

EDGARS

Planning Statement

New Dwelling at Priory Barn, Alvescot

Prepared for: Piers Holden

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Edgars on behalf of Mr Piers Holden, henceforth referred to as the “applicant”, in support of an application for *the erection of a single dwelling and garage with associated access, parking and landscaping*, at Priory Barn, Alvescot.
- 1.2 The document is structured as follows:
- Section 2 introduces the site and its context (in relation to the constraints and character of the site and its surroundings);
 - Section 3 establishes the relevant planning history;
 - Section 4 identifies the relevant planning policy;
 - Section 5 describes the proposed development);
 - Section 6 assesses the key planning considerations; and
 - Section 7 concludes the statement.
- 1.3 The following documents and drawings are provided as part of this application:
- Architectural drawing pack
 - Design and Access Statement, prepared by Thinking Buildings
 - Foul drainage plan, prepared by Cole Easdon
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (ref. 21-1957) and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, prepared by Lockhart Garratt
 - Planning Statement and application forms, prepared by Edgars Limited.
- 1.4 It is considered that the application site represents a particularly unique development opportunity and officers are invited to visit the site during the course of the application’s determination.



2 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The application site is located in the south-western part of the village of Alvescot and is accessed via a private driveway from Lower End. The total area of the site, which is illustrated at **Figure 1**, is 5,125sqm.
- 2.2 **The site:** The site itself comprises an area of informal garden to the rear of an outbuilding associated with Priory Barn, and a small grassland paddock which is not currently in any active use. The site topography is generally flat and site boundaries comprise some domestic/native hedgerow planting and post and rail/wire fences with some scattered trees, primarily to the south/west. There is a pile of rubble/soil on the site that has been colonised by native vegetation.
- 2.3 **Immediate surroundings:** The area surrounding the site comprises residential dwellings to the north, east (Priory Barn) and south (Oakey Close) and open countryside to the west. The land directly adjoining the site to the north is currently under construction for five dwellings (ref 20/01119/FUL).



Figure 1: Site Location Plan

- 2.4 **Settlement hierarchy:** Alvescot is classified as a village in West Oxfordshire's Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy table 4b, where development is supported where it respects the village character and local distinctiveness and helps maintain the vitality of the local community (Policy OS2).
- 2.5 **Landscape:** The site is not located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or any other statutory landscape designation.
- 2.6 **Heritage:** The site adjoins and is partially inside the Alvescot Conservation Area which roughly follows the rear line of the garden of Priory Barn but excludes the paddock, as shown in **Figure 2**. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) describes the houses and cottages of Alvescot as generally built from the local pale oolitic limestone, topped with stone slate roofs. Most properties are small in scale and vernacular in type and detailing, with a predominance of simple plan forms, two- and threebay ranges and timber casement or sash windows.
- 2.7 The village itself is described as having a loose-knit character; many of the houses and cottages on the fringes of the village, together with some of the later properties within its core, stand back from the road behind deep verges or front gardens.



- 2.8 The CACA also contrasts the more open, sweeping vista of the main road with the tight and twisting nature of the lane south of Lower End and Mill Lane to the north, which have a more intimate character.

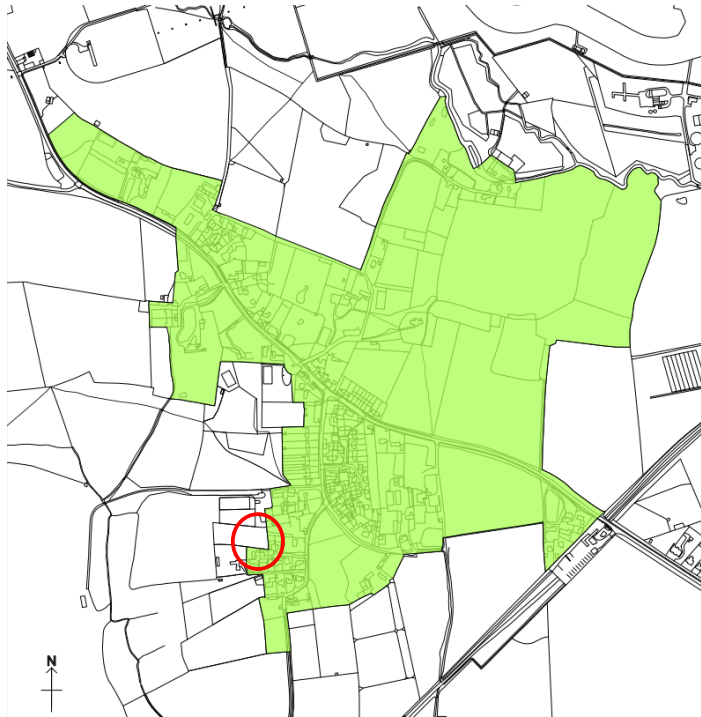


Figure 2: Alvescot Conservation Area Map

- 2.9 The Historic England map shows there to be five Grade II listed buildings in the vicinity of the site, as shown in **Figure 3**.
- 2.10 The closest of these is Priory Barn (List Entry Number 1053581, statutory address Barn adjacent to west of Park Farmhouse, Lower End') which was first listed on 12th September 1995. Historic England's listing entry is as follows:

"SP2604-2704 ALVESCOT LOWER END (South-west side) 9/7 Barn adjacent to west of Park 12/09/55 Farmhouse (Formerly listed as Barn and farm buildings at Park House)

GV II Barn. Dated IKM 1779 on plaque. Coursed rubble limestone with dressed quoins, stone slate roof with coped gables. 5 bays with central threshing floor. North side has central cart doors with wooden lintel and date plaque above, and 2-rows of vent slits over a row of square vent holes. South side has cart doors in central gabled projection, one vent slit to either side, and more square vent holes. Similar vents in gables. Lower C19 block of 2 bays attached to west end, with doors and vent slits to yard. Barn has double purlin roof on queen strut trusses with collars.

Listing NGR: SP2715104219"



Figure 3: Historic England map of listed buildings

- 2.11 **Ecology:** The site does not contain, nor does it fall within close proximity of any statutory or other ecology designations/habitats. The accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (prepared by Lockhart Garratt) assessed the site as having ecological value at site level only.
- 2.12 **Flooding:** According to the Environment Agency map, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore subject to the lowest flood risk.
- 2.13 Images of the site, its grounds and wider context are provided at **Figure 4**.



