



## Committee Report

**Planning Committee South** – 28 November 2023

**Application no** DC/20/5261/LBC

**Location**

Butley Abbey Farm  
Abbey Farm Lane  
Butley  
Suffolk  
IP12 3NP

**Expiry date** 4 March 2021

**Application type** Listed Building Consent

**Applicant** Greenwell Farms

**Parish** Butley

**Proposal** Listed Building Consent - Redevelopment of Redundant Agricultural Buildings to 2no. Holiday Lets, Events Centre, Manager's Accommodation & Office Accommodation. Includes erection of 1no. Holiday Let & erection of Cartlodge & Store infill. Repairs and alterations to existing buildings.

**Case Officer** Rachel Smith  
07887 452719  
[rachel.smith@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.smith@eastsoffolk.gov.uk)

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The proposal is for Listed Building Consent for alterations to buildings at Butley Abbey Farm in relation to the redevelopment of the wider site, which includes the Grade II listed 'Butley Abbey and Priory' (former frater), 'Butley Abbey and Priory Reredorter (Refectory)', Abbey Farm and the Ruins of Abbey Church.
- 1.2 The application is being presented to Planning Committee South in connection with the accompanying planning application DC/20/5260/FUL which was referred by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management due to the scale of proposed development relative to its location and the level of interest.
- 1.3 The proposed alterations are considered acceptable and not to harm the significance of any of the Listed Buildings or their value as a group. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The application site is located within the Parish of Butley, to the south of the core of the village. It is also located within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is accessed via an existing track off Church Road which serves a mix of agricultural buildings, both modern and traditional, and residential dwellings. There are two pairs of semi-detached dwellings to the north of the access track which are outside of the site boundary, as is the Grade II Listed Butley Abbey Farmhouse which is located adjacent to the south of the application site. In between these properties are a number of agricultural buildings including stores, former stables and piggeries. The refectory barn towards the eastern side of the group is also individually Listed as Grade II in addition to a further barn forming the northern part of the courtyard buildings. Other traditional buildings on the site are considered to be curtilage listed.
- 2.2 The application site lies to the south of Butley Priory itself which is an established events location and is owned by the applicant of this site. It is proposed that the application site is used in conjunction with the existing events use.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 The application seeks Listed Building Consent for a number of works and alterations to buildings on the wider site. The works are proposed in connection with the associated planning application which involves the conversion of buildings to form holiday accommodation, staff accommodation and an events centre. The proposal includes the following elements:
  - Conversion of refectory barns and attached piggery buildings to an events centre, to include catering area.
  - Demolition of later addition to refectory barn and piggeries.
  - Conversion of 2 no. outbuildings to form 3 no. holiday let accommodation.
  - Demolition of 1 no. outbuilding and replacement with single storey contemporary building for 1 no. holiday let accommodation.
  - Rebuild of infill element of cartlodge to provide additional parking, store and holiday let accommodation.

- Partial conversion of east end of stables to office accommodation to support the events centre and holiday lets.
- Conversion of two storey element of stables for manager's accommodation for the running of the site.

#### 4. Consultees

##### Third Party Representations

- 4.1 One letter of objection has been received raising the following points:  
 While the restoration of old heritage buildings and finding new uses for them are good things, the current proposals need further evaluations and reports before they can be supported. The road access is on narrow rural roads including some too narrow for two vehicles to cross, especially at the eastern end of the road known as 'The Clumps' between the existing Priory entrance and Five Cross Ways (Church Road) which is steep and narrow, not well suited to contractor vehicles and wedding and other event guests. There is no public transport to the site. Other issues which need further evaluation include noise and light pollution affecting neighbouring properties, energy sustainability, utilities capacities, effects on wildlife and landscape especially as in an AONB. The sight could be developed on a smaller scale in a way which is more in keeping and sympathetic with its location, and less likely to have adverse effects on neighbours and the surrounding natural environment.

#### Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Butley Parish Council	12 January 2021	11 February 2021
<p>Summary of comments:</p> <p>I confirm the Parish Council held an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on Thursday 4th February 2021 to consider the above-mentioned Planning Applications.            I am writing to confirm the Parish Council CANNOT SUPPORT the applications submitted for the development of the Abbey Farm due to the following reasons:- Noise/Sound Pollution, Traffic Safety, Light Pollution and Habitat.</p> <p>The size of the car park and facilities with all the flow of traffic also seems disproportionate to the idea of peace and quiet in an AONB.</p> <p>Noise            There appears to be inadequate/no controls over the site in terms of Noise, Sound &amp; Light Pollution.            Before any serious consideration can be given to the plans the Parish Council would need to see a computerised model of how the music/sound generated would project itself onto the surrounding countryside to prevent significant sound problems for the villages of Butley, Capel and Boyton.            An analysis of the light pollution based on occupation of all elements of the plan, not just the events centre but also associated buildings and the car park.</p>		

### Traffic Safety

The Parish Council wish to highlight that during the summer months the local roads can have up to 70 tractors a day (surveyed 2020) plus other large agricultural and ancillary vehicles passing the proposed entrance – currently one of a few passing places along this stretch of road.

A proper traffic survey needs to be carried out which shows how the arrival of over 100 cars over a short period of time would be accommodated, as the volume of event traffic from staff, caterers, musicians, florists etc, as well as guests, is not suitable for these small roads.

The Parish Council note that SCC Highways have objected to the applications as there was not 4 metres of passing available. The preferred access for traffic is the lower end of Clumps Road which is a single track of less than 3 metres with minimal passing places meaning cars having to reverse to allow passing. This would cause a lot of damage to the verges and bring more mud onto the road.

Whilst event traffic will mostly be going in the same direction on entry and later exit, that does not take into account local residents using the same road or the farming activities at the junction just next to Butley Priory. There are no footpaths along this road which is used regularly by walkers and cyclists.

Should any system of one-way traffic include using the entrance by the Gatehouse as part of the system? This would certainly be a safer route for entry and minimise the problems on the Abbey Farm corner for exit.

It should be noted that most guests will not be local and will be unused to very narrow lanes with potentially large farm equipment in the middle of the road.

Signage should be put in place to ensure traffic does not go along the Quiet Lane in error.

### Habitat

A proper Habitats Assessment must be carried out to preserve the local species (Bats, Swallows etc.).

### Local Economy

The Parish Council note there is no local benefit to the local economy except for occasional cleaning and catering jobs, whilst increasing the carbon footprint massively.

### Layout, Density, Design/Appearance, Character

There will be a significant increase in the carbon footprint of the area, with many more car movements in what is an AONB.

Any residents already renting properties at the site and who are displaced as a consequence of this development will struggle to find replacement local rented accommodation.

Actions the Parish Council would require to see before seriously considering the development are as follows:-

- Definition of the number of events in any given year. Weddings, corporate events and parties to be given as a total figure. The use of the two sites (events centre and the Gatehouse to be consolidated.)
- Restrictions on timing of all events including licensing and music.
- Noise restrictions in terms of decibels, direction, timing and location, based on the feedback from the computerised sound model which is to be provided.
- A proper traffic survey as to how hundreds of cars are going to arrive and leave along the lanes around the Abbey as well as the ancillary lorries needed for the catering and entertainment sector.

- Adequate solution to the access and egress of the site and the location of all guests and ancillary transport providing catering, catering staff and equipment.
- Adequate solution for the approach to the site by this traffic. At present the suggestion is along The Clumps which is not more than 3 metres wide in places, while Highways consider 4 metres inadequate on the site itself!!
- Construction of a minimum of 3 passing bays on The Clumps is imperative for any solution using this lane.
- Restrictions on the use of fireworks and balloons as part of events given the closeness to forested areas.
- Adequate habitat protection measures for wildlife, especially bats and swallows. Habitat protection needs to be defined in terms of measures to be carried out and who would monitor these.
- The 2 new infill buildings should be designated as affordable.

I trust that you will take the above comments into consideration.

