



PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Land to the rear of Prospect House, Bristol Road, Cambridge, Gloucestershire | May 2021

On behalf of Mr and Mrs Smith

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by SF Planning Ltd on behalf of our clients, Mr and Mrs Smith, in support of a planning application to Stroud District Council for the erection of one self-build dwelling within the rear curtilage of Prospect House on Bristol Road in Cambridge.
- 1.2 In addition to this Planning, Design and Access Statement, the application is supported by the following:
- Planning Application Forms;
 - Existing Site Plan & Location Plan;
 - Proposed Site Plan & Block Plan;
 - Proposed Plans & Elevations;
 - CIL Information Forms;
 - Application fee (£462 to follow).
- 1.3 This statement identifies the site within its local context, details how the proposed development is in accordance with national and local policy as well as setting out the design principles and access considerations.

2.0 The Application Site & Proposed Development

- 2.1 Prospect House, also referred to as Prospect Farm, occupies an L shaped plot on the north-western side of the A38 Bristol Road in the village of Cambridge which lies within the Stroud District.
- 2.2 The application site comprises a large garden area to the north-west of the existing detached dwelling which also contains a small number of outbuildings, relating well to the existing built form in the settlement. The front part of the site is bounded by the A38 highway to the south-east and existing dwellings to the south-west, west and north-east whilst the garden stretches out in a north-west direction to open countryside, as illustrated on the image below.



Fig 1 – Aerial photograph of the proposed development site within Cambridge.

- 2.3 The application site area measures approximately 0.11 hectares and can be accessed from the A38 Bristol Road via the existing and established site access. Bristol Road is a 40mph speed restricted highway and the linear development of Cambridge follows this road.

- 2.4 The site is in part located within the settlement boundary of Cambridge (see Proposals Map extract below) which is identified within the settlement policies of the adopted Stroud Local Plan as being a 'Fourth Tier Settlement'. There are a limited range of facilities and services within the settlement itself, however nearby Slimbridge lies approximately 700m away via public footpaths and this offers a wider range of services such as a primary school, village hall and church.
- 2.5 Bus stops can be found a short walk from the application site along Bristol Road, providing regular services throughout the day to the City of Gloucester and the First Tier settlements of Cam and Dursley.



Fig 2 – Extract from Local Plan Proposals Map showing black settlement boundary line and rough location of new dwelling.

- 2.6 The site lies outside of any designated conservation area and there are no listed buildings within the site although the adjacent former public house, The White Lion, is

a grade II listed building. The site is not at a high risk of flooding and lies outside flood zones 2 and 3. Furthermore there are no landscape designations.

- 2.7 Planning permission is being sought for the demolition of an existing workshop and garage and the erection of one self-build dwelling within the garden of Prospect House as shown on the proposed block plan extract below.
- 2.8 The new dwelling would be a predominantly 1.5 storey dwelling, with a two storey element to the middle section and an attached single storey garage / workshop building to the front as illustrated on the accompanying drawings. The dwelling is proposed to be a "self-build" plot and would be built out and occupied by the applicants who are long term residents of Cambridge. The dwelling would be provided with its own garage, parking and garden areas.

