

Planning Statement

Chedworth Farm Shop
Denfurlong Farm
Fields Road
Chedworth

Prepared on behalf of: Stag Homes (Severnside) Limited
Project: 15661
Date: 27 Sep 2021

Cheltenham | London | Reading

 0800 001 4090

 info@evansjones.co.uk

evansjones.co.uk



Project
Management



Planning
Consultants



Building
Surveying



Disabled Access
Consultancy

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	5
3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	7
4. PLANNING HISTORY	8
5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	9
The Development Plan.....	9
National Planning Policy Framework	9
Other Material Policy Consideration	11
Appropriate Weight	11
6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	12
Principle of Development	12
Affordable Housing Need.....	13
Viability.....	13
Community Assets	14
Design and Layout.....	16
Heritage.....	17
Landscape.....	18
Transport.....	19
Ecology	21
Drainage	21
Land Contamination.....	22
7. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS	24
 Figure 1 - Site location (taken from Google Maps).....	 3
Figure 2 - Proposed site layout (extracted from submitted plans).....	5

Executive Summary

Evans Jones Ltd have been instructed by Stag Homes (Sevenside) Limited to submit an application to Cotswold District Council for a rural exception scheme to meet an identified and unmet need for affordable housing at the settlement of Chedworth. The proposals will deliver nine dwellings in total. Five of those dwellings will be affordable and four will be open market, which are required to cross subsidise the affordable housing due to viability constraints.

The principle of this development is established through Policy H3 of the Local Plan, which supports rural exception sites within, adjoining, or closely related to, the built-up areas of towns and villages. In this instance, the site is clearly adjoining and closely related to the built-up area of Chedworth and therefore complies with the locational criteria for a rural exception site.

The submitted Viability Assessment concludes that even with the inclusion of 4 open market dwellings alongside the 5 affordable dwellings, the Residual Land Value (RLV) of the scheme still falls short of the Baseline Land Value (BLV). A 100% affordable housing scheme would generate a lower RLV and is clearly unviable. Whilst the Viability Assessment finds that RLV falls short of the BLV, even with an element of market housing, the sensitively testing suggests that some positive movement in costs and revenues, alongside a developer's ability to take a view on profit/return, the prospects of the proposed scheme being delivered are improved considerably.

The proposal promotes high standards of design that will complement the character and appearance of the area and will ensure that there is an acceptable impact on neighbouring property in terms of residential amenity. It will also conserve landscape character and scenic beauty within in the Cotswold AONB.

The supporting technical information submitted with this application demonstrates that the proposed development would enhance the setting of Upper Barn (Grade II listed) and result in no harm to its significance. It further demonstrates that the site will be served by a safe and suitable access and the residual cumulative impact on the highway network will not be severe. Indeed, there will be a significant reduction in trips over a

day with the proposed development when compared to the extant farm shop complex use.

The site is not at an unacceptable risk of flooding and a suitable drainage strategy has been identified. Furthermore, subject to adhering to the recommended mitigation measures outlined in the supporting Ecological Appraisal, the proposal would have an acceptable impact in terms of biodiversity.

This statement demonstrates that the proposal is fully compliant with the development plan and other material policy considerations, including national policy and the pursuit of sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application seeking permission for a rural exception scheme to meet an identified and unmet need for affordable housing at the picturesque settlement of Chedworth. The proposals involve the comprehensive re-development of a brownfield site and will deliver 9 dwellings. 5 of those dwellings will be affordable and 4 will be open market dwellings.

1.2 This statement sets out the main planning considerations and justification for the scheme. In support of the application, this statement demonstrates that the proposed scheme is acceptable in principle and expands upon issues relating to the principle of development, affordable housing need, viability, design, heritage, landscape impact, biodiversity, transport, drainage, and contamination.

