

UTT/0679/12/LB WHITE RODING

PROPOSAL: Change of use of 4 barns to form a wedding venue. Demolition of lean-to extension and erection of single storey extension. Creation of new vehicular access and car park. Demolition of three outbuildings. Change of use of 1 no. barn to D1 use.

LOCATION: Colville Hall, Chelmsford Road, White Roding

APPLICANT: Professional Vision Services

AGENT: Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects

GRID REFERENCE: TL 553-134

EXPIRY DATE: 25/07/2012

CASE OFFICER: Mrs Madeleine Jones

1.0 NOTATION

1.1 Outside Development Limits. Metropolitan Green Belt. Grade 1, II* and Grade II buildings. Ancient Scheduled Monument. Tree Preservation Orders. Within Flood Plain Zones 1, 2 and 3. Public Right of Way and Bridleway. Within notifiable distance of gas pipeline. Contaminated Land.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

2.1 Colville Hall is located on the southern side of the A1060 between Hatfield Heath and White Roding in a rural location, surrounded by mostly arable farmland. Colville Hall, the main farmhouse, is a Grade II* listed building with Grade 1 listed barns, Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings. The complex is surrounded by countryside with an access lane to the north leading to the A1060 past a pair of semi detached cottages. The site has several trees that are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

3.0 PROPOSAL

The proposal is for:

- a) Change of use and adaption for the following redundant agricultural buildings for use as a wedding venue:
 - Mill Pond Barn (Grade II*), The reconstruction of the modern lean-to to its north and the removal of the facing from the northern wall to the original barn.
 - The Byre, (Grade II*) Extensively rebuilt.
 - The Cart Lodge (Grade II) this would be lifted, reversed and rest on a new floor and given a number of new windows.
- b) Change of use of Orchard Barn (Grade I) agricultural barn to D1 use.
- c) The demolition of part of Mill Pond Barn (Grade II*).

4.0 APPLICANTS CASE

4.1 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report, Ecological Scoping Survey Report and ecological Species Survey Report Acoustic Report, Structural survey of the barn structures, Design and Access Statement,

Automatic Traffic Count Speed Survey and a Transport Statement Letter.
Flood Risk Assessment
Heritage Statement
Accident Date
Scheduled Monument Consent

5.0 RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

5.1 UTT/0734/98/LB Restoration to barn following fire damage (The Great Barn) Conditional approval 1998

UTT/1203/03/FUL Change of use of agricultural building from B1 use to use as holiday let (The Old Dairy) conditional approval 2003

UTT/0096/08/FUL Change of use from holiday let to residential (The Old Dairy) refused 2008

UTT/0987/93/FUL Retrospective application for the change of use of farm office/milking parlour to offices and workshop. Conditional approval 1993

6.0 POLICIES

6.1 National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework
Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.2 East of England Plan 2006

- Policy ENV6 - The Historic Environment
- Policy ENV3 - biodiversity and Earth Heritage

6.3 Essex Replacement Structure Plan 2001

- N/A

6.4 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

Policy ENV2 – Development affecting Listed Buildings
Policy ENV4 – Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance

7.0 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Colville Hall and its farm buildings form a very significant part of Essex heritage, especially of White Roding and therefore any proposal to restore these buildings is to be welcomed providing it is sensitively done and in keeping with the environment. It is for the heritage experts to determine whether the proposals for restoring the buildings are in keeping with their heritage. However the Council does not believe the proposal to turn the buildings into a wedding venue meets these criteria and therefore strongly objects to this application on the grounds of the seriously detrimental effect it will have on the local environment and the village of White Roding in terms of noise and light pollution and the sheer volume of traffic in and out of the site.

The Reasons are as follows:

1. The impact of the operation on the immediate vicinity will be immense, in particular on the inhabitants of Colville Hall cottages which are within 200m of the site. Their well established quiet way of life in peaceful countryside will be completely destroyed.
2. There will be a significant impact on local wildlife. The surrounding countryside which is mostly farmland and woodland and the buildings themselves, being ancient barns,

