

The Barn House, Meadow Way, Eastcote HA4 8TP

## Heritage Statement



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Heritage + Urban Design

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in relation to proposals for alterations to the Barn House, Meadow Way, Eastcote, a Grade II listed building. It considers the heritage significance of the building in relation to the proposed changes and assesses them against national and local planning policy.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 sets out the requirements for proposals affecting heritage assets:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

In support of the above, the Hillingdon Local Plan<sup>1</sup> requires that for works to listed buildings:

Applications should include a Heritage Statement that demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of the building and the impact of the proposals on its significance.

The scope and content of the Statement follows the general approach advocated by Historic England in their Advice Note *Statements of Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*. In line with that advice, this Statement analyses the significance of the designated heritage asset, considers the impact of the proposals on that significance, and weighs it against adopted planning policy.

The Statement is written by Geoff Noble IHBC MRTPI, an independent heritage consultant. Geoff Noble is a chartered town planner and a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

It draws on a range of published, online and archival material, including Hillingdon Museum and Archives Service, London Metropolitan Archives and the National Heritage List.

The Statement aims to be an impartial analysis of what matters about the building, and why. It is not an advocacy document. In this respect it is also intended to help the local planning authority to come to a judgement about the level of impact on that significance, and therefore on the merits of the proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> Hillingdon Local Plan Policy DMHB2

Preliminary advice has been provided by Hillingdon Council's Consultant Conservation Officer Emma Lauze, who visited the site on 13 March 2023. That advice has informed this submission and the proposals have been amended accordingly.

## 1.2 Nature of the proposal

As its name suggests, the Barn House is a former agricultural building that was once part of a farmstead complex known as Field End Farm. The old barn fell into disrepair in the 1970s and in 1977 was converted to office use, with new openings being formed and a floor and staircase inserted.

The applicants Blossom Tree Montessori Ltd propose to convert the property to a children's day nursery, which does not necessitate a planning application for the change of use but does call for listed building consent for the related internal alterations. Some stripping-out works have already taken place, but on the advice of the Council all work has been put on hold pending the determination of this application.

The exterior of the barn will be unchanged and there are no plans to change the appearance of the car park, boundary treatment or soft landscape.

## 1.3 Designation records

Eastcote Barn was first listed on in December 1957. The current list entry (undated) is as follows:

5018 FIELD END ROAD (West Side) EASTCOTE Barn to south of Field End Farmhouse (Formerly listed as Field End Farm Barn) TQ 1088 10/113 12.12.57.

Grade II

Probably late C16 timber framed barn, with old tiled roof. Weatherboarded except on south side which has exposed framing with brick nogging. Queen-post roof trusses. Lean-to north aisle.

Listing NGR: TQ1089888071

This description is very brief and not especially helpful. It predates the office conversion and is misleading in its detail and the orientation given (the aisle is on the east side of the structure).

Field End Farmhouse to the north is separately listed, also grade II:

5018 FIELD END ROAD (West Side) EASTCOTE Field End Farmhouse TQ 1088 10/112 12.12.57.

Grade II

C17 building of 2 storeys, 3 bays, irregular. Painted brick with dentil cornice. Old tiled roof with bargeboarded gable ends. Moulded brick chimney stacks. Casement windows, that on 1st floor centre blocked.

Listing NGR: TQ1089088100

The old farmhouse is in separate ownership and is unaffected by these proposals.

No reference is made in either listing to the granary or store that stood between the farmhouse and the barn. This is shown on photographs as a square, weatherboarded structure with a pyramidal tiled roof. It possibly stood on staddle stones, as one sits on the site at present. The granary survived until 1977, when it was replaced by an approximate replica and was deployed to house the office boiler.

#### 1.4 [Linked reports](#)

This Heritage Statement should also be read with the Design and Access Statement by iCON Building Consultancy, the submitted drawings and the supporting statement by Blossom Tree Montessori.

