

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

APPLICATION FOR
RETROSPECTIVE PLANNING AND LISTED BUILDING
CONSENT FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL
USE TO CLASS E USE

HARVEL HOUSE FARM CAFE
HARVEL LANE
MEOPHAM
GRAVESEND
DA13 0DH

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HARVEL HOUSE FARM CAFE
HARVEL LANE, MEOPHAM
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DOCUMENT RECORD

PROJECT REFERENCE

L.26 - HARVEL HOUSE FARM CAFE

APPLICANT:

**MR MARTIN JAMES
HARVEL HOUSE FARM CAFE
HARVEL LANE
MEOPHAM
GRAVESEND
DA13 0DH**

REVISION	DATE	STATUS
A	14.03.2026	PLANNING APPLICATION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 LYL Architectural Designs Ltd. have been instructed by Mr Martin James to prepare an application to seek the formal consent from Gravesham Borough Council for the retrospective planning and listed building consent for the change of use of the Harvel House Farm Cafe and shop buildings from agricultural to Class E use.
- 1.2 The site was acquired by the applicant in June 2023 with an established mixed use; agricultural and commercial. The latter in the form of a farm shop and butchers on the premises selling the farm produce directly to the public.
- 1.3 The Heritage Statement by HB Archaeology and Conservation provides a detailed analysis of the chronological development of the site and the farmstead buildings from their origin as a loose courtyard-plan layout to a regular courtyard layout and its current form in response to changing needs and functional requirements.
- 1.4 The attached drawings by LYL Architectural Designs Ltd provide a detailed graphical representation of the various structures within the application site in terms of their condition, extension and refurbishment prior to, and following the applicant's acquisition of the site and the established commercial use.
- 1.5 We have attached the following drawings and documents in support of the application:
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT | |
| L26-P-00 | SITE LOCATION PLAN |
| L26-P-01 | EXISTING SITE PLAN |
| L26-P-02 | EXISTING CONDITION: GROUND FLOOR PLAN |
| L26-P-03 | EXISTING CONDITION: FIRST FLOOR PLAN |
| L26-P-04 | EXISTING CONDITION: ROOF PLAN |
| L26-P-05 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: SITE PLAN |
| L26-P-06 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: GROUND FLOOR PLAN |
| L26-P-07 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: FIRST FLOOR PLAN |
| L26-P-08 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: ROOF PLAN |
| L26-P-10 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: BUILDINGS A, B, & C ELEVATIONS 1 |
| L26-P-11 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: BUILDINGS A, B, & C ELEVATIONS 2 |
| L26-P-12 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: BUILDINGS A, B, & C ELEVATIONS 3 |
| L26-P-13 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: BUILDINGS D ELEVATIONS |
| L26-P-14 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: BUILDINGS E ELEVATIONS |
| L26-P-15 | CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023 WORKS: BUILDINGS F ELEVATIONS |

