It is proposed to house a helical staircase within the space, with a lift set into the centre of this. This will enable step free access to the first-floor bedrooms, offering a level of accessibility to a heritage asset which is often unachievable, without any impact to historic fabric, positively enhancing the building without disrupting form or fabric. As such, this is considered to result in a neutral to positive impact, with a public benefit identified through the inclusion of a feature to improve accessibility with no loss of historic fabric.

4.2.3 Glazed Link and Side Extension

As supported by the existing rear infill and the conservatory, set to the side of the front elevation, the principle of modern additions set in close proximity to the historic core of the house does not result in a loss of significance. As also indicated by this proposal however, design can also ensure that even neutral impacts can be improved and that well considered, high quality additions can better reveal significance.

The proposed extension will be set back from the façade of the building, to the rear of the side elevation and adjacent to the location of a former historic outbuilding. It has been positioned in this manner to carefully minimise any impact on the significance of the listed building, and to allow the historic form to remain legible. It is noted that the side elevation forms part of the building's modern visible approach however visibility from the public realm does not denote significance and historically, it is clear that the building was intended to be approached towards the front elevation directly. From viewing historic maps, it is also clear that the extension is

intended to sit in land which can reasonably be interpreted as garden or amenity space associated with the dwelling, rather than part of the wider agricultural setting. As such, the proposal occupies a part of the curtilage that has long been visually and functionally domestic, reducing any potential harm to both the farmhouse and the historic farmstead's agricultural character as well as the relationship between the heritage asset and the wider landscape.



The extension is sited back from the front elevation, utilising window openings to both ground and first floor to ensure that a sense of balance is retained and the historic pattern of the apertures remains apparent. This also ensures that the new structure does not visually dominate, obscure or interrupt the principal elevation.

The extension's lightweight construction and predominantly glazed design enables it to be both visually recessive, against the solid brick nature of the listed building, as well as clearly legible as a modern addition. Brickwork is used to maintain a relationship with the building, as is the setting of the fascia at the height of the brick string course which ties the forms together.





The proposed terrace would be glazed and set in from the boundary of the extension, aligned with the proportions of the house to minimise its visual impact, with a green roof and planting intended to soften the addition and to allow the proposal to better blend into the landscape.

Whilst it is required to remove the rear windows to accommodate the extension, it is noted that no historic fenestration survives, limiting the degree of material loss and to the first floor, the aperture size would be primarily retained. To the ground floor, the opening to the glazed link would be splayed, to reflect the historic window aperture, and the shutters to be removed would be reinstated on the front elevation window which has been crudely altered to accommodate the current staircase. In this manner, the impact is considered to be neutral as the fabric to be lost would be reinstated on a more prominent internal elevation, better revealing the significance of that location.

Listed buildings are protected in policy and law, not to prevent alteration or additions, but rather to ensure any works are compatible with the significance of the building, secure its continued enhancement and protection, and preserve fabric, special features and settings. The design, materials and location of the proposed structure have each been carefully considered to align with this belief.

Located in an area that has been historically partitioned as a garden area for the building, it will be set back from the front elevation and will be in close proximity to the past outbuilding which also stepped out from the line of the building. In this way, the visual impact will recall the historic narrative of subservient built form which flanks the front elevation.

The building will be set within the garden, which has historically been distinct in the landscape, set outside of the farmland, intended to serve the house. From a wider consideration, a side extension set in a garden would be a typical feature to a historic building and from a more specific perspective, this would be a subservient but high quality, honest addition, visibly contemporary but intended to sit comfortably with the heritage asset.

The extension should be considered in line with its relationship to the front elevation and the wider site. The significance of the heritage asset stems from its age, its grand but simple front elevation and its relationship with the historic farmstead, all of which would be maintained due to the set back nature of the addition, the heavily glazed design and the historic footprint of the site.

As such, this element of the proposal is considered to align with local Policies DM10, DM11 and DM12, as well as the council's Good Design Guide SPD, alongside national policy including Section 66 of the Planning (LB&CA) Act 1990 and Section 16 of the NPPF.

4.2.4 Proposed Front Access to Principal Elevation

This element of the proposal will reinstate the prominence of the historic front elevation, which has fallen out of use in recent years due to all access being primarily from the rear of the site. It is proposed to construct a new access which will recall the historic track which lead to an approach to Gopsall Hall. It will be set on a slightly different footprint however, as the approach to Gopsall Hall has been lost therefore connection to the Bilstone Road is still required.



