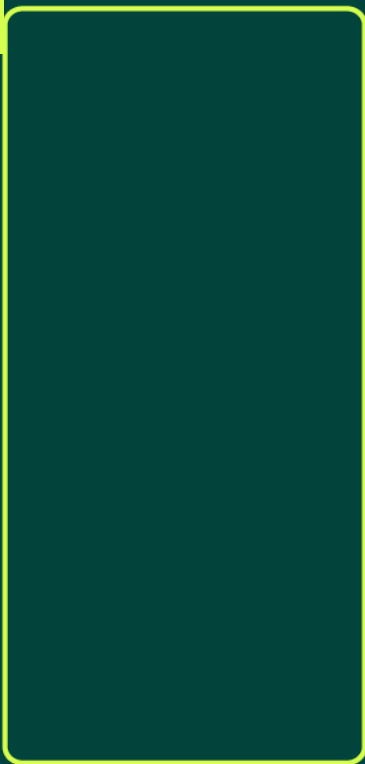


A different view



Planning Statement

# Northfield Farm Barns

Mr R Lowe

9<sup>th</sup> November 2023

**Project Title**

Conversion of barns at Northfield Farm into 5 dwellings

**Applicant Name**

Mr R Lowe

**Date**

9<sup>th</sup> November 2023

**Report Author**

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Associate Director

Revision	Date	Author	Checked	Comments
V2	01/11/2023	KG	SJ	NL comments incorporated

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## Summary

Rural Solutions are commissioned by Mr Rupert Lowe (the applicant) to prepare and submit a planning application to Cotswold District Council (CDC) for the conversion of four existing farm buildings at Northfield Farm into five new dwellings.

The scheme includes the conversion of the barns on site including the demolition of one large existing modern barn, and two large lean to's. The lean to's are proposed to be replaced with smaller, more appropriately scaled lean to extensions. Two new outbuildings are proposed for the provision of parking and garden storage.

### Policy

Policy DS4 of the Cotswold District Local Plan seeks to control the development of new-build open market housing in the countryside. The policy does not, however, preclude the development of open market housing in rural locations where specific criteria are satisfied; for example, through housing created from the conversion of rural buildings. Therefore, the creation of five open market dwellings through the conversion of the rural buildings on site is acceptable in principle. Policy DS4 also allows for alterations to, or extensions of, existing buildings.

Local Plan Policy EC6 (conversion of rural buildings) permits the conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses.

Local Plan Policy EN5 (AONB) states that "In determining development proposals within the AONB or its setting, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, its character and special qualities will be given great weight". The proposal is well contained within the site and will not lead to any encroachment into the surrounding land. A detailed assessment of the previous application has been undertaken to bring forward a proposal that is appropriate for the site, delivers a high-quality conversion scheme and delivers significant environmental enhancements to the site and its surrounding landscape. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of policy EN5.

Local Plan Policy EN2 (design of the built and natural environment) permits development that accords with the Cotswold design code contained as Appendix D of the Local Plan. It requires proposals to "be of design quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality". The revised design follows the guidance set out with the design code.

NPPF paragraphs 80b) and c) are applicable. The conversion scheme will bring forward a conversion scheme that will enhance the site's physical appearance and bring forward improvements to the AONB.

The proposed development accords with all of the relevant Cotswold Local Plan policies including policies EC6, H2, EN1, EN4 and EN5, EN2, EN14, EN8, INF3, INF4 and INF8. The proposal also meets the provisions of the NPPF including paragraphs 80 b) and c) which are a material consideration.

The proposal also meets the needs and requirements of the AONB Management Plan.

In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the proposed development should therefore be approved without delay.

### Material considerations

The proposed development will deliver the following benefits;

- Reuse of redundant farm buildings to provide high quality homes.
- Viable reuse of a non-designated heritage asset.
- Enhance and improve the appearance of a site in the AONB through a high quality and sensitive design that retains an agricultural appearance and delivers a sympathetic landscape scheme.
- Provide a financial contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing in the district.
- New bird and bat boxes.
- New tree planting and over 1000m of new hedgerow planting.
- Conversion of existing hard to soft landscaping.
- Safe removal of large quantities of asbestos from site.