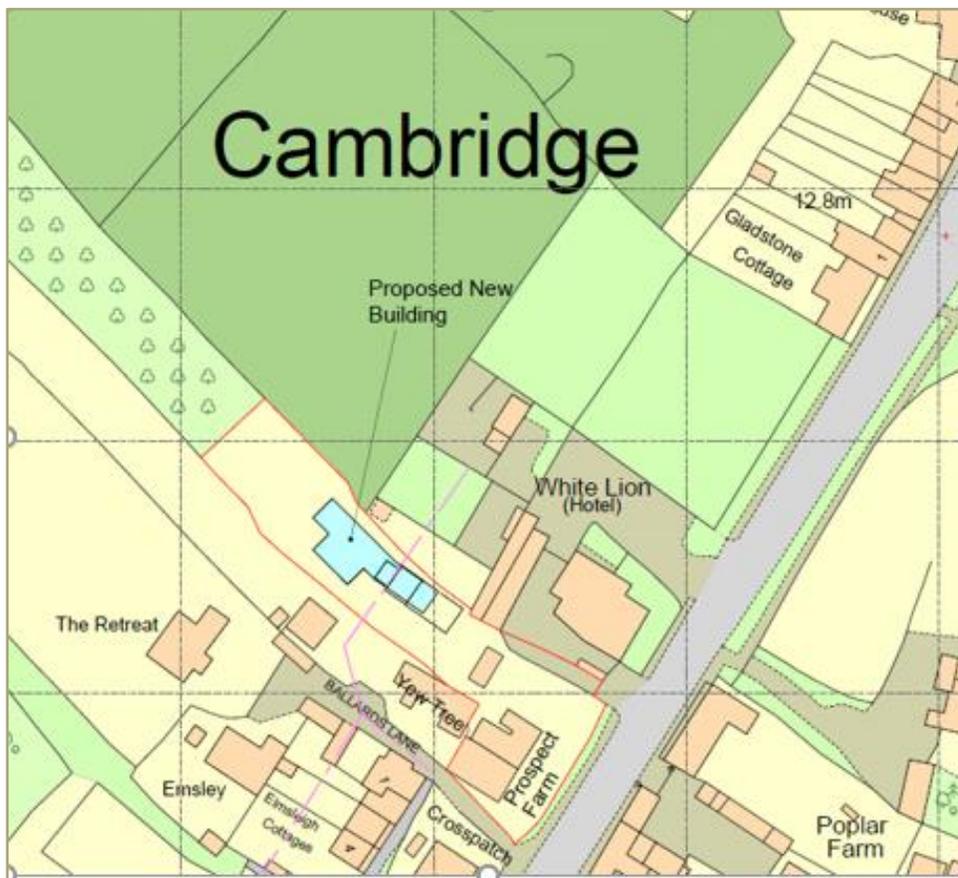


Figure 3: Extract from proposed block plan showing proposed dwelling in blue and the outline of the existing outbuildings.

- 2.9 The new dwelling would be served via the existing private drive which is accessed directly off the A38. This driveway will be marginally reconfigured and continue to provide access to Prospect House as well as the proposed dwelling, as shown on the submitted site plan.
- 2.10 As figure 3 above illustrates, there are a number of properties adjacent to the site which are set back from the roadside such as 'The Retreat', 'Emsley' and the recent conversion at the former 'White Lion'. The siting of the proposed dwelling would not be an anomaly and is in character with existing development. The proposed dwelling has been designed to reflect the character of the village utilising materials such as red brick and timber cladding. The siting has been carefully considered to ensure minimal impact on the amenities of occupiers of the adjoining properties. Given the immediate character around the site, a residential development in this location would be in keeping with the neighbouring uses of the area.

3.0 Planning History & Pre-Application Discussions

- 3.1 The site itself has a limited planning related history, particularly over the past 20 years. A small number of new housing developments (as indicated on figure 4 below) have taken place in Cambridge, notably at the White Lion site immediately adjacent to the application site.
- 3.2 Six new dwellings fronting onto Bristol Road were approved in 2018 (ref: S.18/0840/OUT) and two additional units approved in 2020 (ref: S.19/2376/FUL). These works are now nearing building completion. The conversion of the former public house into three dwellings was approved in 2013 (ref: S.12/2288/LBC).



Figure 4: Planning consents for nearby residential development

- 3.3 The applicants held pre-application discussions (ref: 2019/0008/WIG) with the Council in March 2019 regarding potential residential development within the rear garden of Prospect House and wholly outside of the settlement boundary.
- 3.4 Officers considered the principle of residential development outside of the settlement boundary to technically conflict with Local Plan Policy CP15 which relates to development in the countryside and outside of defined settlement boundaries.

Therefore, at that time, it was officer's view that an application would not be supported as it was not technically in accordance with one Local Plan Policy.

- 3.5 This advice has been borne in mind and the location of the proposed dwelling amended so this now falls, albeit only partly, within the settlement boundary.