The principle of the works, which reinstates the significance of the front elevation as the polite face of the building, is considered to positively benefit the heritage asset, better revealing its significance. The track is intended to follow field boundaries from Bilstone Road before diverting towards the site house alongside what was likely once an enclosed side garden. This will allow for the approach to avoid disturbing any potemail remains of the former ha-ha which was set before the house, though this has largely been lost over time. The proposed turning circle will recall the former semi-circular walled garden to the front of the house, though that was likely a Victorian addition.



Black Metal Electronically Operated Gates with Black Metal Piers

The access will pass in front of the elevation but will also connect to the rear courtyard through an existing gate to the side of the building, to allow for parking away from the front elevation. In this manner, the importance of the front elevation is reinstated through improved access but the increased presence of vehicles will not impact upon this character.

To Bilstone Road, it is proposed to install black metal gates to the proposed entrance which are relatively modest, as opposed to large brick or stone piers, but identify this as a grander residential home, rather than a farmstead for example, which is reflective of the historic character of the building.

Overall it is considered that this an element of the proposal that will benefit the heritage asset through a reinstatement of significance and purpose to the principal elevation, with a low visual impact on the setting of the listed building. It is recognised that the historic access to the house was previously set to further to the north of the property, as it connected to an approach to Gopsall House. Due to the loss of the great house, the proposed location will allow for reinstatement of the prominence of the front elevation, alongside ensuring a connection to the Bilstone Road whilst avoiding disturbance to the rural setting, resulting in a neutral impact overall.

4.2.5 Internal and external works

It is proposed to undertake works externally and internally to enable a greater functionality to spaces with minimal impact to historic fabric, character and significance.

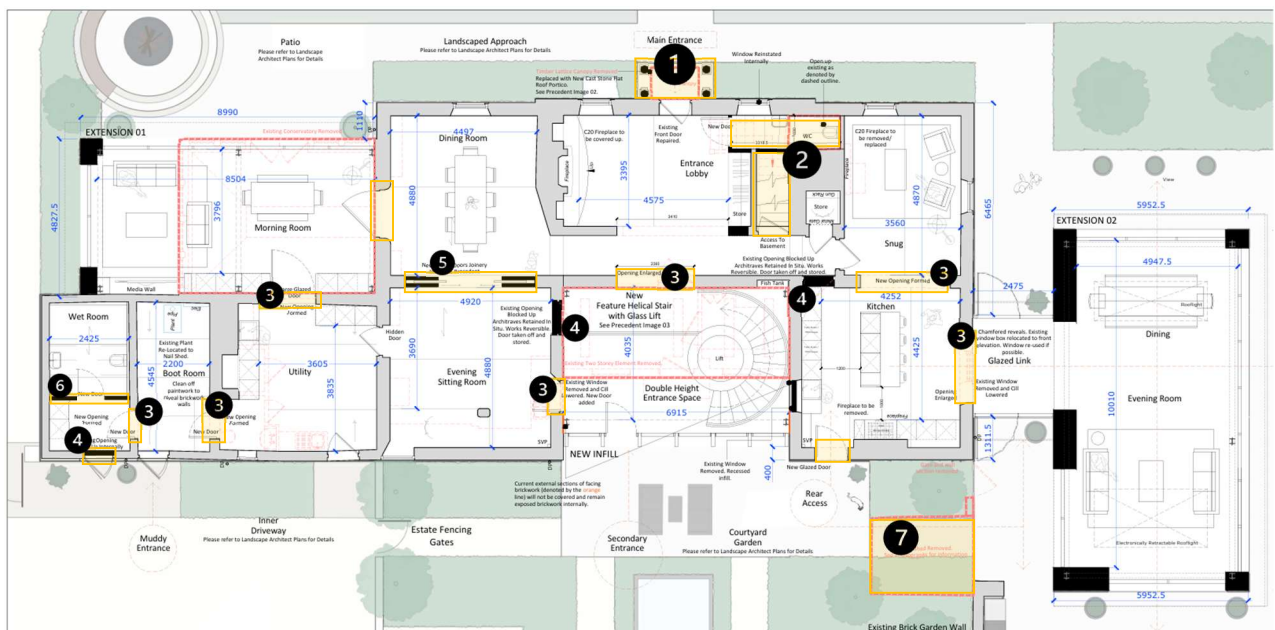
A short summary of the proposed works is as follows:

- 1. Removal of non-original timber trellis porch
- 2. Removal of non-original stairs and subsequent reinstatement of historic window proportions to ground floor
- 3. Insertion of new openings to ground and first floor to both internal and external walls