Figure 4: Site and Surroundings



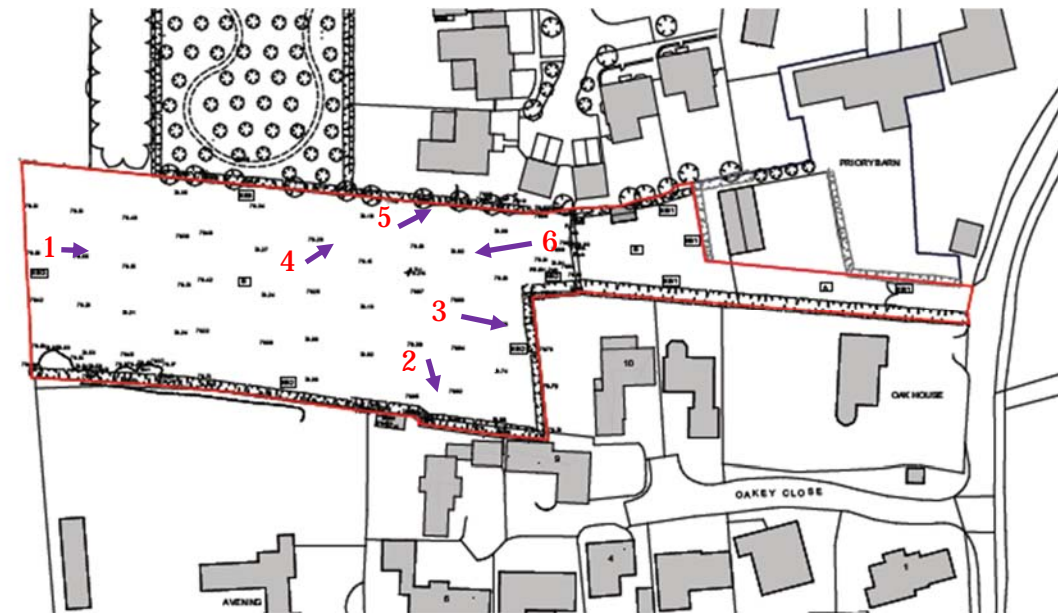
1. View looking into the site from far end of paddock



2. View facing south towards Oakey Close



3. View towards Oakey Place



4. View towards Park Farm development 20/01119/FUL



5. View looking into Park Farm development 20/01119/FUL



6. View into site from Priory Barn garden



3 Planning History

3.1 The relevant planning history for the site is summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Planning History				
Reference	Description	Location	Decision	Date
22/00345/FUL	Conversion of existing garage block to form up to 2 holiday lets/accommodation ancillary to Priory Barn and associated works. (Retrospective).	Priory Barn, Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot	Awaiting Decision	04/04/22
19/02542/FUL	Proposed New Dwelling	Priory Barn, Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxfordshire, OX18 2QA	Withdrawn	28/11/19
18/00633/PREAPP	Possibility of new house on part of paddock. Access would be extending existing driveway to Priory Barn	Priory Barn, Park Farm, Lower End	Response Issued	01/03/18
17/01707/FUL	Erection of five dwellings and associated works (Amended Plans)	Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot, Oxfordshire, OX18 2QA	Approved	08/09/17
16/01569/HHD	Erection of 3 bay garage to incorporate 1 space for car, 1 storage bay with doors and 1 home office	Priory Barn, Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxfordshire, OX18 2QA	Approved	05/07/16
16/04045/FUL	Erection of twenty four dwellings with associated public open space landscaping and improved access	Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot, Oxfordshire, OX18 2QA	Withdrawn	27/04/17
16/00287/HHD	Erection of garage outbuilding incorporating ancillary accommodation together with external log	Priory Barn, Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxfordshire, OX18 2QA	Refused	08/04/16



	store and associated ancillary development			
<i>Park Farm, adjacent site to the north</i>				
20/01119/FUL	Erection of five dwellings and associated works	Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot, Oxfordshire, OX18 2QA	Approved	30/07/20
17/03233/FUL	Demolish equestrian buildings and erect five dwellings with associated public open space and structural landscaping (Amendments to allow relocation of open space).	Park Farm, Lower End, Alvescot, Oxfordshire, OX18 2QA	Approved	09/02/17

3.2 The site which is the subject of this application was contained within the red line boundary of application 17/01707/FUL for five dwellings at Park Farm in 2017, which was subsequently approved (amended plans¹). This part of the wider development site was proposed for a copse to add a visual softening to the edge of the site adjacent to Oakey Close. As can be seen from the drawing exert in **Figure 5**, this informal area of open space was proposed to have access for residents, effectively removing it from the open countryside and incorporating it within a soft village edge in this location. The continuous north-south ‘landscape buffer strip’ which was also proposed to the west of the 2017 application site, created a further a legible boundary which clearly distinguished between the village and open countryside beyond.

¹ Plans originally submitted and later amended included a dwelling on the application site to which this Statement relates; the layout of the proposed development was later revised to improve its relationship with existing properties within the context of the number of dwellings proposed (5) and their associated design and siting. These considerations as they relate to this planning application are addressed in the Planning Considerations section of this Statement.



Figure 5: Excerpt from Site Plan for application ref 17/01707/FUL

- 3.3 The scheme was subsequently amended to remove the application site and relocate the landscaped area (copse) to the west of the proposed dwellings under application 17/03233/FUL. Reasons put forward by the applicant to support the relocated area of 'open space' to the west of the new dwellings related to benefits associated with the broader landscape setting, screening this part of the village and assimilating the new dwellings **into** the edge of village location.

- 3.4 The scheme now under construction to the north of the application site at Park Farm is that consented under application ref 20/01119/FUL which had a slightly reduced site area and incorporated some small changes to the layout. Details for the landscaped area to the west of the approved dwellings were submitted and approved in August 2021 (ref 21/02668/CND). The landscape masterplan (**Figure 6**) shows a wildflower meadow and orchard with mown strips in this location, with a strong boundary of native copse to the west clearly demarking the transition to open countryside.



Figure 6: Extract from landscape masterplan, application ref 21/02668/CND

3.5 As can be seen from **Figure 7**, the curtilage of the proposed new dwelling which is the subject of this application aligns with those of the new dwellings to the north, while the proposed landscaping provides a continuation of the native copse line to the west.



Figure 7: Site Plan showing relationship to northern site

A request for pre-application advice relating to the site which is the subject of this application was submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council in February 2018. The 2018 submitted scheme comprised two detached dwellings and is illustrated in **Figure 8**.



Figure 8: Site layout as submitted for pre-app ref 18/00633/PREAPP

- 3.6 In summary, the Planning Officer advised that if the applicant were to submit a planning application, it was unlikely to have Council support unless there was a lack of five-year Housing Land Supply because there is not an overriding need for new housing. Since that advice was received, the scheme to the north of the application site has been substantially completed, and it is now considered that the application site could be strongly considered to provide a logical complement to the existing pattern of development within the village that is in accordance with the principles of Local Plan policies OS2 and H2, as discussed in Section 6.
- 3.7 In their written response the Planning Officer differentiated the application site from the Park Farm scheme to the north, stating that the Park Farm site *“comprises of agricultural barns and hardstanding so there is already a degree of built form on the site and consequently there would be visual benefits associated with the removal of these buildings and the addition of dwellings of a vernacular character which would soften the edge of the village when viewed from the adjacent countryside”*. To note, the proposals to the north also incorporate an area of undeveloped, greenfield land on the southern part of the site to the west of the former agricultural buildings, as evidenced in Google Earth extracts in **Figure 9**. The layout of the new dwellings was clearly thought out to form the most logical complement to the existing built development, but in doing so encroached onto what appears to be a previously undeveloped area directly adjoining the currently proposed application site.



Figure 9: Satellite images from 2014 and 2018 respectively; western extent of new built development to the north of the application site shown indicatively by orange line

- 3.8 The written pre-application advice also made reference to the potentially urbanising impact of the proposals, their impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and the general impact of edge of settlement sites on landscape character. These concerns are considered to have been overcome by the revised proposals are addressed in the respective sections of Section 6.



