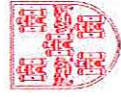
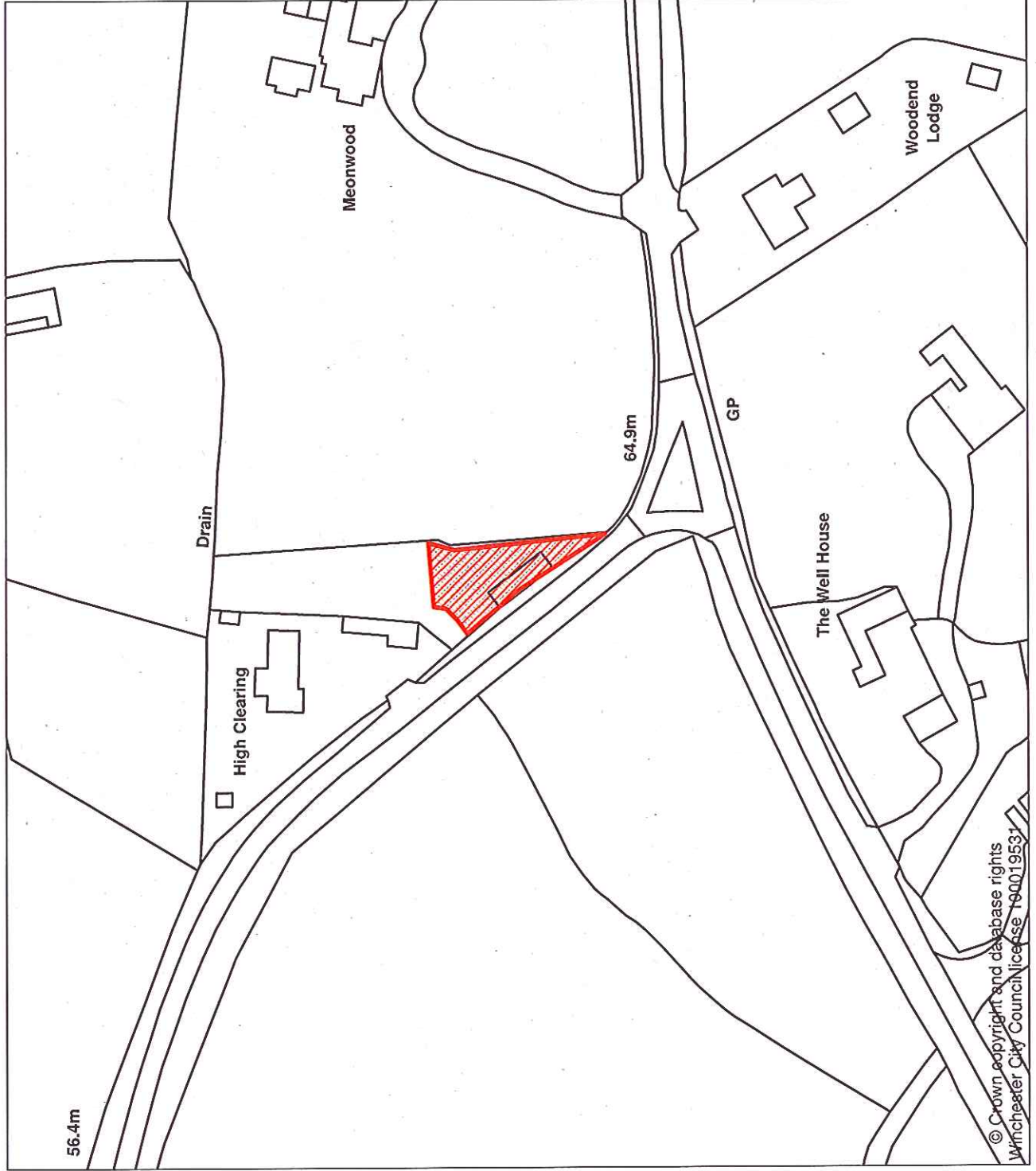