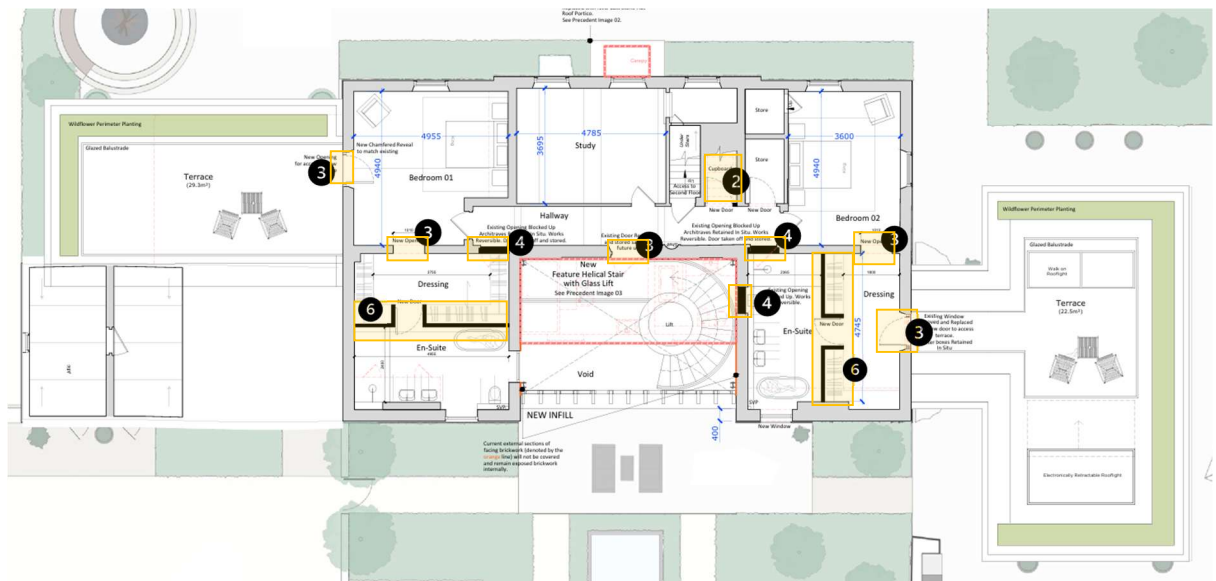
- 4. Closure of existing doorways to ground and first floor and retention of historic architraves
- 5. Installation of partition to modern aperture to ground floor
- 6. Installation of stud wall partitions to form wet room to the ground floor and en-suites to first and second floor
- 7. Removal of a small redundant brick outbuilding
- 8. Repair works to dormers and replacement of dormer windows with slimline double glazing.
- 9. General repair and restoration works

These works are outlined in yellow on the drawings below of the ground, first and second floors respectively, with the annotated numbers corresponding to the above list.

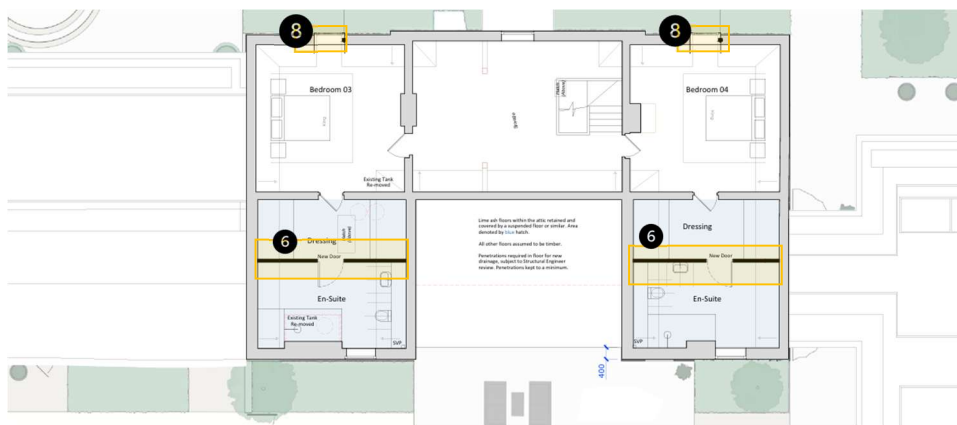
It is noted in the listing description (Appendix A) that the interior has been modernised, which aligns with the findings of Section 3.3, and as such, the impact of the works on historic character and fabric is considered to be reduced due to previous interventions.



Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor

1. The proposed porch is intended to replace an existing timber structure, which is vernacular in character and at odds to the delicate brickwork, stone sills and overall balance of the existing elevation which indicate a level of grandeur. The current porch is intended to carry climbing plants over the doorway, indicative of the door's later change of function to an access point to a garden rather than a grand entry point. The low level of the structure's roof does not sit comfortably with the proportions of the building, and the porch itself has been deliberately omitted from the listing description (Appendix A) which describes the principal elevation in detail. Whilst listing descriptions are primarily to aid identification, this building was clearly assessed at length and no consideration as given to this element, lending weight to this report's conclusion that it does not contribute to significance. It is proposed to instate a Tuscan porch, which will be relatively plain but will provide cover through a proportional design that sits comfortably with the building. The stone will align with the window sills to the elevation and it is proposed to keep the porch relatively plain, to ensure it does not impose itself on the elevation nor does it fall into pastiche. As such, the impact of this is considered to be neutral.
2. As established in Section 3.3, the existing stairs have been subject to substantial alteration. At present, the stairs intersect the ground floor lefthand side window, with a balustrade and

newel post that have been poorly altered to fit the existing stairs and are situated within the area that was previously subject to dry rot. These alterations to accommodate the current non-original stairs have resulted in a change to floor height at first floor level to account for head height and the opening to the first floor from the stairs is extremely large in comparison to other apertures, with no architrave. The shutters to the window to the ground floor have also been altered and replaced to accommodate the current stairs. At present, the stairs are considered to detract from the significance and value of the building, as the inappropriate form disrupts the symmetry of the fenestration to the principal elevation.

It is likely that the original stairs were steep and potentially dog leg stairs that finished near to the cellar opening, which is considered to be an original feature. Whilst the former location of the stairs is speculative, the current stairs can be definitively determined as detracting from the heritage asset, a later alteration and to be of no significance. The proposed removal of the stairs would enable for the proportions of the ground floor window to be reinstated. As discussed in Section 4.2.3, it is also proposed to reinstate the shutters in this location, following works to allow access for the extension, which would result in a benefit to the window and the overall internal elevation. The basement and first to second floor stairs would be retained however the ground floor stairs, which are considered to be a harmful addition would be removed.

The removal of the stairs would also allow for the space beside the window to be reopened, an area that was previously served by an opening, the outline of which can be discerned from within the ground floor lefthand room, to the right of the 1930s fireplace. It is proposed to utilise this space as a ground floor WC, which will bring an important use to an otherwise vacant section of the building. As such, these works, whilst they will impact upon material, will not alter historic fabric and will allow for rectification of poor past intervention, resulting in a neutral impact.

3. It is proposed to introduce a small number of new openings throughout the building and to widen some existing openings. To these areas, there is no existing historic fenestration or doors and whilst the alterations will require a small amount of brickwork to be removed, it is not considered enough to impact upon character or significance, with plan form remaining legible throughout. To the ground floor, it is proposed to introduce a double door width opening between the kitchen and the snug, an alteration which would be reversible and would retain nibs to indicate the historic layout of the area. As such, whilst there would be a minor disturbance to fabric, the harm is considered to be low, with significance maintained.
4. The proposed closures of doorways are intended to be reversible actions, with the architraves retained, to enable the plan form to remain legible and the historic fabric to be undisturbed. As such, the impact of this is considered to be neutral.
5. The proposed installation of a partition to a twentieth century opening, to reinstate the historic proportions of the right hand ground floor rooms is considered to be a neutral reversal which highlights that the floor plan can be successfully reinstated. The closure of the arched opening is also welcomed as this is at odds with the apertures throughout the building.
6. The insertion of stud walls to facilitate the use of rear bedrooms as en-suites and dressing rooms is considered to be a low impact alteration which allows the historic proportions of the rooms to remain legible whilst giving a function to all rooms. These works also ensure

that the principal bedrooms to the front of the house remain unaltered. The retention of the historic doorways to both front and rear rooms, as noted in point 4 of this list, retains the plan form whilst the new internal access points between the rooms are considered to have a low visual impact and to be reversible, overall resulting in a neutral impact. To the second floor, it is recognised that historic lime ash floors remain in situ, however these are badly cracked and uneven. It is proposed to retain these floors and install a suspended floor which will sit above the historic floors, providing a safe and even surface without disturbance to historic fabric.