4 Planning Policy

- 4.1 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. This is echoed in paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in February 2021, which is itself a material consideration.
- 4.2 The Development Plan comprises West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031, adopted September 2018. Also of relevance is the West Oxfordshire District Council Design Guide SPD (2016) and the Alvescot Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3 The relevant chapters and paragraph numbers are listed in Table 2 below. Appendix 1 contains the full wording of the policies.

Table 2: NPPF policies	
Chapter	Paragraph Numbers
2. Achieving sustainable development	8, 10 & 11
4. Decision-making	38
5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes	69 & 79
9. Promoting sustainable transport	110 & 111
12. Achieving well-designed places	130 & 134
14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	154 & 157
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	174
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	194, 195, 197 & 199

West Oxfordshire Local Plan

- 4.4 The Local Plan policies relevant to this application are listed in Table 3 below. Appendix 1 contains the full wording of the policies.

Table 3: Relevant Local Plan policies	
Policy Number	Policy Title
<i>West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031</i>	
OS1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
OS2	Locating development in the right places
OS3	Prudent use of natural resources
OS4	High quality design
H2	Delivery of new homes
T1	Sustainable transport
T3	Public transport, walking and cycling



Table 3: Relevant Local Plan policies	
Policy Number	Policy Title
<i>West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031</i>	
T4	Parking provision
EH2	Landscape character
EH3	Biodiversity and geodiversity
EH7	Flood risk
EH9	Historic environment
EH10	Conservation Areas
EH11	Listed Buildings

West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD (2016)

- 4.5 The purpose of the Design Guide is to encourage a high standard of design, and to promote new development which respects and fits in with the character of West Oxfordshire. The Guide sets out the characteristics which make West Oxfordshire unique, and which can be used to influence new design that reflects and enhances local character. Each chapter has a specific theme or issue. Appendix 1 contains the full wording of the chapters.
- 4.6 The following chapters are of relevance to this proposal:
- Chapter 5 – Settlement Type
 - Chapter 6 – Conservation Areas
 - Chapter 8 – Stonework
 - Chapter 9 – Roofs and Roofing Materials
 - Chapter 10 – Windows and Doors
 - Chapter 11 – New Development and Context
 - Chapter 12 – Sustainable Building Design



5 Proposed Development

- 5.1 This application seeks planning permission for the *erection of a single dwelling and garage with associated access, parking and landscaping* at Priory Barn, Alvescot.
- 5.2 The proposals comprise a single detached 4 bedroom residential dwelling set within private grounds with a detached outbuilding providing parking for 2 cars and a garden store. The residential accommodation is provided over two floors with the first floor partly within the roof space to limit building height and mass.
- 5.3 A vehicle parking and turning area is provided to the east in front of the new dwelling which will be accessed from the existing access road serving Priory Barn from Lower End.
- 5.4 There are private garden areas to the south and west of the proposed dwelling. The remainder of the site to the west will be planted as a tree orchard within a wildflower meadow, with a native copse line on the western boundary to provide biodiversity and landscape enhancement and integrate the site with the Park Farm development directly to the north.
- 5.5 Further details of the proposals can be found in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.



6 Planning Considerations

6.1 Having regard to the proposed development, together with the site context, relevant planning history and planning policy, the key planning considerations for this proposal are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Design (including sustainability)
- Landscape
- Historic Environment
- Transport
- Ecology
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Neighbouring Amenity

6.2 These matters are considered in turn below.

Principle of Development

6.3 NPPF para 69(c) directs local planning authorities to support the development of windfall sites through their decisions, giving great weight to the benefits of suitable sites within existing settlements. In rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities; opportunities should be identified for villages to grow and thrive, especially where it supports local services (para 79).

6.4 Alvescot is identified in the Local Plan table 4b and Policy OS2 as a village suitable for limited development that respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help maintain the vitality of these communities.

6.5 Local Plan Policy H2 permits new dwellings in villages under the following circumstances:

- *Previously developed land within or adjoining the built up area or undeveloped land within the built up area (provided no conflict with other policies in the plan)*
- *On undeveloped land adjoining the built up area where convincing evidence is presented to demonstrate that it is necessary to meet identified housing needs, it is in accordance with the distribution of housing set out in Policy H1 and in accordance with other policies in the plan, including the general principles of Policy OS2.*

6.6 Although modest residential development would be in accordance with the principles of Policies H1 and OS2 which recognises the importance of maintaining the vitality of such communities, there are no housing site allocations for Alvescot, largely due to the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan for the village which Policy OS2 identifies as the mechanism for further allocations in villages.

6.7 In terms of identifying suitable windfall sites within the village, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) recognises that the village is largely linear in form without a strongly defined edge or built up area boundary. The WODC Design Guide describes the village's evolution as 'haphazard', giving an informal and dispersed form whereby farmsteads have been linked by modest infill. The CACA also notes that many of the houses and cottages on the fringes of the village, together with some of the later properties within its core, stand back from the road, while later 20th century development has infilled Lower End between the main road, Park Farm and Rectory Farm – Oakey Close directly to the south of the application site being an example of this.

6.8 While the village benefits from a good range of shops and services (including primary school, village hall, pub and local bus service between Witney and Carterton), its linear form and evolution has the



effect of limiting opportunities for development that are clearly within what is a very loosely defined built up area.

6.9 In the context of national and local policy, support for small-scale development in villages such as Alvescot, our appraisal of the village, and specifically the pattern of development adjoining the site suggests that there is strong justification for a dwelling on the application site that would not set a harmful precedent and represents a logical complement to existing built form and is arguably within the built up area of the village:

- The rear garden of Priory Barn, which forms part of the application site, is within the built up area of the village; owing to its context, the remainder of the site, which is fully enclosed on three sides, does not read as open countryside.
- The proposed new dwelling is extremely well related to existing development and will infill a small gap between existing residential development to both the north and south (and east); the positioning of the dwelling itself reflects a continuation of the existing property boundaries to both north and south, avoiding any protrusion into open countryside.
- The built up area of the village extends even further west into open countryside to the south-west of the application site, where a substantial single dwelling – Avening – to the rear of Oakey Close is accessed via a private drive.
- The curtilage of the Avening property, together with the landscaped open space to the west of the new dwellings at Park Farm to the north of the application site effectively create a soft boundary to the village to the west.
- Specifically to the north, there is a very clear newly defined village boundary between the open countryside and informally landscaped open space, marked by planting of a native copse to define the limits of the landscaped area. The landscaping proposals submitted with this application reflect this and propose a logical continuation.
- The built form of the proposed dwelling itself has been designed to reflect the local vernacular and blend into the existing character of the village both in terms of siting and design, in accordance with Policy OS2.

6.10 In conclusion, both the NPPF and local planning policy give support to suitably small-scale residential development in villages such as Alvescot where it can play a vital role in maintaining the vitality of rural services. The village itself does not benefit from a Neighbourhood Plan or any identified sites for development. The benefits of small-scale development for a village such as Alvescot are therefore dependent on windfall sites, opportunities for which are constrained by the village's linear form and dispersed settlement pattern.