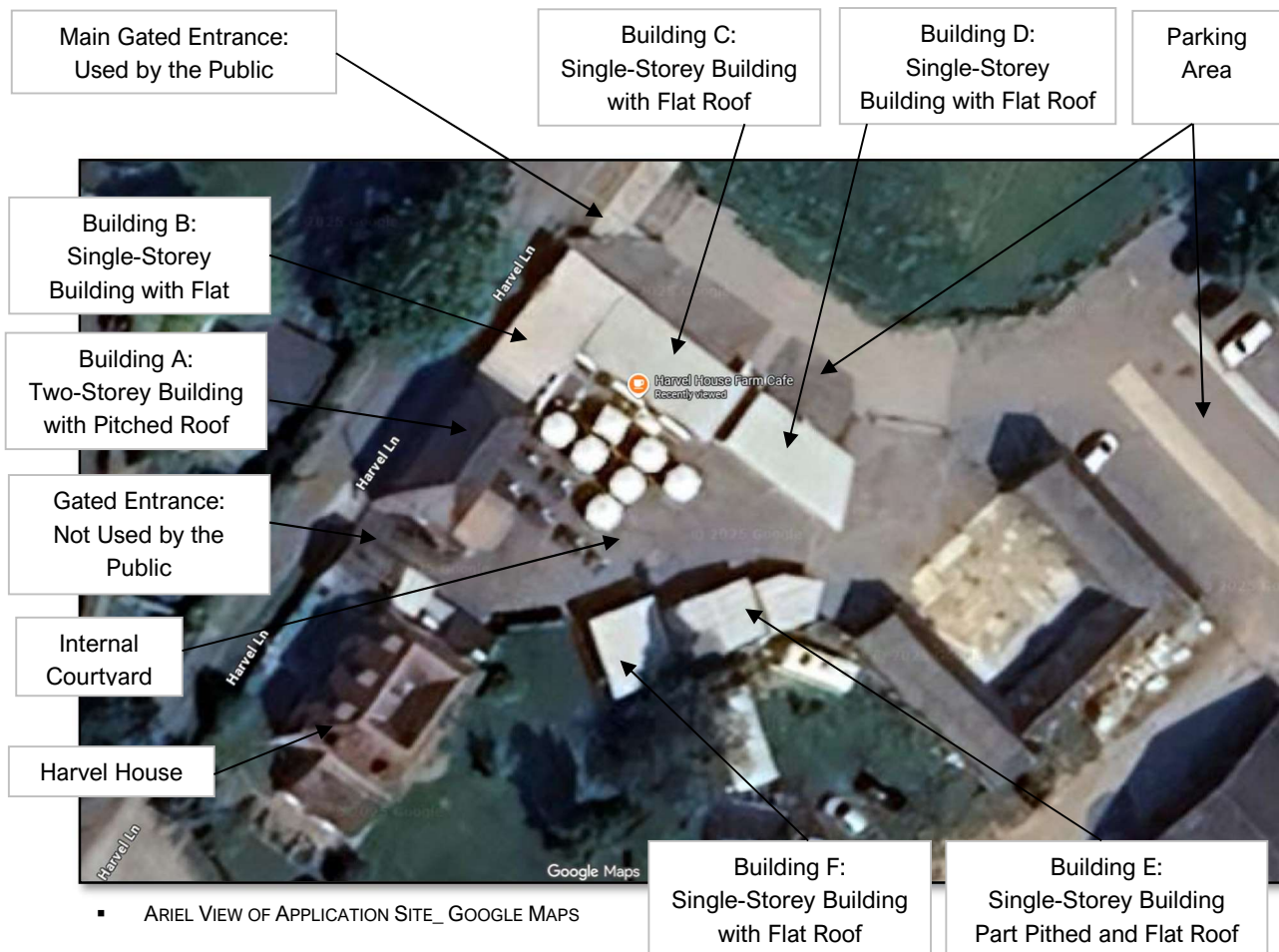
HERITAGE STATEMENT BY HB ARCHAEOLOGY & CONSERVATION LTD.

2.0 THE SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The Application site lies on the southeastern side of Harvel Lane in a rural location within the Green Belt Area, southwest of the Harvel Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The Harvel House Farm site comprises the following cluster of structures together with agricultural land:
- 2.2.1 Grade II Listed House, Harvel House, which falls outside the scope of this application.
 - 2.2.2 U-shaped barn and large agricultural barns, that fall outside the scope of this application.
 - 2.2.3 Harvel House Farm Café, comprising two and one-storey structures arranged around an internal courtyard with associated car parking facility, which are the subject of this application.



■ ARIEL VIEW OF APPLICATION SITE_ GOOGLE MAPS



2.3 The Application Site is comprised of the following cluster of structures/buildings set around an internal courtyard, and bounded on the southwest by Harvel House:

2.3.1 Building A: Two-storey building with a pitched tiled roof. Identified in the Heritage Statement to have been originally used as a 'Stable with Hayloft over.'



■ BUILDING A: ELEVATION FACING INTERNAL COURTYARD



■ BUILDING A: ELEVATION FACING INTERNAL COURTYARD & HARVEL HOUSE

2.3.2 Building B: Single-storey building with a corrugated metal flat roof finish. Identified in the Heritage Statement to have been originally used as a 'Cowshed/Livestock Accommodation.'