1.3 The application submitted comprises the following plans and documents.

- Site Location Plan – PL001
- Topographical Site Survey – PL002
- Existing Buildings to be Demolished, Floor Plan – PL003
- Existing Buildings to be Demolished, Elevations – PL004
- Existing and Proposed Block Plans – PL005
- Flood Map for Planning – PL006
- Proposed Site Layout – PL010 Rev A
- Proposed House Types to Plots 1 and 2 – PL011
- Proposed House Type to Plot 3 – PL012
- Proposed House Type to Plot 4 – PL013
- Proposed House Type to Plot 5 – PL014
- Proposed House Type to Plot 6 – PL015
- Proposed House Types to Plots 7, 8 and 9 – PL016
- Existing Building Areas – SK009
- Design and Access Statement – 21.20.003 B - June 2021
- Heritage Statement –RHC 2021-06 - 16.08.2021

- Ecological Appraisal – 12379_R01 Rev A – 16.06.2021
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal – V2 – 06.09.2021
- Drainage Strategy Technical Note – CTP-21-0210
- Transport Statement – September 2021
- Ground Report – 21555 – 12.08.2021
- Parish Housing Needs Survey Report – April 2017
- Financial Viability Assessment – 19.08.2021

1.4 This statement should be read in conjunction with the plans and documents that make up the application.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site is located at the eastern end of the village of Chedworth, to the south and west of Fields Road. The site is located approximately 12km north of Cirencester and approximately 15km southeast of Cheltenham.

2.2 The application site comprises some 0.4ha of previously developed land consisting of former agricultural buildings and hard standing. The buildings were previously converted to a farm shop with café, ancillary storage, and vehicle parking. However, that use has since ceased and the buildings are currently vacant. The buildings on site form a single mass comprising a substantial modern former agricultural barn constructed around a steel portal frame, with additional blockwork and profile cladding, together with adjoining open-fronted storage.

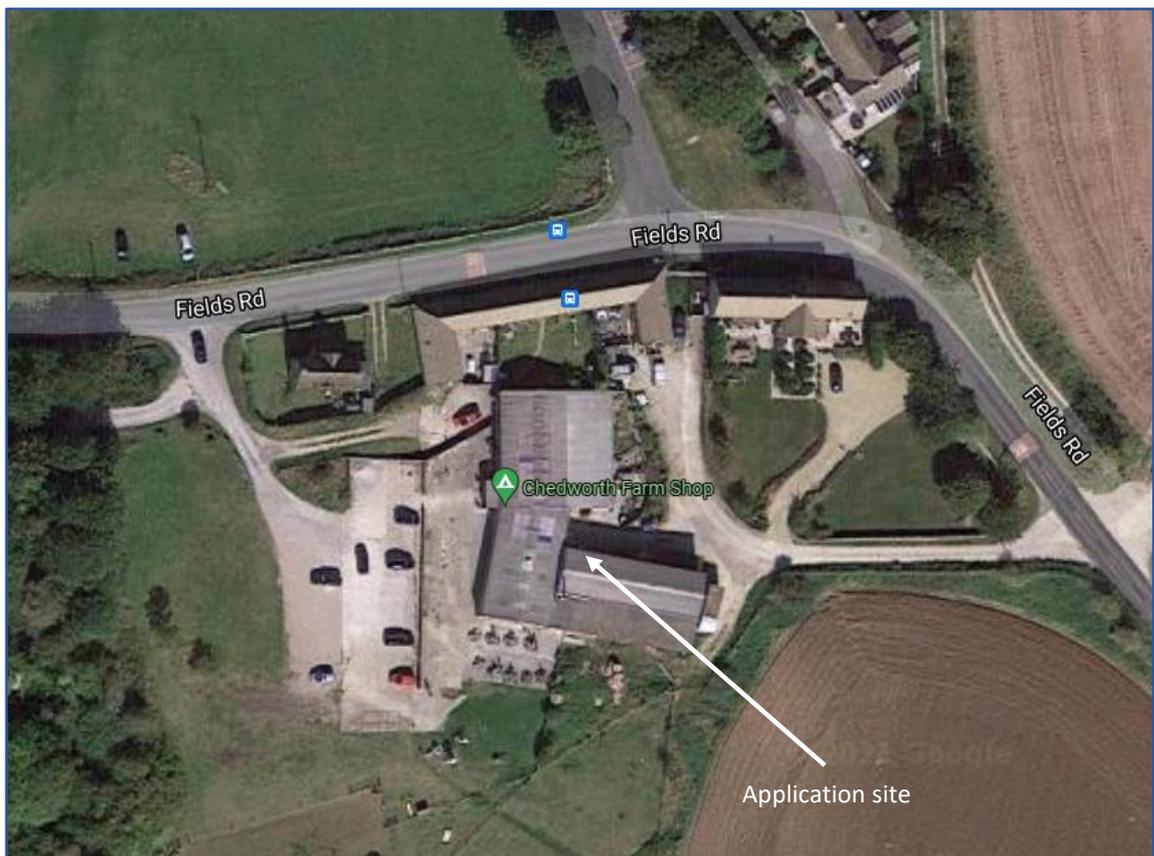


Figure 1 - Site location (taken from Google Maps)