Meonwood, Heath Road, Wickham, PO17 6JZ

17/00147/FUL



Winchester  
City Council



### Legend

Scale: 0 0.0125 0.025 0.05 KM

Organisation	Winchester City Council
Department	Winchester GIS
Comments	1:1250
Date	10/04/2017
PSMA Number	100019531

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**Item No:** 02  
**Case No:** 17/00147/FUL  
**Proposal Description:** Conversion and extension of existing barn from garage/store to 1 no three bedroom dwelling  
**Address:** Meonwood Heath Road Wickham Fareham Hampshire  
**Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City:** Soberton  
**Applicants Name:** Mr Francis Wells  
**Case Officer:** Liz Marsden  
**Date Valid:** 16 January 2017  
**Site Factors:**

**Recommendation:** Refuse

**General Comments**

This application is reported to Committee because of the number of letters of support that have been received contrary to the Officer's recommendation for refusal.

**Site Description**

The site is an area of 0.6ha located to eastern side of the junction between Buddens Lane (runs north-west to south-east) and Heath Road (runs east-west). It is to the far west of Meonwood, the host dwelling on the landholding, which has a separate access further east from the site along Heath Road. To the north is a field access to other land to the north and east. The nearest dwelling 'High Clearing' is to the north of the site, around 35m away, on the other side of the access track. The

The existing barn, which is not a listed building, is located immediately adjacent to Buddens Lane, with only a narrow verge separating it from the road, with an access gate to the northern side of the structure. The site on which it is located is currently a relatively small, triangular area, with a fence and hedge separating it from the adjoining garden of Meonwood. The southern part of the site closest to the nearby road junction is screened by saplings and trees which provide a fairly dense visual screen and partially screen the barn from the junction itself.

The barn measures (from submitted plans), 14.4m in length and 4.5m in width, providing a footprint of around 65 square metres. The height is 5.35 to the ridge and 2.85m to the eaves, though the roof is sagging in parts. The structure is in very poor physical condition and has open areas in the walls, including damage from being hit by a vehicle, and there are tarpaulins to cover gaps. It does not appear to be in use other than for storage of non-valuable items, such as hay/straw bales.

**Proposal**

The proposal is for full permission to convert and extend the existing barn into a dwelling house with a detached garages and car port. The application site extends the current area surrounding the barn structure, and includes part of the adjacent land to the east of the hedge line that forms part of the extensive curtilage of Meonwood, to create a garden area for the new house.



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The proposal would require extensive works to the existing barn and its conversion to provide a kitchen/dining area, utility and boot room and a study. The extension would project eastwards from the northern end of the barn, creating an 'L' shaped building with accommodation on two floors, a lounge and en-suite bedroom at ground floor level and two further bedrooms and a bathroom in the roofspace.

The proposed new build extension would result in additional ground floor footprint of approximately 55.8 sq. m and a first floor area of 43.4 sq. m which represents a total increase of 99.2 sq. m (from submitted plans). The gross external floor area of the proposed dwelling would be around 165 sq. m. The eaves and ridge height of the extension are to be the same as the existing barn.

It is proposed to use the existing vehicular access to the site from Buddens Lane, located to the north of the barn, with improved visibility created by trimming back vegetation along the roadside. The area adjacent to the access is to be used for turning of vehicles and two car parking spaces are shown to be provided.

**Relevant Planning History**

15/02659/FUL - Conversion and extension of existing barn from garage/store to 1 no three bedroom dwelling with detached garage and carport – Refused 10.03.2016

**Consultations**

Engineers: Drainage:

Site not located in a flood zone or ground water protection area. No mains drainage available so sewerage package plant and discharge to existing water course proposed. Environment Agency discharge consent will be required.