6.11 The proposed development site is surrounded by residential development to the north, south and east and now represents a 'gap' in the settlement edge, which is acknowledged as not being strongly defined. As such, this appraisal suggests that the proposals fall within the soft village boundary and represent a logical complement to the existing pattern of development where they would infill a clearly defined and well contained gap in an otherwise continuously developed settlement line, and in doing so would create an easily defensible yet suitably soft village boundary in this location.

6.12 In conclusion, the proposals do not conflict with the overall development strategy as described in Policy OS2 and H2 which seek to achieve a sustainable pattern of development. The nature of the site itself is an extremely appropriate location for development, whose specific characteristics and context would not set a harmful precedent elsewhere.

6.13 As well as conforming with the overall development strategy described in Policy OS2, Table 4 demonstrates that the proposed development would also be in conformity with the general principles for development listed in OS2; these are explored further in subsequent sections of this Statement.



Table 4: Conformity with General Principles of OS2	
Be of a proportionate and appropriate scale to its context having regard to the potential cumulative impact of development in the locality	A single dwelling is considered to be proportionate and appropriate scale of development for Alvescot, which is identified as suitable for limited development.
Form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and/or the character of the area;	The site is enclosed on three sides by residential development and would form a logical continuation of the existing pattern of development.
Avoid the coalescence and loss of identity of separate settlements;	No coalescence would result from the proposals.
Be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact on the amenity of existing occupants;	The design and siting of the development will avoid any impact in the amenity of existing residents (see para 6.38).
As far as is reasonably possible protect or enhance the local landscape and the setting of the settlement/s;	Significant landscape enhancements are proposed as part of the application (see para 6.20).
Not involve the loss of an area of open space or any other feature that makes an important contribution to the character or appearance of the area;	The development site and its current condition does not make any contribution to the character or appearance of the area; landscaping proposals will enhance the character of the local area by integrating with Park Farm to the north (see para 6.20).
Be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities;	There is a suitable existing vehicular access, with convenient access to local services and facilities by foot/cycle/public transport (see para 6.31).
Not be at risk of flooding or likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;	The site is in flood zone 1 and a surface water drainage strategy will be prepared in due course.
Conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment;	The proposals conserve and enhance the setting of the nearby listed buildings and Conservation Area through careful siting and a materials palette and design that reflects the local vernacular (see paras 6.14 & 6.24)
Safeguard mineral resources;	n/a
In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;	n/a
In the Green Belt, comply with national policies for the Green Belt; and	n/a
Be supported by all necessary infrastructure including that which is needed to enable access to superfast broadband.	All necessary infrastructure connections can be secured.



Design

- 6.14 NPPF para 130 requires developments to add to the overall quality of the area; be visually attractive in terms of architecture, layout and landscaping; and reflect local character and history.
- 6.15 Policy OS2 states that development should be proportionate, appropriate and form a logical complement to the scale, pattern and character of the area while conserving and enhancing the environment. Policy OS4 requires that development delivers high-quality design which respects the historic, architectural and landscape character of the area, contributes to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhances the character and quality of the environment. Policy OS4 further requires development to have specific regard to the West Oxfordshire Design Guide.
- 6.16 The proposed dwelling has been designed to comply with these policy requirements and the West Oxfordshire Design Guide as follows:
- Proposed building design reflects the character of existing built form in the village, which is characterised by simple plan forms, long frontages, narrow gables and steeply pitched roofs
 - The materials palette reflects the local vernacular of local coursed rubble limestone, slate roof and timber casement windows
 - Use of design cues from nearby dwellings, including the oak frame on the western elevation which takes its cue from Priory Barn
 - The wider landscaping scheme takes a simple approach that will integrate the site into its surroundings while delivering significant biodiversity enhancements.



Figure 10: Visuals of proposed dwelling design

- 6.17 NPPF (para 134) directs that significant weight should be given to development that reflects local design policies and guides. The submitted Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawings demonstrate that the design proposals reflect a carefully considered, deliberate and appropriate response to the character of the area which respects and contributes to local



distinctiveness and is in accordance with local Policies OS2 and OS4 and the accompanying West Oxfordshire Design Guide.

Use of natural resources and sustainability

- 6.18 The NPPF acknowledges the need for new development to avoid increased vulnerability to the effects of climate change and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and associated energy consumption (paras 154 & 157). Measures to encourage the prudent use of natural resources and climate change resilience are set out in Local Plan Policies OS3 and OS4.
- 6.19 In accordance with Local Plan Policies OS3 and OS4, the proposed development incorporates the following:
- Meeting and exceeding latest Building Regulations relating to energy and water consumption to maximise energy efficiency.
 - Minimising energy demands by adopting a fabric first approach that incorporates high levels of insulation, air tightness and high performance glazing.
 - Scope within the site for space heating and hot water to be provided using an air source heat pump.
 - Provision of electric vehicle charge point.
 - Sufficient scope within the site to deliver appropriate sustainable drainage systems.

Landscape

- 6.20 NPPF para 74 encourages the protection of valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local Plan policy EH2 states that development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive local landscape features. The general principles of Policy OS2 reflect the above and collectively seek to preserve the local landscape and setting of settlements.
- 6.21 Although it is located on the edge of the village, the development site does not make a significant contribution to the setting of the village or wider character of the area. The site itself has little landscape value owing to its poor visual appearance and its enclosure on three sides by residential development which mean that it does read as part of the open countryside. There are no Public Rights of Way passing in the vicinity of the site, and long views into the site are interrupted by a recently consented equestrian facility (ref: 20/00874/FUL) and mature hedge and tree planting to the west of the site (**Figure 11**).





Figure 11: The site is enclosed on three sides by residential development; the visual appearance of the application site has no landscape value; [last image] views out of the site, looking west

- 6.22 Proposals for the new dwelling reflect the local vernacular which, together with its siting in relation to the established property boundary line to the north and south, will effectively assimilate the proposals within the village and wider landscape setting. The proposed landscaped area to the west of the dwelling reflects the landscaping approach to the north of the site and offers the opportunity to create a more visually attractive and consistent village boundary in this location that softens the transition between the built up area and open countryside beyond.
- 6.23 The development proposals are therefore considered to accord with Local Plan Policies OS2 and EH2 in that they will protect and enhance the character of both the local landscape and village setting.

Historic Environment

- 6.24 Policies OS2, OS4 and EH9 and the West Oxfordshire Design Guide seek to conserve and/or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of the historic environment and its associated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Policies EH10 and EH11 support proposals that conserve and/or enhance the special interest, character, appearance and setting of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings respectively.
- 6.25 Where a proposal affects a heritage asset, the NPPF (para 194) and Local Plan Policy EH9 require applicants to describe the significance of the assets affected, including the contribution of their setting, demonstrating how the proposals have avoided any adverse impact on their significance.
- 6.26 The development site is located ~50m to the south-west/ rear of the Grade II listed Priory Barn. Historic England's listing entry identifies architectural features of the building that are distinctive of barns constructed during the 18th century. The barn faces south and has a strong physical and visual connection to the adjoining property, Park House to the east. Directly to the south of the barn is an area of informal lawn which provides an informal setting to the front of the property. The barn is otherwise enclosed by the newly consented Park Farm residential development to the north and west which directly abuts the property. Views to and from Priory Barn to the application site are interrupted by the intervening garage/outbuilding which was consented in 2016 and provides ancillary accommodation to the property.
- 6.27 The development site is not considered to form part of the setting of Priory Barn and, as such, will not have any impact on the significance of the listed building.



