

**EDGARS**

# Planning, Design & Access Statement

Wychwood Lodge

Prepared for: Mr and Mrs Arnold

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# 1 Introduction

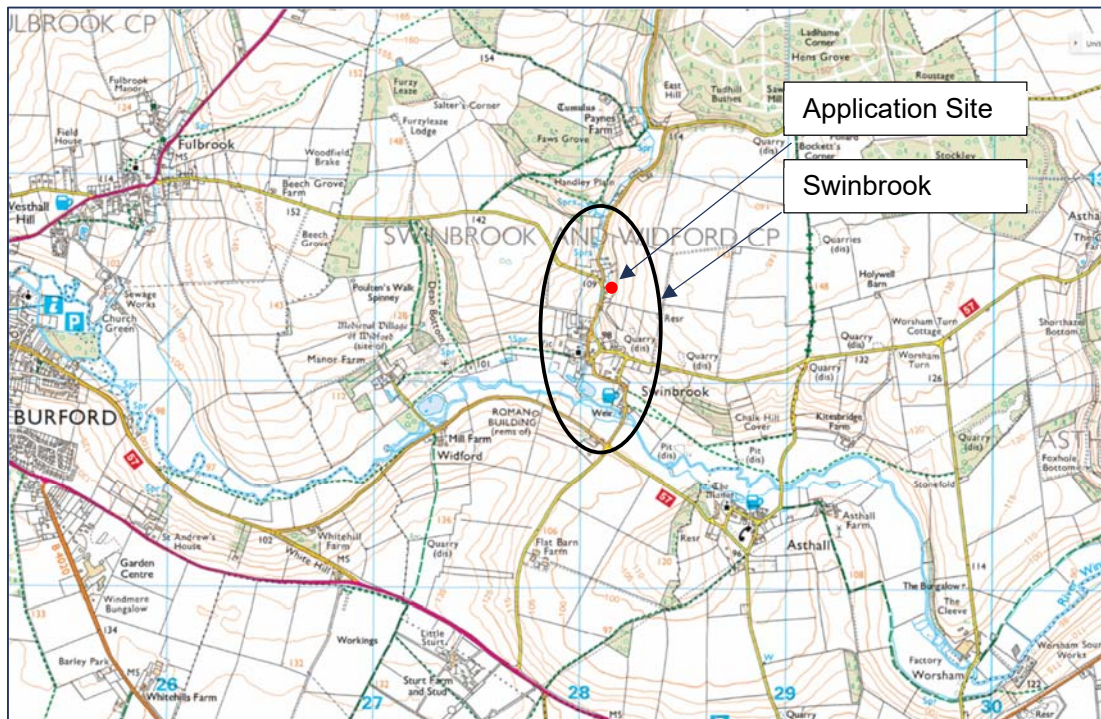
- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Edgars Ltd and APA London architects on behalf of Kevin and Sophia Arnold (hereafter known as the applicant). The report is prepared to accompany an application for *alterations to outbuilding* at Wychwood Lodge, Swinbrook.
- 1.2 This statement contains a description of the site and surrounding area, the proposed works and sets out the relevant planning history and planning policy. It then outlines the proposed development and assesses it against the key planning considerations.
- Planning application forms & certificates
  - Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (Swift Ecology)
  - 501 L 01 00.A EXISTING SITE PLAN (OUTBUILDING)
  - 501 L 01 11 EXISTING OUTBUILDING GROUND FLOOR PLAN
  - 501 L 01 12 EXISTING OUTBUILDING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
  - 501 L 01 13 EXISTING OUTBUILDING ROOF PLAN
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  - 501 L 01 15 EXISTING OUTBUILDING ELEVATIONS & SECTION
  - 501 L 02 11 REVA OUTBUILDING PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
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  - 501 L 02 13 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
  - 501 L 02 14 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
  - 501 L 02 15 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ELEVATIONS & SECTION
- 1.3 In summary, the proposed development is assessed to be sympathetic and complementary to the existing built form and will result in no impact to the wider Swinbrook Conservation Area. The proposals accord with the local development plan and in line with paragraph 11c of the NPPF, it respectfully requested planning consent is granted without delay.



## 2 Site and Surrounding Context

### Surrounding Area

- 2.1 Wychwood Lodge is located in the village of Swinbrook, two miles east of Burford. It is connected to Fulbrook to the west and Asthall to the south-east by a network of minor roads running along the Windrush Valley.