### Planning balance

The proposal is in accordance with policies DS4, EN1, ENN2, EN4, EN5, EN7, EN8, INF3, INF4 and INF8 of the Cotswold Local Plan adopted in 2018. There are no impacts arising from the development which can be considered significant; therefore, the development proposal should be approved without delay.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1: Rural Solutions are commissioned by Mr Rupert Lowe (the applicant) to prepare and submit a planning application to Cotswold District Council (CDC) for the conversion of four existing farm buildings at Northfield Farm into five new dwellings.
- 1.2: This application follows the withdrawal of an earlier application (LPA ref: 22/00605/FUL) that was withdrawn on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. This application has sought to review the comments made by CDC previously, and to address these within a revised scheme for the site.
- 1.3: The scheme includes the conversion of the barns on site including the demolition of one large existing modern barn, and two large lean to's. The lean to's are proposed to be replaced with smaller, more appropriately scaled lean to extensions. Two new outbuildings are proposed for the provision of parking and garden storage.
- 1.4: The revised scheme brings forward new landscape proposals including the provision of new native tree and hedgerow planting, reinstatement of historic field hedgerows and the insertion of new boundary treatments.
- 1.5: This statement should be read alongside the wider submission documents including:
  - Plans package (Tyack Architects);
  - Design and Access Statement (Tyack Architects);
  - LVIA Update (WH Landscape);
  - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey (Bombus Ecology);
  - Structural Survey (as previously submitted) (David Edwards Associates);
  - Transport Statement Update (as previously submitted) (Connect Transport Consultants);
  - Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (as previously submitted) (GeoSmart);
  - Phase 1 Ground Investigation (as previously submitted) (GeoSmart);
  - Draft S106 Cotswold Beechwood SAC recreational impacts mitigation contribution.
- 1.6: This planning statement focuses on how the revised scheme has responded to the previous application comments.
- 1.7: This report is structured as follows:
  - Section 2 – summary of site, the previous application and the proposed scheme;
  - Section 3 – summary of key relevant planning policies;
  - Section 4 – assessment of key planning issues and how the revised application has responded to the previous concerns raised made by CDC;
  - Section 5 – sets out the conclusions including planning balance.

## 2. The site and proposed development

- 2.1: Northfield Farm is comprised of six farm buildings (a range of stone built and steel framed buildings). The farmyard is a sprawling collection of buildings, located within open arable farmland with the track running east/west across it's centre.
- 2.2: The field / farmyard edge is ill defined, and over the years farm sprawl from storage of machinery, equipment and the creation of new vehicle routes has eroded the edge of the adjacent fields. In effect, the current farmyard ignores old boundaries and has begun to merge into the open countryside. Within the surrounding landscape, hedgerows that originally separated the fields have diminished until they have disappeared entirely.
- 2.3: The supporting Design and Access Statement sets out a detailed description of the site's location and therefore this is not repeated here. Section 2.3 of the Design and Access Statement also sets out a detailed commentary on the existing site and buildings on site.
- 2.4: The DAS explains the fresh approach that has been given to the site in terms of a new process of site assessment, constraints and opportunity, evaluation and design. The project architects, Tyack, have looked at the historic and existing wider site context, and this has also helped to develop the design through a range of enhancements that have been identified.

### The proposed development

- 2.5: The proposed development seeks the conversion of the barns to create 3 five bedroom houses and 2 three bedroom houses. The previous application was considered to be harmful to the character of the AONB by the nature of the design of the dwellings, ancillary domestic buildings on the periphery of the site and lack of appropriate boundary treatments.
- 2.6: The proposed scheme has responded to the site's context and the former comments made by the planning and landscape officers of CDC in relation to planning application LPA ref: 22/00605/FUL.
- 2.7: The revised scheme includes the demolition of one large existing modern barn, and two large lean to's. The lean to's will be replaced with smaller, more appropriately scaled lean to extensions. Two new outbuildings for the provision of parking and garden storage are proposed.
- 2.8: The reduction in massing caused by these demolitions and replacements allows for more space to be created in the centre of the site, as well as between Units 4 and 5, and considerably improves the setting and quality of the external spaces of both units.
- 2.9: Landscape proposals within the scheme include the provision of new native tree and hedgerow planting, and the insertion of new boundary treatments.
- 2.10: The materials palette for the proposed dwellings reflects those that exist on site. The dwellings will be clad in vertical timber boarding and have profiled metal roofs. They will retain their agricultural appearance.

