

Manorwood - 9th May 2026

Responses below in blue to the points raised in the consultation response dated 6th May 2026 (shown red) following the original comments dated 27th January 2026

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications. My apologies for the delay in getting these to you which has been caused by pressure of other work and leave over the Christmas period.

West House Farm is a historic farmstead located in a rural position outside Albourne. The farmstead includes a Grade II listed farmhouse, which dates originally from the late 17th- early 18th century, with a second parallel range and rear wing added in the late 17th/early 19th century, a Grade II listed weatherboarded barn of the mid-late 17th century, and a number of other ancillary buildings which are predominantly ranged around a series of yards to the south-west of the house. These include a late 18th century stable which would be regarded as curtilage listed. The farmstead is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment as a historic farmstead of the post-Medieval period.

A public right of way (PROW) runs east-west just to the north of the farmstead. There would be clear views from this path of the grouping. This path turns to run south along the western side of the farm buildings, with several other PROWs joining from all directions.

The current proposal, which follows on from preapplication advice, is for the extension and conversion of the barn to create a dwelling, conversion of the curtilage listed stable to ancillary accommodation, demolition of modern buildings within the former farmstead, and construction of a new stables building, games room building, and bike and bin store.

Further parallel applications for listed building consent and planning permission have been received relating to works to the listed farmhouse and its immediate setting. Whilst not the subject of the applications currently under consideration, the cumulative impact of all of the proposed works on the historic farmstead and the setting of the farmhouse may be relevant.

At preapplication stage, concern was raised regarding the principle of the conversion of the barn to a separate dwelling, in terms of the potential impact on the character of the farmstead and its currently tranquil rural nature, as well as the likely associated pressure for subdivision and domestication of the settings of the farmhouse and barn. It was noted that although establishing a beneficial long-term use for the building would be desirable, it was reported to be in a good structural condition, and that any formal application should include a robust justification for a domestic conversion as opposed to another, potentially less invasive, use, such as a continuing ancillary purpose relating to the farmhouse.

The current proposal is accompanied by a Planning Statement and by a Heritage Statement which comment on this issue. A Structural Assessment and Method Statement is also included, although the consideration of the condition of the building and necessary repairs is brief and high-level. The Heritage Statement includes a table (SWOT framework) which considers and rejects alternative uses for the listed barn. Whilst I would not necessarily disagree with some of the conclusions drawn by the SWOT, this also appears to be a very simplified, high level analysis which is not backed up by adequate supporting evidence- for example, we do not have a fully detailed condition survey of the barn, or costings of repairs, or valuations, to demonstrate that any necessary work would not be financially viable were the building retained in a low key use ancillary to the house. In my opinion, therefore, the optimal viable use of the barn has not been adequately demonstrated, and there is no clear evidence that domestic conversion to a separate dwelling is the only or best option to secure the long-term beneficial use of the building. This fundamental aspect of the proposal requires further work, and a more robust justification, if the principle is to be established.

We have received further information in respect of this aspect of the proposal, which I will consider in turn:

- A letter from H. J Burt Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents has been received which gives various costings for different options in terms of the extent of works to the buildings within the farmstead and conversion, or not, of the barn and outbuildings. The basis for these estimated costs is not set out and to me they appear in some cases on the high side (e.g. £500,000 for the small single storey extension to the house, minor internal works and car port). If further works outside the direct scope of the application are included in this costing, this should be made clear, but without some further justification for the levels of these various costings, it is difficult to know how much weight to put on them.

The figure of £500,000 is in fact likely an underestimate. With current build costs and the works required this figure could be more like £550,000 - £600,000 in our view.

We have worked on many projects like this and have a clear understanding of the likely costs which would include the approved alterations to the house, the new car port, the extension, the insulation and alterations to the single storey range, rewiring and replumbing of the house, general refurbishment throughout, new sanitary ware, refurbishment of windows, redecoration throughout and landscape works.

Whilst the agents have given a figure of £500,000 we have in fact worked £400,000 to ensure we are conservative with this.

As such we stand by the figures used.