■ BUILDING A [LEFT HAND SIDE] & BUILDING B [RIGHT HAND SIDE]: STREET ELEVATION



■ BUILDING B: ELEVATION FACING THE INTERNAL COURTYARD.



■ BUILDING B: ELEVATION FACING THE INTERNAL COURTYARD.

2.3.3 Building C: Single-storey with corrugated metal flat roof finish. Identified in the Heritage Statement to have been originally used as a *Cowshed/Livestock Accommodation.*



▪ BUILDING C: ELEVATION FACING THE INTERNAL COURTYARD.



▪ BUILDING C: ELEVATION FACING THE INTERNAL COURTYARD.



▪ BUILDING D [LEFT] & BUILDING C [RIGHT]: ELEVATION FACING THE CAR PARKING & ENTRANCE AREA

2.3.4 Building D: Single-storey with corrugated metal flat roof finish. Identified in the Heritage Statement to have been originally used as a *Cowshed/Livestock Accommodation.*



■ BUILDING D: ELEVATION FACING THE INTERNAL COURTYARD.



■ BUILDING D: ELEVATION FACING THE PARKING/ENTRANCE AREA.



▪ BUILDING D & BUILDING E: INTERNAL ELEVATIONS

2.3.5 Building E: Single-storey, in part pitched and in part flat roof with corrugated metal roof finish. Identified in the Heritage Statement as a 'Group of 20th and 21st Century Ad-Hoc buildings on the site of an earlier structure.'



▪ BUILDING E: INTERNAL ELEVATION FACING COURTYARD



▪ BUILDING E: REAR ELEVATION

2.3.6 Building E: Single-storey with corrugated metal flat roof finish. *Contemporary structure.*



- BUILDING F: INTERNAL ELEVATION FACING COURTYARD

2.4 There are two gated vehicular entrances to the site from Harvel Lane:

2.4.1 The Main Entrance.



- MAIN GATED ENTRANCE: LEFT- VIEW FROM HARVEL LANE, RIGHT – VIEW FROM INSIDE THE PARKING AREA

2.4.2 The Secondary Entrance.



- SECONDARY GATED ENTRANCE BOUNDED BETWEEN BUILDING A & THE GARAGE STRUCTURE OF HARVEL HOUSE

2.5 Refer to the Heritage Statement by HB Archaeology and Conservation for the detailed analysis of the chronological development to the site and the farmstead buildings from their origin as a loose courtyard-plan layout to a regular courtyard layout and its current form.

2.6 The maps and ariel views below are extracted from the Heritage Statement by HB Archaeology and Conservation and show the timeline development of the application site.