2.11: The architect's response to the site allows for a number of site enhancements to be delivered. These include:

- Tidying up and improved definition of site boundaries, thus eradicating farm sprawl.
- Demolition of the largest modern barn, located in the south east of the site, improving the setting of the two traditional stone buildings.
- Rationalisation of vehicle routes, enclosing vehicles within the built form.
- Proposed new pond.
- New landscape features anchoring the development into the wider countryside landscape, reinstating historic field boundaries and ecological corridors.
- Native tree planting, reinstating recognisable landscape character.

2.12: The concept proposals set out at section 4 of the DAS show the sensitive approach taken to reducing the farm sprawl on the site and the site enhancements that can be brought forward by reducing the amount of built form on the site.



Figure 1 Concept diagram from DAS





Figure 2 Proposed new planting



Figure 3-Proposed site layout



Figures 4 and 5 Existing site photo and CGI of proposed site (view from east)



Figures 6 and 7 Existing site photo and CGI of proposed site (view from west)

## 3. Local and national policy

### Introduction

3.1: Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Paragraph 2 of the recently revised National Planning Policy Framework in September 2023 (NPPF) explain that the starting point for the determination of planning applications is the development plan and that the determination of an application must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 2 also qualifies that the NPPF is a material consideration in determining applications.

### The development plan

3.2: In this case, the Cotswold District Council adopted Development Plan comprises of the Cotswold District Local Plan (2011 to 2031) which was adopted by the council on 3rd August 2018.

3.3: The Local Plan also includes the 2018 Cotswold Design Code at Appendix D of the Local Plan.

3.4: The key relevant policies are:

- DS4 Open market housing
- EN1 Built, Natural & Historic Environment
- EN2 Design of Built & Natural Environment
- EN4 The Wider Natural & Historic Landscape
- EN5 Cotswolds AONB
- EN7 Trees, Hedgerows & Woodlands
- EN8 Bio & Geo: Features Habitats & Species

3.5: The above policies, and the proposal's compliance with them, are considered in detail within Section 4 of the planning assessment and therefore they are not considered further here.

### Guidance

3.6: In addition to the adopted Development Plan, there are two guidance documents which are relevant to this pre-application proposal, given that the site is located in the Cotswold AONB:

- Cotswold Conservation Board - Landscape Character Assessments and National Character Assessments; and
- Natural England Guidance on Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB).

### The national planning policy framework

3.7: At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). Paragraph 8 explains that this includes an economic, social and an environmental objective.

3.8: Paragraph 11 explains that decisions should apply this presumption in favour of sustainable development and that planning permission should be approved for

development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

- 3.9: Paragraph 69 notes that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and would be applicable to the application site.
- 3.10: Paragraph 80 is a key material planning consideration in the determination of this planning application. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of a list of exceptions apply, including of relevance to this application, the following circumstances:
- (b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
  - (c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.
- 3.11: An assessment of this relevant paragraph is included in Section 4.
- 3.12: In designing the revised conversion scheme significant consideration has been given to paragraph 134 of the NPPF which states:
- 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.
- 3.13: It is considered that the proposal meets the expectations set out in this guidance. The design utilises local stone materials with contemporary timber details which retain their agricultural appearance.
- 3.14: The design approach has been to sensitively convert the existing buildings, retaining their agricultural aesthetic but which is harmoniously in balance with its existing surrounding landscape.
- 3.15: Paragraph 174 sets out that planning decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The proposed development responds to and enhances its existing surrounding landscape.
- 3.16: Paragraphs 176 and 177 of the NPPF seek to ensure that development within the AONB enhance and protect the beauty of such areas.

## Summary

- 3.17: The design is of the highest quality, is sensitive to its local context, and will introduce a number of environmental benefits that meet with the requirements of the policies in both the Local plan and national guidance. An assessment of these policies is undertaken within Section 4 below.

