

# PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Householder planning application: Reconstruction of existing barn which has fallen into disrepair, to provide outbuilding in the curtilage of a residential dwelling

December 2022

The Folly, May  
Hill Longhope  
GL17 0NP

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## INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared on behalf of Mrs Mary Torill Freeman in support of a planning application to reconstruct an existing barn which has recently fallen into disrepair.

The building is located in the grounds of the Folly, Folly lane, May Hill, Gloucestershire GL17 0NP.

The renewed building will provide an additional indoor space for the benefit of the Folly, which currently has no outbuildings or storage areas since the collapse of the original barn building.

The building falls entirely within the residential curtilage of the Folly and will not require a change to the vehicular access.

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. The development plan here consists of the Forest of Dean Core Strategy 2012 and the Forest of Dean Allocations Plan adopted in June 2018.

There is no "made" Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Taynton, which the site falls within.

The Council's supplementary planning documents residential design guide and extensions and alterations are also material considerations.

This application also refers to the National Planning policy (NPPF), the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at Paragraph 11, and the planning practice guidance.

This statement needs to be read alongside the following documentation:

- Application forms
- Elevation plans
- Site plan
- Vegetation map (trees and hedges)
- Location plan
- Planning statement

This statement goes on to consider the proposal in the context of the site and its character, and the national and local planning policies, together with other material considerations.

## THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The Folly is a traditional, stone, two-storey cottage located in the upper heights of May Hill. It is accessed off a track off Folly lane, which is a loop road which joins Glasshouse Hill Rd on both ends, which in turn joins the A40.

The cottage is accessed via a gravel driveway and is not visible from the road. The barn site is visible from the road; however, this is a short lane which only provides vehicular access to two other dwellings (the Nook and Sheepscote) and experiences very little vehicular traffic. The barns' location between this public road (albeit a small track) and the dwelling's frontage means it does not fall within the limits of permitted development, and planning permission must be sought from the local authority to reconstruct the barn which has fallen into disrepair.

The Folly lies within an aggregation of residential dwellings on different lot sizes, which collectively comprise the hamlet of May Hill village. The main focal points of May Hill village are the May Hill village hall- approximately 5 minutes' walk from the site, and the Glasshouse Inn, which is located 0.6 miles from the site, and approximately 15 minutes' walk from the site. The iconic summit of May Hill is located approx. 1 mile from the site and can be accessed directly from the Folly via a public footpath.

May Hill is a friendly, community oriented, picturesque hamlet surrounded by woodlands and open countryside located in the northern part of the Forest of Dean district.

Folly lane joins Glasshouse Hill, which leads to the village of Huntley via the A40 to the south of the site, over approximately 3 miles. To the north, Glasshouse Hill continues onto the market town of Newent, via the village of Clifford's Mesne over approximately 4.2 miles. The site is located 11.4 miles from the city of Gloucester.



Figure 1: Google Earth screen shot with Folly marked in Blue and barn marked in red.

This aerial image shows the location of the Folly (marked in blue), and the existing barn (marked in red) in relation to the driveway access off Folly Lane. The barn building is set back a distance of around 6m from the unnamed bitumen track which adjoins the site's frontage.