- An options document has been provided which again provides costs for various scenarios with respect to the house and farm buildings. Apart from the conversion and repair of the barn (see below) I don't believe we have a

detailed breakdown of how these costs have been arrived at. It all seems quite speculative? How much weight therefore can be attached to this?

The figures used in the options document have been obtained from a well respected local agent and Chartered Surveyor for the end values and from an experienced contractor with a solid background in working with historic buildings.

The standard method of valuing properties is by way of comparables and this is from experience. That is why we spoke with HJ Burt who are probably the most experienced agents in the area for this type of property. As Chartered Surveyors they are bound by RICS standards and so their figures are entirely reliable.

Build costs are calculated with a breakdown of figures and from our experience the figures are broadly what we would expect.

As such we stand by the figures used.

- I also don't understand the difference between options 5 and 6 on the options document, both of which appear to refer to the current application proposals, but have differently worded descriptions and resulting costs?
- Option 5 is the value of the house once the proposed works are complete.
- Option 6 is the value of the barn once the proposed works are complete (as a separate dwelling)

These could be combined to form one option which is ultimately what the proposal is, but as one results in a small profit and the other results in a small loss they have been separated for clarity.

- The applicant has submitted a contractor's quote for the conversion works, which also includes a quote which is described as being solely for the repair and renovation of the building for continuing use as a barn. However this latter aspect of the quote includes a large sum for preliminary works, which are described as being in preparation for commencement on the extension, which would not appear to be applicable to simple repair of the extant building. The repair and renovation quote also includes a groundworks package which also appears to include works across the farmstead as a whole, and refers, for example, to rainwater outlets around the perimeter of new as well as existing buildings. Are these items correctly included and priced, reflecting only repair of the existing barn? Again, as these quotes feed into the costings for the various options for the site it is difficult to know how much weight can be attached to the conclusions drawn where areas of uncertainty of this nature remain.

The quote for the barn includes a large prelims figure of £70,000 but this is reduced compared to the full conversion option which allows £116,000. Reference to 'preparation for commencement on the extension' was clearly a typo and left in from the earlier formatting as was reference to the extension in the groundworks. This has been updated.

The groundworks figure however had not been adjusted for just the barn and this has now been amended and the total cost used in the spreadsheet adjusted to match.

For these reasons, I do not consider that at present the justification is in place which establishes the principle of the conversion.

As above we feel that with the clarity provided and the documents adjusted as stated there remains only one viable option for the barn and that is the conversion to a separate dwelling.

Putting the principle to one side for the moment, I will move on to consider the detail of the proposed physical works forming part of the application before us. These have been amended following on from pre-application advice.

In respect of the barn itself, it is proposed to demolish adjacent structures to either end of the building, which are partly attached and partly detached, and construct in their place two attached extensions. Internally, to the barn the extent of the works to the existing mezzanines is not clear. Partitioning is according to the submitted plans proposed at the western end of the barn beneath the new or retained mezzanine (although there is also some lack of clarity in this respect), and new doors are shown to connect the barn to the extensions. Externally, a number of new or altered openings for windows are shown, including rooflights to the rear (south) roofslope.

The applicant has clarified that it is intended to demolish both mezzanines, replacing one with a new structure incorporating some of the existing fabric. Given the relatively modern date of construction of the mezzanines, this is not considered contentious in principle, although further information would be required, which could be reserved by condition.

Noted – we are happy to agree to such a condition

The existing structures beside the barn are not of any particular merit, and their removal is not considered contentious. The proposed extensions are also considered acceptable in principle, although that to the eastern end would benefit from being set back in terms of the building line from both front and rear elevations. The elevational treatment and fenestration would also benefit from reconsideration to render the appearance of the additions less domestic and more agricultural in character. In my opinion, the architectural quality and level of detailing of the treatment of the extensions could be improved to provide a development which reflects better the level of interest of the host barn and the setting of the adjacent farmhouse.

The line of the eastern extension has been set back from front and rear elevations, which is welcomed. The fenestration and elevational treatment have also been amended but whilst the amended scheme represents some improvement over the original submission, I remain concerned about the number and scale of new openings to the barn, including at ground floor to the frontage of the building, which as a result has a domesticated appearance, to the rear where new openings are proposed rather than reusing existing, and to the western end. This aspect of the proposal requires further consideration.