## 4. Appraisal of key planning issues

4.1: Our assessment of the site, our response to the previous application, the nature of the proposed development, the development plan and material considerations suggest that the following key planning issues are relevant.

- Principle of Development
- Landscape
- Design
- Biodiversity
- Affordable housing
- Drainage
- Highways

### Key planning issue 1: Principle of development

Development Plan Policies: DS4, EC6  
NPPF: Para 80

4.2: At a national level, paragraph 80 of the NPPF allows for the conversion of rural buildings providing that they provide an enhancement to their immediate setting. The proposed development will lead to the physical uplift in the appearance of the site within the AONB. New landscaping will enhance visually and ecologically the quality of the site.

4.3: The development would also be consistent with paragraph 120 of the NPPF in that it would promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings and contribute towards meeting local housing needs.

4.4: At a local level Policy DS4 of the Cotswold District Local Plan is intended to preclude, in principle, the development of new-build open market housing which is not needed in the countryside. The policy does not, however, preclude the development of some open market housing in rural locations; for example, through housing created from the conversion of rural buildings. Therefore, the creation of open market dwellings through the conversion of the rural buildings on site is acceptable in principle. It is noted that Policy DS4 also allows for alterations to, or extensions of, existing buildings.

4.5: Local Plan Policy EC6 (conversion of rural buildings) permits the conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses. The policy criteria stipulate that the conversion of rural buildings will be permitted provided that:

- The building is structurally sound, suitable for and capable of conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding;

- It would not cause conflict with existing farming operations, including severance or disruption to the holding that would prejudice its continued viable operation; and
- The development proposals are compatible with extant uses on the site and existing and planned uses in close proximity to the site.

4.6: It is acknowledged by the council in the policy wording contained at Paragraph 9.6.2 that the re-use of existing rural buildings, which have become surplus to requirements or are no longer suitable for their original use, can help to reduce demands for new buildings in the countryside.

4.7: The policy wording at Paragraph 9.6.6 also states:

Where an extension or significant alteration is proposed, then it will need to be demonstrated that the building is capable of conversion on its own merit. Subject to this, extensions or alterations will be permitted where they do not significantly harm the character of the building, its setting, and/or the character and appearance of the landscape.

4.8: Set out below is an assessment of the policy criteria.

**The building is structurally sound, suitable for and capable of conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding;**

4.9: In order to address this criteria a structural survey has previously been prepared for the site. The report looks at each building in turn and recommends works to be undertaken. A summary is given below. The barn lettering system below is the same as that adopted in the report.

#### **Barn A – stone barn (Proposed unit 5)**

4.10: The survey concludes that the barn is generally in good order. Works are required to replace the roof however the proposed roof is intended to be a profiled metal roof to reflect the existing.

4.11: The building already has a first floor constructed of timber on timber floor joists. No issue is raised with the soundness of these joists.

4.12: The modern lean to extension is recommended for removal and a small extension is proposed which will allow for garaging and a plant room. The garage will provide car parking and storage, and limit domestic paraphernalia within the site.

4.13: Through the course of the previous application CDC confirmed that they consider the stone barn to have the qualities of a non-designated heritage asset. As such, the works proposed to convert the barn including the demolition of the modern lean to, and erection of a smaller extension are deemed sensitive and will allow for the repair and future longevity of the barn. The barn is without a viable use and the sensitive conversion to create a dwelling is deemed the least harmful on the site and its surroundings.

4.14: Paragraph 80b is of material importance as it supports the reuse of heritage assets that helps ensure the optimal viable use of a (non designated) heritage asset.

4.15: To the south of the stone barn is another traditional single storey stone building. It is proposed to convert this building to create a studio/ hobbies room for occupiers of the dwelling.