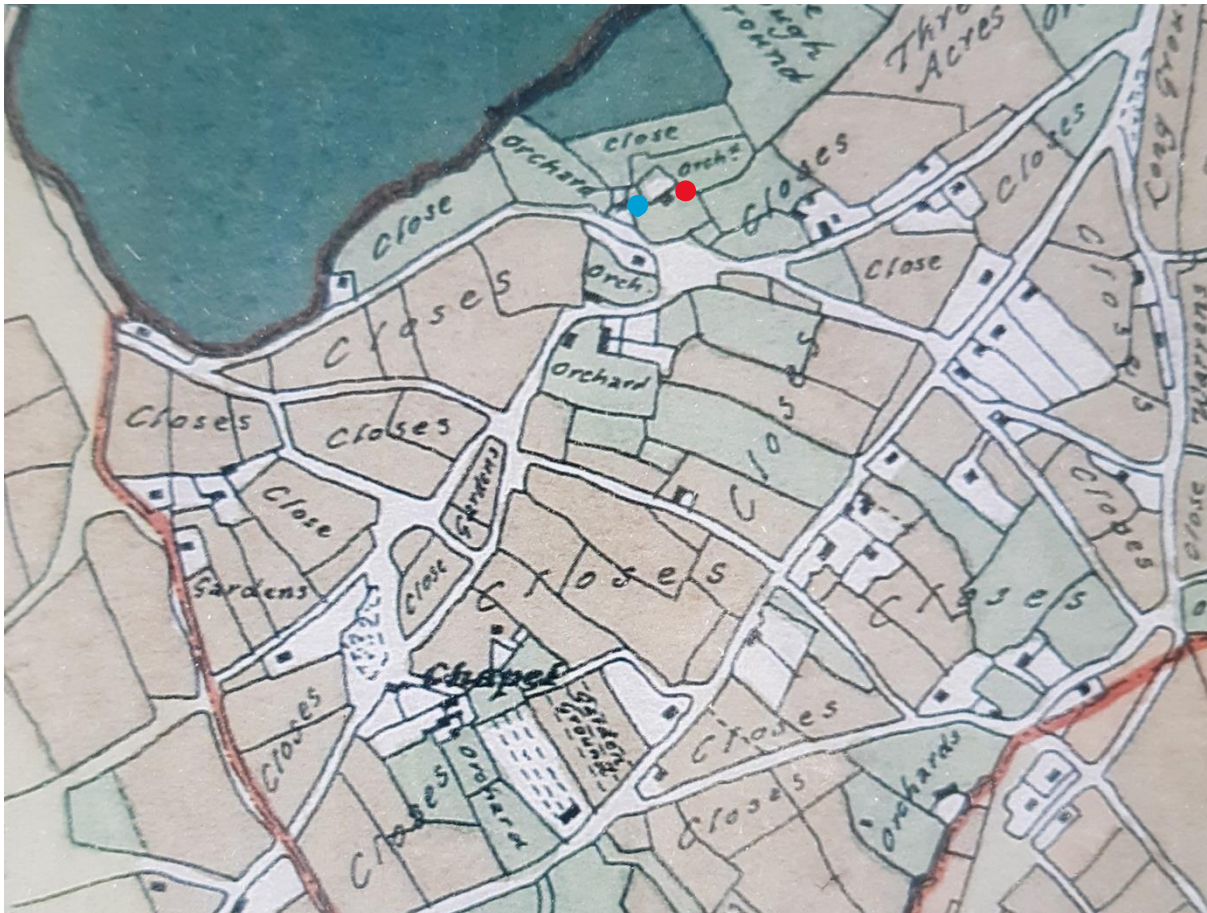
The site is surrounded on three sides by Upper Newent woods. These woods are designated as ancient woodlands, as they have been continually wooded since 1600. They are owned by Mrs Torill Freeman and managed by her son Piers Freeman who also resides at the Folly.

## SITE HISTORY

The whole site (including the barn and the Folly) is captured in the ancient woodland mapping designation. However, historical maps illustrates that this site and its curtilage should not qualify for this designation, although the adjoining woodlands do.

This is because the ancient woodland designation only applies to “woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before in England, Wales and Northern Ireland”. As per the historical maps below, it is clear to see that the Folly was in fact a traditional farmhouse, surrounded by traditional “enclosures” at least as far back as 1840, and probably a lot longer still. There were fields directly to the north and south of the homestead were cleared and cultivated land with associated infrastructure. The very presence of the original barn which is subject of this application further illustrates that the land in the immediate vicinity of the Folly was not woodland but cleared and cultivated land.