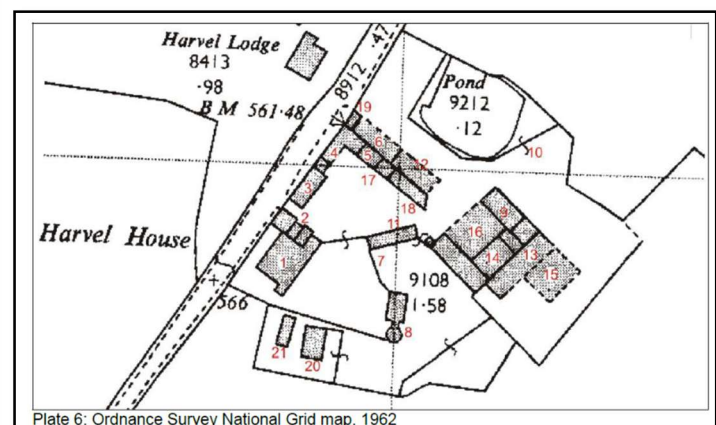
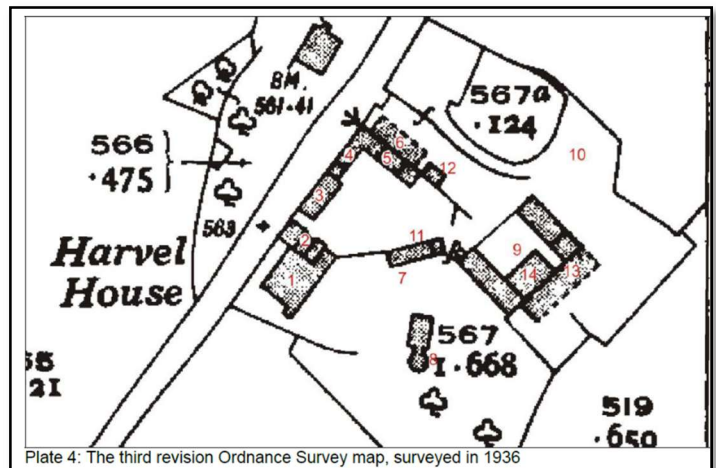
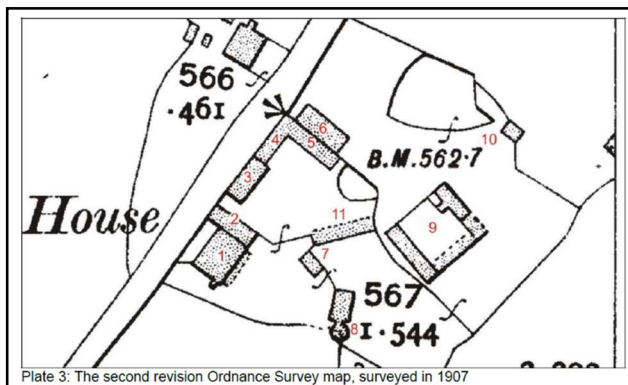
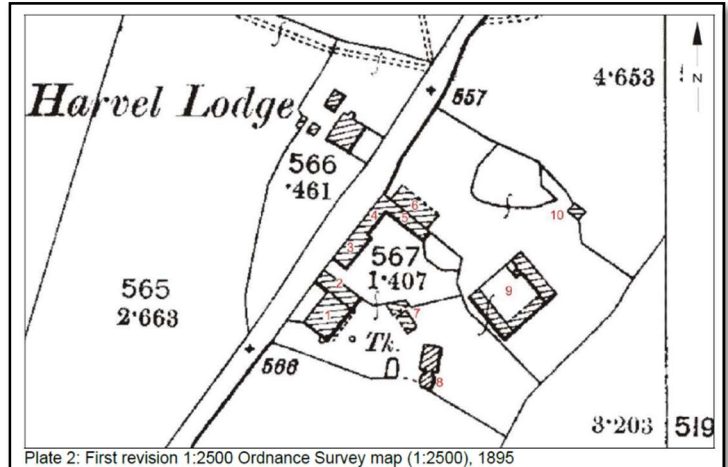
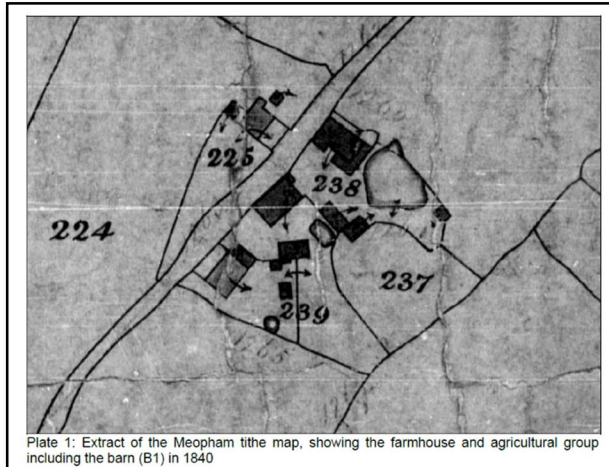




Plate 7: The farmstead by 1990 (Google Earth Image)



Plate 8: Between 1990 and 2003 (Google Earth Image)



Plate 9: The farmstead in 2007 (Google Earth Image)



Plate 10: The farmstead as arrived at between 2011 and 2013, new buildings flanking the replacement to building 11 indicated by arrow