4.0 Planning Policy Considerations

- 4.1 In order to consider the acceptability of the scheme, it is necessary to assess the proposal against both the adopted development plan and relevant national planning policy.
- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.3 Furthermore, local authorities are subject to duties under the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 which requires them to have regard to their self-build registers and give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified need for those seeking to acquire serviced plots.
- 4.4 The development plan for the area comprises the Stroud Local Plan which was adopted in November 2015. The Local Plan has been under review and a Pre-submission Draft Plan (the 'Publication Plan') was published in May 2021. Limited weight can now be afforded to these emerging policies.
- 4.5 Other material considerations that may be relevant to the development proposal should also be considered and these include national planning policy and guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).
- 4.6 The remainder of this Statement will demonstrate how this proposal accords with both national and local planning policies such that planning permission should be granted.

Principle of Development

- 4.7 At a national level, there is clear planning policy support for this proposal. At the heart of the policy objectives of the NPPF is the drive to seek to achieve sustainable development, with the planning system required to perform economic, social and environmental roles whilst setting out Central Government's overarching, national strategic planning objectives, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF Paragraphs 7 - 10).

- 4.8 Paragraph 59 of the NPPF confirms the Government’s emphasis and wider aim to “boost significantly the supply of housing” and not just meet housing targets which shouldn’t been seen as a “cap.”
- 4.9 Paragraph 68 of the NPPF specifically supports proposals on small and medium sized sites such as this, which “*can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly.*”
- 4.10 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF notes that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Whilst paragraph 79 discusses the need to avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside.
- 4.11 In this case, the proposed residential development would support local services in Cambridge and adjoining settlements while concurrently being within the capacity of the area’s infrastructure. Cambridge is a Fourth Tier settlement as defined by Policy CP3 of the adopted Local Plan which highlights that despite having minimal facilities there is limited scope for development. This continues to be the case within the Publication Plan which although amending Cambridge to a Tier 4a settlement, notes that “*very limited infill and re-development to meet specific local needs may be permitted inside the SDL and (exceptionally) adjacent to the SDL.*”
- 4.12 The proposal is also supported by Policy HC1 ‘*Meeting small-scale housing need within defined settlements*’ of the Adopted Local Plan. This policy contains nine pre-requisite points in order for the principle of development to be supported, which are as follows:

Policy HC1 Criteria	Application Response
<p>1. <i>The proposed housing is of a scale, density, layout and design that is compatible with the character, appearance and amenity of the part of the settlement in which it would be located and the density proposed is at as high a level as is acceptable, in terms of townscape, street scene and amenity</i></p>	<p><i>The proposed development is for one dwelling to the rear of Prospect House which would not be at odds with the existing grain of development. The surrounding area is characterised by residential dwellings of a range of age, form and design and therefore the proposed development can be considered acceptable.</i></p>
<p>2. <i>Where appropriate schemes should include a variety of dwelling types and sizes, which meet identified local needs</i></p>	<p><i>The District has an identified “self-build” need and this proposal would assist the Council in meeting this need.</i></p>