2.3 Access to the site is currently obtained via Fields Road, with dual splayed junctions to both the north and east of the site connecting via consolidated private tracks to a main parking area. Both accesses are shared with the primary access to the north also serving

the Chedworth Campsite and adjacent dwellings and the secondary access to the east also serving an existing residential property.

- 2.4 The settlement of Chedworth has a rural setting, set within a generally open agricultural landscape. Woodland is a feature of this wider landscape and generally the village itself has a well treed setting. Chedworth, including the application site, is set within the Cotswolds AONB.
- 2.5 The site is also located adjacent to Upper Barn, which is a Grade II listed building that derives its principal heritage significance from its built form and historic fabric. It is described as a fine surviving example of a traditional Cotswold farm building of later eighteenth-century date.
- 2.6 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk from fluvial flooding. The site is also not within a critical drainage area.

3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

3.1 The application proposes to demolish the existing agricultural buildings on the site and create a bespoke series of 5 affordable and 4 open market new homes in a mix of traditional Cotswold buildings and Dutch barn style dwellings. The proposal is for a high-quality, tenure neutral, development that enhances the site and its setting within the Cotswolds AONB and respects the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed barn. The proposed design and layout are explained further in this statement and the supporting Design and Access Statement.



Figure 2 - Proposed site layout (extracted from submitted plans)

3.2 The proposal represents a rural exception scheme that will meet an identified and unmet need for affordable housing at the settlement of Chedworth. The proposals also include an element of market housing to cross subsidise the affordable housing due to viability constraints. The proposed housing mix is as follows:

- 4 x 2-bedroom houses (affordable)
- 1 x 3-bedroom house (affordable)
- 2 x 4-bedroom houses (open market)
- 2x 5-bedroom houses (open market)

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There is a considerable amount planning history attached to the site, which is set out as follows:

- CD.7274: Outline application for use of land as a Cotswold Interpretation Centre comprising exhibitions and lecture hall, craft workshops, animal rehabilitation and display area. Refused July 1990 and subsequently dismissed at appeal.
- CD.7274/A: Outline planning permission for use of land as a Cotswold Interpretation Centre with associated parking and access. Not determined; dismissed at appeal November 1991.
- CD.7274/B: Outline planning permission for use of land as a Cotswold Interpretation Centre with associated parking and access. Refused 26.07.1991
- 93/00316/FUL: Conversion of barn to a dwelling. Granted 08.07.1993
- 93/00895/FUL: Conversion of barn to a dwelling and associated works. Granted 19.07.1993
- 96/00642/FUL: Conversion of barn into two dwellings. Granted 19.09.1996
- 96/00643/LBC: Conversion of barn into two dwellings. Granted 19.09.1996
- 04/00044/FUL: Conversion of milking barn into a farm shop, tearoom, and post office. Granted 22.04.2004
- 04/00045/FUL: Conversion of single storey barn into 3 No. domestic units. Granted 22.04.2004
- 05/00832/FUL: Conversion of milking barn into a farm shop, tearoom, and post office. Revised scheme to CD.3277/J including alterations to internal layout and erection of entrance porch. Granted 13.05.2005
- 12/00196/FUL: Change of use of agricultural land to provide camping and caravanning site with 40 pitches, together with ancillary building. Granted 20.03.2012.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

5.2 The development plan is currently comprised of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 3rd August 2018), and several 'made' Neighbourhood Development Plans. However, there are no Neighbourhood Development Plans that are applicable to this site.

5.3 The Local Plan policies that are of relevance to this application are:

- H1 – Housing Mix and Tenure to Meet Local Needs
- H2 – Affordable Housing
- H3 – Rural Exception Sites
- EN1 – Built, Natural and Historic Environment
- EN2 – Design of the Built and Natural Environment
- EN4 – The Wider Natural and Historic Landscape
- EN5 – Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- EN8 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity: Features Habitats and Species
- EN10 – Historic Environment: Designated Heritage Assets
- EN14 – Managing Flood Risk
- INF3 – Sustainable Transport
- INF4 – Highway Safety
- INF5 – Parking Provision

National Planning Policy Framework

5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was revised on 20th July 2020. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions

5.5 The Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the

achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, this can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection.