- 2.2 The settlement has polyfocal form, dictated largely by the topography of the area. The village is visible from high ground to the south. However, various components – such as the scattering of trees and scrubby vegetation – have combined to give the feeling of seclusion and restrict internal vistas.
- 2.3 The village is located within a sensitive ecological, historic and landscape setting. Notable designations include; the Upper Thames Tributaries Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village is also set within the attractive landscape of the Upper Windrush Valley and is a designated Conservation Area.
- 2.4 The Conservation Area Character Appraisal highlights the architectural style of the village is almost exclusively vernacular in character with a loose-knit settlement pattern, which contributes to the seclusion and rural character of the area. Important viewpoints within, and from outside, the Conservation Area are highlighted on the map within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. The proposed development site is not identified in the appraisal as being part of any particularly important viewpoint.
- 2.5 Most of the village properties date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These buildings employ the local grey limestone in coursed rubble forms with rooves mainly of stone slate.



- 2.6 Only small amounts of development were undertaken in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, much of which consisted of alteration to the existing properties. The few new-build properties added during this period conform to the colour precedents of the earlier buildings. Ancillary buildings and structures are built from a variety of materials including stone.
- 2.7 There are other key architectural details of Swinbrook such as stone chimney stacks, flush timber casement windows and gabled dormer windows. Drystone walling forms the most common boundary feature in Swinbrook, using the same pale limestone as the buildings and contributes to the visual cohesion of the village.

The Site



*Figure 1: Site plan (outbuilding edged in red)*

- 2.8 The outbuilding forms part of the wider estate at Wychwood Lodge. Wychwood Lodge is moderately sized rural estate with a total land area of 1.4 ha (depicted by the blue edged area in Figure 1).



- 2.9 As is the case in much of Swinbrook, the estate is set at the base of flat-bottomed valley, which gives rise to some quite significant topographical features. Overall, the estate slopes aggressively west-east, cresting along the eastern boundary of the site. The existing built form is concentrated towards the centre and south end of the estate on comparably low-lying ground. The north end of the estate represents the 'high-point' in topographical terms and provides a steep sided bank to the adjoining roadside west.
- 2.10 As is typical in Swinbrook, the site is bounded by a dry-stone wall along the length of the roadside boundary. Access is obtained via a private driveway off the principal road that runs north-south through Swinbrook village. The access turns south towards the main house and is constructed from shingle.
- 2.11 The estate itself is in sole C3 (residential use). It is adjoined by neighbouring dwellings south and southwest. Both the site and surrounding development comprise large dwellings set within generous domestic plots. There is additional residential development north, although this is detached from Wychwood Lodge by a series of agricultural fields.
- 2.12 The existing built form comprises a large dwelling house accompanied by an outbuilding (southeast), tennis court (north) and swimming pool (east).
- 2.13 The main house is a 2.5 storey former hunting lodge dating back to the 1700s. Recent extensions and alterations include a single-storey timber framed room to the south and a two storey wing on the north elevation. Overall, the building is typical of the wider area; constructed from creamy limestone and Stonesfield slate.
- 2.14 The outbuilding is located in the far south-eastern corner of the estate, separated from the main house and public road by extensive yet simply landscaped gardens. Directly to the east of the outbuilding and estate boundary is agricultural land; to the south the outbuilding is separated from the nearest residential property by an area of mature planting.
- 2.15 The outbuilding itself is broadly vernacular in its form, constructed from limestone and stone slate. Its character is functional and utilitarian and historically was likely used for small scale agricultural/livestock activities. It has also been subject to a number of more modern additions including a lean-to extension with glass roof and the provision of rooflights in the roofslope which have domesticated its appearance (Figure 2).
- 2.16 The ground floor of the original outbuilding is currently in a poor state of repair and not in any active use. The lean-to-extension has been fitted out as a studio, and the upper floor as a gym. The building is not listed and is considered to attract limited local historic interest as a consequence of cumulative modern intervention.





Figure 2: Outbuilding

2.17 In terms of planning designations, the following is noted:

- Swinbrook Conservation Area;
- Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- A band of Flood Zone 3 along the western half the site.

2.18 A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was undertaken in May 2021, which found that the outbuilding offered low-negligible suitability for bat roosting. The assessment also concluded that the building offers few opportunities for bird nesting and no nests were found during the survey. The assessment can be found in the supporting documents of this application.