<p>3. <i>On edge of settlement sites, the proposal would not appear as an intrusion into the countryside and would retain a sense of transition between the open countryside and the existing settlement's core.</i></p>	<p><i>Figure 4 below demonstrates that the proposed site can be considered infill development since the site is currently garden to an existing house which is surrounded by development on 2 sides. There is no intrusion into the countryside and the substantial north-western end of the garden will be left undeveloped.</i></p>
<p>4. <i>It would not cause the loss of, or damage to, any open space which is important to the character of the settlement.</i></p>	<p><i>The use of the site is residential curtilage. There is no open space that will be detrimentally affected by the proposal with built form existing on the adjacent sites in a similar 'backland' setting.</i></p> <p><i>The existing mature hedge boundary to the site would be retained to maintain the character of this part of the settlement.</i></p>
<p>5. <i>It would not result in the loss of locally valued habitat which supports wildlife</i></p>	<p><i>As outlined above in point 4 above, the existing use is residential curtilage and in comparison to the wider surrounding landscape holds very minor wildlife habitat value. The magnitude of the effect on the locally valued habitat would be negligible.</i></p>
<p>6. <i>Any natural or built features on the site that are worthy of retention are incorporated into the scheme.</i></p>	<p><i>There are no trees in the vicinity of the siting of the proposed dwelling and those to the far end of the garden will be retained. Existing hedgerows are to be retained.</i></p>
<p>7. <i>An appropriate area of private amenity space is provided for the occupiers of each dwelling house. Where other types of residential accommodation are proposed, an appropriate level of amenity space to serve the scheme as a whole is provided.</i></p>	<p><i>As detailed in the accompanying drawings submitted in support of this application, the proposed dwellings will have sufficient amenity space for the applicants. There will also be provision for off-street parking spaces for the new dwelling and the retention of parking and garden for future occupiers of Prospect House.</i></p>
<p>8. <i>It is not subject to any other overriding environmental or other material planning constraint.</i></p>	<p><i>There are no environmental constraints on or adjacent to the site.</i></p>
<p>9. <i>Have a layout, access and parking appropriate to the site and its surroundings.</i></p>	<p><i>As referenced above in point 7 and within the design and access component of this statement, the proposed development has been specifically designed to amalgamate seamlessly into its surroundings.</i></p>

4.13 It is recognised that a proportion of the proposal lies on the border of the settlement boundary as identified on the Policies Map, however policy HC1 makes provision for a discretionary approach in certain cases in criteria 3, 4 and 5, which have been shown to be satisfied in the table above. Draft Policy DHC2 of the Publication Plan supports small housing schemes outside of settlement development limits at Tier 4 settlements like Cambridge. There is a clear direction of travel within the Council to be more flexible regarding settlement boundaries.

- 4.14 An appeal decision in 2018 (Appendix 1 – APP/H1840/W/18/3197607) is particularly relevant as this involved a similar situation where a development boundary ran through the appeal site. The application was refused by Wychavon District Council as the site was not deemed to represent a suitable location for a new dwelling having regard to an existing settlement boundary. The appeal was allowed with the Inspector noting that *"whilst the proposal would technically not accord with policy SWDP2, the appeal site is readily assimilated with the built-up area"*.
- 4.15 This is a highly relevant consideration given that it has lots of similarities with the application site. The Inspector noted how the appeal site had *"a greater affinity with the settlement and houses to the south and west of the appeal site as well as the additional houses under construction to the south-east, than it does with the adjacent countryside"*. This is certainly the case for this application where the site lies in close proximity to houses to the south and east as well as those recently constructed to the north as evidenced in figure 5 below.
- 4.16 The part of the site that lies outside the defined settlement boundary is clearly defined managed garden land that has been used as such for many years. The proposed dwellings would be positioned within this established plot to Prospect House and would therefore not appear as an intrusion of built form into the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would be adjacent to existing dwellings and cannot therefore be classed as an 'isolated home in the countryside' as illustrated in figure 5 below.



Figure 5: Aerial photo of site and its surroundings

- 4.17 It is recognised that the Council are currently able to demonstrate a healthy five year housing land supply, however as part of the Local Plan Review an additional housing options consultation was undertaken in October 2020. This was due to the change in the minimum housing requirement calculations and the Council now anticipate an additional 1,050 to 2,400 new homes will be required in comparison to the initial numbers set out in the Draft Local Plan.
- 4.18 As part of this consultation, options were put forward that included wider dispersal across settlements including Tier 4 villages (such as Cambridge) as well as identifying the A38 as a major movement corridor that offered good accessibility within the wider area and noting the potential for development along this corridor.
- 4.19 Any harm caused by straying over the defined settlement boundary at Prospect House is limited to a technical breach which would cause negligible, immaterial harm, while the economic, sustainable and social benefits of the proposal are material. The principle of development should therefore be considered entirely acceptable since it is supported by the NPPF and the Development Plan, and by the aforementioned Appeal Decision.