- 5.6 So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.
- 5.7 The Framework defines the three overarching objectives of sustainable development as:
- **An economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
 - **A social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - **An environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 5.8 These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of

plans and the application of policies in the Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

Other Material Policy Consideration

5.1 Outside of the development plan and the Framework, there are other material policy considerations, which are relevant to this proposal. These are as follows:

- The Cotswold Design Code
- Cotswold AONB Management Plan

Appropriate Weight

5.2 Regarding the weight that is given, Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, determination of applications must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, full weight is given to the relevant policies contained within the Local Plan.

5.3 As it forms the basis of Government policy for planning applications, a high degree of weight should be given to the policies of the Framework.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Having regard for the proposed development; the sites planning history; the relevant planning policy context; and all other material issues; the main planning considerations for the determination of this application relate to the principle of development, affordable housing need, viability, community assets, design and layout, heritage, landscape impact, transport, ecology, drainage, and contamination.

Principle of Development

6.2 During pre-application discussions, the Council advised that they considered the site to be outside of the village of Chedworth and therefore any proposal for a rural exception scheme will be assessed against Policy H3 of the Local Plan (Rural Exception Sites). Policy H3 states.

'Land which may not be considered appropriate for residential development may be released for a rural exception scheme for affordable housing development where there is an identified need within that parish or community for affordable housing. Where a need for affordable homes has been identified, development of an appropriate scale will be permitted within, adjoining, or closely related to, the built-up areas of towns and villages, taking into account Parish Housing Surveys and Parish Plans or other local evidence, and provided that:

a. the developers enter into a legal agreement with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the affordable housing provided through the rural exception scheme will be managed to meet the District's need for affordable housing in perpetuity; and

b. rural exception schemes will normally be expected to provide 100% affordable housing for local needs. Other types of tenure will be considered where it can be demonstrated, through a viability assessment, that this is essential to facilitate the affordable housing scheme to meet the identified local need.'

6.3 It is debatable as to whether the site is within the built envelope of the village of Chedworth but even if not, the site is clearly adjoining and closely related to the built-up area of the village. In this regard, the site complies in principle with the locational criteria for a rural exception site.

Affordable Housing Need

- 6.4 In respect of the expectation that there should be an identified need, this is clearly satisfied in this instance by the 2017 Parish Housing Needs Survey, commissioned by the Parish Council and included in this submission, which identified five local households in genuine housing need within the Parish. Policy H3 of the Local Plan, together with the Affordable Housing SPD, identifies such surveys as the appropriate tool for identifying housing need, and the affordable units shown respond in full to the findings of that survey while remaining proportionate to the settlement.
- 6.5 During pre-application discussions with the Council, the Strategic Housing Manager welcomed the proposal to provide affordable housing in this rural location. It was confirmed that the Parish Housing Needs Survey did indeed identify an affordable housing need for five households with a local connection. It was further advised that whilst the Council were unable at the time to provide up-to-date data from the Council's housing register to supplement the information provided from the Parish Needs Survey 2017, they were aware of an estimated 8 people on the housing register with a preference for, and a local connection to, Chedworth.
- 6.6 The proposed affordable housing mix broadly accords with the latest district wide Housing Needs Assessment and is comprised of the following:
- 4 x 2-bedroom houses
 - 1 x 3-bedroom house
- 6.7 At this stage the tenure mix has not been finalised although this will be agreed with the Council during the application. It is anticipated that the retention of the affordable units in perpetuity as local affordable housing (by way of a suitable cascade provision) would be secured by through a Section 106 Agreement. Subject to that agreement, the proposal would meet an immediate and unmet need for affordable housing in this location, which weights strongly in favour of this development.

Viability

- 6.8 In line with national policy and guidance, Policy H3 of the Local Plan makes clear that

affordable-led exception schemes may be supplemented by a degree of market cross-subsidy where this is demonstrably necessary to ensure viability and thus secure the release of land by way of a reasonable incentive to the landowner. To that end, the application is accompanied by a Viability Assessment (VA) that demonstrates that the market element is essential for the scheme to stand a good chance of proceeding and delivering the much-needed affordable housing.