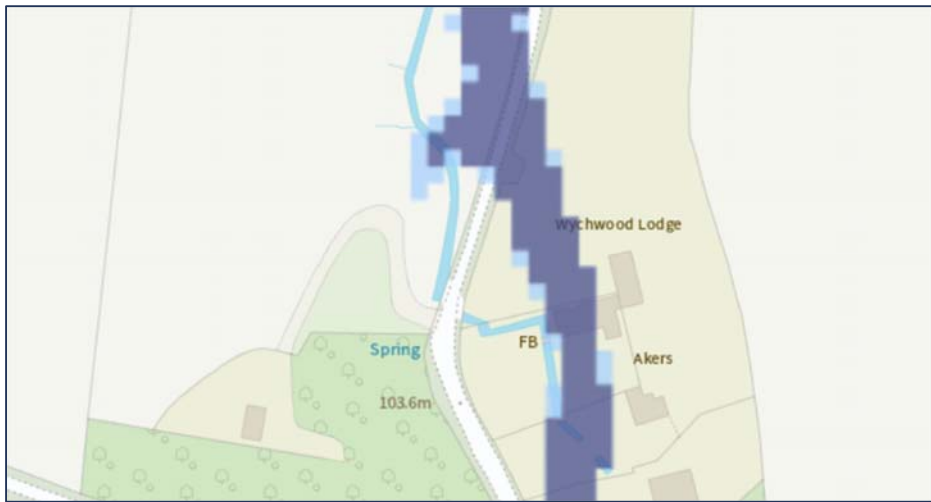


Figure 3: Flood risk



### 3 Planning History

3.1 A review West Oxfordshire’s public records has identified a number of historic planning applications at Wychwood Lodge, as summarised below. Most recently, in 2008 consent was granted for alterations to the outbuilding to form an external staircase, new rooflights and replacement of lean-to extension (ref 08/0968/P/FP). Except where modified by the 2008 consent, conditions attached to the 2007 consent for alterations to the outbuilding were clarified as continuing to apply, including Condition 4 which states:

*The outbuilding and studio hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Wychwood Lodge.*

Reason: The extension has to be restricted as ancillary to the main dwelling as its use as a separate accommodation would not be considered acceptable in this location (Policy H4 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011).

3.2 Attention is drawn to this condition on the basis that the accommodation was described as ‘ancillary’ rather than ‘incidental’, thus permitting its use for primary living accommodation such as bedrooms and bathrooms, but only within the context of its ancillary use to Wychwood Lodge, not as a separate dwelling.

Address	Reference	Description	Decision	Date
Wychwood Lodge	08/0968/P/FP	Alterations to outbuilding to form external staircase, new rooflights and replacement lean-to extension (to allow external walls to be rebuilt using random rubble Cotswold stone).	Approved	25/07/2008
	07/1144/P/FP	Alterations to outbuilding to form external staircase, new rooflights and replacement lean-to extension.	Approved	08/08/2007
	W2000/1380	Erection of two storey extension to include dormer windows on east elevation (modification to permission w2000/0891 to alter roof materials)	Approved	02/10/2000
	W2000/0891	Erection of two storey extension to include dormer windows on east elevation.	Approved	01/08/2000
	W95/1039	Demolition of lean-to toilet and passage	Approved	12/09/1995



	W95/1038	Erection of single storey rear and side extensions and two storey front extension change of use from agricultural land to domestic curtilage.	Approved	12/09/1995
	W95/0626	Construction of tennis court.	Refused, but understood subsequently granted at appeal.	06/07/1995
	W93/1403	Construction of dormer window in front elevation.	Approved	16/12/1993



## 4 Proposed Development

4.1 The proposed development at Wychwood Lodge comprises the following elements:

- Replacement of 2 no. rooflights with single bank of rooflights; and
- Reinstatement of historic doorway.

*See drawings, 501 L 02 11 REVA OUTBUILDING PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN, 501 L 02 12 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN, 501 L 02 13 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ROOF PLAN, 501 L 02 14 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ELEVATIONS, 501 L 02 15 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ELEVATIONS & SECTION*

4.2 The proposed alterations to the outbuilding will facilitate the conversion of the ground floor to living accommodation, which has been arranged to reflect the original stable partitions. On the front (western) elevation, the historic door opening in the middle, which was later converted to a window, is proposed to be reinstated as part of the outbuilding's original identity and architectural 'honesty'. This door opening will also provide access to the two ground floor rooms. The proposed timber stable-style door will match the existing timber windows in terms of look and finish.