Plate 11: The property as arrived at between 2020 and 2025

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- | | | | |
|-----|--|------------|-----------------------------|
| 3.1 | 20090662 | 26.03.2010 | Prior Approval Not Required |
| | Application for Prior Approval of an open fronted storage barn. | | |
| 3.2 | 20030542 | 29.09.2003 | Permitted |
| | Erection of Single-Storey Side Extension to Form Kitchen and Bathroom | | |
| 3.3 | 20030543 | 29.09.2003 | Permitted |
| | Listed Building Application Erection of a s Single-Storey Side Extension | | |
| 3.4 | 20020730 | 02.09.2002 | Prior Approval Not Required |
| | Application for Determination Pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning [General Permitted Development] Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for 15m high imitation grain silo tower with 6no. dual band polar antenna and 4no. 600mm transmission dishes internal to the silo with one equipment cabin measuring 2.8m(h) x 3.4m(w)x 4.5m (l) with 2no. heat management units measuring 1.1m x 3.4m x 2.6m in an enclosed 8m x 12m compound. | | |
| 3.5 | 19990006 | 02.02.1999 | Prior Approval Not Required |
| | Determination as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of a general-purpose agricultural building | | |
| 3.6 | Pre-application advice PRE20230255 | 18.04.2024 | |
| | Alterations to existing agricultural barn and conversion to a restaurant.
Erection of three lodges and three pods in field to rear of barn to form tourist accommodation together with associated parking and access way. | | |

4.0 EXISTING CONDITION & CONDITION PRIOR TO 2023

4.1 The Applicant, Mr Martin James, purchased the site from the previous owners in June 2023, with an established farm shop and butchers, selling to the public fresh meat, green/fresh produce together with cooked delicacies made using the ingredients from the farm.

4.2 Upon reviewing the historic google street view available for this area, the earliest being February 2009, it is evident that the use of the site as a farm shop was established by that date together with the works to expand this use and improve public access into the site.

4.2.1 Public access was via a narrow entrance, retaining the main access from Harvel Lane for farm use.



▪ GOOGLE STREET VIEW – FEBRUARY 2009: FARM SHOP ENTRANCE /SIGN & FLOOR PAVING HH [HARVEL HOUSE]

4.2.2 Works to expand the parking facility for the public were also underway by February 2009.



▪ GOOGLE STREET VIEW – FEBRUARY 2009: FARM SHOP SIGN & START OF PAVING WORKS TO THE MAIN ENTRANCE & PARKING

- 4.2.3 The Google Street View dated May 2019 shows the completion of the works to the customer car parking area, and the closure of the secondary entrance together with the removal of the shop signage associated with that secondary access.



- GOOGLE STREET VIEW – MAY 2019: COMPLETION OF RESURFACING OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE & PARKING



- GOOGLE STREET VIEW – MAY 2019: SECONDARY ENTRANCE GATED AND FARM SIGN REMOVED

- 4.3 The two-storey brick structure of Building A that delineates the northwester boundary of the site parallel with Harvel Lane was used by the previous owners as a Butchers, selling meat and readymade baked goods using farm produce. This use ceased in January 2025 amid financial pressure and significant losses incurred.

4.3.1 The slate roof and clay ridge and hip tiles appear to be contemporary, together with the plastic rainwater pipes, in place since 2009.



■ LEFT GOOGLE STREET VIEW – FEBRUARY 2009. RIGHT: PHOTO TAKEN IN AUGUST 2025

- 4.3.2 The first-floor level is only accessible via an external staircase that was put in place in 2023.
- 4.3.3 The existing fenestrations, window and door units all remain unchanged and reflect the condition prior to the 2023 transition of ownership, and whilst this building was actively used as a butcher and farm shop.
- 4.3.4 Internally the floor finish still reflects the previous use and location of the butcher's fridges and worktops.
- 4.3.5 The air-conditioning unit was also in place during the use of the building as a butcher/farm shop to provide the required space cooling.



■ LEFT GOOGLE STREET VIEW – FEBRUARY 2009. RIGHT: PHOTO TAKEN IN AUGUST 2025

- 4.4 Building B, is a single-storey brick building with a corrugated metal roof finish that was in its established form since prior to the 2023 transition of ownership, and its use associated with that of the Butcher/farm shop.
- 4.4.1 The street façade shows two distinctive historic extensions of this structure: Horizontal extension bonded to Building A, and a later vertical extension. The former earlier than the latter.
- 4.4.2 The street façade was extended vertically prior to the earliest Google Street view of February 2009. The vertical extension can be clearly read because of the use of the Red/Orange mix bricks used that strongly contrast the earlier, darker brick.