- 6.9 To assess the proposed development's viability, the VA considers the Existing Use Value (EUV) through consideration of comparable property transactions, and making rational adjustments where necessary for location, size, specification condition and use. The VA considers the site to fall within Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) and the EUV has been assessed on that basis.
- 6.10 The VA sets out that the Benchmark Land Value (BLV) is the threshold that, if exceeded by the Residual Land Value (RLV) of the proposed development, the development can be considered viable. If RLV is lower than the BLV, the development might be considered unviable. In estimating BLV, viability guidance confirms the requirement for a reasonable incentive to be provided to a landowner for them to release land/property from its existing use for re-development.
- 6.11 The VA concludes that even with the inclusion of the 4 open market dwellings alongside the 5 affordable dwellings, the RLV of the scheme still falls short of the BLV. A 100% affordable housing scheme would generate a lower RLV and is clearly unviable. Whilst the VA finds that RLV falls short of the BLV, even with an element of market housing, the sensitively testing suggests that some positive movement in costs and revenues, alongside a developer's ability to take a view on profit/return, the prospects of the proposed scheme being delivered are improved considerably.

Community Assets

- 6.12 During pre-application discussions it was advised that the farm shop would be considered as Social and Community Infrastructure having regard to Policy INF2 of the Local Plan, and therefore its loss would be a material consideration.
- 6.13 Policy INF2 of the Local Plan states, inter alia, that planning permission for development which results in the loss of a local community facility or service, including an open

space, will be permitted provided it is demonstrated that there is no local demand for the facility or service, or demand for an appropriate, alternative local community use for the facility.

- 6.14 As previously set out, permission was granted to convert the buildings into a farm shop, tearoom, and post office in 2005. That permission was implemented shortly thereafter. Prior to the changes to the Use Classes in September 2020, the lawful use of the premises was considered to be a mixed A1 and A3 use. The updated Use Classes now includes a new Class F use (Local Community and Learning), which incorporates newly defined local community uses. Class F2 is defined in 4 parts and includes Class F2(a), which is defined as *'shops (mostly) selling essential goods, including food, where the shop's premises do not exceed 280 square metres and there is no other such facility within 1000 metres.'* In this instance the shop premises (albeit vacant) exceeds 280 square metres in floor area and therefore does not fall within class F2(a). Consequently, if the building was brought back into use again, it would now fall within Class E of the current Use Classes Order (Commercial, Business and Service).
- 6.15 In terms of Policy INF2, even if the premises was considered to be a community asset, it is evident that local residents did not necessarily see it that way as patronage was unsustainably low over many years. Essentially, there was no demand for the farm shop. Indeed, it was reported in the Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard that whilst the farm shop has been valuable for residents when the village was snowed in, the same residents didn't support the shop when it was not snowing. Moreover, there was no public backlash when the premises closed for the final time in February 2021 and no steps were taken by the Council to formally designate the premises as an asset of community value.
- 6.16 The lack of demand for the farm shop also highlights that it is simply not viable as a going concern given the Benchmark Land Value set out in the supporting Viability Appraisal. It also must be borne in mind that given the Class E use of the premises, there would be no control over the loss of retail use should it be used for another purpose within Class E. Consequently, whilst the loss of the farm shop is regrettable, its loss was inevitable. Furthermore, the loss is significantly outweighed by the public benefits associated with the provision of affordable housing that will meet an identified

and unmet need in Chedworth.

Design and Layout

- 6.17 The Framework sets out that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. At a local level, Policy EN2 of the Local Plan states that development will be permitted which accords with the Cotswold Design Code. Proposals should be of a design quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality.
- 6.18 The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, which explains the design rationale for the scheme. Prior to developing the scheme, a series of constraints and opportunities were identified following a thorough analysis of the site. These, in conjunction with pre-application discussions with the Council, public consultation, and assessment by the applicant's landscape and heritage consultants, have informed the evolution of the scheme.
- 6.19 During initial pre-application discussions with the Council, it was advised that the scheme as presented would be too domestic and suburban in nature, which would result in harm to the setting of the nearby listed Upper Barn. It was also suggested that the proposed affordable units were not tenure blind. The scheme presented here addresses this. The proposals has been fully informed by the pre-app response and has been developed to create a scheme that represents an appropriate grouping or cluster of built forms, that relate to the existing adjacent buildings, and form an expected vernacular style of structure within the landscape. The intention is to create a high-quality space that has a distinctive sense of place that will be an asset to Chedworth.
- 6.20 The proposed development creates a cluster of buildings in two complimentary styles. To the western section of the site a series of stone and render buildings reflect a traditional grouping of vernacular structures formed around a central court. To the eastern section of the site, two dwellings are formed within Dutch barn style structures. These sit outside of the vernacular cluster as is typical with more modern farm structures. They are situated further into the site than the existing buildings to be