The plans have been updated to reduce the number of openings and reuse others.

New openings are proposed in the end elevations of the building to allow access to the additions. This work is not commented on in detail in the submitted Heritage Statement, and as such we can have no clear idea of the impact that this will have on the historic fabric of the building. It is clear that some elements of the timber frame to the walls and of the brick plinth to the building have been altered or replaced over time; however, whether original or more modern fabric is now proposed for removal is not clear. This work therefore requires further, more detailed information and justification, including appropriately annotated internal elevations.

The submitted comments make it clear that the new openings will result in loss of historic fabric. The comments do not however discuss whether alternative positions for the openings have been considered which might reduce or avoid loss of historic material, for example if parts of the frame to the lower part of the end elevations of the barn have been previously repaired. This requires further consideration and justification.

There are no alternative areas in the east or west elevations that would result in no loss of fabric to make the connection to the extensions. As can be seen from the photographs provided the sole plates remain intact on both ends of the barn as do the studs, therefore any alternative positions would result in the same loss of fabric.

The proposal with respect to the existing mezzanine structures is also unclear and raises some concerns in my opinion. The submitted Heritage Statement notes that these date from the late 19th or early 20th century and are indicative of a period of change and intensification of agricultural practice. Although these will be of less interest than the earlier fabric contained within the building, they do therefore have some significance in terms of the narrative of the building and of the wider farmstead, which is recognised by the Statement. The application submission is not consistent as to whether one or both structures are to be removed, with one then replaced with a modern structure- the Structural Assessment indicates both removed with one replaced with a new structure, whereas the Heritage Statement suggests that the western mezzanine will be retained with a new stair access. Whilst there may be some justification for the removal of one mezzanine to better expose the original volume of the 17th century barn, I would question whether the removal of both is justified, particularly where it would then be intended to replace one with modern fabric in the same position? These structures contribute strongly to the '*visible layering of change*' which is remarked upon in the Heritage Statement, and their wholesale removal would require further consideration and justification. This aspect of the proposal requires clarification, and if it is confirmed that it is intended to retain the western mezzanine, it would also be helpful if the applicant could explain why this structure was considered to be more significant than the eastern, which it is certainly proposed to remove.

See above. Based on the further information provided I would not object to the removal of the structures and the construction of one new structure incorporating elements of the existing (already re-used) fabric, but as noted above further detail of this would be required. The submitted comments suggest that the retention of openings adjacent to the mezzanine to the eastern end will continue to indicate its former presence, however in fact it is proposed to block that to the rear of the building in favour of new openings at ground level- a further reason why the

fenestration requires reconsideration. The Heritage Statement should be updated to reflect the proposal correctly.

We are happy to agree to such a condition with regards to further details of the mezzanine.

As above the openings have been reused on the rear now in the revised plans.

The submitted Heritage Statement also comments that no new partitioning is proposed within the barn itself, however this is contradicted by the submitted proposed drawings, which show a snug and WC beneath the western mezzanine structure. The HS remarks explicitly that these have been removed from the scheme following negative feedback at pre-application stage, so there does appear to be inconsistency between the drawings and this supporting statement, which should be addressed. I would also repeat the advice given at pre-app. that this partitioning should be removed from the proposal- given the extent of the additions proposed to the barn, no new subdivision within the historic building should be necessary.

The snug and WC have been removed from the proposed floor plan of the barn, which is welcomed.

Noted

In terms of the elevational treatment of the barn, a number of new or altered openings are proposed. It is proposed to retain and to glaze within the cart door openings to both the front and the rear of the building. This aspect of the scheme is not considered contentious, subject to detail. However, elsewhere to these elevations and to the west elevation at high level a number of new openings are proposed. Whereas the re-use of the existing openings to these elevations (with appropriate glazing) may not be considered contentious, it seems that in some cases these existing openings are not used, with instead new windows created, some of which including the long high window to the western elevation and the large window at low level to the rear of the building are particularly domestic in their appearance. To the front of the building, the new openings lower level, their form, and the artificial symmetry which is introduced to the elevation by their placement are in my opinion particularly inappropriate. The new rooflights to the rear roof slope, while not necessarily contentious in principle, appear oversized. These, and the new openings to the elevations are likely to result in loss of historic fabric, which will be considered to cause further harm to the special interest of the building. This aspect of the proposal requires further reconsideration, and the impact of the works on the historic fabric of the barn should be considered in more detail in the supporting documents, and illustrated on appropriate internal elevations.