This aligns with the site name “The Folly” which means Farmhouse in the traditional dialect of old Gloucestershire. Its building’s earliest reference in tithe maps is 1799, and it is assumed that it was one of the original buildings of the area, and Folly lane was named after it. The Folly is a common house name in Gloucestershire, and will generally refer to a traditional farmhouse, as opposed to the more well-known modern English meaning of an extravagant building constructed primarily for decoration.



*Figure 2: Historical map circa 1840 of May Hill village, with Folly site marked in red and original barn marked in blue. At this stage both buildings are located within cultivated enclosures. The colours indicate that these lots were used for orchards and pastures, and the woodlands lay beyond them (illustrated by the dark green area).*

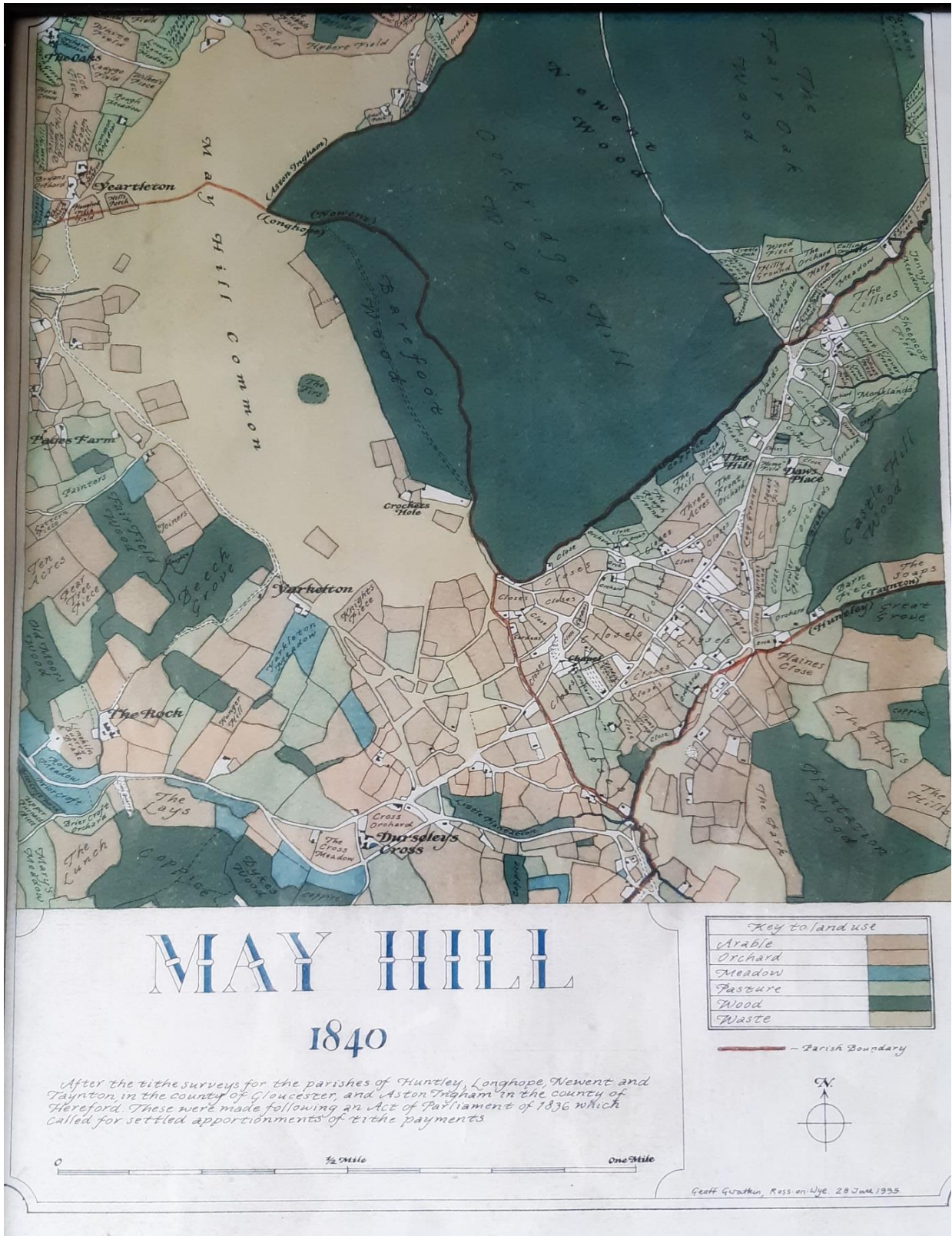


Figure 3: Historical map of May Hill (1840) in full form.