Self-Build

- 4.20 The proposed new dwelling is to be a “Self Build” by and for the applicants. Self-build projects are defined as those where someone directly organizes the design and construction of their new home. This covers quite a wide range of projects, the most obvious example is a traditional ‘DIY self-build’ home where the self-builder selects the design they want and then does much of the actual construction work themselves. This is the case on this occasion with applicants leading the design process and intending to do the bulk of the construction.
- 4.21 The adopted Local Plan (Policy HC3) recognises the need to support the supply of housing through self-build schemes however this policy only relates to the strategic allocations and is silent on plots outside of this.
- 4.22 Since the adoption of the current Local Plan in November 2015, the current NPPF (revised in 2019), Planning Practice Guidance and the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) have added increased emphasis for planning and delivering sites specifically for those wishing to build their own homes.
- 4.23 Furthermore, this increasing desire at national government level to support innovative developers and housebuilders, as more recently evidenced with the housing white paper issued in August 2020 and the announcement of a review of self-build housing (October 2020) in order to encourage the granting of planning permissions for self-build projects.
- 4.24 The Publication Plan responds to this increased national emphasis within draft Delivery Policy HC3 which provides specific support for self-build dwellings within and adjacent to settlement boundaries. This policy cannot be afforded full weight as it is at the pre-submission publication stage but it does indicate a clear direction of travel within the Council in granting permission for self-build dwellings outside of settlement boundaries as is partly the case with this application.
- 4.25 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF reproduced below specifically refers to the need to provide for self-build houses and emphasises the importance of providing for this type of development.

4.26 The accompanying footnote draws attention to the statutory duty imposed on local authorities by the Self Build and Custom Housing Act 2015 to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified need for self-build housing¹.

61. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers²⁵, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes²⁶).

²⁶ Under section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, local authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are also subject to duties under sections 2 and 2A of the Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand. Self and custom-build properties could provide market or affordable housing.

NPPF paragraph 61 and footnote

4.27 Furthermore, paragraph 023 of the PPG provides that relevant authorities must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area.

4.28 The proposals would result in the provision of a self-build dwelling, a significant social benefit in the context of the requirements of NPPF paragraph 61 and the Self Build and Custom Housing Act 2015.

4.29 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 inserted a legal duty on LPAs to *"give suitable development permissions in respect of enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area arising in each base period"*.

4.30 Data released by the Council shows that there has been a consistent failure to grant planning permission and secure self-build plots. Between 2016 and 2019 there have been 165 individuals on the register and only 102 planning permissions granted for self or custom building plots, representing a deficit of 63 plots.

4.31 The council's administrative area is extensive, settlements are dispersed with a large part of the district protected by AONB designation, key wildlife sites, special protection areas, and special areas of conservation. This scheme would involve the

¹ The July 2017 amendment to the National Planning Practice Guidance, (NPPG), also sets out practice guidance on self-build and custom housing; see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding>

development of a plot in an existing residential context outside of any protected designated area.

4.32 As noted previously, the council does not have a self-build policy relating to individual plots for which the register has demonstrated there is the highest demand (only on strategic sites via policy HC3). This proposal would help to address this identified need and assist the Council in meeting its statutory requirements.

4.33 The provision of a self-build home at this site can be suitably secured through the planning condition. This is an important social benefit associated with the proposal.

Sustainable Development

4.34 The NPPF provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It recognises that to achieve sustainable development, gains should be sought in environmental, economic and social aspects.

4.35 Environmental: The development will have no lasting impacts. The application involved minimal operational development and makes use of an existing access to and from the highway. The intention is to exceed current building regulations and air tightness to ensure the proposed building is energy efficient. In addition, sustainable measures are to be introduced such as rain harvesting, the use of an air source pump and solar panels to be placed on the new garage which will help to limit the buildings environmental impact. There are no trees within the site that will be affected as a result of the proposed development and the existing hedgerows are to be retained.

4.36 Economic: The proposal would result in economic benefits, both during and post-development, including support of the local construction industry and increased spend in the local economy following occupation of both the existing and the new dwellings.

4.37 Social: The proposed development will not have a significant negative impact on the amenities of any of the occupiers of the adjoining dwellings who have been informed of the applicant's intentions prior to the submission of this application for planning permission. In addition one new dwelling will be provided thus making a positive, albeit small, contribution to the District's housing stock as well as contributing to the Council's legal duty to support self-build opportunities as noted in 4.3 above.