### Non statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	N/A	4 October 2021
Summary of comments: Comments included in report		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Environmental Protection	N/A	No response
Summary of comments: None received		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC County Archaeological Unit	12 January 2021	21 January 2021
Summary of comments: Request conditions requiring archaeological investigation		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Ward Councillor	N/A	11 February 2021

Summary of comments:

CLlr James Mallinder

First I would like to confirm my support for the position of Butley Parish council. They called an extraordinary planning meeting to discuss this application, which was well attended by the parish. Thus their conclusions are well considered and have taken into account the views of all attendees.

When supporting or objecting to any application I must always respond to the needs and impact of the local community . Reuse of farm buildings, local employment and a number of environmentally positive infrastructure and design elements should clearly be highlighted and are a credit to these designs. However the size of such a development is a concern to not only local residents but also its place in the local environment.

Butley Abbey Farm is situation in the middle of the AONB in a rural isolated location with no infrastructure near by. An area that needs special protection to maintain its unique position in our environment and the corresponding biodiversity . Roads are narrow with some damage due to large farming equipment along with substantial flooding concerns , via Capel St Andrew and Butley. The proximity to Butley river and Rendlesham forest cause additional concerns for further disturbance. Clearly the number of carparking spaces, with the majority of visitors arriving and leaving at the same time is not acceptable due to safety concerns - an issue highways response also highlighted. In the running of such avenue there are legitimate concerns of further light and noise pollution not only disturbing wildlife but will have a negative impact to residents nearby in private and rented accommodation as well as the village of Butley.

Wedding and event venues often erect marquees and with covid restrictions and smoking outside there are considerable fear events will certainly have an outside element again causing corresponding issues. Our local plan clearly has a clear a dark sky policy and this application will need to meet this policy. Although there are positives to this application, to fully support I require a reduction in the size and a number of conditions - to limit number of events per week, hours of usage and a restriction in outside events from music to not allowing the use of any fireworks, bonfires or sky lanterns.

### Reconsultation consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	12 January 2021	1 February 2021

Summary of comments:

Comments included in report

## Publicity

The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Listed Building	14 January 2021	4 February 2021	East Anglian Daily Times

## Site notices

General Site Notice	Reason for site notice: Listed Building Date posted: 22 January 2021 Expiry date: 12 February 2021
---------------------	--

## 5. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

SCLP11.1 - Design Quality (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.3 - Historic Environment (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.4 - Listed Buildings (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (June 2021)

## 6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1 The proposal is for the redevelopment of the Butley Abbey Farm site, which includes the Grade II listed 'Butley Abbey and Priory' (former frater), 'Butley Abbey and Priory Reredorter (Refectory)', Abbey Farm and the Ruins of Abbey Church. The site is historically linked to the Augustinian Butley Abbey, whose Gatehouse still exists to the north and is listed at Grade I. This large-scale redevelopment has the potential to affect the significance of all these assets individually, as well as the significance of the group.
- 6.2 Butley Abbey Farm is an agricultural site centred around the C18 farmhouse, however it incorporates the remains of C13 abbey buildings, namely the former frater/refectory and rere-dorter (latrines). These remains were incorporated into the later farm buildings and are therefore referred to as the Refectory Barn and the Rere-dorter Barn. Many of the other historic farm buildings appear to date from the period between 1845-1888, as do the pair of cottages opposite the church ruins. The most recent additions to the site (mid/late-C20) are modern steel barns and Covey Cottages at the entrance to the site.

- 6.3 Due to the complexity of the site and of the buildings, a more in-depth analysis of the Refectory Barn in particular would have been expected. The assessment in the HIA seems limited by the fact that the interior was not accessed. Nonetheless, it is considered there is enough information in the application on which to base assessment of the proposal.

#### Principle of development

- 6.4 The principle of conversion would be accepted if it provides a sustainable use for the buildings, and if the physical changes associated with the conversion would preserve the significance of the listed buildings. Bringing redundant historic buildings into sustainable use could be considered a heritage benefit. The Grade I listed Gatehouse is already in small event and holiday let use, therefore bringing the Abbey Farm site into this use to supplement those functions appears to be a good approach. Event use is also generally an appropriate use for large agricultural buildings, as this requires large open space rather than the subdivision that is needed for residential use, for example.