Figure 12: Priory Barn from the south (Park House to the east); view from the application site towards Priory Barn (identified by orange arrow); view from Priory Barn first floor window onto adjoining Park Farm development; Priory Barn google map view (Priory Barn identified by blue circle; approximate Conservation Area boundary in red)

6.28 The development site is located partially within the Alvescot Conservation Area, whose boundary roughly follows the rear garden line of Priory Barn as illustrated in **Figure 12**. The proposed dwelling itself sits outside the Conservation Area and is set back from the public road by ~70m. Views of the site from the public realm are almost entirely obscured (**Figure 13**) and it does not feature in any significant views within the Conservation Area.



Figure 13: View into the site from site access off Lower End



- 6.29 Both the layout, scale and material finish of the proposed dwelling reflects the local vernacular and pattern of development within the Alvescot Conservation Area, which is typified by simple plan forms, constructed from natural stone (limestone), slate tiles and timber framing.
- 6.30 Having regard to the above, the proposed development will conserve the setting of both the listed Priory Barn and Alvescot Conservation Area, while visual improvements to the site and enhanced landscaping and planting proposals are expected to enhance the setting of the village in this location. As such, the proposals comply with Local Plan Policies OS2, OS4, EH9, EH10 and EH11 and NPPF section 16.

Transport

- 6.31 Both NPPF para 110 and Local Plan policies T1 and T3 encourage the location of new development where it can benefit from convenient access to services and facilities and where there are opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport. On the basis of its size and range of local facilities, Alvescot village has been identified as suitable for small-scale development, and the village benefits from a regular bus service between Carterton and Witney (no.19, ~8 services per day).
- 6.32 The development site benefits from an existing and suitable access from Lower End and sufficient space within the site has been provided for car parking in accordance with Local Plan Policy T4 and the County Council's adopted standards which require 2 parking spaces to be provided for a 4-bedroom dwelling.
- 6.33 In accordance with the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2021) and Policy EVI 8, the proposals will include one Electric Vehicle charging point.

Ecology

- 6.34 Policy EH3 echoes NPPF para 174 (a & d) and requires new development to protect and achieve a net gain in biodiversity. As confirmed by Section 2, the site does not contain, nor is it within notable proximity of any ecological designations and its ecological value has been assessed as site-level only.
- 6.35 This application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Lockhart Garratt which makes several recommendations for biodiversity enhancement at Section 10.
- 6.36 In accordance with Local Plan Policy EH3, a preliminary Biodiversity Net Gain assessment of the development proposals has found that the proposals would deliver a significant net gain, as outlined in the accompanying letter.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.37 Local Plan policy EH7 directs development to areas of lowest flood risk and requires proposals to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage run-off and support water quality. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, thereby avoiding flood risk. A drawing showing how the site could connect into the existing foul drainage system has been provided with the application. Options for surface water drainage systems have been considered as part of the site design and layout. There is sufficient scope within the site to incorporate SUDS, and it is anticipated that a surface water drainage strategy will be conditioned as part of planning consent.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.38 Policy OS2 expects development to be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact on the amenity of existing occupants. The layout of the proposed new dwelling reflects the orientation of existing dwellings to the north and south. The north and south facing elevations of the new dwelling will have a minimal amount of obscure glazing to prevent direct overlooking to neighbouring properties at Oakey Close (no.9) and Park Farm. Windows on the eastern elevation of the property have been positioned to avoid direct overlooking of no.10 Oakey Close, with rooflights proposed on the southern-most part of the property; intervening garden and landscaping space between the



proposed new dwelling and no.10 Oakey Close measures ~26m which is sufficient to protect the amenity and privacy of existing properties.

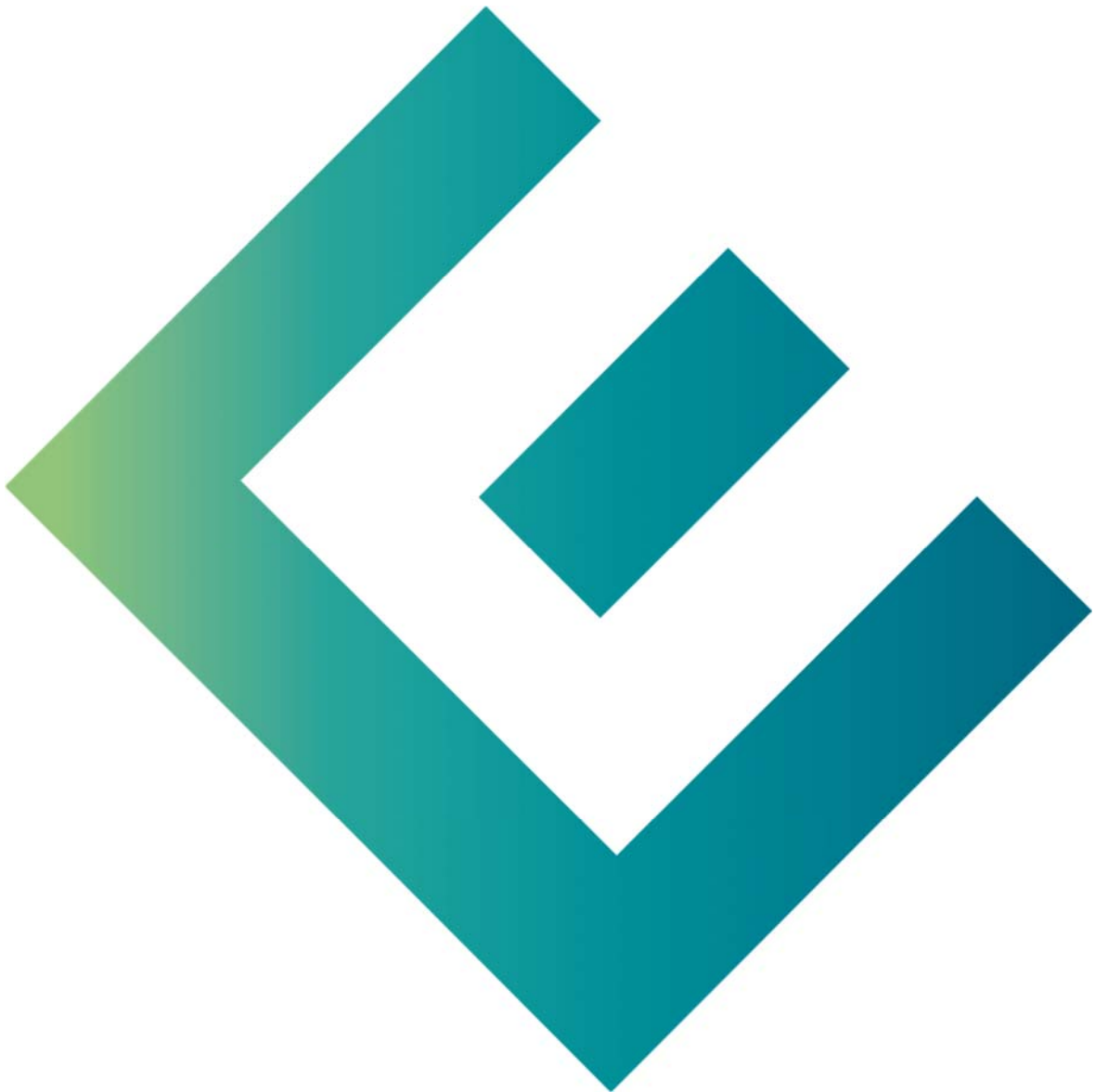
6.39 The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy OS2.