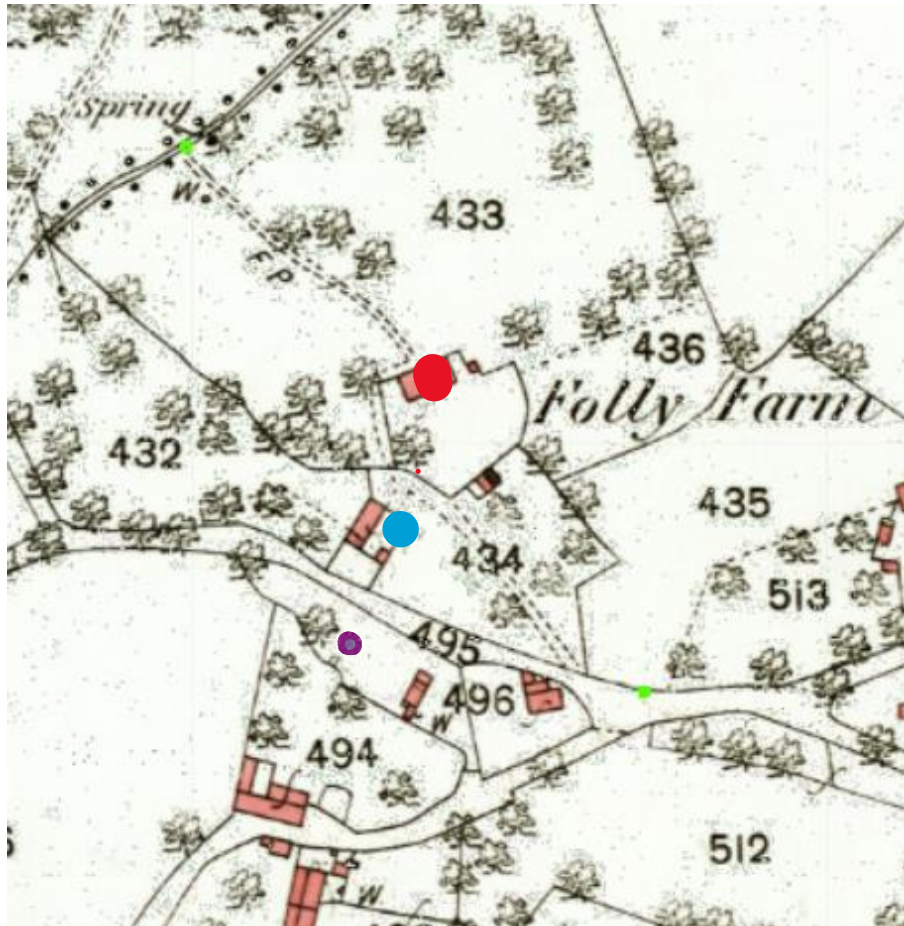


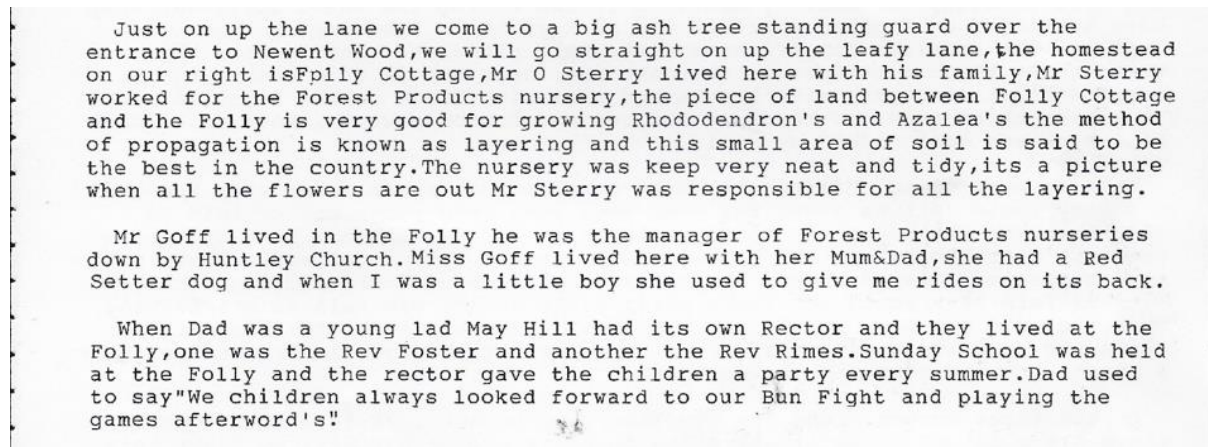
Figure 4: 1898-1939 Ordnance Survey map of the site, with blue dot over the Folly and red dot over the barn. The current driveway is in the same place (illustrated by the dash lines from the intersection).



Figure 5: Gloucestershire Tithe map of the site (1840), with blue dot over the Folly and red dot over the Barn.



There are several early accounts of the Folly in historical memoirs. This includes the following passage by life-long May Hill local resident Mr Joe Watkins, who wrote this account shortly before his death in 19--. The Folly cottage refers to the dwelling now known as Sheepscode.



*Figure 6: Extract from Joe Watkins memoirs of his life on May Hill*

It is said by long standing local people, that while the Folly was lived in by the Rectors, that the original barn was used to teach local children at Sunday school, before the current May Hill village hall was built in 1923.

In more recent times up until the around 1988, the Folly grounds were used as a plant nursery, with seed stock raised in the Folly barn. The grounds around the Folly were used to grow rhododendrons and azaleas (as per the extract above) and replanted for sale.

After this, the Folly was briefly used as a holiday let, before becoming a private rental. Over this period the original barn was used for storage and as a garage space for the benefit of the Folly.

The barn was used for the benefit of storage for the Folly until 2018. Since then, the barn building has fallen into disrepair. A sycamore seedling germinated at the base of the building and was not removed until it had become a young tree. The tree roots went unchecked for many years, and then undermined the foundations, causing the main beam and roof structure to begin to collapse. This is evident in these photos, taken in 2018.



*Figure 7: The Folly barn in 2018, with the sycamore tree growing in front which ultimately undermined the whole building.*

The roof was further compromised by a heavy downfall of snow in 2018 which put weight on the roof. After this, the roof tiles were removed to remove weight stress on the collapsing roof structure, in a hope to preserve the building's structure.



*Figure 8: Original stonework & roof tiles of the Folly barn, before its partial collapse.*

Despite these efforts, in 2020 the original barn partially collapsed overnight, and now only some of its original walls remain.

This development proposal seeks to restore the barn to its original form and function as an outbuilding for the Folly. This proposal is to maintain its original scale and form and use similar materials to the building before its collapse.



*Figure 9: The remains of the original barn after its roof structure and some of its walls collapsed in 2020.*



*Figure 10: View down the Folly driveway, with the remains of the original barn on the right (2022)*



*Figure 11: After the night of the collapse, the roof structure lies across the ground.*



*Figure 12: After the night of the collapse, the barn's one remaining complete wall.*



*Figure 13: After the night of the collapse, this wall had been intact the day before this photo*

However, two walls remain intact, as does the small, walled courtyard in front of it, as pictured below (with some of the remaining terracotta pots from its days as a nursery). This courtyard will be retained in its original form in the renewal of the Folly barn.