7. It is proposed to remove an external brick store and whilst this pre-dates the twentieth century, it is likely a later addition, when comparing the brickwork of the structure to that of the main house. When reviewing historic OS Maps, a corresponding free standing structure of the existing size is difficult to determine and whilst it is older material, potentially Victorian, it is not considered to hold high significance in relation to the listed heritage asset. As such, the removal of any older material is always given careful consideration and on balance, the removal of this currently redundant structure is not considered to impact upon the significance or character of the principal building, nor is it considered to result in a loss of legibility, form or integrity to the curtilage listed wider farmstead.
8. It is proposed to undertake energy efficiency measures to the existing dormers which have deteriorated through lack of maintenance. It is proposed to re-lead the roofs and cheeks of the dormers, whilst incorporating insulation to the cheeks and 12-14mm double glazed timber fenestration in a matching style to existing. The current windows have rotted beyond repair and are currently boarded internally, with glazing bars and glazing having been lost in areas. It's considered the works will bring the dormers back into use and will provide an important public benefit in regard to improved energy efficiency as recognised in Policy HE6 of the NPPF. Whilst it is noted the existing windows dormer will be lost, due to the decay to these windows, full replacement would be required and as such, the opportunity to improve energy efficiency would not result in loss of fabric as the fabric is beyond retention. It is noted that the oeil-de-boeuf window is in better condition and will be retained alongside the historic wooden cover, thereby retaining historic character to this area.
9. It is proposed to undertake remedial works throughout the property with sensitive matching materials, including lime pointing where necessary, replacement of any slipped tiles or spalled brickwork with matching materials, and replacement of rainwater goods with cast metal. It is also proposed to install breathable wood fibre insulation internally, to allow for the improved thermal performance of the property. No historic internal decoration remains and as such, this would not result in disruption to historic fabric. These works are considered to maintain significance whilst providing important benefits through improved thermal efficiency and greater weather protection, ensuring the longevity of the heritage asset overall.

The driving principle behind these internal and external works is to future proof the occupation of the heritage asset, ensuring it functions as a contemporary family home whilst maintaining significance, historic integrity and character. Whilst it is considered that there will be some minor impact to historic fabric, it is not considered that this results in overall harm to the listed building or its setting, with the works considered to maintain the special historic and architectural interest of the heritage asset.

4.3 Heritage impact of proposal: Weighing potential harm versus benefits

The impact of the proposal on the heritage asset has been weighed and is considered to be neutral, with positive impacts in regard to the future proofing of the heritage asset, the reinstatement of historic features and the replacement of somewhat heavy modern extensions with lightweight additions of high-quality design and sensitive materials. The proposal intends to result in a dwelling that will be an asset to the district, with its historic significance retained whilst also reflecting the nature and values of a contemporary living to ensure that the legacy of the building is maintained and that the fate of Gopsall Hall will never befall Gopsall House. Gopsall House Farmhouse is not an untouched, preserved relic but rather a dynamic and functioning site, with this proposal enhancing both the historic character of the heritage asset as well as futureproofing a family home through considered and careful design.

When assessing the potential impact of the proposed works, it is necessary to consider not only the historic significance of Gopsall House Farmhouse but also the building's present-day function and setting. Although the farmhouse now sits within a working industrial yard that has evolved to its rear, the prominence of the historic core remains evident. The building still asserts its status through its scale, form, and siting, despite the surrounding changes.

The significance of the farmhouse is rooted in both its architectural qualities and its historic associations. Key attributes include its well-balanced principal elevation, its historic relationship with Gopsall Hall, and the legible eighteenth-century U-shaped plan form of the wider farmstead. These elements are central to the building's heritage value and its considered this proposal respects this and even better reveals it, through the alterations to the rear infill and the existing conservatory, due to the proposed sensitive intervention.

Whilst the house is substantial in scale, with a potential of at least nine bedrooms arranged across its principal floors, the amount of functional amenity space at ground-floor level is comparatively modest. The original domestic arrangement relied on live-in staff, and the cessation of such patterns of occupation has resulted in a large dwelling that is not readily suited to the needs of a contemporary household. Maintaining a property of this size and age requires significant investment and a viable approach to its ongoing occupation. Although such considerations are not material to planning decisions, they reflect the wider context within which listed buildings, as public heritage assets primarily in private ownership, are sustained. Owners act as custodians, and a balance must therefore be achieved between enabling a viable modern use and safeguarding the building's enduring significance. Policy DM11 recognises this in a manner and notes that the social and economic benefits of a proposal should be recognised. This is a large, single-family home which requires investment to ensure its sustained inhabitation and also sufficient amenity space to serve what could be a nine bedroom house, with the proposal providing the heritage asset with an assured function as a high quality, large, family home whilst maintaining character and significance.