4.3 A new rooflight, which will be installed flush with the roof slope, is proposed to replace the existing two small rooflights. The choice of a simple wide-spanning rooflight design is in keeping with the adjoining glazed roof while its positioning and size seeks to respect the existing roof shape and structure. The proposals are also needed for functional reasons to enhance the amenity and quality of the space on the first floor, which currently suffers from insufficient natural light owing to the size of the existing rooflights.



## 5 Planning Policy

5.1 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.

5.2 The relevant documents of the development plan are identified as follows:

- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

5.3 The relevant documents identified as material considerations are as follows:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG); and the
- West Oxfordshire Design Guide

### West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

5.4 The relevant policies of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan are as follows:

- Policy OS2 – Locating development in the right places
- Policy OS4 – High quality design
- Policy H6 – Existing housing
- Policy EH1 – Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy EH9 – Historic environment
- Policy EH10 – Conservation areas

### West Oxfordshire Design Guide

5.5 The relevant chapters of the West Oxfordshire Design Guide are as follows:

- Section 4 – Local Character
- Section 13 – Alterations and Extensions

### National Planning Policy Framework

5.6 The relevant chapters of the NPPF as follows:

- Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well designed places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

5.7 A full policy analysis is included in the appendix of this report.





## 6 Planning Considerations

6.1 The key planning considerations of relevance to this application are:

- Principle of development
- Design
- Impact on Swinbrook Conservation Area & Cotswolds AONB
- Residential amenity

### **Principle of development**

6.2 As identified in Chapter 3 of this report, the outbuilding is considered to be ancillary to the main dwelling. As such, it is assessed that the building falls under the wider planning unit at Wychwood Lodge and benefits from the same policy context as would be applied to alterations to the main dwelling house. For the avoidance of doubt, the present development proposals do not seek to remove or vary the aforementioned occupancy condition.

6.3 The alteration or improvement to a dwelling house is supported in principle by local policy H6. This policy sets out the district's expectations in respect of proposed alterations in that development should; respect the character of the surrounding area and will not unacceptably affect environment of people living in or visiting that area.

6.4 Chapter 2 of this report sets out the site specific and surrounding context of Wychwood Lodge. This assessment has helped inform how development proposals respond to, and integrate with, the surrounding environment.

6.5 With regard to the above, it is concluded that alterations to the outbuilding are acceptable in principle providing the requirements of policy H6 are met. These points are discussed in the subsequent sections of this report.

### **Design**

6.6 High quality design is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. Development proposals should be of a proportionate and appropriate scale (policy OS2) and demonstrate how buildings and areas of historic, architectural or environmental significance have been conserved or enhanced (policy OS4).

6.7 Attention is also given to the West Oxfordshire Design Guide, particularly chapters 4 (local character) and 13 (extensions and alterations). The Design Guide notes that Swinbrook lies within the Limestone Wolds. This is the largest character area within the district and is identifiable as a consequence of a distinctive features including creamy limestone, which, together with the extensive use of limestone slates for roofs, creates a built environment of strong local character and consistency. The design guide calls for external alterations to be carried out with particular regard to the implications for the character and appearance of the building.

6.8 With regard to the above, the rationale behind the proposed alterations to the outbuilding is to enhance its practicality as ancillary accommodation to Wychwood Lodge. The proposed alterations comprise two elements:



1. Replacement of 2 no. rooflights with single bank of rooflights; and
2. Reinstatement of historic door way.

6.9 The above elements are discussed in turn.

Replacement 2 no. rooflights with single rooflight



*Figure 4: East elevation of outbuilding*

- 6.10 Proposals seek to replace the existing rooflights on the east (rear) elevation with a single, flush bank of rooflights.
- 6.11 It is accepted that the proposals will increase the level of glazing within the roofslope. However, the rooflights will be located on the eastern roofslope, views of which are unobtainable from wider public vantage points. This roofslope has already been subject to previous alteration with two pre-existing rooflights and replacement concrete tiles. The roofslope is also adjoined by a glazed lean-to extension approved by the Council in 2007 (Figure 4).
- 6.12 While the building can be described as broadly vernacular the aforementioned alterations suggest the east elevation is less sensitive to change.
- 6.13 The chosen simple style of rooflight that will sit flush with the roofslope will ensure that while contemporary alterations are required to improve the useability of the building, these changes are undertaken in a manner which is respectful to the building's existing form and roof structure (trusses,



see Figure 5). The rooflights will not protrude beyond the existing roof plane; as such, visible change to the building will only be noticeable when viewed directly from the east.



