



CHARLOTTE EVANS

Heritage & Conservation Advice

Hearing Speaking Notes

VCROC1 – Land South of New Inn Hill, Rockland St Mary

15 January 2026

This note responds to the Hearing Statement submitted by Julie Church, insofar as it relates to the identification and assessment of the building referred to as "Small Barn", and alleged deficiencies in the heritage evidence, and sets out the notes shared at the Hearing on 15th January 2026.

1. Identification of "Small Barn"

The building referred to by Julie Church as "Small Barn" is not a separate designated heritage asset. It forms part of the Grade II listed "Barn and Hayloft 25m north east of Old Hall", listed under NHLE entry no. 1050428.

For the purposes of the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Charlotte Evans (October 2024), this building has been assessed under this listing number. It has therefore not been omitted or overlooked but correctly considered within the wider listed barn complex.

2. Historic function and evidential value

Historically, the listed structure 1050428 was not constructed as part of the original farmstead (as shown on the 1839 Tithe Map) but was built later (but before 1882). "Small Barn" was an ancillary agricultural structure, formerly used for pig rearing in the 20th century prior to its conversion to residential use:

- It did not contain windows overlooking the site
- Access was via a stable door fronting the lane
- It functioned as a service building subordinate to the main farmstead.

As such, it did not historically derive significance from views across open agricultural land, nor did it have a designed or functional visual relationship with the site now allocated as VCROC1.

3. Residential conversion and views

The current windows and outward views from "Small Barn" are the result of a late 20th-century residential conversion, which represents a substantial change from the building's historic agricultural character.

In heritage terms, views created by later domestic adaptation do not contribute materially to the building's significance as a listed heritage asset. This accords with Historic England's guidance.

The Heritage Impact Assessment therefore focuses appropriately on historic significance and setting, rather than modern residential amenity.

4. Alleged confusion between Old Hall Barn and “Small Barn”

There is no confusion within the Heritage Impact Assessment regarding the identification of listed assets:

- “Old Hall Barn” is the name given to NHLE 1050428, as former agriculture structure/s, and is clearly described, mapped and assessed;
- The building referred to as “Small Barn” falls within this listed group and is not a separate heritage designation;
- Photographs are used illustratively to demonstrate setting and relationships, not to assert separate asset status.

The assessment methodology is proportionate and consistent with NPPF and Historic England GPA2 and GPA3.

5. Topography and visibility

The Heritage Impact Assessment explicitly acknowledges:

- The site’s relationship to surrounding land;
- Existing changes to the historic agricultural setting, including modern development, landscaping, and boundary treatments;
- The limited and filtered nature of views as experienced from the listed farmstead complex.

The presence of a slope does not alter the conclusion that any harm would be less than substantial and at the lower end of the spectrum, particularly when mitigation is applied.

6. Open space and mitigation

The proposed western open space buffer has been identified as an appropriate mitigation measure. It reflects:

- The evolved character of the farmstead’s setting;
- The fact that historic openness has already been compromised by earlier development;
- A balanced approach between heritage considerations and the delivery of allocated housing.

The Inspector will be aware that the NPPF does not require the freezing of settings at a particular point in time, but a reasoned assessment of harm and public benefit.

7. Conclusion

The Heritage Impact Assessment:

- Correctly identifies and assesses all relevant designated heritage assets;
- Properly includes the building known as “Small Barn” within NHLE 1050428;
- Applies a sound, policy-compliant methodology;
- Reaches a justified conclusion of less than substantial harm, capable of mitigation and planning balance.

There is no evidential basis for the claim that decisions are being made on “completely unsound evidence”.