#### Barn B - modern building (Proposed unit 4)

4.16: Barn B is a steel framed building. The right side of the building includes a 1.8m high blockwork wall which is to be retained. The building is timber clad but includes an asbestos sheet roof and therefore this must be removed in an appropriate manner. Removal of the asbestos roof is an environmental benefit. The steel frame has no signs of distortion and is capable of withstanding the conversion without any requirement for new structural elements. New cladding and a replacement roof can be hung off the existing framework. It is proposed to reduce the height of part of the southern side of the roof and reduce this to create a single storey element on the south elevation. The proposed set back and overhang on the single storey element will help to screen any light spill coming from the house. The reduction in height helps to reduce the overall volume of development on site.

#### Barn C – modern building (to be demolished)

4.17: Barn C is partially attached to Barn B. This building shows no signs of distortion in the frame but its walls and roof are clad in asbestos containing materials. This is a large barn. Through the concept development stages the architects considered that the removal of this building was the most appropriate option for the site. It removes a large mass from the site but also removes a large volume of potentially harmful materials from the environment. Removal of this barn allows for Barn B to be reduced in height and volume on its southern side which looks out onto the wider landscape.

#### Barn D – open fronted barn (proposed unit 2 and 3)

4.18: Barn D is a steel framed building clad in metal sheets. The survey confirms no distortion to the frame. However the roof in part contains asbestos containing roof sheets. It is therefore an environmental benefit to remove this material and replace it with new profiled metal roofing.

4.19: The barn can be split into 2 units, with the majority of the living accommodation at ground floor. The building is capable of accommodating the conversion without the need to upgrade or bolster the existing structural elements.

#### Barn E - small modern building (proposed unit 1)

4.20: Barn E is a steel framed building clad in metal sheets. The survey confirms no distortion to the frame. However the roof and walls, in part, contain asbestos containing sheets. It is therefore an environmental benefit to remove this material and replace it with new profiled metal roofing.

#### Scale of development

4.21: The proposal looks to undertake demolition works in 3 areas on the site in order to reduce the overall volume and improve the visual appearance of the site, and ensure that the conversion scheme can be brought forward in a sensitive manner.

4.22: The site currently has a total gross floor area of 1,924sqm. It is proposed to demolish floor space amounting to 32% of the existing floorspace (616sqm). This includes the



large barn, and two modern lean to extensions. The floorspace proposed via smaller scale extensions extends to a total of 426sqm. The overall floorspace proposed (1734sqm) is a reduction of 10% below existing levels.

4.23: The policy allows for and recognises that some alterations and works to a building will be required to facilitate its conversion. It is not considered in this case that *substantial* rebuild or extension are proposed.

#### Summary on structural integrity of the barns

4.24: It is considered that all of the buildings to be converted are capable of conversion without substantial alteration, rebuild or extension. The steel frames are in good order and the alterations to the barn can be 'hung' from the existing frame without the need for further structural additions.

4.25: The buildings contain asbestos materials which cannot be included in the conversion scheme. The removal of this material is an environmental benefit. The replacement materials proposed are on a like for like basis, proposing timber cladding and/or metal sheeting; and profiled metal sheeting for the roofs. These works are reasonably necessary for the barns to be converted into residential use.

4.26: The conversion scheme including the extension and alterations do not significantly alter or harm the character of the buildings, their setting, or the character and appearance of the landscape. The scheme offers a real opportunity to elevate the appearance of the site through sensitive boundary treatments, careful planning for the parking of vehicles, demolition of floorspace and retaining an agricultural appearance to the dwellings.

#### It would not cause conflict with existing farming operations, including severance or disruption to the holding that would prejudice its continued viable operation

4.27: The buildings and the site are used very sporadically and are not deemed to be useful or fit for modern agriculture. The buildings at Northfield Farm are too old; too low for modern equipment and vehicles to be able to physically get into them; are not currently watertight; and the asbestos is cracked and needs replacing. The buildings are beyond their useful life for agricultural purposes and therefore an alternative use is required.

4.28: The applicant owns other buildings at Ravenswell Farm. As such the conversion of the barns is not going to prejudice a viable farming operation.

#### The development proposals are compatible with extant uses on the site and existing and planned uses in close proximity to the site.

4.29: No part of the site is to remain in agricultural use. The nearest properties to the site are in residential use and therefore is not deemed that there is any conflict with existing uses in close proximity.