Red/Orange Brick Mix for the
vertical extension of Building B

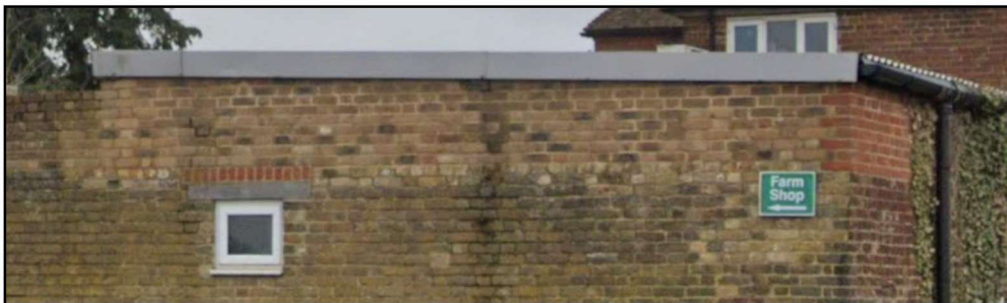
Brick Bond – Queen Closer

- BUILDING B: STREET ELEVATION - EXISTING CONDITION

- 4.4.3 The Northeast elevation facing the car parking area was historically constructed and later extended vertically using different bricks than those along the street elevation.



■ BUILDING B: NORTHEAST ELEVATION - EXISTING CONDITION



■ BUILDING B: NORTHEAST ELEVATION – GOOGLE STREET VIEW 2009

- 4.4.4 The earlier lower section of the façade forms part of the Building C structure.



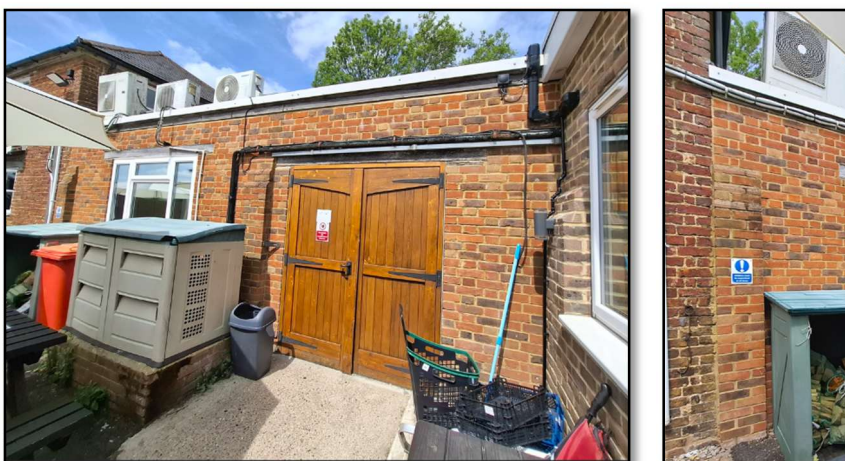
■ BUILDING B: NORTHEAST ELEVATION – GOOGLE STREET VIEW 2019

- 4.4.5 Following the 2023 transition of ownership, the façade was strengthened via the construction of buttressing brick piers, a brick enclosure for storing gas bottles and the installation of an air-conditioning unit and other surface mounted services.



■ BUILDING B: NORTHEAST ELEVATION FACING THE CAR PARKING AREA- EXISTING CONDITION

- 4.4.6 The Southeast elevation facing the internal courtyard has not been altered since the transition of ownership in 2023, apart from the abutment of the Building C structure and a new internal door opening.



■ BUILDING B: SOUTHEAST ELEVATION FACING THE INTERNAL COURTYARD AREA- EXISTING CONDITION

- 4.4.7 Vertical joint abutment with Building A and the use of an orange-mix brickwork allows for a clear reading of the architectural development of these structures.

