



Planning Statement

Conversion and extension of agricultural building to form new office building, conversion of barn to form amenity building and construction of car park

For: Adalta Real

Chapel House Farm, Chipping Norton, OX7 5SZ

February 2022

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been produced by JPPC to accompany a planning application on behalf of Adalta Real for works at Chapel House Farm. The proposals seek consent for the conversion and extension of the existing agricultural building to form a new office building, the conversion of a barn to form an amenity building and the construction of car park.
- 1.2 The proposals have been developed with careful reference to the character of the application site and surrounding area, an appraisal of the prevailing planning policy and careful consideration of those elements of the site which contribute to its significance in heritage terms.
- 1.3 The proposals consist of the accompanying drawings produced by Corstorphine and Wright and this Planning Statement.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1 Chapel House Farm is located northeast of the built-up area of Chipping Norton, within the open countryside. The site is accessed from the A3400 to the east and is located close to the junction with the A361 to the north. Although the site is located in the open countryside, to the north of the site is a service station and a car showroom.
- 2.2 The farmstead is made up of the principal farmhouse and a number of traditional and modern farm buildings. The traditional buildings have retained much of their character but are now redundant in use. There are few modern window and door openings, and the existing stone walls remain largely unaltered. The modern buildings do not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
- 2.3 The building subject to this application has been granted consent for its conversion to commercial use under 21/04133/PN56.