4.30: The proposed development, therefore, does accord with the provisions of Local Plan Policy EC6 and NPPF Para 80b and 80c.

### Summary on principle

4.31: The assessment above demonstrates that the proposal satisfies Policy EC6 and each of its criteria. The policy does not preclude extensions or significant alterations providing the building is capable of conversion on its own merit. This has been demonstrated above. The policy allows for the extension or alteration of buildings where they do not significantly harm the character of the building, its setting, and/or the character and appearance of the landscape.

4.32: As demonstrated through the sensitive design approach the proposal does not harm the character of the buildings. The proposal is faithful to the existing agricultural nature of the site. The proposed development does not cause any adverse harm on the character and appearance of the landscape. This is further considered below.

### Key planning issue 2: Landscape

Development Plan Policies: EN1, EN2, EN4, EN5  
NPPF: 176, 177

4.33: The site is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) where there is a statutory requirement to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape (S85(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

4.34: Local Plan Policy EN1 Built, Natural and Historic Environment states:

New development will, where appropriate, promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment by:

- a) Ensuring the protection and enhancement of existing natural and historic environmental assets and their settings in proportion with the significance of the asset;
- b) Contributing to the provision of multi-functional green infrastructure;
- c) Addressing climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation through creating new habitats and the better management of existing habitats;
- d) Seeking to improve air, soil and water quality where feasible; and
- e) Ensuring design standards that complement the character of the area and the sustainable use of the development.

4.35: Local Plan Policy EN2 Design of the Built and Natural Environment states that:

Development will be permitted which accords with the Cotswold Design Code. Proposals should be of design quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality.

4.36: Local Plan Policy EN4 The Wider Natural and Historic Landscape states:

1. Development will be permitted where it does not have a significant detrimental impact on the natural and historic landscape (including the tranquillity of the countryside) of Cotswold District or neighbouring areas.

2. Proposals will take account of landscape and historic landscape character, visual quality and local distinctiveness. They will be expected to enhance, restore and better manage the natural and historic landscape, and any significant landscape features and elements, including key views, the setting of settlements, settlement patterns and heritage assets.

4.37: Local Plan Policy EN5 Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) states:

1. In determining development proposals within the AONB or its setting, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, its character and special qualities will be given great weight.

2. Major development will not be permitted within the AONB unless it satisfies the exceptions set out in National Policy and Guidance.

4.38: When determining the previously withdrawn application, concerns were raised regarding the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance on the AONB. In their consideration of the previous application the landscape officer made the following comments:

The proposed gardens are excessive in size and should be drawn more tightly around the proposed dwellings. This would both minimise the suburbanisation of the site, whilst also preventing encroachment into the open countryside. I would advise limiting the extent of development to the existing farmyard, maintaining undeveloped 'gaps' between dwellings in order to reduce the level of built form, managed residential garden space and associated residential paraphernalia.

4.39: They stated:

If the principle of conversion of the sheds can be established, a significantly reduced scheme might be acceptable, but I would recommend that the scheme includes wider landscape enhancements to off-set any perceived harm caused by the development. Any landscape enhancements would need to be characteristic of the High Wold Valley setting.

4.40: The previous landscape comments have been given full consideration in the revisions to the proposal. The revised scheme has drawn the curtilages much tighter to the barns to bring back the site boundaries where they had become ill defined and sprawling. The scheme is still for the conversion of five barns but the proposed demolition will have the effect of visually reducing the volume of development at the site. The replacement extensions are smaller and subservient to the barns.

4.41: The materials palette ensure that the barns continue to be read as agricultural buildings, and the number of openings has been reduced from the previous scheme to maintain a more agricultural and less domestic aesthetic to the buildings.