Figure 5: Location of roof trusses has informed the proposed rooflight design and position

6.14 Overall, these minor works will not detract from the broadly vernacular form of the outbuilding and will consequently preserve its pre-existing character and appearance.

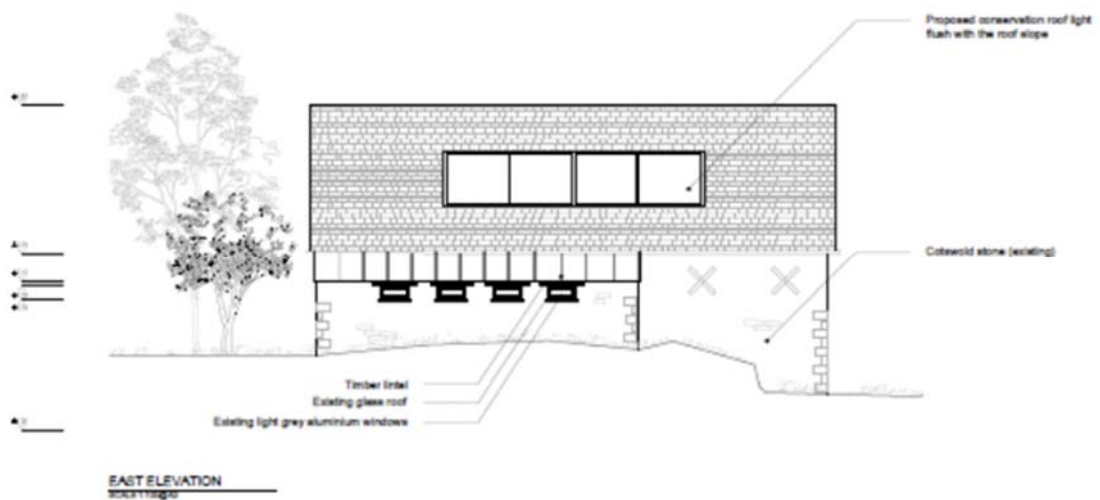


Figure 6: East elevation of outbuilding (see drawing 501 L 02 14 REV B OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ELEVATIONS)



### Re-instated doorway



*Figure 7: Western elevation of outbuilding*

- 6.15 The second element of the proposed development seeks to reinstate a doorway on the west elevation. The silhouette of this doorway is identifiable in Figure 7.
- 6.16 The overriding character of the building is functional and utilitarian. It is likely that the building was historically used for small scale agricultural/livestock activities. In this vein, the proposed doorway will be a stable style, as illustrated in Figure 8.
- 6.17 The doorway is required to ensure the ground floor accommodation becomes more practical for future users, but its reinstatement is also considered to better reveal the historic form of the building. As such, this alteration will enhance the architectural and historic value of outbuilding.





Figure 8: West elevation of outbuilding (drawing ref 501 L 02 14 REVB OUTBUILDING PROPOSED ELEVATIONS)

#### Impact on the Swinbrook Conservation Area & Cotswolds AONB

- 6.18 The general thrust of planning policies in relation to areas of special character or quality (AONBs, conservation areas etc.) is to conserve and enhance them. Policy EH1 sets out the Council's expectations for development in the AONB, stating that 'great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty, including its heritage, which includes consideration of any harm to the contribution that a settlement makes to the scenic beauty of the AONB'. Likewise policy OS2 seeks to preserve the local landscape and setting of settlements, giving great weight to the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty within the AONB.
- 6.19 On the basis that the development proposals are a very minor form of development they are not considered to impact the overriding character and setting of the Cotswold AONB. Nevertheless, consideration is given to any associated harm to the settlement of Swinbrook which may have a negative impact on the wider scenic beauty of the AONB. Added weight is afforded to this as Swinbrook is a designated conservation area. Policies OS2 and EH9 seek to conserve the historic and built environment while policy EH10 says that 'proposals for development in a conservation area or affecting the setting of a conservation area will be permitted where it can be shown to conserve or enhance the special, interest, character, appearance and setting'.
- 6.20 The proposals are a minor form of development. Views of the proposed rooflight are unobtainable from publicly accessible areas of the conservation area while the reinstated doorway will better reveal the historic form of the building. Neither alteration will materially alter the character or appearance of outbuilding while the choice of traditional materials is in keeping with the existing built form and local vernacular of the village. As a consequence the proposals will have no resulting impact on the Swinbrook Conservation Area or wider AONB.