demolished, and therefore substantially improve the visual and residential amenity of the existing cottages to the north, and the setting and aspect of the adjacent Grade II Listed barn.

- 6.21 The scheme presented here represents a highly appropriate and bespoke form of development in this location. It is of an appropriate scale and mass and provides an aesthetic that compliments and respects its location within the Cotswold AONB, the proximity to the adjacent Listed barn, and the residential amenity of existing neighbours. The proposed development therefore fully accords with Policy EN2 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Heritage

- 6.22 The site sits adjacent to Upper Barn at Denfurlong Farm, which is a Grade II listed building. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Those duties are reflected in the Framework, which sets out that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. This advice is further reflected in Policy EN10 of the Local Plan.
- 6.23 In recognition of the heritage constraints that affect the site, a Heritage Statement has been prepared, which accompanies this application submission. It sets out that Upper Barn is a Grade II listed building that derives its principal heritage significance from its built form and historic fabric. As a fine surviving example of a traditional Cotswold farm building of later eighteenth-century date, the barn retains important illustrative and aesthetic heritage values, which relate both to its historic function and to its architectural qualities and mode of construction, which strongly reflect regional character and use of local materials.
- 6.24 The Heritage Statement states that historic mapping evidence suggests that the barn

and adjoining byre building developed as a small outlying farmstead, which underwent several changes until the later twentieth century. The existing modern farm buildings, formerly in use as a farm shop and café, are an intrusive development which detracts from the setting and significance of the listed barn. The extent and massing of these buildings exerts a dominant effect in south-westward views from the barn, and blocks views of open farmland setting from this perspective. Their removal would therefore be beneficial in partly restoring the setting of the barn.

6.25 It goes on to advise that the proposed development would result in a partial displacement of built form to the west of the barn, which would partly ameliorate the visual dominance currently exercised by the farm buildings. In addition, the massing effect of the latter would be broken up by suitably dispersed individual units, which would present a mix of rooflines and elevations within views from the barn. The proposed development has potential to considerably enhance the overall visual aspect of the Denfurlong Farm site, together with the wider setting and significance of the listed barn and would therefore enhance the significance of this heritage.

6.26 Importantly, the Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed development would enhance the setting of Upper Barn and result in no harm to its significance. The proposal therefore in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Framework and policies EN4 and EN10 of the Local Plan.

Landscape

6.27 Policy EN4 of the Local Plan advises that development will be permitted where it does not have a significant detrimental impact on the natural and historic landscape (including the tranquillity of the countryside) of Cotswold District or neighbouring areas. It follows that proposals will take account of landscape and historic landscape character, visual quality, and local distinctiveness. Policy EN5 of the Local Plan states that in determining development proposals within the AONB or its setting, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, its character and special qualities will be given great weight. A further material consideration is the Cotswold AONB Management Plan 2018-2023.

6.28 During pre-application discussions it was advised that as the scheme progresses, details

should be provided to explain how the scheme intends to protect and enhance the Cotswolds AONB landscape and the special qualities for which it was designated. To that end, the application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA).

- 6.29 The LVA finds that the study site has limited features that contribute positively to the wider landscape character. Whilst some of the older farmstead structures reflect the limestone and stone tile Cotswold vernacular, newer buildings are predominately post war and a mix of styles and finishes. The LVA highlights that visual receptors are generally limited to road users of local roads and lanes and to residents adjoining the site. Views are generally seen as glimpsed, indirect, and transient but are experienced from a rural setting where value is attributed to views.
- 6.30 The wider landscape remains agricultural in character, which informs the setting of both the site and the village. Whilst arable fields are typical of the wider landscape character, there is a notable well treed character to the local landscape. This provides an opportunity to use tree planting to mitigate the effects of development without conflicting with the local landscape character. There is also an opportunity to incorporate new native hedge planting both within and around the site, which can link meaningfully into the local established green infrastructure. Indeed, it was advised at pre-application state that a robust vegetated boundary should be provided to the southern site boundary to aid in the softening and assimilation of the site within the wider landscape context.
- 6.31 In summary, the LVA finds that the cluster of existing settlement features and the established Green Infrastructure creates greater capacity for new well-designed development into this location without causing a detrimental change to the landscape character. With the incorporation of the mitigation measures set out in the LVA, the site has capacity for change that would conserve landscape character and scenic beauty. The proposal would therefore accord with national landscape policy and guidance and Policies EN4 and EN5 of the Local Plan.