Engineers: Highways:

Additional traffic generated unlikely to cause material harm to users of Buddens Lane, though it would be beneficial to trim boundary vegetation to improve visibility. No objection subject to conditions.

Head of Historic Environment:

Objection and refusal recommended. The barn is not of sufficient heritage value to qualify as an undesignated Heritage Asset and its conversion to a dwelling would be contrary to policy.

Ecology

No objection subject to conditions

**Representations:**

**Soberton Parish Council - Support**

The barn is not listed however it is a key local landmark, its very location defines the beginning of the settlement of Soberton Heath when approached from the South via Heath Road from the A32. The loss of this local land mark would diminish the character of the local area. It is the parish councils considered view that retention through a sympathetic conversion of this former agricultural building will make a positive contribution to the fabric of this important entrance to the Parish.



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13 letters of support received from 12 addresses

- Good use of historic building which may be the last of its type in the area.
- The building is important to the character and local distinctiveness of the area and is an important landmark.
- Well connected to cycle/pedestrian routes which provide an alternative means of access to the car.
- The retention of the barn is important to the historic legacy of the area.
- The site is an infill plot
- Proposal reflects the existing building character and will not adversely affect the rural character of the area.
- Proposal would not adversely affect the village
- Other barn conversions in the area.
- Relatively modest scale of the development welcomed as there is a shortage of smaller family homes in the community.
- Proposed improvements will upgrade the site in a useful and unobtrusive way.

### **Relevant Planning Policy:**

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1)

DS1, MTRA3, MTRA4, CP3, CP4, CP10, CP11, CP13, CP14, CP16, CP17, CP20

Winchester Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management & Site Allocations (LPP2) :

DM1, DM2, DM9, DM13, DM14, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM22, DM23

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

National Planning Policy Framework

Supplementary Planning Guidance

High Quality Places (2015)

### **Planning Considerations**

#### Principle of development

The principle of residential development in the countryside is considered by Policy MTRA4 LPP1. This policy lists certain criteria which would justify development in the countryside. These include there being an operational need for the development in the countryside for agriculture, forestry or horticulture, reuse of existing rural buildings for employment generation or affordable housing, and small scale tourist accommodation. None of the criteria are relevant to this proposal which is for a single new dwelling in the countryside.

Policy MTRA3 covers development within settlements with no clearly defined boundary where infilling of a small site within a continuously developed road frontage may be supported if in a form compatible with the village character. Whilst Soberton falls within the settlement category of MTRA3, the application site cannot be considered to be an infill site due to the lack of any adjacent road frontage development and the widely spaced nature of development in the immediately surrounding area. The nearest house (High Clearing) is set some 40m away and there are no dwellings along the road to the south of the site.



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In supporting the proposal the applicants refer to Policies CE24 (conservation of existing non-residential buildings) and HE17 (change of use of redundant agricultural and other rural buildings of historic interest) of Winchester District Local Plan Review (WDLP), together with guidance of the NPPF, as providing justification for the new dwelling. Whilst these WDLP policies are now no longer in use, having been superseded by the recently adopted LPP2, policy DM32 of this plan makes similar provision for the change of use of undesignated rural heritage assets and the proposal is assessed against the provisions of this policy.

The primary issues in this case can be summarised as, firstly whether the building is worthy of being considered as an undesignated heritage asset and secondly whether the proposals put forward in the current application would be in accordance with the provisions of policy DM32.

The applicants have submitted supporting information in the form of a heritage statement and report on the structure to demonstrate that the building is of historic importance and capable of being converted. However, this view is in conflict with the conclusion of the Council's Historic Environment Officer which, following careful consideration of the supporting documents, is that the barn is not of sufficient heritage value to qualify as an undesignated heritage asset and therefore there is no justification for a departure from policies for the protection of the countryside.