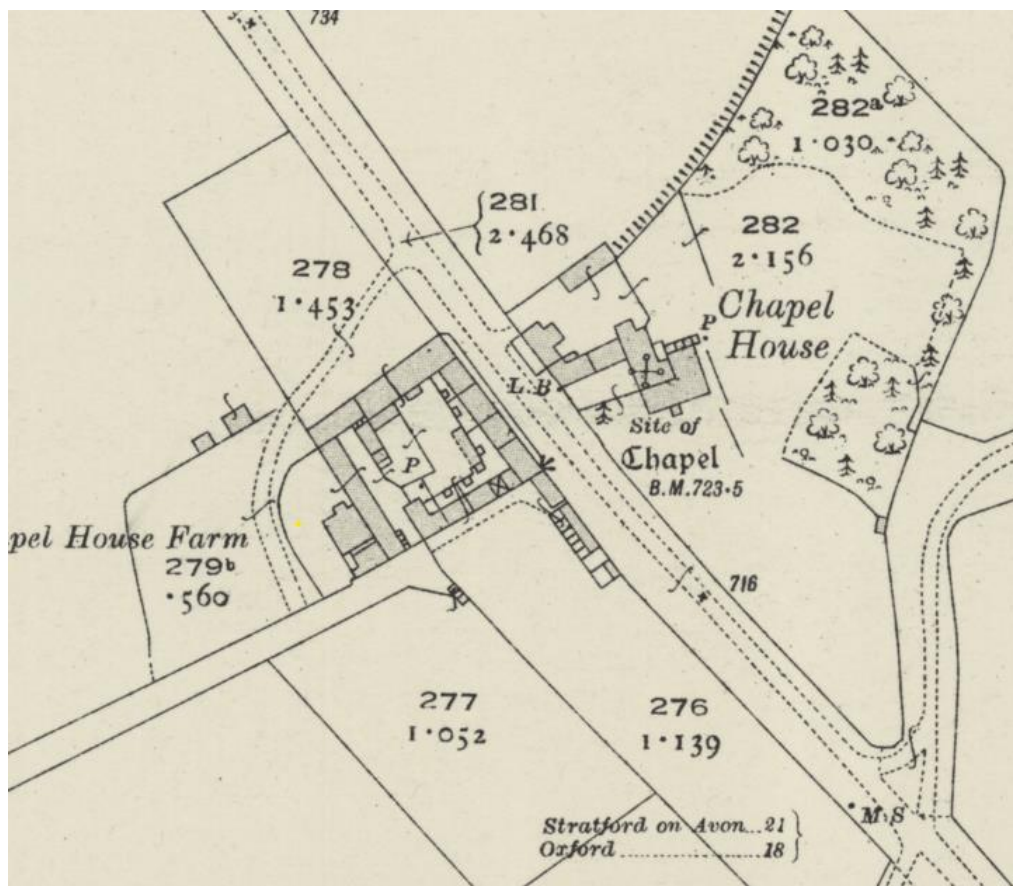


Figure 1- OS Map 1922 showing the site

2.4 The site is not located within a conservation area and the nearest listed building is Chapel House, on the opposite side of the A3400 at a distance of 70m. The site is well contained in the landscape and is screened by the existing buildings on the site. There is a restricted byway located to the south of the site, but the site is well screened from views in this direction by existing vegetation.

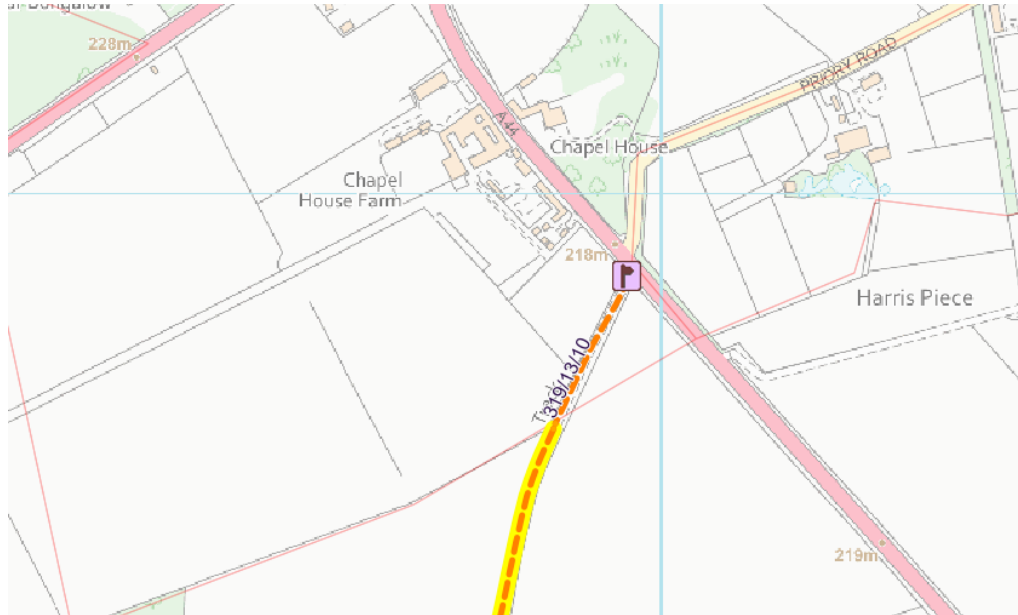


Figure 2 – Map showing nearby public rights of way

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY, PRE-APPLICATION AND SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

Planning History

- 3.1 The recent planning history of the site is extensive. The applications shown below are those that relate to the outbuildings, with the two prior approval applications relating specifically to the building to which this application relates.

Reference	Development description	Decision and date
13/0845/P/FP	Conversion of attached outbuildings to create self contained annexe	Approved 20/08/2013
19/02470/FUL	Conversion of existing barns to form four residential properties, the conversion of a barn to form ancillary accommodation and the erection of a car port and ancillary works (Amended).	Approved 19/08/2020
19/02474/PN56	Change of use of agricultural building to create two dwellings.	Approved 05/11/2019
21/04133/PN56	Change of use of buildings from agricultural use to mixed office and retail use	Approved 16/02/2022

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 This proposal relates to the conversion and extension of the existing agricultural building to form a new office building. The existing building would have a two-storey extension to the east and west and a single storey extension to the north. The two storey extensions would have an identical scale and design to the existing building. The office accommodation would be laid out across two floors in the building.
- 4.2 A small barn in the west of the site is proposed to be converted to an amenity building to serve the users of the office barn. This building would have areas for cycle storage, showers, toilets and a drying area.
- 4.3 A plant room and bin storage building is proposed to the east of the office barn, which would be constructed from materials to match the barn. The car parking area is proposed to the west of the barn, with 28 parking spaces to be provided. Of these 28 spaces, 8 would be provided with EV charging infrastructure. A new footpath would be provided between the public bus stop on the Banbury Road to the north and the site.