- 4.5 Works to provide pedestrian access from the car parking area through to the internal courtyard and extend/refurbish the other structures on site started in or around August 2009 according to the images collated from Google Street View.

4.5.1 Northeast Elevation: opening created in the brick wall, piers and steps constructed.



- NORTHEAST ELEVATION FACING THE CAR PARKING AREA- GOOGLE STREET VIEW AUGUST 2009

4.5.2 Vertical extension of Building C using red brickwork in place by October 2016.

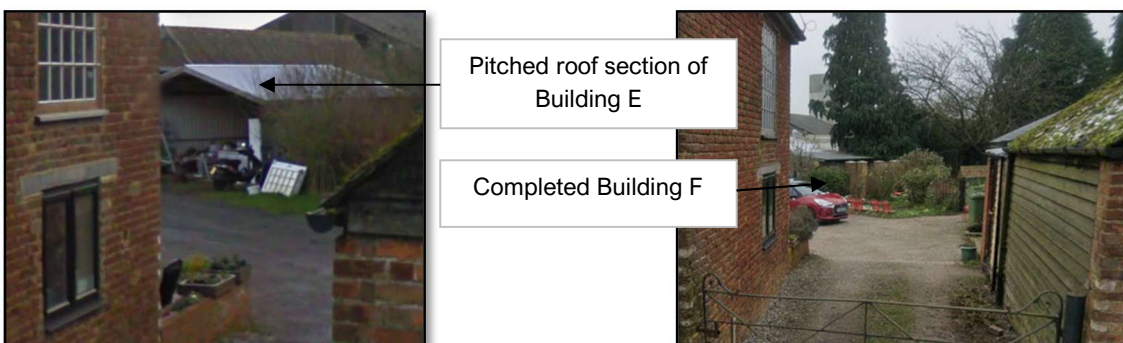
4.5.3 Building E: completed by October 2016 and used as part of the established Farm Shop.



- NORTHEAST ELEVATION FACING THE CAR PARKING AREA- GOOGLE STREET VIEW OCTOBER 2016

4.5.4 Building E: Pitched roof section was in place prior to February 2009.

4.5.5 Building F: Structure in place by January 2021.



- LEFT BUILDING E- GOOGLE STREET VIEW FEBRUARY 2009. RIGHT BUILDING F:- GOOGLE STREET VIEW JANUARY 2021

- 4.6 Work completed since transition of ownership in 2003 to support the established use of farm shop/ butchers and expand services and sale of ready-made produce to offer café facility:

4.6.1 Building C: Brick enclosure to vertically extend the existing walls/plinth and align with the height of Building B. the use of bricks that vary from the original/earlier structure allows for a clear and distinct reading of the later works.



■ LEFT BUILDING C:& RIGHT BUILDING D : LEGIBILITY OF THE TWO BUILDING CAMPAIGNS

- 4.6.2 Building C: Corrugated metal roofing finish that matches the roof finish used on Buildings B & E by the previous owners. The only change is incorporating metal trim finish and white IPVC fascias to provide a required fascia/soffit overhand.
- 4.6.3 Building C: White UPVC window/door units to match those already used in Building B & E by the previous owners.
- 4.6.4 Building D: Walls extended vertically on three elevations using a red/orange mix brick that allows for the distinct reading of the two building campaigns. Open fronted timber framed structure supporting a corrugated metal roof. Brick piers buttressing the existing structure and a chimney stack to run the flu from the bread oven.
- 4.6.5 Refurbishment of Building E: New internal partition, replacing timber doors with a window, replacing timber cladded sections with windows, UPVC fascias and soffits and the installation of air-conditioning and refrigeration units.
- 4.6.6 Refurbishment of Building F: New internal partitions, UPVC windows, sanitary fittings and finish, reversing the fall of the flat roof with new UPVC fascias and soffit boards.