- 4.42: The use of garaging and storage is now located within the site so that beyond the site boundaries evidence of domestic paraphernalia is limited.
- 4.43: The scheme's landscaping mitigation and enhancements ensure that the proposed development can come forward without causing an unacceptable level of harm.
- 4.44: An update to the LVIA has been prepared by WH Landscape which confirms that the proposal and landscape enhancements meet the policy requirements of the Local Plan and the Cotswold Design Guide. Taking account of the proposed landscape mitigation and enhancement recommendations, the proposed development can be undertaken in compliance with the relevant guidance and policies in the NPPF, Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031, the AONB Management Plan 2018-2023, and Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (2016).
- 4.45: The LVIA is comprehensive and it is not intended to repeat its findings here. However, in summary the LVIA states:

The proposals seek to convert the stone barn, whilst the scale of the proposals have been significantly reduced when compared to the original scheme. Moreover, the removal of the largest modern portal-framed barn reduces the prominence and sprawl of the existing complex of buildings - a significant material benefit to the receiving landscape. The proposals include wider landscape enhancements, including the reinstatement of former grubbed-out field hedgerows, which will significantly offset any perceived harm caused by the development. This strategy is consistent with the underlying landscape character description which states that between areas of woodland the landscape is 'divided up by a network of hedgerows'.

### Key planning issue 3: Biodiversity

Development Plan Policies: EN8  
NPPF: Chapter 15

- 4.46: Policy EN8 of the Local Plan requires protection for biodiversity and geodiversity: features, habitats and species. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including bat survey has been prepared by Bombus Ecology in support of this planning application.
- 4.47: The bat survey found the buildings to be of low suitability for bats, with low levels of bat activity recorded.
- 4.48: The proposal offers the opportunity for enhancements through the following measures:
- Bird and bat boxes placed within the surrounding trees;
  - New native hedgerow planting;
  - Landscape works and removal of hardstanding from around the barn;
  - New planting and opportunity for nectar-rich species; and
  - Low-level lighting schemes to protect dark skies.
- 4.49: The relevant requirements of Local Plan Policy EN8 have therefore been met.

- 4.50: Section 15 of the NPPF relates to ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’. It requires that developments should look to minimise impacts on and provide net gains.
- 4.51: The current farm yard offers little ecological value. Legislation is not yet mandatory regarding the requirement to demonstrate a 10% net gain in biodiversity. Formal calculations have not been prepared however, the landscape strategy for the site is envisaged to deliver a significant uplift in habitat on site and the wider environment. The scheme looks to reinstate and plant over 1000m of native hedgerow which alone scores over 3 habitat units in the DEFRA net gain metric. With new tree planting, removal of hard standing and the addition of a pond (for surface water attenuation) the site can deliver good ecological benefits.
- 4.52: The proposal sits with the 15km buffer zone of the Beechwood SAC. As such, the applicant is willing to pay the required financial contribution per dwelling in order to mitigate any harm that may arise from the increase in visitors to the SAC.
- 4.53: A copy of the S106 draft heads of terms is submitted as required.

#### Key planning issue 4: Affordable housing

Development Plan Policies: H2  
NPPF: Chapter 5

- 4.54: Whilst the proposal is for only 5 dwellings, the scale of floorspace to be converted will exceed 1,000sqm and therefore the need to provide affordable housing is triggered.
- 4.55: Policy H2 of the Cotswold Local Plan requires ‘up to’ 40% affordable housing on schemes. On site delivery is not feasible or viable given the rural nature of the proposal. A registered provider would not take on a small scheme such as this.
- 4.56: On this basis, the applicant would be willing to negotiate an appropriate financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere (i.e. off-site), in lieu of on-site provision. This will be secured via a S106 agreement.

#### Key planning issue 5: Drainage

Development Plan Policies: INF8  
NPPF: Chapter 14

- 4.57: The application site lies within flood zone 1 and therefore is at the lowest risk of flooding. A SUDS strategy was previously prepared in support of the former conversion scheme. The principle of the conversion of the buildings to create five dwellings on site remains as per the previous scheme and therefore the reports are resubmitted for consideration.
- 4.58: The previous strategy was for a larger scheme and therefore represents a worst-case scenario. The overall footprint of development is reduced as part of the revised proposal and greater level of soft landscaping proposed.

4.59: The previously proposed drainage scheme was deemed acceptable and there has been no material change to the proposal on site.

4.60: As such it is considered that the policy satisfies policy INF8 of the Local Plan.