- are home to many different species. There is also a bridleway running alongside the site, users of which would be affected at certain times.
3. The wider impact on the whole village of White Roding will be totally unacceptable. The noise and disturbance generated by 150 guests (more than half the population of the village) having a party, usually late into the night, will travel to most of the village. Music, revelry, shouting, car doors slamming, engines revving and the inevitable occasional fight and consequent police attendance (evidence says these will happen) not to mention fireworks, all occurring perhaps twice a week or more, will destroy the quiet nature of the village. In particular the effect of fireworks on local domestic animals will be traumatic.
 4. The volume of traffic generated by 150 guests and all the service vehicles associated with them will cause a major traffic hazard on the A1060. The access road to Colville Hall joins the A1060 on a bend where the road is also undulating, severely restricting the lines of sight. Some vehicles travel along this stretch at great speed (there is no speed restriction other than the national limit) and even with the limited amount of traffic using the junction now it is a dangerous place where several accidents have happened in recent years. Add another 100 or so vehicles turning onto the lane twice a week and it will rapidly become an accident black spot. The proposed revised junction layout and new access road across green belt land will have little or no effect, nor will it reduce the impact of traffic on Colville Hall Cottages because it is still only 40m away. Of particular concern is that there will be a large number of large coaches and service vehicles entering and leaving the site.
 5. There is no evidence of any need for such a venue, which will provide little or no economic benefit to the village. There are already at least five wedding venues within the vicinity, some of which are reported to be struggling. If this enterprise fails what will then happen to these precious buildings?

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

English Heritage

- 8.1 (summary) The proposals for the repair and alteration of a number of historic buildings to provide for their use for wedding celebrations form a sympathetic approach to the task of securing the site's future. The buildings are remarkable both for their chronological range and for their quality and together form an exceptionally beautiful ensemble. The exceptional importance of the site and the buildings is reflected in appropriate designations. A large area is scheduled (a fact not referred to in the application). Colville Hall and its buildings survive remarkably uncompromised and their extraordinary significance can be appreciated keenly in part due to this. Their conservation, however, is not assured. Already the Byre has partially collapsed in the absence of use and repair and its roof structure has been lost. The cartshed is in very poor condition. The Mill Pond Barn has suffered from significant movement and the failure of joints. A significant and expensive programme of works is needed to remedy these defects and to ensure that the buildings are in good repair.
- It follows that the question of how best to fund such repairs and thereby secure the future of this exceptional ensemble is an urgent one.
- The proposals do raise questions of principle. Fundamental to the presumption in favour of sustainable development that animates the National Planning Policy Framework is the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and in considering planning applications planning authorities are required, inter alia, to take account of "the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation" In practice all forms of conversion compromise the significance of such buildings markedly, but it is widely accepted that thoughtfully conceived and executed conversions may be necessary to secure the future of any such buildings. In effect the harm consequent on conversion may be justified by the benefit of securing a buildings future, apposition that can be understood in relation to paragraphs 133 and 134 of the Framework. Conversions may be the necessary means of securing the future of most such buildings, but not all. A very small number of traditional farm buildings (principally grade I and grade II * listed and scheduled monuments) are such

historically for architecturally significant element of our heritage that they should be conserved without alteration for the benefit of current and future generations. Even if they become redundant, they should be maintained and kept in good repair. Given the exceptional nature of the buildings of Colville Hall some thought has to be given to this point. It is particularly relevant to the highly graded agricultural buildings on the site. We would hope to see these conserved without alteration.. given that the owners of such houses often maintain one or more barns, both as ancillary structures and to preserve the beauty and amenity of their property, the notion that such building should be maintained without conversion is not in itself unreasonable. In this case, however, the extent of the historical buildings in proportion to the size of Colville Hall, coupled with their poor condition at the time the applicants acquired the site, suggests that the conversion of at least some of the buildings on the site may be necessary to secure their future.

English Heritage's conclusion, in respect of the principle of what is proposed can be set in two parts. First, the proposals as presented form a sympathetic means of providing uses for the buildings that are to be repaired and converted, and securing the repair of the barn and the repair and partial reconstruction of the two buildings on the site whose condition is most poor. Second, the success of these proposals, coupled with the continued use of the hall as a house, ought to be considered to provide an adequate means of securing the site as a whole. While the use of Orchard Barn for ceremonies would be unexceptionable, we would strongly advise against its alteration. Should major repairs be required in the future it might be possible to provide grant aid towards their cost. The future use of the Courthouse is a different question, given that the character of this building is not, and was not, purely agricultural, but is a building of particular sensitivity.