The reasons for this conclusion are set out in full in the response from the Historic Environment Officer and are principally based on the existing poor condition of the structure and the extent of previous repair work which has already resulted in the loss and replacement of the original historic fabric. Furthermore, the works that would be required in order to convert the barn to residential would be likely to result in the loss of most remaining historic features and reducing further its heritage value. The fact that the barn is an example of an increasingly rare vernacular building is recognised but this is not, in itself, sufficient to regard it as a heritage asset given its extremely poor state of repair and limited level of surviving historic fabric.

Notwithstanding this conclusion, that the building cannot be considered as an undesignated heritage asset, the proposal has also been assessed against the relevant provisions of Policy DM32.

- *The building is capable of conversion without significant alteration or replacement or changes which would be detrimental to the distinctive character and historic interest of the building, its setting, historic fabric or features.* The structural engineers report on the building, submitted with the application, acknowledges that the building is in very poor condition and admits that extensive repair is needed. It is not considered that the level of works that would be required would comply with the terms of this policy.

Furthermore, it is not just the works to the existing building that would have an impact on its heritage value. The proposal also includes a large addition to the building which almost doubles the footprint of the built form on the site and would significantly change its character as a relatively modest rural outbuilding. The scale and massing of the proposed extension would confuse the architectural hierarchy and not allow the building to be read in its own right. The proposed



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design will create a pastiche of a traditional farmstead that has little historical accuracy which is contrary to accepted conservation practice and negates the heritage argument being forwarded that the building is of such heritage value that it should be conserved.

The proposed conversion is over-domestic in nature. The dormers to the extension will introduce incongruous elements that are at odds with the rural vernacular character of the building and make the extension look top heavy.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would result in the significant alteration to the distinctive character and any remaining historic interest, fabric, features and setting of the building and is therefore contrary to policy DM32 of LPP2.

- *The building is incapable of being used in a manner less harmful to its historic interest.* The level of alteration required to facilitate the use of a building as a dwelling is generally greater than that for lower key uses and would have most impact on the historic interest of the building. The preference is therefore that alternative uses are considered with residential conversion being a last resort. No information has been provided as to the level of works that would be required for alternative uses, although it is considered that use as storage or a stable would require minimal internal alteration.
- *If a residential conversion is proposed, it has been demonstrated that other uses have been properly considered and discounted.* The applicant has submitted information to demonstrate that other uses have been considered, together with the revenue that could be hoped to be obtained from them.

The conclusion from this information is that, even the use of the building as high quality office accommodation (end value £180,000 or £18,000p.a) would not be viable, given the high cost involved in the conversion. There is, however, no information provided about the cost of repairing the structure to a condition where it will not deteriorate further or the anticipated cost of the conversion, though it is assumed that this would vary depending on the type of end use. It is not therefore possible to confirm whether the proposed residential conversion would be justified on this basis.

To conclude, the site is located in the open countryside where the provision of new dwellings is not generally allowed except in exceptional circumstances. It is not considered that the heritage value of the building is such that its retention and conversion would outweigh the harm caused to the character and appearance of this rural location that would result from a new dwelling. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies of the local plan.

It should also be noted that this application cannot be viewed in isolation as there are a number of buildings across the district to which a similar argument could be applied. Whilst, each application must be dealt with on its own merits, allowing the conversion of a building that is not considered to be of sufficient heritage value, as in this case, could set a precedent that will make it difficult to refuse other, similarly unworthy, proposals



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### Design/layout

The proposal would result in a considerably larger structure on this site, though due to the addition of an area of garden that has been severed from the curtilage of Meonwood, the building as a whole can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site without appearing cramped. The parking provision is in accordance with standards and the access from Buddens Lane can be made acceptable.

The extension, which is only 2.2m shorter in length than the existing barn and of the same width, has been designed to reflect the appearance of the barn in terms of its height, roof pitch and external materials, with the publically viewable northern elevation having limited openings. The resultant building, whilst not entirely inappropriate in a rural location would, as set out in the section of this report on the principle of the development, significantly detract from the modest proportions of the existing barn to the detriment of its character and appearance.