#### Works to the Refectory Barn and attached piggeries

- 6.5 The Refectory Barn is a large brick and stone structure, with attached single-storey piggery barns. The main barn was likely built in the C18, but incorporates parts of the C13 refectory. Its character is that of a large post-medieval agricultural barn which has been altered extensively over the course of the C19 and C20, and it is difficult to tell its connections to the historic abbey site without pre-existing knowledge. The main barn is formed of two main spaces which are not connected internally. The piggeries are attached to the main barn on the west and east gables, and on the south elevation. Historic OS maps show that there were buildings in these locations since at least 1881, likely built with a timber frame or the same red brick that was used on the main barn. However, it appears that these were either gradually or entirely replaced in the C20 with blockwork, and there is little to no historic fabric visible. The exceptions to this are the two-storey red brick and weatherboarded range on the eastern gable and the red brick structure attached to the north-east corner of the barn, which has lost its roof.
- 6.6 The proposed use for the Refectory Barn is as event space, with associated amenities and staff and kitchen areas. The larger space of the barn would be opened up and connected internally to the smaller space adjacent to the west. The existing flint and rubble porch would be extended to make it symmetrical, and a glazed gallery would be created to the front.
- 6.7 The repairs mentioned in the structural report should be illustrated on drawings and in a schedule of repairs. The report notes that certain strengthening works would depend on the proposed design, therefore any additional or different repairs should be clarified based on the design which is now proposed. Notwithstanding this, the report confirms that the building is in reasonable condition and capable of conversion, with the typical amount of necessary repairs and strengthening works expected for a barn conversion. The existing floor structure appears to be crudely inserted across historic window openings and is supported by brick columns and timber pylons. This structure would be removed to open up the space to the roof, which would allow the full volume and roof structure to be appreciated. While it is likely that the Medieval refectory would have had multiple floors, there is little evidence of this, and it appears more reflective of the historic agricultural use of the barn to have this be one open space. The existing blocked window openings would



be re-opened and the large windows on the south elevation would be enlarged to insert a glazed double door.

- 6.8 Several new door openings would be created to connect the internal spaces of the main barn space and the piggeries. This would cause the loss of some historic fabric. Based on site photographs, the areas where door openings are proposed appear to be part of the C18 or C19 construction, but this should be clarified in a detailed heritage assessment of the building, to be made before any works commence. Notwithstanding this, the number of new doorways is limited, only to facilitate circulation, and the locations where new doorways are proposed are considered appropriate (in existing recesses or where there are existing door lintels). The minor loss of fabric would therefore be considered acceptable. Additionally, some demolition of external structures is proposed; namely the red brick building on the north-eastern corner, the piggery buildings on the central courtyard, and parts of the western piggeries. The red brick Victorian building has some remaining historic value as a part of the C19 expansion to the farm and its removal would be considered to cause some harm. On the other hand, the central piggery buildings have no heritage significance. Overall, the demolition of these elements would better reveal the form of the Refectory Barn and on balance this would be considered acceptable. The alterations to the interior of the piggeries would not affect the significance of the listed building, as this would not affect historic fabric.
- 6.9 The proposed elevational treatment would have a positive impact on the external appearance of the Barn and piggeries. Cladding the blockwork piggeries with horizontal weatherboarding would be an enhancement. The new windows would have similar frames with two simple vertical glazing bars. The elevations of the main barn have a mix of materials and detailing, so tying together the elevational treatment by using similar window frames is a positive approach. Additionally, there is a recurring motif of a pointed arch in the larger glazed doors and the gallery. This would make reference to the Medieval history of the site, but still reads as a modern detail, rather than a pastiche.
- 6.10 Overall, the proposed conversion of the Refectory Barn and attached piggeries would preserve those elements of the barn that contribute to its significance and provide an enhancement of the external appearance of the group. Minimal harm would be caused by the loss of Victorian brickwork where the north-eastern building would be removed and where doorways would be created, however, in balancing this against the heritage benefit of better revealing the form of the main barn and bringing the building into sustainable use, it is considered acceptable, subject to further information to be submitted at conditions stage.