In principle, therefore, English Heritage endorses the proposals submitted. The design of the works appears largely sympathetic. We have the following observations:

1) The Mill pond Barn would be quite radically altered. The reconstruction of the modern lean-to to its north, and the removal of the facing from the northern wall of the original barn, would provide light to the interior in a way that would affect part of the barn that has already been compromised. Given the level of light that this would provide, coupled with light from the proposed gable windows, we suggest that the proposed windows in the south elevation of the barn should be omitted. These, placed to either side of the midstrey- which itself would be glazed - would give the barn an unduly domestic appearance.

2) The byre would necessarily be extensively rebuilt. While the general approach seems unexceptionable the effect of conversion on the external appearance of the building to the west could be reduced were the bedroom window to be altered so as to match that of the bathroom - i.e to be set above the weatherboarding. To introduce three full height windows and a door to this elevation seems excessive.

3) The cart shed would also be radically altered by being lifted and rest on a new floor. This may be necessary to its proposed use. It would also be both reversed and given a number of new windows. The effect of conversion could be modified were the proposed window in the south elevation to be screened, perhaps by battens of the sort to be used on the west elevation.

4) The remarkable character of the site is due not only to the extraordinary assembly of buildings and structures that survive but also to the simplicity of their setting. There is nothing complex or affected in the landscaping of the place. With this in mind, it is important that the landscaping works associated with these proposals should be minimal. Materials and detailing for new drives or roads, for paths and for other features should be consistent with the agricultural character of the place. The creation of a formal garden in what is essentially an informal landscape would seem at odds with the character.

5) Given the archaeological, architectural and historic importance of the site, it would be appropriate to attach a full archaeological condition requiring recording of both building works and ground works.

Recommendation

English Heritage considers that these proposals for Colville Hall form a sympathetic approach to securing the future of this remarkable historic place. We advise your Council to consider the minor amendments that we have proposed above, but, subject to these, we recommend that your council approve the proposals, with appropriate conditions, including a recording condition.

Internal Specialist Advice

- 8.2 Coville Hall together with the selection of important agricultural buildings forms an outstanding example of early historic farmstead sadly now redundant for farming purposes. It is clear that because of the historic and architectural importance of this site the new, economically viable use has to be found for these structures so their survival is assured.

This proposal has been a subject of extensive pre-application negotiations involving the Council's and English Heritage officers. In general it is considered that the suggested use, the overall details of the design and proposed repairs would be beneficial to the integrity and longevity of the historic buildings. The content of English Heritage letter conveys in great detail the importance of the buildings and merits of the proposal, which by and large reflect my view and I am happy to indorse most of the suggested conditions.

I feel however that the suggested long glazed screens with associated timber doors pined back on the face of the Byre would result in a less domestic character of the conversion rather than the cottage-like windows suggested by the EH.

Although it is said that the grade I Orchard Barn would be used for the ceremonies, no information is provided as to the possible work if any which need to be implements. I consider that in view of its high grading only exactly like for like repairs and minimal adaptations could be considered. Clearly any work to this structure would require formal listed building consent.

In conclusion and should there be no planning objections I suggest following conditions.

- Prior to the commencement of works detailed schedule of repairs for each historic building to be approved.
- All new roofs to be long straw thatch, natural slate or hand made plain clay tiles respectively to LA approval
- All weather boarding to be feather edge timber painted black.
- All original render to be lime based and smooth.
- All external joinery to be painted timber painted to match the boarding.
- An acceptable landscaping scheme to be approved prior to the commencement of works.

9.0 REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 This application has been advertised and 39 representations have been received. Expiry date 12th June 2012.

Within the 39 representation letters received objecting to the proposal a summary of the main concerns are as follows: Highway safety, noise, impact on amenity, affect on wildlife, light pollution

10.0 APPRAISAL

The main issues are whether the change of use would have any detrimental impact on the listed buildings and their setting (NPPF ULP ENV2)

In considering a proposal for listed building consent, the duty imposed by section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Policy ENV2 seeks to protect the fabric, character and the setting of listed buildings from development which would adversely affect them.

Development proposals that impair special characteristics of a listed building will not be permitted. The listed buildings subject of this proposal are redundant and in a poor state of disrepair. The Byre has partially collapsed and its roof structure has been lost. The cart lodge is in very poor condition and the Mill Pond Barn has suffered from significant movement and the failure of its joints.