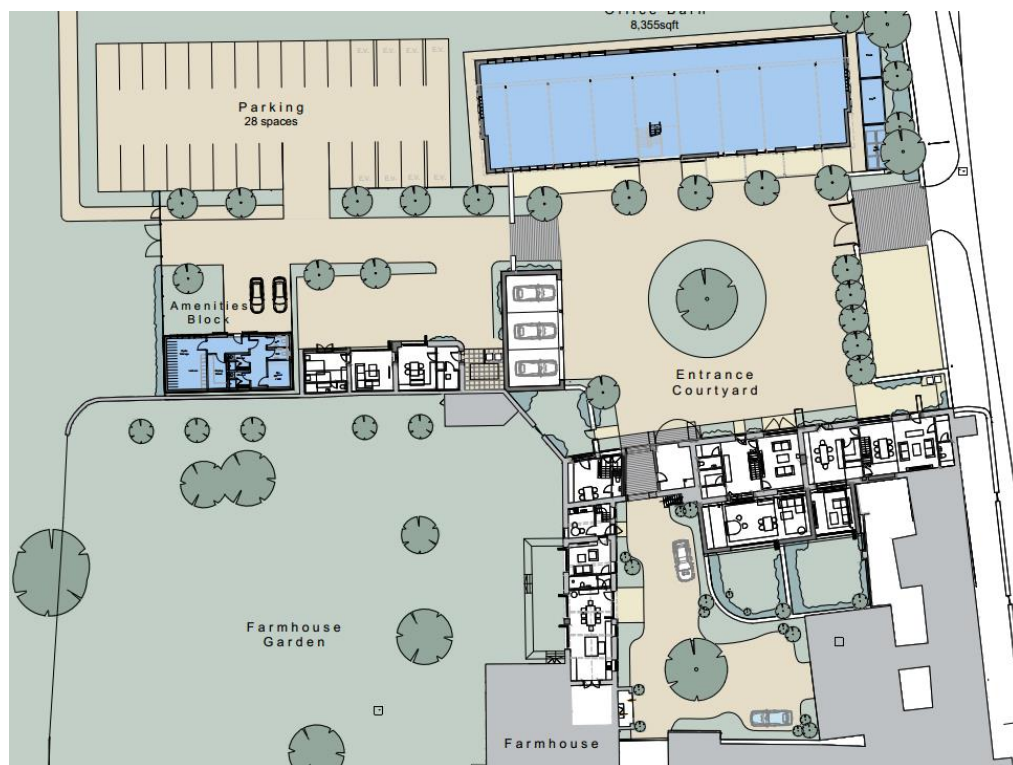


Figure 3 – Proposed site plan

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a statutory obligation to determine planning applications and appeals in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 The development plan for the area consists of the policies within the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration in the decision-making process.

National Planning Guidance

5.3 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

5.4 The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment as it will help to make places better for people. Paragraph 130 notes that developments should ensure that designs are sympathetic to local character and history of an area and ensure developments are visually attractive.