*Figure 11: Walled courtyard directly in front of the original barn.*

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

It is proposed to undertake the reconstruction of the original barn. This would remain as single storey, and occupy the same footprint, scale and appearance of the existing barn but with new walls and a roof added.

For the avoidance of doubt, the proposals fall entirely within the residential curtilage of the Folly and do not require a change to the existing vehicular or pedestrian accesses. Parking will continue to take place directly across the driveway head from the barn, in a double bay car park.

The building will be used for storage, as well as provide additional living space for the benefit of the residents of the Folly.

As far is practical, the fabric of the existing stone barn will be integrated into the design of the reconstructed building. However, much of the remaining original walls may be structurally unsound and unsafe. The new building will reference the original building in many design elements, including scale, shape and size. Where possible, we will collect and reuse the original stone to clad the building. Remaining walls will be a combination of metal and timber cladding.

The new building will occupy the same building footprint as the original. The roof height and pitch will also be similar, except that instead of the original ceramic roof tiles, there will now be a metal roof with three small Velux windows on the back elevation, to maximise natural light penetration into the building's interior.

The interior of the building will be open plan. The open floor plan will enable the space to be versatile, and used for storage and additional living space, such as a studio as well as possibly accommodate a small home office in one corner of the building.

The doors will be in the same positions as the original barn, with one single door from the north-western elevation, which adjoins the driveway and car parking areas. On the opposite side of the barn, there will be double door which leads to an existing walled courtyard garden which was part of the original barn.

All windows will be on the back elevation of the barn (south-eastern side) looking onto the walled garden. This does not overlook any neighbouring property and will ensure the privacy of adjoining residents.

The site is screened from the road by an existing hedgerow and some trees. It was not a highly visible building originally and will continue to be modest in its visual impact. This vegetation will be retained as far as practical in the building stage.

The site does not directly share a boundary with a neighbouring property. The two closest residences are the Nook and Honey patch cottage, which are across the small lane from the site. As the building will be a replica of an existing barn which stood on the site up until 2020, it is considered that this development will have zero to negligible impacts on the surrounding area and neighbouring properties.

The colours of the new barn have been carefully selected, to be discrete and blend with the surrounding woodland environment. The stone used to build the original barn would have been quarried locally, and we will clad the reconstructed barn with the same material where possible or matched to be as close as possible.

Therefore, the new roof will be muted grey tones, and walls will be forest green.

The principal design considerations have been to protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, retain the character of site and existing barn, safeguard visual amenity, and not compromise the visual setting of the Folly.

To these ends, external variations on the barns original form have been kept to a minimum and no windows have been inserted in the south-east, north-east and north-west or elevations.

The re-building of the Folly barn will retain the character of the site and its surrounds, by using the same scale and shape as the original building before it collapsed in 2020.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework

As a starting point, it is relevant to note that the NPPF still confirms at Paragraphs 2 and 47 that:

*“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions”.*

Paragraph 7 confirms that:

*“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

Paragraph 10 of the Revised NPPF affirms, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which paragraph 11 explains that for decision-taking 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.”*

### Forest of Dean District Council Core Strategy (2012)

Insofar as the Forest of Dean Core Strategy is concerned, the most relevant policies in our view are:

- CSP1 Design, environmental protection and enhancement (strategic objective: providing quality environments)

This policy states (6.2):

*“Minor developments may not require anything other than a very short statement when they are proposed but need to be considered because of their potential impact on their localities. Rural areas can be especially sensitive to small changes such as the redevelopment of dwellings or the conversion of rural buildings. Particular care will be taken to ensure that such proposals do not adversely affect the traditional, settled appearance of the many small settlements and of the countryside”.*

### Forest of Dean Allocations Plan adopted in June 2018.

Given the nature and location of this site, which an inspection of the Forest of Dean Local Plan Policies Map confirms the site lies outside the settlement boundary, we say the following policies are particularly relevant, always bearing in mind that the application must be determined having regard to the development plan.