It is clear that because of the historic and architectural importance of this site a new, economically viable use has to be found for these structures so their survival is assured. This proposal has been a subject of extensive pre-application negotiations involving the Council's and English Heritage officers. In general it is considered that the suggested use, the overall details of the design and proposed repairs would be beneficial to the integrity and longevity of the historic buildings

Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Framework states that Local Planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

The proposals for the repair and alteration of a number of historic buildings to provide for their use for wedding celebrations form a sympathetic approach to the task of securing the site's future. The buildings are remarkable both for their chronological range and for their quality and together form an exceptionally beautiful ensemble. The exceptional importance of the site and the buildings is reflected in appropriate designations. A large area is scheduled. Colville Hall and its buildings survive remarkably uncompromised and their extraordinary significance can be appreciated keenly in part due to this. Their conservation, however, is not assured.

As stated by English Heritage, the proposals as presented form a sympathetic means of providing uses for the buildings that are to be repaired and converted, and securing the repair of the barn and the repair and partial reconstruction of the two buildings on the site whose condition is most poor. The success of these proposals, coupled with the continued use of the hall as a house, ought to be considered to provide an adequate means of securing the site as a whole.

Advice is that Orchard Barn should remain unaltered. This proposal does not include any alterations to this Grade I listed building.

The part of Mill Pond Barn to be demolished is a modern addition and is therefore not considered to be detrimental to the special historical characteristics of the building; however, the proposed windows in the south elevation should be omitted. The applicants have agreed to this revision. A further revision is that a new glass screen should be built behind the existing glass doors. This will also help to control music noise breakout and will provide a high level of sound insulation.

In respect of the Byre which would be extensively rebuilt, advice from English Heritage and the internal Specialist advice conflicts,

English Heritage states the effect of conversion on the external appearance of the building to the west could be reduced were the bedroom window to be altered so as to match that of the bathroom - i.e to be set above the weatherboarding. To introduce three full height windows and a door to this elevation seems excessive. However, Conservation advice is that the suggested long glazed screens with associated timber doors pinned back on the face of the Byre would result in a less domestic character of the conversion rather

than the cottage-like windows suggested by the EH. The view submitted by English Heritage is an observation and he has no objections to the proposal as presented.

The conversion and conservation will not only bring life back to the above listed buildings but also allow the possibility of a long-term future for all ten of the listed buildings forming the group.

The proposal would not adversely affect the setting or impair the special characteristics of the listed building and would be in keeping with its character and surroundings.

Scheduled Monument consent has already been approved (subject to conditions) by the Secretary of state for these works to proceed.

7.0 CONCLUSION

It is considered that the benefits of the proposal would secure the future conservation of these heritage assets. English Heritage and internal specialist advice recommends approval subject to conditions and as such it is considered that the proposal should be approved.

RECOMMENDATION – CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

1. The development to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as set out in the Schedule.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt as to the nature of the development hereby permitted, to ensure development is carried out in accordance with the approved application details, to ensure that the development is carried out with the minimum harm to the local environment, in accordance with the Policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) as shown in the Schedule of Policies.

3. The roofs to the development hereby permitted shall be clad in either long straw thatch, natural slate or hand made plain clay tiles in accordance with samples that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before development commences. Subsequently, the materials shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting in accordance with Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005 policy ENV2

4. Before any development or preliminary groundworks of any kind commence the applicant shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work and recording of both building works and ground works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of archaeological protection in accordance with Policy ENV4 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

5. All external weather-boarding shall be feather-edged and painted black. Subsequently, the materials shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the local planning authority

REASON: : In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting in accordance with Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005 policy ENV2

6. All works to the original render walls to the development hereby permitted shall be lime based and have a smooth rendered surface. Subsequently, the materials shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

REASON: : In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting in accordance with Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005 policy ENV2

7 All external joinery to the development hereby permitted shall be of painted timber and painted to match the boarding . Subsequently, the materials shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting in accordance with Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005 policy ENV2

8. Prior to the commencement of works a detailed schedule of repairs for each historic building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the development commences. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

REASON : In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting in accordance with Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005 policy ENV2

9. Notwithstanding the plans submitted for the design of the formal garden to the west of Orchard Barn and The Byre, before development commences full details of both hard and soft landscape works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Subsequently, these works shall be carried out as approved.