Historic England's guidance in *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* recognises that change to heritage assets is inevitable but that harm arises only where such change erodes significance. At Gopsall House Farmhouse, it is considered that the elements which contribute to significance can be carefully maintained and upheld whilst accommodating carefully designed additions and alterations. The resulting light touch scheme supports a continued use of the building whilst reinforcing its historic character.

The eighteenth-century U-shaped plan remains evident both externally and internally and proposed additions, alterations and openings are located sensitively in the scheme to maintain this.

Externally, the principle of a conservatory has been established as acceptable in approved applications (17/00280/LBC and 17/00490/HOU). Positioned directly by the principal elevation, this alteration was not considered to constitute harm nor was the rear infill at its time of approval, lending weight to this document's conclusion that new development in proximity to the heritage asset does not have to equate to harm and that adaptations can be sited comfortably in a building's direct setting, though form and material are important.

The prominence and symmetry of the principal elevation must remain the primary considerations. Any new addition should be demonstrably subservient in scale and height and use materials and forms that minimise visual intrusion. The proposed side extension to the south elevation has been developed with these sensitivities in mind. Historic mapping shows that, when viewed from the front, the farmhouse once related closely to an outbuilding which was positioned beyond the side elevation. A form set back from the principal elevation but projecting from the side therefore has historic precedent and it's considered the proposed lightweight, high-quality design can be comfortably accommodated without impact to the legibility of the U-shaped core, resulting in a neutral impact overall.

To the rear, the two projecting wings are key components of the building's form and should remain clearly expressed. The area between them has been infilled for many years, typically with heavier brick structures. The proposed glazed infill provides an opportunity to reduce the visual mass of earlier additions through a lighter addition and reinterpret the courtyard in a manner that reinstates some of the openness of the original arrangement. As such, this is considered to result in a neutral to positive impact which allows for the significance of the heritage asset to be better revealed. The inclusion of a lift also provides an element of public benefit to this addition by offering accessibility with little impact to fabric or form.

The works also introduce important public benefits in regard to the increased thermal efficiency of the building, as recognised by Policy HE6 of the NPPF. Alongside this, the proposed repair works will support the longevity of the building.

All heritage assets evolve over time, and understanding significance requires acknowledging that the present composition of a building and its setting is reflective of only one point in its long histories. The overarching aim should be to facilitate change that respects and maintains historic character, architectural integrity, and spatial legibility, whilst also supporting sustainable contemporary use. The proposed works at Gopsall House Farmhouse are considered to achieve this balance, with the works resulting in a neutral to positive impact, as they enable continued occupation and long-term conservation which is to the benefit of both the heritage asset and its inhabitants.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed works have been developed in accordance with the requirements of national and local heritage policy, including the principles set out in the NPPF and relevant local plan policies relating to listed buildings. The scheme has been carefully designed to sustain and enhance the significance of Gopsall House Farmhouse, responding sensitively to its architectural character, historic form, and spatial legibility.

By replacing heavy and poor performing later additions with lighter, more sympathetic interventions, reinstating historic proportions where appropriate, and ensuring that all new work remains subservient to the historic core, the proposals will support the building's continued viable use while preserving its special interest.

Following positive feedback at pre-application stage and proactive discussion on site, this application has been developed and submitted to support bringing this heritage asset back into use as a family home.

Overall, the impact of the development has been weighed and is considered to represent a positive and sensitive contemporary contribution to the heritage asset, improving its long-term functionality and condition without compromising its significance or undermining its historic character.



Compiled September 2026

Appendix A – Listing Description

Name	GOPSALL HOUSE FARMHOUSE, 15, BILSTONE ROAD
Listing Grade	II
Listing Entry Number	1074216
Date First Listed	10-Aug-1989
Listing description	House, formerly the dower house to Gopsall Park (demolished). Circa 1740. Red brick with plain tile roof and brick ridge stacks. 2 storeys and attic with first floor band and rubbed brick eaves cornice. Regular 1:3:1 window front with central pedimented projection; glazing bar sashes in open boxes, with segmental heads; round window in tympanum of pediment and 2 flat topped and corniced dormers. 2 gables to rear with central recess. Left return front of 2 storeys and 2 bays. Interior modernised.