See above, the fenestration requires further reconsideration. The number of proposed rooflights has been reduced to two. This may be acceptable subject to further detail of the impact on the historic roof structure. As for the openings to the end elevations, it will be preferable if this are sited to reduce or avoid impact on fabric of interest, where possible.

As above the openings have been revised in the revised plans.

Rooflights would be incorporated in to the new roof build up and would not result in the need to cut rafters as they can be set above the rafters. The detail of this can be secured by condition.

A fundamental aspect of the success of conversion proposals to timber framed buildings such as the West House barn will be retaining the visual prominence of the exposed timber frame, which is key to the internal character of the building. The current application is accompanied by a typical section showing that it is proposed to install insulation between the rafters at roof level. Whilst this retains (as shown) the visibility of the very innermost part of the rafter, the depth of the timber which would remain exposed is minimal. In my opinion, this will not be sufficient to preserve the character of this key part of the building's interior, and I would suggest that the proposal is reconsidered, either to reduce the depth of the insulation (if this is possible) or to set it partly internally and partly externally, so that a good depth of timber remains exposed to view to all members of the roof frame. Similar considerations apply with respect to the insulation to the timber framed walls, which also requires reconsideration. I would suggest that existing and proposed internal elevations to demonstrate the continuing visibility of the frame members should also be provided, as these may vary in depth. These drawings should note the position of the tar marks (indicative of the original thatching to the roof) and carpenter's assembly marks to the frame which are noted in the Heritage Statement, to make it clear that these important features providing evidence of the building's construction will be retained exposed to view.

Whilst I appreciate the point made by the applicant regarding impact on the external appearance of the barn, I remain concerned that insufficient depth of timber will be exposed to the rafters and framing to the walls of the building internally. In fact, there seems to be no appreciable difference between the two sectional drawings provided, has the correct revised drawing been submitted? I would also like to see the marked up internal elevations as part of the application rather than by condition, as this aspect is so fundamental to both the practical implementation of the conversion and the preservation of the special interest of the building.

We maintain that the insulation details provided are appropriate and are the best approach on balance to ensure the external character and internal character of the barn are impacted as little as possible.

The insulation depth internally was revised in the last revision from 60mm to 50mm and to compensate the external insulation was amended from 35mm to 45mm.

We are on the limit of what is viable to ensure the building is thermally efficient enough to make it viable, but we have looked at this further and reduced the internal insulation further to 40mm without adding further externally.

This is the minimum we can install and leaves a significant amount of the timbers to both the roof and walls exposed.

We are unclear what is being asked for in terms of marked up internal elevations and how this will better clarify how much depth will be visible. The sections provide this detail most clearly.

We have however included a horizontal section through the rafters as well as through the wall which shows both the bay posts and studs and the relationship of the timbers to the insulation make up which we hope is helpful to show this.

As existing, the barn does not retain historic flooring of interest, but the detail of the proposal for the treatment of this part of the building should also be provided, including typical sectional drawings.

The submitted Heritage Statement refers to repairs to the barn building, specifically to the frame and cladding. Whilst sympathetic repair where necessary would not be considered contentious, and would indeed be welcomed, we have no detailed condition survey of the building to explain the need for this work, or its likely extent, and no detailed specification of the works envisaged. This further information should be supplied (and may feed into the issue of the principle of conversion, discussed above).

No further information received to date.

We have included an initial set of frame drawings highlighting the repairs required following a review by ourselves and The Oak Blokes.

We anticipate that there may well be further repairs required once the cladding and tiles are removed and once a scaffold permits closer access.

It is not unreasonable to request that the full details of the repairs to the timber frame be reserved by condition. This is a fairly typical approach adopted by most local planning authorities. We would again request that this is reserved by condition.