Transport

- 6.32 Policy INF3 of the Local Plan supports development that actively supports travel choice through provision, enhancement, and promotion of safe and recognisable connections

to existing walking, cycling and public transport networks. It also supports development that gives priority to pedestrians and cyclists and provides access to public transport facilities taking account of the travel and transport needs of all people.

- 6.33 The application is supported by a Transport Statement (TS) that explains that the site benefits from two points of vehicular access directly off Fields Road. The primary access is located beyond the northern boundary of the site. It is a shared access, which also serves Chedworth Campsite and the adjacent dwellings. It is proposed that this access will serve 7 of the proposed dwellings. The secondary access is located beyond the eastern site boundary. Again, this is a shared access, which also serves Upper Barn and farmland to the south of the site. It is proposed that this access will serve 2 of the proposed dwellings.
- 6.34 The existing access arrangements have historically served the farm shop complex use of the site in addition to the other existing uses without any known highway safety issues. Furthermore, there will be no discernible intensification of use with the proposed development. Indeed, there will be a significant reduction in trips over a day with the proposed development when compared to the extant farm shop complex use. The TS highlights that there would be 261 fewer two-way vehicle trips between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on a typical weekday. Whilst there would be a slight increase in vehicle trips during the AM peak (4 additional trips), this will not have a material impact on the existing local highway network.
- 6.35 Each of the 2- and 3-bedroom properties would be afforded 2 off-road parking spaces, with the 4- and 5-bedroom properties afforded 3 spaces plus garages. This level of parking is suitable and sufficient to accommodate the likely car ownership of the proposed development. Each property will also be provided with an EV charging point, which adds to the benefits of the scheme. All homes will also be provided with secure storage facilities for a minimum of 2 cycles.
- 6.36 In summary, the access arrangements and the internal layout are suitable to accommodate the development traffic. The development will therefore be safe and suitable for all users and the residual cumulative impact on the highway network will not be severe. The proposal therefore accords with the Framework and Policy INF3 of the Local Plan in that regard.

Ecology

- 6.37 Policy EN8 of the Local Plan states that development will be permitted that conserves and enhances biodiversity and geodiversity, providing net gains where possible. It follows that development with a detrimental impact on other protected species, and species and habitats “of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity” will not be permitted unless adequate provision can be made to ensure the conservation of the species or habitat.
- 6.38 The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal that has been informed by desk studies undertaken and extended Phase 1 habitat surveys undertaken in 2019 and 2021. A single bat emergence survey was conducted in 2019 and repeated in 2021. The appraisal contains an evaluation of ecological features, an assessment of impacts because of the proposals and details mitigation/enhancement requirements.
- 6.39 The appraisal sets out that the site is not covered by, or adjacent to, any sites designated for nature conservation importance. It explains that the buildings and hardstanding on the site are of negligible ecological importance. There are small, isolated patches of rough grassland and tall ruderal vegetation. However, these are not contiguous with other more valuable habitat and are of no more than site ecological importance. In terms of bats, the three connected buildings were considered to have low potential to support roosting bats. During the bat emergence surveys, no bats were observed emerging from the buildings and recorded bat activity was low.
- 6.40 The appraisal concludes that given the low ecological importance of the habitats recorded and the lack of potential for protected and priority species, the proposed development would have an acceptable impact in terms of ecology subject to a restriction on lighting. The appraisal also sets out a series of measures that will deliver ecological enhancements, which should be seen as a benefit. Subject to adhering to the recommendations set out in the Ecological Appraisal, the proposal would comply with Policy EN8 of the Local Plan

Drainage

- 6.41 Policy INF8 of the Local Plan sets out that proposal will be permitted that take into account the capacity of existing off-site water and wastewater infrastructure and the

impact of development on it and make satisfactory provision for improvement where a need is identified that is related to the proposal. In addition, proposals should not result in a deterioration in water quality. It also states that proposals will be permitted that incorporate suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where appropriate.