### Impact on character of area

The site is within a relatively isolated rural location. The conversion of the existing barn itself would be relatively unobtrusive, given that height, form, material type and treatment of the roadside elevation will not differ significantly from the structure already in situ. However, the proposal includes an extension that will nearly double the bulk of the building and be visible from the highway. This increase in size, together with the provision of parking spaces and the use of the forecourt for the parking of cars will result in a domestic appearance at odds with and therefore detrimental to the existing rural character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

There is support for the proposal on the grounds that the building is an important feature in the landscape and contributes to the local distinctiveness of the area. However, this contribution would be significantly altered by the proposal, where the existing proportions of the modest barn would be subsumed into the larger structure. The perception is that the only alternative to the current proposal is the loss of the building in its entirety and that this would have a greater detrimental impact. It is not considered that this is the case. Whilst the repair and retention of the barn would be welcomed, the loss of the building in the dilapidated condition it has been in for a number of years, with holes covered in blue tarpaulin, would have a more positive visual impact on the landscape of the area than the proposed development of a substantial house.

### Impact to neighbours residential amenity

The closest property to this site is High Clearing, a house roughly 35m to the north west of the site. Whilst there may be limited views of the proposal from this property, it is at a sufficient distance to ensure that there will be no loss of light or outlook. There are no windows at first floor level in the northern elevation of the proposed development which will not therefore result in loss of privacy.

### Landscape/Trees

The previous application included a reason for refusal based on the lack of information related to the potential impact of the development on mature trees and measures to be taken to protect retained trees. This issue has been addressed by the submission of a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Method Statement which concludes that it is possible to construct the dwelling without detriment to existing trees and sets out measures for their protection during construction. It is considered that an objection to this aspect of the development cannot be sustained.



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### Ecology

An ecological impact assessment has been submitted in support of the application and sets out the potential impact of the development. In particular, the possible use of the barn had been previously identified but, with the barns further deterioration, it is no longer considered to have potential as a bat roost. Ecological enhancement measures in the form of a new bat roost are proposed within the building and appropriate conditions to this effect should be applied if it was minded to grant permission for the development.

### Highways/Parking

The plans show two parking spaces on site which is in accordance with parking standards for the size of the property proposed. The previous application included a reason for refusal on the basis that adequate visibility splays on site turning area had not been demonstrated. However, it is apparent from the comments of the Highways officer that such visibility could be achieved by trimming back foliage along the frontage and, as the provision of the splays could be conditioned if it was minded to permit the application, it is not considered that a reason for refusal on this basis would be justified.

### Conclusion

The site is located in the open countryside where the provision of new dwellings is not generally allowed other than in exceptional circumstances. It is not considered that the heritage value of the building is such that its retention and conversion would outweigh the harm caused to the character and appearance of this rural location that would result from the new dwelling. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies MTRA4 of the LPP1 and DM32 of the LPP2.

### **Recommendation – Refuse**

1. The proposal would result in the creation of an undesirable additional dwelling in an area of countryside for which no overriding justification, on the basis of the retention of a the building as a heritage asset, has been demonstrated. As such the development would be contrary to Policy MTRA4 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy, Policy DM32 of Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management & Site Allocations and provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012). In addition, it fails to accord with the criteria of Policy MTRA3 in that it does not represent the infilling of a small site within a continuously developed road frontage.

### **Informatives:**

1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, Winchester City Council (WCC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, working with applicants and agents to achieve the best solution. To this end WCC:

- offer a pre-application advice service and,
- update applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application, where possible suggesting alternative solutions.

In this instance a site meeting was carried out with the applicant and agent.



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2. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy: MTRA1, DS1, MTRA3, MTRA4, CP3, CP4, CP10, CP11, CP13, CP14, CP16, CP17, CP20

Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations: DM1, DM2, DM9, DM13, DM14, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM22, DM23