5.5 Paragraph 130 goes on to state that developments should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks. Development should also be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

5.6 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was formally adopted on 27th September 2018 and sets out the overall planning framework for the district from 2011-2031. Those policies that are considered to be of relevance are:

- Policy OS2 – Locating development in the right place
- Policy OS3 – Prudent use of natural resources
- Policy OS4 – High quality design

- Policy EH2 – Landscape Character
- E1 – Employment land
- E2 – Supporting the rural economy
- E3 – Re-use of non-residential buildings
- T1 – Sustainable transport
- T3 – Public transport, walking and cycling

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this case include:

- Principle of development
- Design and impact on character and appearance of the area
- Residential amenity
- Highway safety
- Other matters

Principle of development

6.2 Policy E1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 states that proposals to improve the effectiveness of employment operations on existing employment sites will be supported where commensurate with the scale of the town or village and the character of the area. This may include redevelopment, replacement buildings or the expansion of existing employment uses.

6.3 Policy E2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 states that new small employment sites in or adjacent to Service Centres and the Villages of the District will be supported where they are commensurate with the scale of the settlement and the character of the area. Chipping Norton is one of the Main Service Centres of the District and the site lies less than 500m to the east of the site allocation for Land East of Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area, an allocation within the local plan for 1200 homes.

6.4 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

6.5 The proposals seek permission for the provision of high quality, flexible commercial space to be used by local businesses, commuters and would-be home workers. This would be achieved through the extension to the existing employment site, as the building has consent to be used for Class E purposes under 21/04133/PN56. The proposed development would involve extensions to this existing building, and this is considered to comply with Policy E1, which allows for the expansion of existing employment uses.

- 6.6 The development seeks to convert a small barn in the west of the site to an amenities building. This building would be ancillary to the office barn and represents the conversion of an agricultural building. This building has consent to be used for retail purposes under 21/04133/PN56. This element of the scheme would therefore comply with Policy E1 and Government guidance contained within the NPPF.
- 6.7 The West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot was prepared in 2015 to inform the then draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan. The report stated the following: *the commercial property market here is quite varied, with a broad mix of office and industrial space of varying ages and quality. Most employment sites in Chipping Norton appear to be well occupied, with low vacancy. There appear to be few opportunities for expansion, one notable example being a small plot on Cromwell Park. Data from West Oxfordshire District Council reveal that there is very limited land supply in Chipping Norton, with just 0.5 hectares (1.2 acres) of undeveloped employment land allocated and only 0.1 hectares currently available.*
- 6.8 This assessment is now a few years old, however the provision of office space in Chipping Norton has not increased significantly in this time. Furthermore, the plot at Cromwell Park has been developed since 2015, with the construction of the Aldi store and another new building on the site. There is an established need for office space within the town and the proposed development would provide high quality office space in a sustainable location.
- 6.9 The proposals represent a sustainable reuse of a redundant agricultural building. The building is permitted to be used for office purposes and the development seeks to provide modest extensions to the building to provide a high-quality office development. Furthermore, there is no policy which would preclude the extension of the building. The development would therefore comply with Policies E1 and E2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 and Paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

Design and impact on character and appearance of the area

- 6.10 The existing building is a partially open sided, steel portal framed building, with concrete blockwork and corrugated metal walls, with a corrugated metal roof.

The building is located in the north of the farmyard, to the north of the more historic buildings.

- 6.11 Views of the site can be achieved from both Banbury Road and the A3400. The existing building is prominent within the site and although typical of many modern agricultural buildings, does not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. Longer ranging views of the site are limited by both vegetation and topography and clear views of the site can not be gained from the south, either from the public footpath or London Road. New planting is proposed to the south and east of the office barn, which would screen the bin storage and plant room building to the east of office barn.
- 6.12 The proposals seek to convert and extend the existing barn. This would be a high-quality modern development, constructed from timber and metal cladding. The building would have a significant amount of glazing in order to provide natural light to the new office accommodation. The proposed extensions to the building are considered to be appropriate in scale and design and would integrate well with the existing built form of the barn, with the extensions having the same ridge and eaves height as that of the existing building. The building would still retain its simple, agricultural appearance but with a more modern and high-quality finish.
- 6.13 The small barn in the west of the site is proposed to be converted into an amenity building to serve the office barn. The amenity building will be constructed from timber and metal cladding to match the office barn. It will retain its simple form and agricultural appearance and would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.14 A new car parking area would be constructed to the west of the office barn. This area of hardstanding would be located immediately adjacent to the existing area of hardstanding in the farmyard. The hardstanding would be screened from public views on the A3400 by new tree planting to the south. The parking area would be well contained in the wider landscape and would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.15 A new path is proposed between the site and the Banbury Road. Only hardstanding is proposed for this part of the development and would be contained entirely at ground level. This would be seen in the context of the new