#### 1.5 [Limitations](#)

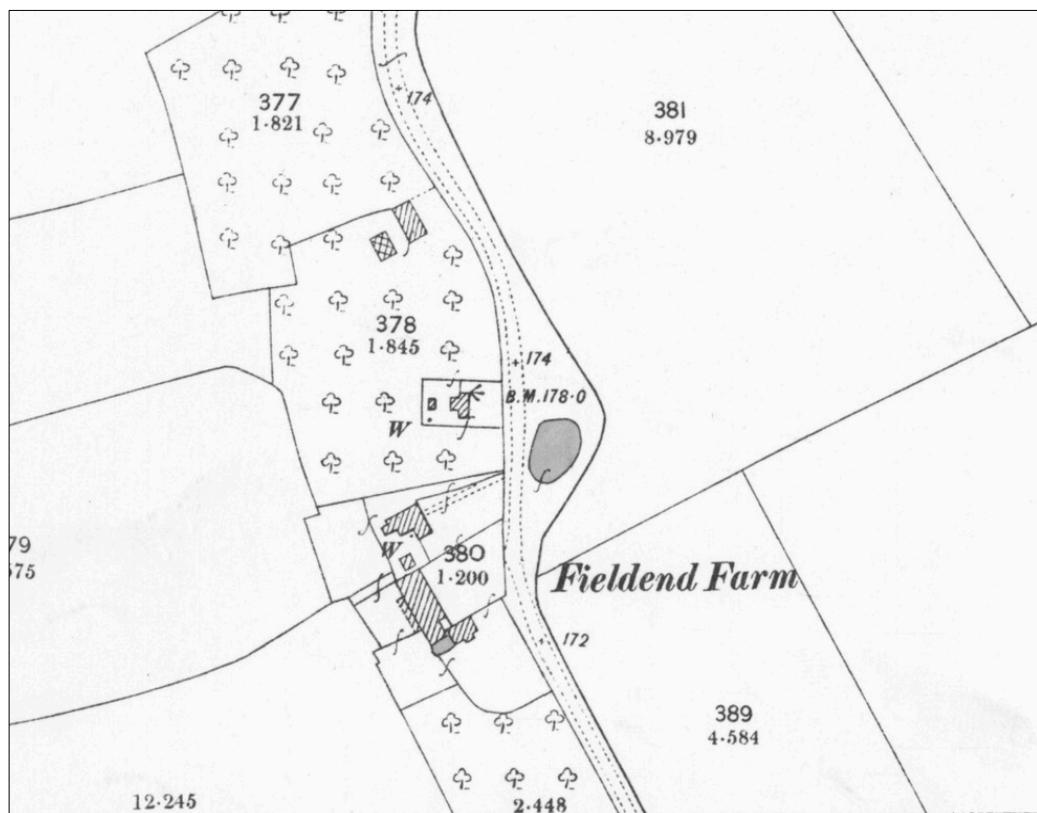
This Heritage Statement describes the building and assesses its value and significance in historic building terms. It does not address any archaeological potential of the site, but the proposals will not entail any substantial ground disturbance.

## 2 [History and description](#)

### 2.1 [Beginnings](#)

Until the start of the twentieth century Eastcote was little more than a scatter of farms in a largely arable landscape, within the parish of Ruislip. Field End Farm was one of several in the area and the barn and the adjacent farmhouse are amongst the last survivors. Field End Farm is understood to have been mostly arable but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had reverted to dairying, supporting the demands of a growing metropolis.

The surviving barn was formerly part of a larger farmstead including smaller buildings as well as the farmhouse to the north.