#### Conversion of eastern barns to holiday lets and erection of new holiday let unit

- 6.11 On the eastern part of the site are the Rere-dorter Barn and historic outbuildings. The Reredorter Barn contains C13 fabric of the Butley Abbey latrines, but was constructed around the same time as the Refectory Barn. It is not a part of the current proposal and is proposed to be retained unaltered. The attached outbuilding on the north gable and detached outbuildings to the north-east are proposed to be converted into holiday lets, and the cart lodge is proposed to be reattached with a section of infill building. These outbuildings appear to have C19 origins, but like the piggeries, some areas have been rebuilt in blockwork. The structural report notes that the buildings are in reasonable condition and are capable of conversion with minor repairs. The north-eastern outbuilding

is an L-shape; the range that is parallel to the access is still mostly built of brick, whereas the southern wing has been entirely rebuilt in blockwork. This southern wing is proposed to be removed and replaced with a new single-storey building. The significance of this wing lies in how it reflects the positioning of an earlier building belonging to the Victorian farmstead, rather than in its fabric, therefore its removal and replacement would not be resisted.

- 6.12 The design of the proposed new building and of the cart lodge infill are modern takes on traditional weatherboarded agricultural buildings, which positively relates the new buildings to the historic buildings, while expressing themselves as modern. The new window frames to the existing buildings reflect those used on the Refectory Barn, which ties the designs of the different parts of the site together. Internally, the historic outbuildings which are to be retained do not have much historic character. They have been used to house animals and have blockwork enclosures. The proposed new internal layout of these buildings would therefore not have a negative impact on their significance. Detailed sections showing the proposed treatment of the walls, floors and roofs are required by condition.

#### Conversion of stables

- 6.13 The stables are a long red brick building dating to the C19, which is partly single-storey and partly two-storey. It appears to be one of the least altered C19 buildings on the site. The proposal is to convert the two-storey part of the building to a manager's residence and a section of the single-storey part to office space, with the centre stable section retained unaltered.
- 6.14 The proposed alterations to support the conversion would be relatively minor. Existing window and door openings would be used, and the layout of spaces internally would not have a major impact on the character of the building. Details of the proposed improvements to the walls, roof and floor structure are required by condition.

### **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 This large re-development scheme would provide heritage benefits in its reuse of the historic buildings on the site and revealing of historic forms and features. The external appearance of the C20 buildings on the site would be improved and the scheme would bring some cohesion between the buildings through the proposed design, as well as connect it to the Gatehouse. Subject to conditions, the proposed conversions and associated alterations would preserve the significance of the listed buildings on site and therefore meet the requirements of the NPPF and the Local Plan.

### **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1 Approve, subject to conditions as detailed below.

## Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with Section 18 of the Act (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be completed in all respects strictly in accordance with drawing nos. PA\_21, PA\_29, PA\_41, PA\_42, PA\_44, PA\_45, PA\_46, 2001-421-001A and 8301-05, -06, -07, -08 and -09 received 24 December 2020, PA\_24B, PA\_36A, PA\_37A, PA\_38A received 10 September 2021, drawing nos. PA-23D, PA-26D, PA-40C, PA-43A and PA-47A received 5 April 2022 for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.

3. Unless otherwise required or detailed within other conditions, the materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application and thereafter retained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity.

4. No building work shall commence on each element referenced below until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
  - (i) manufacturer's details of the proposed external cladding and roofing materials
  - (ii) proposed brick boundary walls and gates
  - (iii) section and elevations of the proposed fenestration and doors
  - (iv) drawings and a schedule of proposed repairs and strengthening works to the Refectory Barn
  - (v) section drawings through the proposed wall, roof and floor structure of the Refectory Barn and stables to include details of any proposed insulation and internal finishes.
  - (vi) detail section drawings through the eaves and verges of the new proposed holiday let building and cart lodge infill.Thereafter, all work must be carried out using the approved materials and in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that any new detailing and materials will not harm the traditional/historic character of the building: the application does not include the necessary details for consideration.