### Key planning issue 6: Highways

Development Plan Policies: INF3, INF4  
NPPF: Paragraph 111

4.61: In support of the previously withdrawn application a Transport Assessment was produced for the scheme which was further supplemented by a Technical Note detailing a traffic speed survey and specification for visibility splays for the site's access. It is understood that subject to appropriate conditions securing visibility splays, vehicle parking and electric car charging the proposal was acceptable on highway grounds.

4.62: The proposed revised scheme seeks a mix of 3no. five bedroom houses and 2no. 3 bedroom houses. Each unit will have a 7kw electric charging point, secure cycle parking and car parking which is sufficient to meet the Gloucestershire parking standards.

4.63: The proposal is deemed to acceptable and will not lead to any adverse highway impact. On that basis the proposal satisfies policy INF3, INF4 of the Local Plan and paragraph 111 of the NPPF.

## 5. Conclusions

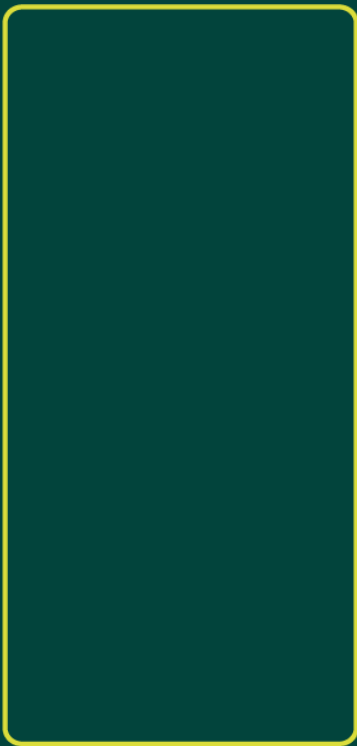
- 5.1: The proposal seeks to utilise the existing barns at Northfield Farm to create 5 new dwellings.
- 5.2: This application follows on from a previously withdrawn application (LPA 22/00605/FUL). A thorough review of the site and previous application comments have informed the revised proposal for the site. As evidenced in the comprehensive Design and Access Statement, LVIA and other supporting documents, it is clear that the proposal will embody a high-quality design, which respects its rural setting, and which will subsequently contribute to the overall enhancement of the site and its surrounding environment.
- 5.3: The proposal seeks to demolish and reduce the overall mass and volume of development on the site. Some limited extensions to the barns are proposed to replace a proportion of this floorspace but in a more sympathetic manner.
- 5.4: There will be no harmful landscape impact as a result of the proposal given the scheme will facilitate the conversion of the existing barns. The proposal seeks to restrict the residential curtilages and reverse the farm sprawl that has occurred over time. The buildings will retain their agricultural appearance and character. The demolition of one large modern barn is a benefit to the landscape, as assessed within the LVIA. A significant benefit of the proposal is the planting of circa 1000m of new tree and hedgerow planting, which will not only mitigate some minor close range impact, but will deliver a significant uplift in hedgerow habitat. The landscape works proposed are in accordance with the Cotswold AONB Management Plan and seeks to reinstate lost hedgerows that are characteristic of this character area.
- 5.5: The stone barn is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by CDC and its reuse was previously supported. The other buildings are of modern construction but whose conversion and physical enhancements will ensure that the setting and surroundings of the non-designated asset are improved.
- 5.6: The structural report and DAS demonstrate that the buildings are capable of conversion. Some existing walls and roof materials need to be removed as they contain asbestos and therefore the sensitive and careful removal of this material is also an environmental benefit. It is considered that the works to the modern buildings to enable their conversion are appropriate and fits within the policy requirements of Policy EC6 and NPPF paragraph 80c.
- 5.7: The proposal will provide an off site contribution toward affordable housing and recreational mitigation on the Beechwood SAC. These will be subject to a S106 agreement.
- 5.8: Matters relating to ecology highways and drainage have previously been found acceptable. There is no material change that warrants arriving at any different conclusion on these points.
- 5.9: The proposed development accords with all of the relevant Development Plan Policies, EC6, H2, EN1, EN4 and EN5, EN2, EN14 and EN8. The proposal also meets the provisions of the NPPF including paragraphs 80 b) and c) which is a material consideration. In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the proposed development should therefore be approved without delay.

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