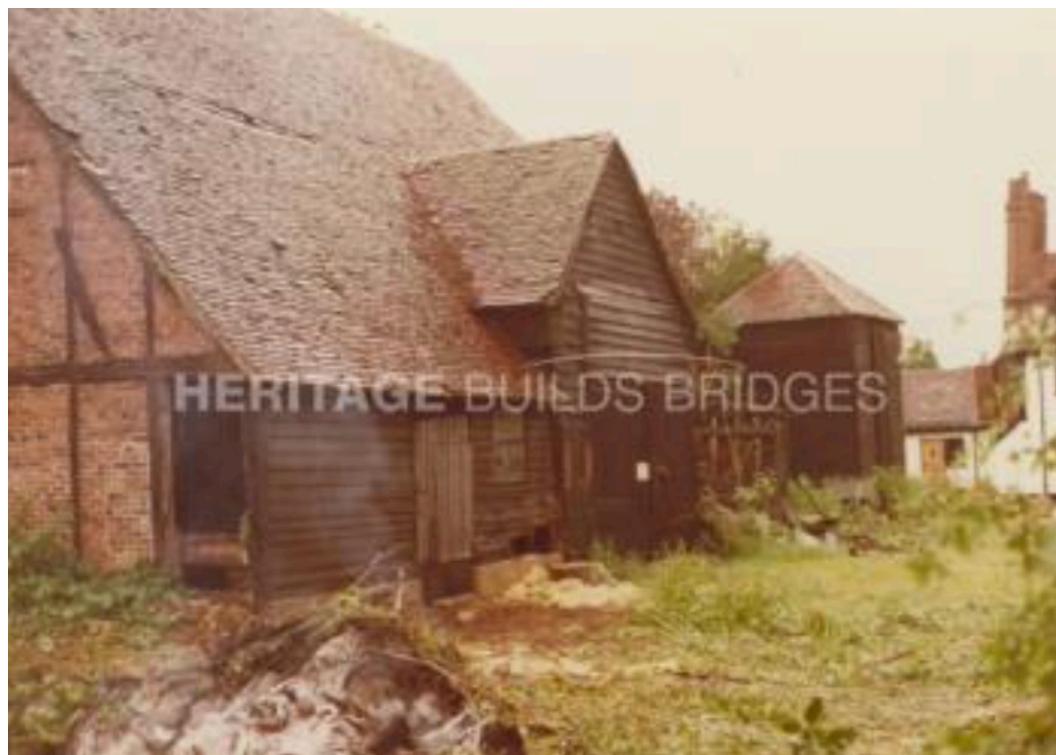


OS Map 1894 Middlesex X.6, Revised: 1894, Published: 1896. At this time Eastcote was still a rural area of small farms and cottages. The barn is shown as part of an assemblage of farm buildings



TQ1088-TQ1188 - A, Surveyed/Revised: 1958 to 1959, Published: 1960. Eastcote grew rapidly in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the group is now in a suburban setting. Some of the farm buildings have been removed

The list description of the former barn dates the building as late 16<sup>th</sup> century, an assessment that seems to rest on constructional evidence such as the use of tenoned purlins. The date could however be up to a century earlier, or possibly later.



*The Old Barn Field End Farm c.1977 before conversion. The original porch and aisle can be seen, along with the outbuilding – a staddle stone granary? Image ©Hillingdon Archives ref EAGS 042*

Photographs in Hillingdon's archives taken at the time of the office conversion show a five bay, box-framed structure with intermediate studwork, a north aisle and central cartshed porch. The roof is in plain clay tiles and the whole of the exterior is weatherboarded, with the exception of the south west end where a square-framed timber gable is infilled with brick nogging. Sash windows were inserted in the north-east gable and the north-west elevation.<sup>2</sup>

The framing appears to be in oak, with hybrid queen post trusses with struts, tenoned in-line purlins, longitudinal wind braces and close stud work. There is no indication that there was ever a north-west aisle.

The timber members in the current building vary greatly in their dimensions, spacing and condition. There is widespread evidence of beetle damage in the principal beams and posts. The profusion of open mortices suggests that timber members have been extensively repositioned or even imported from other buildings.

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<sup>2</sup> Further photographic records may be found at the London Picture Archive



*The Old Barn Field End Farm c.1977 during conversion – the porch has been dismantled.*

*Image ©Hillingdon Archives ref EAGS 050*

## 2.2 The 1977 conversion and subsequent work

By the 1970s the old barn was in a poor state and photographs taken by the Greater London Council show it in a state of dereliction.<sup>3</sup> Work was undertaken in 1977 to convert the barn to offices. This entailed stripping back the building to its bare frame, removing all the brickwork and old weatherboarding in the process. The property was reroofed and there was very considerable reconstruction with widespread use of steel rafters and beams. Some of the steelwork was crudely clad in artificial wood (ie textured fibreglass). The most radical change was to insert a full floor, reached from a staircase placed in the former barn porch. New glazed openings were formed, and the old granary was replaced with an approximate replica, built in breeze blocks and clad in stained weatherboarding.

Various minor works have been undertaken since the conversion, including *ad hoc* replacement of services, lighting, and cables.

Photographs show that the upper space of the office was originally undivided. In 2012 Listed Building Consent was granted for the subdivision of the floor by inserting a stud wall with an upper level polycarbonate panel. This work was undertaken as part of accommodating a tuition centre in the offices. (Hillingdon Council ref. 916015/APP/2012/2596).