- 6.42 The application is supported by a Drainage Strategy Technical Note that explains the proposed foul and surface water drainage arrangements and demonstrates compliance with the principles of SuDS. Infiltration testing and the underlying geology of the site have confirmed infiltration is feasible for the site and it is therefore intended to discharge surface water runoff via a plastic crate soakaway per plot. This will negate the need for a surface water connection to a public sewer.
- 6.43 In terms of foul drainage, it is proposed that the development will collect foul water via a traditional below-ground gravity system and will flow into a package treatment plant. The treated foul will then flow into an effluent drainage mound with perforated pipes ensuring for infiltration.
- 6.44 An indicative drainage strategy layout for both the surface water and foul drainage is provided in the Technical Note, which can be secured by way of a planning condition if necessary.

Land Contamination

- 6.45 Policy EN15 of the Local Plan requires consideration of pollution and contaminated land. During pre-application discussion, due to the former use of the land, it was advised that the applicant undertake a desktop study in the first instance to check for any known pollution, with further survey work if deemed necessary.
- 6.46 Accompanying this application is a Ground Report that includes a Phase 1 and 2 ground investigation. The report states that the risk of contamination on the site is low to medium. The most likely source of contamination is related to the possible presence of any made ground of unknown derivation, spillage/leakage of fuel/oils from vehicles or any historic heating oil tank that might have existed, and the possible use of asbestos products. It follows that there is a negligible risk of contamination from quarry discards to the west of the site and negligible risk of landfill gas migration through soils.

6.47 The report finds that in the absence of any known contamination no special precautions are considered necessary. The report demonstrates that there are no overriding contamination constraints that would present a barrier to development on this site and the proposal accords with Policy EN15 of the Local Plan.

7. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Paragraph 8 of the Framework sets out the three overarching objectives of sustainable development. These are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways, so that opportunities can be taken to secure new gains across each of the different objectives. As previously mentioned, these objectives are economic, social, and environmental.

An Economic Objective

7.2 Substantial economic benefits would stem from this development during the construction phase. Indeed, the Government recognises that construction underpins our economy and society. Construction output in the UK is more than £110 billion per annum and contributes 7% of GDP.

7.3 Whilst the development would result in the permanent loss of the farm shop, it has ceased trading and there is no realistic prospect of it reopening given the limited patronage by local residents over the years. However, this loss would be mitigated to a degree from increased spending by future residents, which would help sustain the other local services and facilities in Chedworth and the surrounding area. The Council would also benefit from the New Homes Bonus and increased Council Tax receipts.

A Social Objective

7.4 The proposed development will provide much needed housing that would meet an identified and unmet need for affordable housing in Chedworth. That affordable housing provision will also be secured in perpetuity, which will benefit Chedworth for years to come and help maintain its vitality.

An Environmental Objective

7.5 The proposal promotes high standards of design that will complement the character and appearance of the area and the surrounding landscape within an AONB. It will have an acceptable impact on existing neighbouring development and there would be no harm to the setting of nearby designed heritage assets. The site will be served by a safe and suitable access and the residual cumulative impact on the highway network will not

be severe.

- 7.6 The site is not at an unacceptable risk of flooding and a suitable drainage strategy has been identified. Furthermore, subject to adhering to the recommended mitigation measures outlined in the Ecological Appraisal, the proposal would have an acceptable impact in terms of biodiversity.

Conclusions

- 7.7 This statement has reviewed the relevant development plan policy framework as it applies in this case, together with the other material considerations. On the evidence presented it has been demonstrated that the proposal accords with all relevant development plan policies and national guidance, and there are no other material considerations present to override them.
- 7.8 It is therefore urged that the Local Planning Authority grant planning permission for this sustainable development.

Drafted: ALW - September 2021

Checked: ALW/DJ – 24.09.2021

Finalised: ALW/DJ – 27.09.2021



Cheltenham • Reading • London

 0800 001 4090

 info@evansjones.co.uk

evansjones.co.uk



Project
Management



Planning
Consultants



Building
Surveying



Disabled Access
Consultancy