- AP4 – Design of Development



- AP5 - Historic character and local distinctiveness

As the site falls within the Locally valued landscape for May Hill, the proposal also requires assessment against:

- AP14 – Locally valued landscape May Hill

This policy states:

*May Hill is a distinctive and prominent feature of the District's landscape. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they will not adversely affect the character and landscape setting of May Hill should show how they add to the overall quality of the area. Included in the assessments of all proposals will be consideration of the following potential impacts:*

- *Visual- whether proposals affect detrimentally long distance or local views of May Hill;*
- *Amenity (in addition to visual)- whether proposals affect the settled nature and tranquillity of the locality, by virtue of noise and other disturbance (eg. Traffic).*
- *Whether development contributes to or enhances the landscape character of May Hill.*

Other material Considerations the Residential Design Guide and its supplementary document Extensions and Alterations is also relevant, as is the national Design Guide.

The site is included in the ancient woodland designation, but as explained in the site history, we feel that this designation over the subject site is incorrect. That said, the site does adjoin the large, commercial woodland area of Upper Newent woods, which genuinely is ancient woodland given that it has been continuously under woodland since 1600. Any development of the site must be sensitive to this proximity to a special and sensitive ecological area.

#### Neighbourhood Development Plan

There is no made Neighbourhood development plan for the parish of Taynton, which the site falls within.

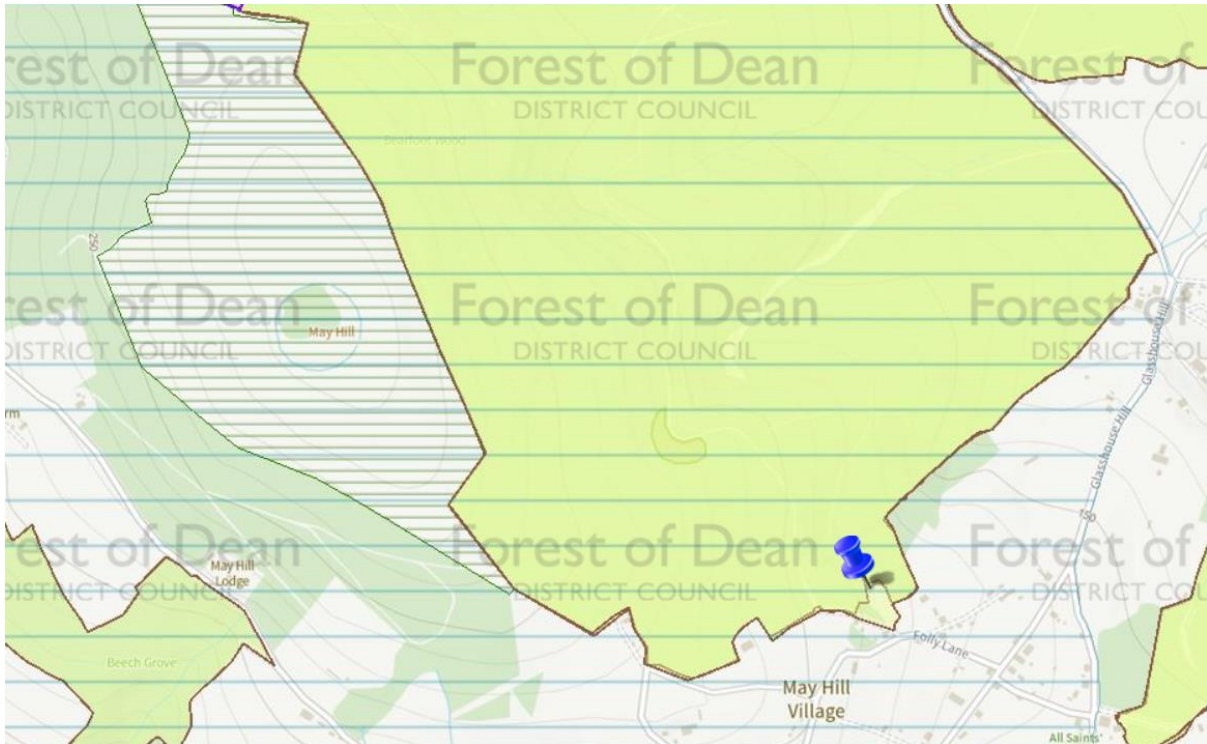




Figure 12: The pin marks the Folly, which is included in both the Locally valued landscape May Hill and the ancient woodland designations. This map also depicts the site's proximity to the summit of May Hill, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).