7 Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application for *the erection of a single dwelling and garage with associated access, parking and landscaping*, at Priory Barn, Alvescot.
- 7.2 There is both local and national policy support for residential development in villages such as Alvescot where modest development proposals can help to maintain the vitality of local communities as recognised in the District's development strategy which is set out in Local Plan Policies OS2 and H2. The development site itself represents a unique opportunity for a suitably small-scale residential development that would form a logical complement to the existing pattern of development in the village, being already enclosed by residential development to the north, south and east.
- 7.3 In accordance with Policies OS2 and OS4, the design and siting of the proposed dwelling reflect the pattern and character of development in the village, taking design cues from the traditional building forms and palette of local materials that characterise the Alvescot Conservation Area. The setting of the Conservation Area and nearby grade II listed buildings have also been carefully considered in the design and siting of the new dwelling, which will conserve the setting of these assets in accordance with local Policies EH9, EH10 and EH11.
- 7.4 As required by Policy OS2, the layout and design of the proposed dwelling has also considered potential impacts on neighbouring properties at Park Farm and Oakey Close, whose privacy and residential amenity will be protected by the orientation and location of the dwelling, positioning of windows to avoid overlooking, landscaping and garden space and associated and separation distances between properties.
- 7.5 Consideration has been given to the development's setting and wider landscape context, which will be significantly enhanced by landscaping proposals that include wildflower planting, orchard trees and native copse planting which will successfully integrate the site into its wider context while enhancing the local landscape setting of Alvescot village in accordance with Policy EH2. These proposals will also deliver a considerable biodiversity net gain as required by Policy EH3.
- 7.6 The proposals also offer scope to achieve significant energy and resource efficiency by minimising both energy demand and loss and creating opportunities within the site for renewable energy, resource efficiency and sustainable drainage systems, as required by Policies OS3 and OS4. There are also opportunities to promote sustainable travel choices by providing an EV charging point at the property and facilitating convenient access to local services and facilities by foot, cycle and public transport in accordance with Policies T1 and T3.
- 7.7 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Overall, the proposals are considered to accord with the policy principles and development strategy of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, and in the absence of any material considerations to the contrary, it is respectfully requested that planning consent is granted without delay.

Appendices



Appendix 1. Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 8 - Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) **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 and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) **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
- c) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 10 - So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).

Paragraph 11 - Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making** this means that:

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
 - ii. 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.

For **decision-taking** this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) 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 this 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 this Framework taken as a whole.

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 38 – Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Paragraph 69 – Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:

- a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;
- b) use tools such as area-wide design assessments and Local Development Orders to help bring small and medium sized sites forward;
- c) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes; and
- d) work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.

Paragraph 79 – To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Paragraph 110 – In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Paragraph 111 – Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 130 – Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) 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; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Paragraph 134 – Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Paragraph 154 – New development should be planned for in ways that:

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and

- b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.

Paragraph 157 – In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:

- a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and
- b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraph 174 – Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Paragraph 194 – 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Paragraph 195 – Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 197 – In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 199 – When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

Policy OS1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) – Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise- taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy OS2 (Locating development in the right places) – The villages are suitable for limited development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the vitality of these communities. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met. Further allocations may be made through Neighbourhood Plans.

Proposals for residential development will be considered in accordance with Policy H2 of this Local Plan.

Policy OS3 (Prudent use of natural resources) – All development proposals (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing building stock) will be required to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources, including:

- making the most efficient use of land and buildings, whilst having regard to the character of the locality

- delivering development that seeks to minimise the need to travel
- minimising use of non-renewable resources, including land and energy, and maximising opportunities for travel by sustainable means
- minimising their impact on the soil resource*
- minimising energy demands and energy loss through design, layout, orientation, landscaping, materials and the use of technology;
- minimising summer solar gain, maximising passive winter solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and reuse of materials;
- maximising resource efficiency, including water. All new residential development will be expected to achieve the optional building regulations requirement for water efficiency of 110 litres/person/day.
- minimising risk of flooding;
- making use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems; • using recycled and energy efficient materials;
- minimising waste and making adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste; and causing no deterioration and, where possible, achieving improvements in water or air quality

* Guidance includes the 2011 DEFRA publication: Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites

Policy OS4 (High quality design) – 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:

- demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced; and
- not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; and
- demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and the use of water conservation and management measures; and
- 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; and
- enhance local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, including the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space commensurate with the scale and type of development, with play space where appropriate.

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 are key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.

Policy H2 (Delivery of new homes) – New dwellings will be permitted at the main service centres, rural service centres and villages in the following circumstances:

- On sites that have been allocated for housing development within a Local Plan or relevant neighbourhood plan;
- On previously developed land within or adjoining the built up area provided the loss of any existing use would not conflict with other plan policies and the proposal complies with the general principles set out in Policy OS2 and any other relevant policies in this plan;
- On undeveloped land within the built up area provided that the proposal is in accordance with the other policies in the plan and in particular the general principles in Policy OS2.
- On undeveloped land adjoining the built up area where convincing evidence is presented to demonstrate that it is necessary to meet identified housing needs, it is in accordance with the distribution of housing set out in Policy H1 and is in accordance with other policies in the plan in particular the general principles in Policy OS2.

Policy T1 (Sustainable transport) – Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised, due to opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, particularly where this would help to reduce traffic congestion on the routes around Oxford and the Air Quality Management Areas at Witney and Chipping Norton.

In addition to this;

- All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, ensure the safe movement of vehicles and minimise the impact of parked and moving vehicles on local residents, business and the environment
- To promote increased home working and telecommuting, all new residential and commercial developments will be required to make provision for superfast broadband.
- Mixed-use developments will be supported in principle in accessible, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant local plan policies.

Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or in combination with other proposals will be required to include a Transport Assessment (TA), and a travel plan, in accordance with County Council requirements.

Policy T3 (Public transport, walking and cycling) – All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Where opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are more limited, other measures will be sought to help reduce car use as appropriate (e.g. measures to promote home working or the opportunity for linked trips e.g. through mixed-use development).

New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles with particular regard to be given to safe and convenient routes to school.

Development that fails to make adequate provision of measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport will not be favourably considered.

West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to work in partnership with the highway authority, developers, local councils, bus and rail operators and other voluntary and community sector organisations, to:

- Increase the use of bus, rail and community transport through the provision of improved services, facilities and information including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan (Connecting Oxfordshire) and IDP; and
- Provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, users of public and community transport including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and IDP.

Policy T4 (Parking provision) – The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality.

Parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with the County Council's adopted parking standards and should be sufficient to meet increasing levels of car ownership.