office barn and given this context and that it would be located at ground level, the path would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

- 6.16 To conclude, the development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. The agricultural character of the site would remain, but the proposals would result in a betterment to the appearance of the barn. The development would be constructed from high-quality materials and is located in an area with a mixed character.

Residential amenity

- 6.17 The office barn is located in the north of the site. There is one existing dwelling on the site, the Chapel House Farmhouse, and a number of other dwellings further to south. The office barn has consent to be used for Class E purposes under 21/04133/PN56, the area to the front of the barn has consent to be used for parking and the access onto the A3400 has consent to be used as the access.
- 6.18 The office barn is proposed to be extended, however these extensions are not significant and the development proposes to create a parking area to the northwest of the site, which would remove the parking from within the courtyard. It is therefore considered that the impact on neighbouring properties would be no more significant than the Class R scheme.
- 6.19 There would be no impact with regard to a loss of light, overlooking or a loss of privacy. The office use is considered to be compatible with the dwellings in the area and would not result in a harmful impact on the amenity of the occupiers of these dwellings.

Highway safety

- 6.20 A Transport Statement has been prepared to support the application. The existing vehicular access to the site onto the A3400 would be retained. The new car parking area to the west of the barn would provide 26 car parking spaces in total, 8 of which would have EV charging infrastructure. Eighteen cycle parking spaces would be provided within the amenity building.
- 6.21 This statement will not repeat the findings of the Transport Statement in full but will cover the most important points. The site is accessible by sustainable means.

A public bus stop is located to the north of the site on the Banbury Road and a private footpath within the site is proposed to connect the site to the bus stop. Furthermore, the site is linked to Chipping Norton on the Banbury Road by an existing footpath which runs along the road. The distance from the recently constructed residential development on Banbury Road to the west of the cricket club is less than 600m, which is less than the distance to the town centre. The site is therefore considered to be in a sustainable location which could be accessed from by sustainable means of transport, which is encouraged by local and national planning policy.

- 6.22 The trip assessment contained within the Transport Statement shows that the development will generate a minimal level of trips. Given the nature of the surrounding highway network, it is considered that these trips will not cause harm to highway safety.

Other matters

- 6.23 The development would result in a biodiversity net gain. Given the construction of the building and the area for the car park, which is mown grassland, there is very limited potential for any ecological habitats on these areas of the site. Bat and bird boxes are proposed to be installed within the converted office barn and the applicants would accept a condition securing further details of these.
- 6.24 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, the areas at lowest risk of flooding. The proposed development will not increase the risk of flooding within the site or elsewhere and is therefore considered to be acceptable in this regard.
- 6.25 The office barn has been historically used as storage for agricultural machinery and implements. These uses do not result in land contamination and the development is therefore considered to be acceptable in this regard. The proposed use is not one which would be particularly sensitive to contaminated land.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposals involve the conversion and extension of the existing agricultural building to form a new office building, the conversion of a barn to form an amenity building and the construction of car park.
- 7.2 The development would provide much needed office space in a suitable and sustainable location near a major settlement in the district. It is concluded that the proposals are a sustainable form of development and would accord with the requirements of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 and the NPPF.
- 7.3 In light of the above, we respectfully request on behalf of our client that the Council approves the proposal.