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<sup>3</sup> London Picture Archive reference SC\_PHL\_01\_604\_75\_15538

In association with its former office use, listed building consent was refused in 2021 for a side extension and conversion of the adjacent ‘tower’.

### 3 Assessment of Heritage Significance

Significance is one of the guiding principles running through the historic environment section of the National Planning Policy Framework. The NPPF defines significance as *“the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Such interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic and it may derive not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”*

Late medieval aisled barns in lowland England are very common and in its present, much altered state the Barn House is not a good example. Much primary fabric was lost or relocated in the office conversion work in 1977 and the years of neglect that preceded it. The insertion of a new floor makes it difficult to appreciate the original spatial qualities of the former barn, or how it would have functioned as part of a farm. Subdivision of the first floor has further added to the problem. It is however still possible to enjoy the sight of the hybrid queen post trusses and get some sense of its former dimensions by looking up from one end to the other.



*First floor interior, showing the floor inserted in 1977 and one of the original queen post trusses. The partition behind was formed in 2012*

Externally, the big plain roof sweeping down over the aisle is impressive and the clay tiles have weathered satisfactorily. The building is a notable landmark on a corner site to the north of Eastcote's main street, thereby contributing to wayfinding and legibility in the suburb. Taking account the changes inside and out, the overall **architectural and aesthetic value** can be regarded as moderate.

The **historic and evidential value** of the former barn is high, notwithstanding the loss of original fabric and the subsequent alterations. It is certainly one of the oldest buildings in the area, and the barn serves as is a striking reminder that Eastcote had a thriving agricultural economy long before the coming of the Metropolitan railway in twentieth century and Eastcote's transformation into an outer London suburb.

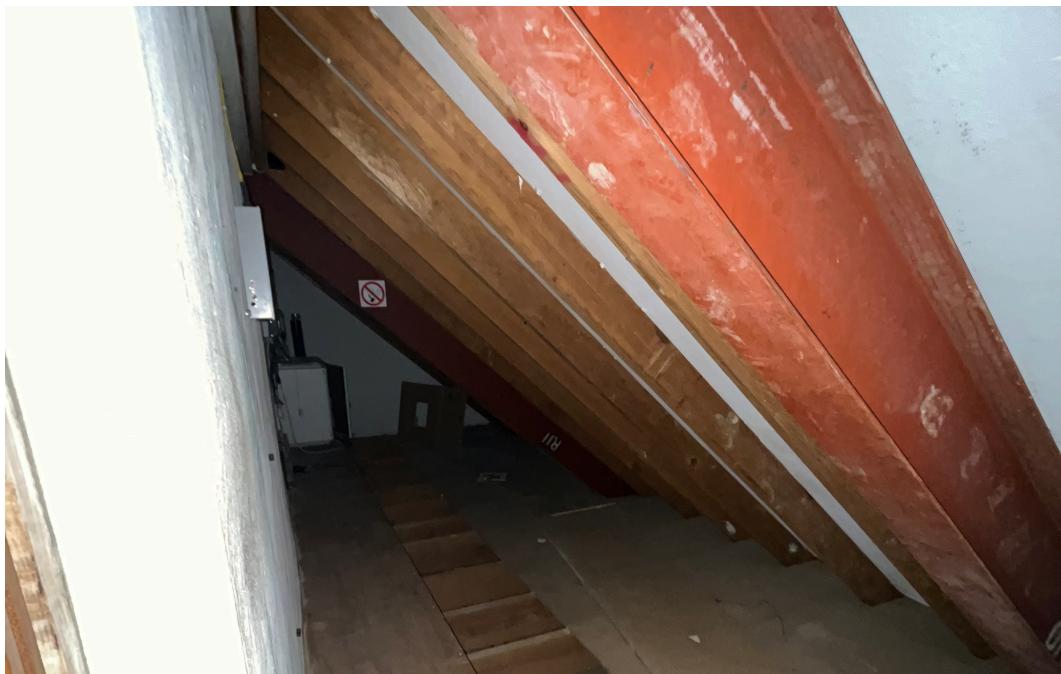
The barn has group value with the adjacent Old Farm, showing the relationship of the two buildings as part of a larger farmstead.

Although the barn has never been a public building, its prominence in the townscape gives it some **communal value**.

Overall, despite having undergone what Hillingdon's Conservation Officer has fairly described as "a rather brutal conversion", the building retains special interest for its age, its reasonably intact structural frame, its group value with the neighbouring farm and its landmark quality in an outer London suburb. It is appropriately listed at Grade II.