5.0 ESTABLISHED & EXISTING CLASS E USE

- 5.1 Harvel House Farm has established the use of some buildings on site around the internal courtyard to sell the farm produce: A butcher selling meat and readymade delicacies, and a farm shop selling groceries. Public access and advertised use established and being extended by February 2009, by the previous owners.
- 5.2 The previous owner suffered financial loss as income from the farm and butchers decreased because of environmental and socioeconomic factors including Covid, which led to a reduction in farm activity and subsequently its viability as a working farm. By the time the Applicant, Mr Martin James, purchased the site in June 2023, the farm activity had been downsized significantly. This in turn was having an adverse impact on the supply of fresh produce to both the Butchers and Farm shop element of the site.
- 5.3 The applicant continued developing and investing in the established commercial side of the site, including the butchers, which ceased operating as such in January 2025 due to a significant decrease in demand and the absence of a working farm to supply it with the fresh produce.
- 5.4 This was offset by the surge in demand for the café facility from locals enjoying the rural setting, ease of parking and the range of menus on offer.
- 5.5 The Harvel House Farm café offers indoor and outdoor seating areas, the latter within the courtyard delineated by the existing buildings, operating 7 days a week, and employing 3 Full-time and 3 Part-time staff members.
- 5.6 The commercial use of the site was introduced by the previous owner to support the agricultural element by selling the farm produce directly to the public. This arrangement and commercial use, though well-established on site for over 15 years, was not formalised with the council. The change of use of the site, following the decline of the agricultural activity, and growth of the commercial use is now being recognised as requiring formal approval by the council.
- 5.7 The current application is seeking the approval of the council for the change of use of the application site from Agricultural use to Class E – Commercial , Business and Service. This class covers the established activity of site for the sale of food and drink for the consumption both off and on—site.
- 5.8 The application site is in the Green Belt Area. Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, SO8, notes the aim of the policy and any planning decision to *'Preserve the openness of the Green Belt, maintain its national and local planning purposes and protect it from inappropriate development.'*
- 5.9 The application site is composed of a cluster of buildings, set around a courtyard area, that historically supported the agricultural activity of the farm. The refurbishment work conducted since the 2023 transition of ownership, was confined to developing existing structures. Vertical extension confined to align with existing structures, and the material palette reflected.

- 5.10 The council's key policies acknowledges that the *'Borough has traditionally been dependent on agriculture... but has increasingly diversified as the agricultural industry has changed in response to modern requirements. This has resulted in the re-use of existing buildings and the development of new enterprises that do not necessarily relate to traditional farm uses... At the same time, the support for rural diversification needs to recognise the nature of the business and its potential traffic generation and other impacts.'*
- 5.11 In terms of traffic, the Harvel Farm Café is ideally located to serve the immediate and adjacent settlements due west and north and provides ample parking facility. Therefore, is not seen to have an adverse impact on traffic generation.
- 5.12 Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy regarding Rural Areas, acknowledges that *'There are a few major employment sites within the rural area and supply within or adjacent to the rural settlements, tend to be dominated by small sites.'* Such as the Harvel House Farm Café. *'However, such sites do facilitate sustainable lifestyles by providing opportunities for people to live and work locally and they also help to support the delivery of local services.'* The Harvel Farmhouse café does offer full and part-time employment and a destination for the local community providing outdoor and in-door dining experience. *'In assessing proposals, regard will be given to the sensitivity of the location and the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.'* The Harvel house Farm café retrofitted existing structures, adapted for reuse, thus, an example of sustainable development with no adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt Area.
- 5.13 Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy CS07 notes that *'The Council will support proposals that promote the appropriate expansion and diversification of the rural area economy. Support will be given to the conversion of rural buildings to employment use/live-work units where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and where it accords with policies in this plan in particular relating to Green Infrastructure.'*
- 5.14 In terms of the impact on historic and architectural significance, the Heritage statement clearly demonstrates the *'continued reuse, adaptation and continued reconfiguration and extension of the historic farmstead in response to changing needs,'* as being integral to the development of this site.
- 5.15 Furthermore, the Heritage statement establishes that *'The significance of the buildings lies in the abundant evidence retained in their remains that illustrate origin, function, development and decline.'*
- 5.16 As demonstrated in this statement and the attached drawings, the refurbishment and retrofitting works retained and built on the existing form and setting. Therefore, have not adversely impacted the historic or architectural significance of the site nor its setting in pursuit of establishing a sustainable use to sustain active investment.