Proposals for new off street public car parking areas will be supported in accessible locations where they would help to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, where they would support visitor and tourist facilities and attractions or where the local environment is being seriously damaged by on-street parking and alternative parking provision is essential.

Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or equivalent financial contributions.

Policy EH2 (Landscape character) – The quality, character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's natural environment, including its landscape, cultural and historic value, tranquillity, geology, countryside, soil and biodiversity, will be conserved and enhanced.

New development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive natural and man-made features of the local landscape, including individual or groups of features and their settings, such as stone walls, trees, hedges, woodlands, rivers, streams and ponds. Conditions may be imposed on development proposals to ensure every opportunity is made to retain such features and ensure their long-term survival through appropriate management and restoration.

Proposals which would result in the loss of features, important for their visual, amenity, or historic value will not be permitted unless the loss can be justified by appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures which can be secured to the satisfaction of the Council.

Proposed development should avoid causing pollution, especially noise and light, which has an adverse impact upon landscape character and should incorporate measures to maintain or improve the existing level of tranquillity and dark-sky quality, reversing existing pollution where possible.

Special attention and protection will be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Wychwood Project Area.

Policy EH3 (Biodiversity and geodiversity) – The biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity and minimise impacts on geodiversity, including by:

- giving sites and species of international nature conservation importance and nationally important sites of special scientific interest the highest level of protection from any development that will have an adverse impact;
- requiring a Habitats Regulations Assessment to be undertaken of any development proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse effect, either alone or in combination, on the Oxford Meadows SAC, particularly in relation to air quality and nitrogen oxide emissions and deposition; • protecting and mitigating for impacts on priority habitats, protected species and priority species, both for their importance individually and as part of a wider network;
- avoiding loss, deterioration or harm to locally important wildlife and geological sites and sites supporting irreplaceable habitats (including ancient woodland, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites and aged or veteran trees), UK priority habitats and priority species, except in exceptional circumstances where the importance of the development significantly and demonstrably outweighs the harm and the harm can be mitigated through appropriate measures and a net gain in biodiversity is secured;
- ensuring development works towards achieving the aims and objectives of the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs);
- promoting the conservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, particularly within the CTAs and NIAs;
- taking all opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site or the locality, especially where this will help deliver networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure and UK priority habitats and species targets and meet the aims of CTAs;
- ensuring that all applications that might adversely affect biodiversity are accompanied by adequate ecological survey information in accordance with BS 42020:2013 unless alternative approaches are agreed as being appropriate with the District Council's ecologist;
- all major and minor applications demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity where possible. For major applications this should be demonstrated in a quantifiable way through the use of a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (BIAC) based on that described in the DEFRA Biodiversity Offsetting guidance or a suitably amended version. For minor applications a BIAC will not usually be required but might be requested at the Council's discretion;
- all development incorporating biodiversity enhancement features.

All developments will be expected to provide towards the provision of necessary enhancements in areas of biodiversity importance.

Policy EH7 (Flood Risk) – Flood risk will be managed using the sequential, risk-based approach, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, of avoiding flood risk to people and property where possible and managing any residual risk (taking account of the impacts of climate change).

In assessing proposals for development:

- the Sequential Test and, if necessary, the Exception Test will be applied;

- all sources of flooding (including sewer flooding and surface water flooding) will need to be addressed and measures to manage or reduce their impacts, onsite and elsewhere, incorporated into the development proposal;
- appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures should be used;
- sustainable drainage systems to manage run-off and support improvements in water quality and pressures on sewer infrastructure will be integrated into the site design, maximising their habitat value and ensuring their long term maintenance;
- a site-specific flood risk assessment will be required for all proposals of 1ha or more and for any proposal in Flood Zone 2 and 3 and Critical Drainage Areas;
- only water compatible uses and essential infrastructure will be allowed in a functional flood plain (Flood Zone 3b);
- land required for flood management will be safeguarded from development and, where applicable, managed as part of the green infrastructure network, including maximising its biodiversity value

Policy EH9 (Historic Environment) – All development proposals should conserve and/ or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire’s historic environment, including the significance of the District’s heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation, in accordance with national legislation, policy and guidance for the historic environment.

In determining applications, great weight and importance will be given to conserving and/or enhancing the significance of designated heritage assets, including:

- the special architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings, with regard to their character, fabric and their settings;
- the special architectural and historic interest, character and/or appearance of the District’s Conservation Areas and their settings, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historic significance;
- the special archaeological and historic interest of nationally important monuments (whether Scheduled or not), both with regard to their fabric and their settings;
- the special cultural, architectural and historic interest of Registered Parks and Gardens, including the contribution their surroundings make to their physical, visual and historical significance.

Significant weight will also be given to the local and regional value of non-designated heritage assets, including non-listed vernacular buildings (such as traditional agricultural buildings, chapels and mills), together with archaeological monuments that make a significant contribution to the District’s historic environment.

All applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, heritage assets will be expected to:

- a) use appropriate expertise to describe the significance of the assets, their setting and historic landscape context of the application site, at a level of detail proportionate to the historic significance of the asset or area, using recognised methodologies and, if necessary, original

survey. This shall be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's historic, architectural and archaeological features, significance and character;

- b) demonstrate that the proposal would, in order of preference:
- avoid adverse impacts on the significance of the asset(s) (including those arising from changes to their settings) and, wherever possible, enhance or better reveal the significance of the asset(s);
 - minimise any unavoidable and justified (by the public benefits that would accrue from the proposed development – see below) adverse impacts and mitigate those impacts in a manner proportionate to the significance of the asset(s) and the nature and level of the impact, investigate and record changes to or loss of physical fabric, features, objects or other remains and make the results publicly available.
- c) demonstrate that any new development that would result in the unavoidable and justified loss of all or part of a heritage asset would proceed within a reasonable and agreed timetable that makes allowance for all necessary safeguarding and recording of fabric and other remains, including contingencies for unexpected discoveries.

Designated assets

Proposals which would harm the significance of a designated asset will not be approved, unless there is a clear and convincing justification in the form of substantive tangible public benefits that clearly and convincingly outweigh the harm, using the balancing principles set out in national policy and guidance.

Non-designated heritage assets

When considering proposals that affect, directly or indirectly, the significance of non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be made having regard to:

- the scale of any harm or loss;
- the significance of the heritage asset; and
- the public benefits of the development. If it is determined through the relevant evidence that currently non-designated buildings, structures, historic landscapes or archaeology are of national significance, those elements of this policy for designated heritage assets will apply.

Policy EH10 (Conservation Areas) – 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, specifically provided that:

- the location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development conserves or enhances the special historic or architectural interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- the development conserves or enhances the setting of the Conservation Area and is not detrimental to views within, into or out of the Area;
- the proposals are sympathetic to the original curtilage and pattern of development and to important green spaces, such as paddocks, greens and gardens, and other gaps or spaces

between buildings and the historic street pattern which make a positive contribution to the character in the Conservation Area;

- the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development are compatible with the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and
- there would be no loss of, or harm to, any feature that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area, unless the development would make an equal or greater contribution.

Applications for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- the building detracts from or does not make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area; or
- the building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use; and
- any proposed replacement building makes an equal or greater contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of buildings that make a positive contribution to the special interest, character and appearance of a Conservation Area will be encouraged, thereby preventing harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area.