### **Residential Amenity**

- 6.21 Policy OS2 expects new development to be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact on the amenity of existing occupants. The outbuilding is enclosed by the wider Wychwood Lodge estate to the north and west while to the east are agricultural fields. The nearest residential property lies to the south of the outbuilding. The rooflights themselves will be installed on the roofslope of the eastern elevation, facing onto agricultural land. Given the distance between the Lodge and the next nearest property to the south, the intervening planting and the orientation of the outbuilding relative to the property, it is not considered that the proposed alterations will have any impact on the amenity of nearby properties.



## 7 Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 This planning statement has been prepared to on behalf of Mr and Mrs Arnold in relation to minor alterations at Wychwood Lodge, Swinbrook.
- 7.2 This report has set out the site and surrounding context, relevant planning history, the proposed development, relevant planning policy and material planning considerations. Within this context the following conclusions have been made:
- The alteration of an annexe/outbuilding is supported in principle by policy H6;
  - The proposed development pertains to minor architectural alterations which appropriately conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the outbuilding in accordance with policy OS4;
  - The proposed development will have no impact on the Swinbrook Conservation Area and will thus preserve its historic character and significance in accordance with policy EH10; as such, and in accordance with policy EH1, it will have no impact on the contribution that Swinbrook makes to the scenic beauty and setting of the AONB; and
  - The position of the outbuilding within the wider estate, its location in respect of nearby residential properties and the nature of the proposed alterations mean that the proposals will have no impact on the amenity of nearby properties, as required by policy OS2.
- 7.3 Having regard to the above it is concluded the proposed development is in accordance with the Local Development Plan and therefore constitutes sustainable development. In line with paragraph 11c of the NPPF it is respectfully requested that planning permission and listed building consent are granted without delay.

# Appendices



## Appendix 1. Policy cross-tabulation

	NPPF	Local Plan 2031
Principle	<p><b>Chapter 2 (Achieving sustainable development)</b> explains that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development that accords with the development plan; or where there are no relevant policies or the policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPPF policies that protect areas of assets (including AONBs or heritage assets) provide a clear reason for refusing development; or</li> <li>• Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy OS2 (Locating development in the right places)</b> - Development in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside will be <u>limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location</u> and which respects the intrinsic character of the area. Proposals for residential development will be considered under policy H2.</li> <li>• <b>Policy H6 (Existing Housing)</b> - states that changes to existing housing will be managed to maintain sustainable communities and a high-quality environment in accordance with several principles, including that householder development will respect the character of the surrounding area and will not unacceptably affect the environment.</li> </ul>
Design	<p><b>Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places)</b> identifies that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and requires that developments:</p> <p>Function well and add to the overall quality of the area;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping;</li> <li>Are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;</li> <li>Establish or maintain a strong sense of place;</li> <li>Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; and</li> <li>Create places that are safe, inclusive, accessible and promote health, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy OS4 (High quality design)</b> - High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design;</li> <li>○ Conserve or enhance areas, buildings and features of historic, architectural and environmental significance, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets and habitats of biodiversity value.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Designers of new development will be expected to provide supporting evidence for their design approach. They should have regard to specific design advice contained in supplementary planning guidance covering the District. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Appraisal, Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds AONB guidance documents</p>



		are key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality
Heritage	<p><b>Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)</b> states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 189 highlights that heritage asset significance should be described proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand a proposal's impact on the significance of the assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy EH9 (Historic Environment)</b> - specifies that proposed development should conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the historic environment and the significance of designated heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance. The policy affords great weight to conserving and/or enhancing the special cultural, architectural and historic interest of Registered Parks and Gardens.</li> <li>• <b>Policy EH10 (Conservation Areas)</b> - Proposals for development in a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area will be permitted where it can be shown to conserve or enhance the special interest, character, appearance and setting</li> </ul>
Landscape	<p><b>Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)</b> states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting valued sites and landscapes and by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.</p> <p>Paragraph 172 attaches great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding National Beauty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy EH1 (Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</b> - affords great weight to proposals which conserve and enhance the natural beauty, landscape and countryside of the AONB.</li> <li>• <b>Policy EH13 (Historic Landscape Character)</b> states that in determining applications which affect the historic landscape character, particular attention will be paid to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Age, distinctiveness, rarity, sensitivity and capacity of the landscape;</li> <li>○ Extent to which key historic features are retained or replicated;</li> <li>○ Degree to which the form and layout of the development respects the existing historic character; and</li> <li>○ The degree to which the form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use alignment and external appearance conserves the special historic character of its surroundings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>