The landscaping details to be submitted shall include:-

- a) proposed finished levels [earthworks to be carried out]
- b) means of enclosure
- c) materials and detailing of car parking layout and driveway
- d) vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas
- e) hard surfacing, other hard landscape features and materials
- f) planting plans, including specifications of species, sizes, planting centres, number and percentage mix
- g) details of planting or features to be provided to enhance the value of the development for biodiversity and wildlife
- h) details of siting and timing of all construction activities to avoid harm to all nature conservation features
- i) location of service runs

REASON: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts

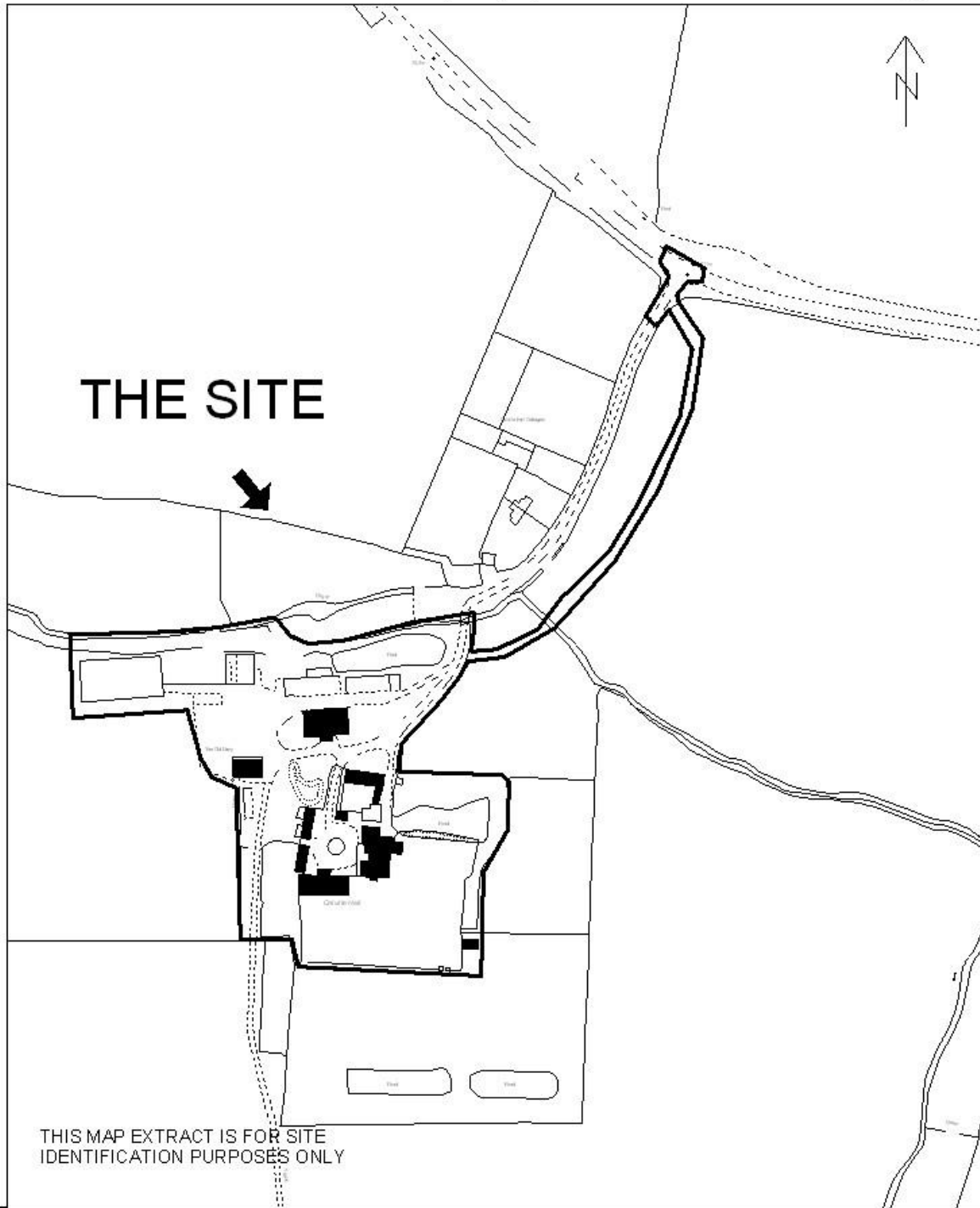
of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 policy ENV2

10. Before development commences a revised plan shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing showing the following amendments which shall be incorporated into the design for the development/works hereby permitted and the permission shall be implemented in accordance with the amendments listed below:

Mill Pond Barn: The proposed windows in the south elevation shall be omitted

The Cart shed: The proposed window in the south elevation shall be screened (perhaps by battens of the sort to be used on the west elevation)

REASON: In the interests of preserving the historic character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting in accordance with Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005 policy ENV2



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