Policy EH11 (Listed Buildings) – Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building, will be permitted where it can be shown to:

- conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the building's fabric, detailed features, appearance or character and setting;
- respect the building's historic curtilage or context or its value within a group and/or its setting, including its historic landscape or townscape context; and
- retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic both to the Listed Building and its setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets in terms of siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design and form.

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Chapter 5 (Settlement Type) – Chapter 5 identifies the settlement type, character and pattern of all settlements across West Oxfordshire. This chapter is strongly connected to Chapter 11 outlined below.

Alvescot is said to have a linear and dispersed settlement pattern. Linear settlements have a distinctive ribbon form and develop along both main roads and the smaller side roads that branch off these routes. Development in linear settlements may only be a single house deep on each side thereby allowing significant views into the landscape beyond. Dispersed settlements are characteristic of West Oxfordshire, with original manors or separate farm groups forming key but distinct elements. Around and between these groups accumulated loose patterns of cottages and scattered houses. Open land is also a

key component within dispersed settlements. Later infill can give a previously dispersed settlement a less gappy, and more nucleated form, and result in loss of character.

Alvescot is within a low-lying/floodplain settlement location. The low-lying or floodplain settlements are generally found in the Thames Vale character area (like Alvescot). This landscape is open, expansive and essentially flat, and the settlements here lie mainly between the 60 and 75 metre contours. Natural constraints on development include rivers and manmade water courses, and the associated river floodplains (rather than factors relating to landform, such as steep gradients).

Chapter 6 (Conservation Areas) – Chapter 6 relates to development within a Conservation Area. This ensures any potential development will preserve and enhance the Conservation Area. This chapter emphasises the need to focus on the design, scale and massing, and use of materials, so that the existing character of the area is not harmed.

Chapter 8 (Stonework) – Chapter 8 outlines the importance of using traditional and local materials, so the existing character is kept in appearance. The recommended materials for traditional walling include distinctive pale or buff-coloured oolitic limestone. The alternative dry stone walls vary in height, and may be topped by one of several coped finishes. The wall should correspond in its appearance (profile and stonework) with adjacent and local patterns of walling. New stone should be sourced from reclamation yards or local quarries, and match in its size, colour, texture and thickness the existing adjacent or nearby walling.

Chapter 9 (Roofs and Roofing Materials) – Chapter 9 details the roofs of West Oxfordshire's traditional buildings. Roof pitches tend to be fairly steep (45 degrees or more) and rarely less than 40 degrees. Two traditional roofing materials dominate: natural limestone stone slate and Welsh (blue) slate. Natural limestone stone slate is locally distinctive and plays a defining role in the built character of the district. Stone slates, as well as being significant for their architectural and historical interest, are also significant in terms of the district's cultural heritage. A number of modern roofing materials are available, most noticeably artificial stone slates which are designed to replicate traditional local materials.

Chapter 10 (Windows and Doors) – Chapter 10 details the contribution to the character and appearance of buildings that windows, and doors make. Traditional windows found in the district include casement windows, sash windows, stone mullion windows and dormer windows. In modern buildings, it is common for windows to be double-glazing for heat and sound insulation. It is found where double-glazing is acceptable, the closer the double-glazed window accords visually with a traditional single-glazed window, the better. The traditional material for doors, whether external or internal, is timber. In modern version of historic doors for vernacular houses, there is a solid upright planked or boarded door, with a small square window in the upper half of the door.

Chapter 11 (New Development and Context) – Chapter 11 concentrates on proposals for new development, and in particular new residential development, setting out the processes and design considerations in line with the Council's desires.

The chapter sets out that the usual three-part process below that is expected for residential schemes:

1. Initial pre-application inquiry / Pre-application advice
2. If deemed acceptable in principle, a comprehensive analysis of the site and context to be carried out
3. Submission of a planning application

The document sets out all the factors with regards to context which are to be considered and addressed in the pre-application enquiry. For example, planning policy, planning history, sustainability, highways, ecology and the heritage impacts such as listed buildings or Conservation Areas. The document also sets

out the potential documents which could be required in a planning application submission, such as a Design and Access Statement, and what should be included within it.

It is fundamentally important that the development has a strong and distinctive character to fit in with the setting of the built environment natural features such as trees and topography.

In the case of a site within or immediately adjoining a settlement with a distinctive established character, it may be most appropriate to develop a scheme that echoes and builds sympathetically upon distinctive aspects and features of that settlement, in order to create a place whose character meaningfully relates to that of its context.

In the case of edge-of-settlement or more removed sites, however, or where the adjoining settlement does not have a distinctive established character, there may be greater scope for the creation of a place with a new and strongly defined character and identity of its own.

In addition to the above, the document gives advice regarding biodiversity, parking, landscaping, strategic development areas and design codes.

Chapter 12 (Sustainable Building Design) – Chapter 12 outlines how sustainable building design will enable adaptation to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The document explains what a sustainable building is and what the sustainable building design considerations are for the design process: site and layout, buildings and building materials.

The site and layout section cover the following topics: Location and setting; Energy saving layout design; Sustainable Landscapes and Open Space; a landscape checklist; Biodiversity; Surface water and Sustainable Drainage Systems; Sustainable energy; and Waste and recycling.

The building section cover the following materials: Building aspect; Passive Solar Design; Thermal capacity and insulation; Solar Panels; Convection Ventilation; Re-use of conversion of existing buildings; Timber; Local materials; Manufactured materials and pollution; Re-use of materials; Water services; and Wind and rain.

Alvescot Conservation Area Character Appraisal / Preservation and Enhancement document

7.8 The CACA describes the main aspects of character or appearance which contribute to Alvescot. The Preservation and Enhancement document accompanies this Character Appraisal, describing strategies for guidance on the design of new buildings within the Conservation Area.

Character Appraisal

7.9 Alvescot comprises both linear and dispersed elements and has a relative unspoilt semi-rural setting in the expanse of the Bampton Vale.

7.10 Alvescot has a loose-knit character and does not possess a strongly defined edge.

Preservation and Enhancement

7.11 The vernacular houses and cottages of Alvescot are typically long and low with steeply-pitched roofs (though a number of taller two-and-a-half storey houses with dormers at attic level can be seen). Simple plan forms, two- and three-bay ranges and timber casement or sash windows predominate.

- 7.12 Any new buildings must be well designed in themselves and must be sympathetic to the established character of the area. They should respect the form, setting and scale of the adjoining and surrounding buildings. Materials for new building works should be sympathetic to those prevailing in the area. In particularly prominent or sensitive sites natural stone will usually be the most appropriate material.
- 7.13 Most of the houses and cottages are constructed from the local pale oolitic limestone (used in coursed rubble form) and are topped with stone slate or Welsh slate roofs. The building materials in Alvescot are set out in the table below:

Roofs	Walls
Stone Slate	Oolitic limestone in very narrow beds
Welsh Slate	Cornbrash limestone for field and boundary walling, laid in very narrow beds
Clay tiles	Timber framing
	Lime render on infill panels
	Weatherboarding of elm, oak or chestnut; left natural to bleach silver grey or stained or painted black.