4.38 The proposed development provides environmental, economic and social gains and therefore, along with its compliance with relevant parts of the development plan and other material considerations, represents sustainable development.

5.0 Design and Access

Design & Layout

- 5.1 The applicants have led the design process, working closely with their appointed architect to devise a scheme that will satisfy their current and future requirements. The proposed dwelling, as the accompanying drawings demonstrate, is of a scale, density, layout and design that is compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding dwellings.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the new dwelling will be commensurate with the existing character of the adjacent dwellings in the vicinity which contains a mix of contemporary and more traditional dwellings. Some of the existing dwellings have a direct frontage onto the main road through this part of Cambridge while others are set back, such as the neighbouring properties 'The Retreat', 'Elmsley' and the recently constructed dwelling to the rear of the former White Lion Public House.
- 5.3 The proposed design approach, with the use of local and natural materials where appropriate to match adjoining dwellings and the wider landscape setting, will ensure the development is in keeping with the area.
- 5.4 The overall design of the dwelling has been considered in depth by the applicants and within the context of the existing dwelling on the site and others within the vicinity. Appropriate materials, styles and heights common to the area have been utilised in the design approach and the proposals will complement the existing built-form.
- 5.5 The proposal would make the best use of underutilised land whilst providing a development in character with the wider area. The resulting density is commensurate with adjoining dwellings, given the large plot Propsect House sits within and provides for both front and rear gardens as well as off street parking via the existing vehicle access which would be modified.

- 5.6 There is sufficient distance between the proposed dwelling and the grade II listed former White Lion public house to avoid any adverse impact upon its setting. The existing outbuildings are nearing the end of their life span and replacing these could be considered an immediate improvement to the setting of the listed building. Whilst views in to and out from the listed building will not be significantly impeded as a result of the proposed development. The proposal therefore complies with Policy ES10 of the Local Plan and, as there will be no loss or harm to the significance of the heritage asset, also accords with national policy contained within paragraph 197 of the NPPF.

Access & Parking

- 5.7 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF makes it clear that proposed development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if the residual cumulative impacts on the highway network would be severe or on grounds of highway safety.
- 5.8 The application proposes to make use of the existing and established vehicular access onto the A38 Bristol Road which serves Prospect House. The existing driveway would be modified and extended further within the site where a hardstanding parking and turning area is proposed together with an attached garage.
- 5.9 The existing dwelling benefits from hardstanding to the side of the building which will accommodate sufficient off street parking for future occupiers of Prospect House. The proposed turning areas will enable vehicles to access and exit the site in a forward gear.
- 5.10 The A38 Bristol Road is a major road intended to provide large-scale transport links within or between areas, notably Gloucester to the north and Bristol to the south and runs parallel to the M5. The road is subject to a 40mph speed restriction through the village and benefits from street lighting. In terms of sustainable transport, there are dedicated cycle lanes that run in both directions along the highway and pedestrian pavements. Public footpaths / rights of way connect Cambridge to nearby Slimbridge.
- 5.11 The proposal will not have any severe impact on the highway network and neither will it have any unacceptable impact on highway safety, comfortably providing a 120m visibility splay in both directions at the vehicle access (2.5m from the roadside) as illustrated on the proposed site plan.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development fully accords with the latest national planning policy objectives within the NPPF, as well as those of the adopted development plan and those within the emerging local plan.
- 6.2 The proposed development is for a single self-build dwelling to meet an identified need located within the settlement of Cambridge, which is identified as a sustainable location suitable for additional residential development.
- 6.3 The proposals respect the setting of the site and the proposed form of the development has been designed in a style to complement the surrounding built form and grain. The scheme would be consistent and complementary to the prevailing character and appearance of the area and in terms of design, height and scale.
- 6.4 Based upon the planning assessment and justified case presented in support of this scheme, the case for granting planning permission for the proposed development is compelling and it is requested that Officers (and Members if required) support the scheme.



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