5. Prior to the commencement of any works to the Refectory Barn, a detailed Historic Building Record shall be made and be deposited with the Suffolk County Council Historic Environment Record. Within one week of this being done, confirmation of this shall be sent, by email, to the local planning authority.

Reason: The significance of this building is considered to be of sufficient merit and quality to be recorded and form part of the public record.

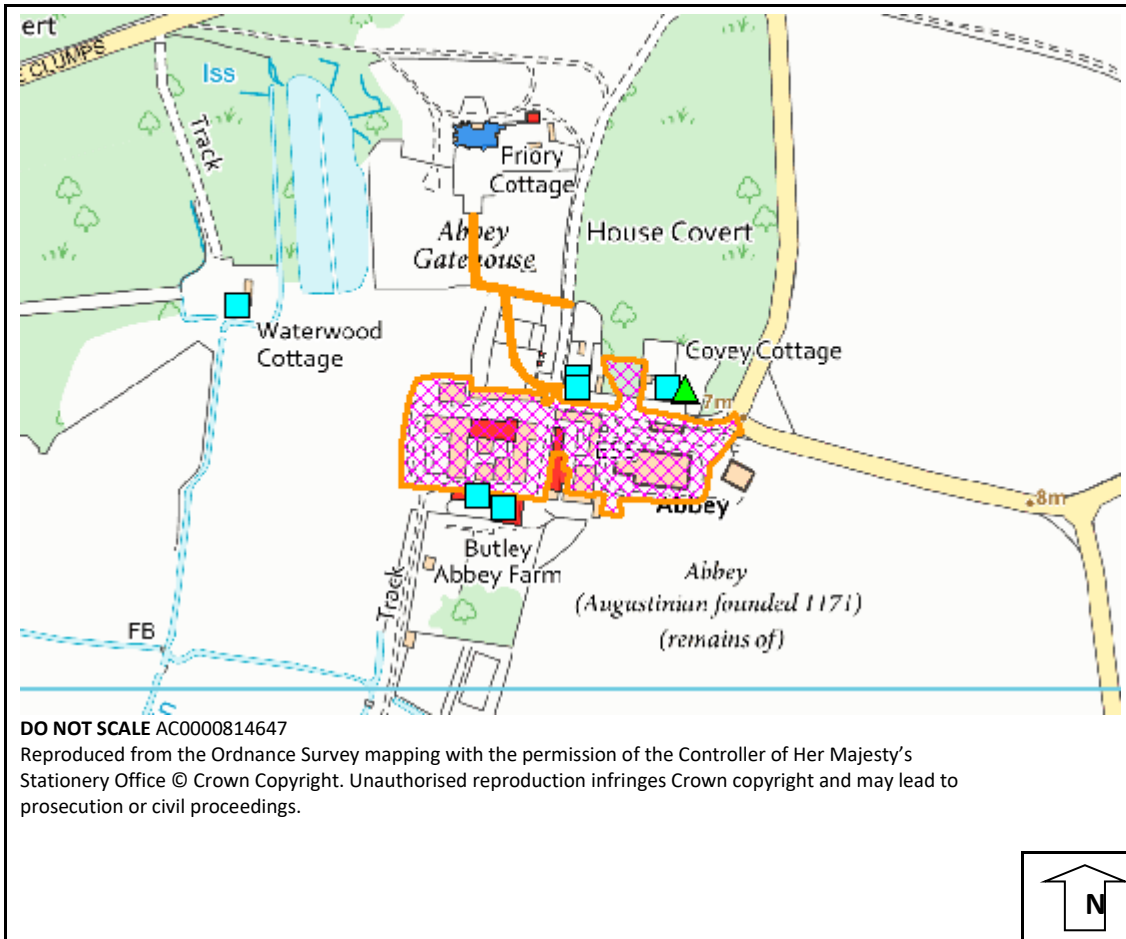
**Informatives:**

1. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.

**Background information**

See application reference DC/20/5261/LBC on [Public Access](#)

# Map



## Key



Notified, no comments received



Objection



Representation



Support