The use of the building will be ancillary to the residential use of the Folly. It is considered to fall into the class of outbuilding, which is a term which includes

*“sheds, playhouses, greenhouses and garages as well as other ancillary garden buildings such as swimming pools, ponds, sauna cabins, kennels, enclosures (including tennis courts) and many other kinds of structure for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse”.*

(Source: The Planning portal 2022)

Outbuildings within a residential curtilage of a dwelling house are permitted development, not needing planning permission, subject to the following limits and conditions:

No building on land forward of a wall forming the principal elevation	 Given the barn's location between the principal elevation of the Folly, and the bitumen track that benefits the Nook and Sheepcote, the reconstruction of the barn is considered to not benefit from permitted development rights.
Outbuildings and garages to be single storey with maximum eaves height of 2.5m and maximum overall height of 4 metres with a dual pitched roof of 3m for any other roof.	 The height of the ridgeline is 5.52m
Maximum height of 2.5m in the case of a building, enclosure or container within 2m of a boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.	N/A

No verandas, balconies or raised platforms (a platform must not exceed 0.3m in height)	 The proposed reconstruction does not include any verandas, balconies or raised platforms.
No more than half the area of land around the "original house" would be covered by additions or other buildings.	 No building footprint is far less than half the area around the Folly and is the same footprint of an existing dilapidated barn.
In National parks, the broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural beauty and World heritage sites the maximum area to be covered by buildings, enclosures, containers and pools more than 20m from the house to be limited to 10 sqm.	 The site does not fall within a National parks, the broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural beauty and World heritage sites.
On designated land, buildings, enclosures, containers, and pools at the side of properties will require planning permission.	 The site is not within designated land.
Within the curtilage of listed buildings, any outbuilding will require planning permission.	 The site is not within the curtilage of a listed building.

## POLICY ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

### Visual Amenity

The modest scale of the proposed barn reconstruction would ensure that the sites character is retained and would ensure that visual impact on the wider open countryside is kept to an absolute minimum.

### Residential Amenity

The site is at the margins of May Hill village, which is a dispersed, low-density settlement adjoining the woodlands of May Hill and near the iconic summit of May Hill

There will, however, be:

- no change to the use of the application site;
- no new building that would result in an overbearing impact or loss of light or adverse impact on outlook; and
- no new windows that would result in loss of privacy.

The building will also be screened from view from the road by a hedgerow and mature trees.

Therefore, the proposal would not cause an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

### **Biodiversity**

While the woodland area surrounding the site is likely to contain habitat for bats, it is unlikely that they use the dilapidated barn for roosting, since the roof collapsed. It has also been established that there is a low risk of Great Crested Newts being present.

As the proposal is the reconstruction of any existing building which is located between two dwellings (The Nook and the Folly) we consider that the proposal will not result in an unacceptable ecological impact.

### **Highway Safety**

There is an existing safe vehicular access to the site from Folly Lane. There is no change or intensification of use from the development proposed. There would thereby be no adverse impact on highway safety.

### **Overall 'Planning Balance' and Conclusions**

With all the above in mind, Paragraph 7 of the Revised NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The reconstruction of the barn, to restore an outbuilding ancillary to the residential use of the Folly is modest in scale and, as a consequence, the impacts and the benefits are accordingly proportionately modest.

In the light of the above, it is concluded that the proposal accords with the development plan, the Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide on Alterations and Extensions, and the Revised National Planning Policy Framework, and there are no material considerations (social, economic and environmental benefits) that weigh in the 'planning balance' against granting permission.