In respect of the works to the stable building, again there is not sufficient evidence currently before us to demonstrate that the domestic conversion proposed represents the optimum viable use for this small ancillary building. In particular, as a new stables building is also proposed as part of the application, any further justification of the principle of this work should include a demonstration of why the curtilage listed building is not considered fit to continue in its original intended purpose?

The applicant states that the proximity of the stables to the barn (intended house) and their dimensions make them unsuitable for modern equestrian use.

Noted

In terms of the physical alterations to the building, externally it is proposed to replace the existing stable doors, but glazing the upper opening of 2 of the 3. Other external works appears to be minimal- this aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious. However, the existing stables building, when viewed on site, has a blocked doorway to the western elevation where an opening has been infilled with concrete blockwork:



This opening does not appear to be shown on the existing or proposed plans relating to the stable building, so that there is no indication of what the proposed treatment of this part of the building would be? It would be helpful if this could be clarified as I doubt (hope!) that it is not proposed to retain the blockwork?

A revised drawing has been provided to show the opening infilled with timber boarding. This would be an improvement over the existing blockwork and is considered acceptable.

Noted

Internally, the building does not appear to retain much in the way of fabric of interest, and the original stall partitioning has been replaced with blockwork -notwithstanding this, the proposal retains sufficient of this plan form to illustrate the original subdivision of the building, which is welcomed. The Heritage Statement does however note the survival of some remnants of lime plaster, and of timber fixing points for mangers, which are important evidence of the original use of the building. There is no commentary on how these features are to be preserved- the Statement and/or drawings should be amended to address this point. In addition, the applicant should provide detailed sectional and elevational drawings as appropriate in relation to the proposal for the insulation of the roof, walls and floor. With respect to the roof, it is noted that this has been lined out with modern boarding, however as it does not appear that listed building consent was obtained for the installation of this boarding we would expect that the historic roof structure above will be retained and exposed in a sympathetic manner, as for the barn.

No further information appears to have been provided with respect to the surviving historic features internally. See above with respect to insulation to the roof.

The insulation depth internally on the roof has been revised from 60mm to 40mm

This is the minimum we can install and leaves a significant amount of the timber visible.

There will be the need for insulation to the walls which were previously rendered anyway as evidenced by the remaining on site. We have however reconsidered the wall detail and have looked to stop the insulation and plaster finish below the remaining manger base which is present on the back wall. This would ensure the

upper section of the wall remains visible and would maintain the character of the building as well as maintaining the base of the mangers which ensures legibility of the buildings former use remains.

The proposed new stable building replaces a row of existing moderns building on the site, which is located to the west of the historic farmyard. These buildings are not of any particular merit, and their removal is not considered contentious. The proposed new stable building is similar in footprint, and of an appropriate design. This aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious, subject to detail.

The proposed new games room building and bike and bin store are also shown to the west of the farmstead, broadly in the position of an existing modern building which it is proposed to demolish and replace. These buildings have an agricultural aesthetic sympathetic to the context, and are not considered contentious, subject to detail.

On recent site visits it was noted that the existing entrance driveway to the northeast of the house, which would become the shared access to the barn, is not currently in good condition in some areas. Upgrading of the drive does not appear to be part of the application, but the nature of any work including materials should be carefully considered in terms of the impact on the setting of the farmstead. It would be helpful if the applicant could confirm their intentions in this respect.

No further information appears to have been provided.

The detail of this was provided as part of the application for the house and it was confirmed this would be dug out, a MOT Type 1 sub base laid and then dressed with a hoggin material with no "hard edges"

This was accepted for the house application. The same is proposed for the barn.

In summary, the proposal raises a number of concerns beginning with the principle of the acceptability of the conversion of the barn and stables to residential accommodation, which is not demonstrated. Beyond this, there are several issues with the detail of the proposed works in terms of their design, and their impact on the historic fabric and special interests of the listed and curtilage listed buildings, including the contribution which these make to the setting of West House Farmhouse. As it stands, I would not consider that the proposal meets the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. On the basis of the information in front of us, and mindful that we have insufficient justification of the principle of the conversion, I would regard the harm arising to be less than substantial, at the mid-high level of that scale.