*One of the artificial (fibreglass) beams on the first floor, above the aisle*



*Steel beam in use as a principal rafter*

## 4 Planning statute and policy

### 4.1 Statute

The legal duty is set out in Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

“...no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised”

Works are authorised if written consent has been granted by the local planning authority or the Secretary of State, and they are executed in accordance with the terms of the consent and any conditions attached to it. Any contravention of Section 7 amounts to an offence that may result in prosecution.

Under Section 16 of the Act, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

### 4.2 National planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 sets out the basis on which applications affecting heritage assets should be handled.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (NPPF para 199)

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification (NPPF para 200).

The NPPF is supported by the online National Planning Practice Guidance.

#### 4.3 Local planning policy

##### Hillingdon Local Plan

Hillingdon Council adopted the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 - Strategic Policies on 8 November 2012 and the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (Development Management Policies) on 16 January 2020.

Policy HE 1 Heritage commits the Council to conserving and enhancing Hillingdon's environment, settings and landscape, including designated heritage assets.

The first Strategic Policy objective, SO1, is:

Conserve and enhance the borough's heritage and their settings by ensuring new development, including changes to the public realm, are of high-quality design, appropriate to the significance of the heritage asset, and seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London's environmental quality, cultural identity and economy as part of managing London's ability to accommodate change and regeneration.

The Strategic Policy relating to heritage, HE1, states (in part)

The Council will conserve and enhance Hillingdon's distinct and varied environment, its settings and the wider historic landscape, which includes: Designated heritage assets such as statutorily Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and Archaeologically significant areas, including Archaeological Priority Zones and Areas.

Policy DM HB 2 (A) states that

Applications for Listed Building Consent and planning permission to alter, extend, or change the use of a statutorily Listed Building will only be permitted if they are considered to retain its significance and value and are appropriate in terms of the fabric, historic integrity, spatial quality and layout of the building. Any additions or alterations to a Listed Building should be sympathetic in terms of scale, proportion, detailed design, materials and workmanship.

[London Plan](#)

There are equivalent and complementary strategic policies in the London Plan 2021.

## 5 The proposed works

The Design and Access Statement by iCON Building Consultancy describes the work in detail. In summary, these are:

Ground floor

- removal of partition at the north end of the principal space (already executed)
- Replacement of toilets, kitchen units and cabinets
- Removal of kitchen partition, new kitchen units and appliances
- New units in staff room
- Basins in babies' room and creation of nappy change area
- Glazed screen
- Creation of toddlers' rooms including toilets (north part of aisle)

First floor

- Removal of kitchen units and toilet
- Creation of toddlers' and pre-school toilets

No major re-planning or structural alterations are required and the intervention is limited to the construction of additional toilets for the children, plus facilities for nappy changing and preparing milk bottles.

## 6 Heritage impact

As noted in the Design and Access Statement, no structural alterations are required and the replanning has been kept to the minimum in order to maintain the spacious qualities of the principal rooms. In particular, the ability on the first floor to see the roof structure.

The existing large open plan space to the southern end of the ground floor space will remain unaltered so that the perception of the former barn is maintained.

There will be no removal or disturbance to any of the structural timbers of the barn, or to the external brickwork, glazing or weatherboarding. There will be no change to the external appearance of the building and its setting will be unaltered.

## 7 Conclusions

Converting the building to a children's nursery will provide a benign new use, wholly compatible with the existing structure. The proposed essential works of adaptation are relatively modest and there will be no disturbance to the timber frame, studwork or historic surfaces, where they have survived.

The proposed works are minor, reversible and entail no loss of primary fabric or disturbance to the present plan form. Whilst it is most unlikely that the inserted floor would ever be removed, the proposed work does not prejudice that possibility.

The suitability of the new nursery use combined with the low-key nature of the work will result in a **neutral heritage impact**, causing no harm to, or loss of heritage significance, to the listed building. The proposed work thereby complies with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Hillingdon Local Plan and the London Plan.

## Sources consulted

National Heritage List <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

London Picture Archive <https://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk>

Hillingdon Local Plan 2012 and 2020

Hillingdon Museum and Archives Service

Victoria County History [Middlesex](#)

Cox, C.A and Spink,K [Field End Revisited](#) Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society Journal 2000