



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)  
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE  
ACT 2004**

**PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**RE: ALTERATION AND CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT STABLES  
TO ANCILLARY STUDIO, WINE STORAGE AND PLANT ROOM**

**Cotswold House, Pancake Hill, Chedworth,  
Gloucestershire, GL54 4AP**

**On behalf of:  
MR & MRS LANGLEY**

Date: November 2023  
Ref: AP/P/L-035A

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

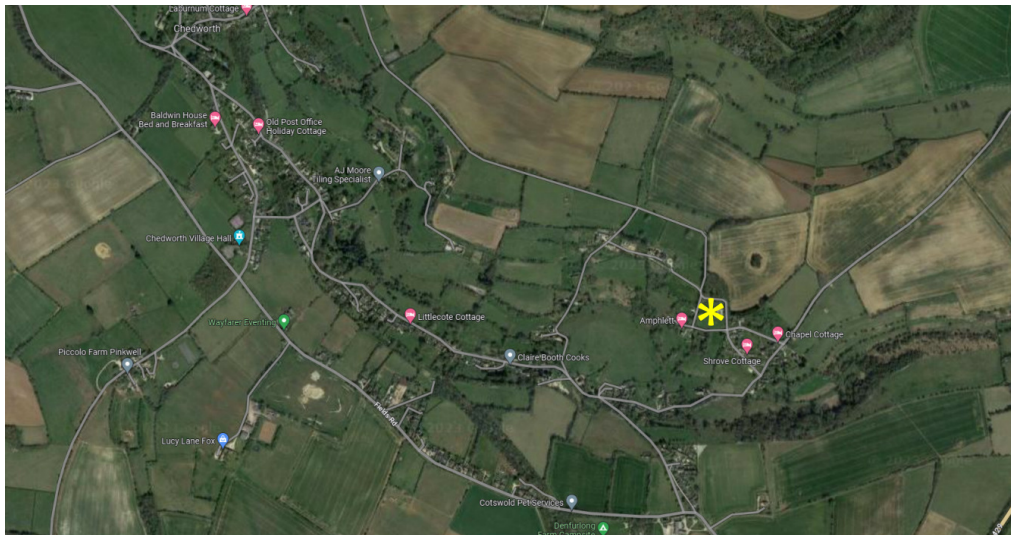
1.1 This statement has been prepared by **Plan-A Planning and Development Ltd** in support of a full planning application for alteration and conversion of an existing stables building to ancillary studio, wine storage and plant room at Cotswold House, Pancake Hill, Chedworth. It assesses and evaluates the context and character of the site and surrounding area and considers the proposals against the national and local policy framework, referring as appropriate to the following drawings and documents:-

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Katie Warren)
- Structural Survey Report (David Partridge Ltd)
- Photo Survey (Plan-A Planning and Development Ltd)
- Drawing No. 21.10.031.PL121 - Site Location Plan
- Drawing No. 21.10.031.PL122 - Existing Site Block Plan
- Drawing No. 21.10.031.PL123 - Existing Floor Plans and Elevations
- Drawing No. 21.10.031.PL124 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

1.2 Based on our assessment and having taken all relevant material planning considerations into account, the statement concludes our case that the application proposals accord with all relevant policy criteria and will cause no material harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

## 2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The redundant stables building lies at the northern edge of a former paddock located immediately to the west of Cotswold House on the south facing valley slope at the eastern end of Chedworth. The building, house and paddock all fall within the applicants' ownership, as does the larger paddock to the south, which has recently been planted as a vineyard.
- 2.2 The building is currently accessed via the paddock entrance from Cotswold House, which is a two-storey mid-twentieth century detached dwelling located in the north-eastern corner of the applicants' landholding. It forms part of a cluster of development which lines the adjoining lanes and is at least partially visible at close-range and in some longer distance views from across the valley.



*Google Earth extract of approximate site location (accessed April 2023)*

- 2.3 The building is internally subdivided into three stalls and has a shallow pitched roof with overhanging eaves forming a sheltered canopy. A lean-to extension spanning the rear of the stables is subdivided into two enclosed storage areas, accessed via double doors at either end. The building is clad in timber and punctuated by four small windows to the rear and a door and window to each of the three stalls.
- 2.4 The site falls within the Cotswold AONB and Chedworth Conservation Area and is also situated within Flood Zone 1 (areas within the Environment Agency's lowest category for flood risk).

### 3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The only planning application associated with the stables building itself concerned a 2005 proposal for the erection of an extension to the rear of the building (CDC Ref. 05/02295/FUL refers). However, this application was withdrawn prior to determination.
- 3.2 Whilst not directly associated with the stables building, an application for the erection of a two-storey side extension and loft conversion to Cotswold House was granted permission in July 2022 (CDC Ref. 22/01198/FUL refers). The extension is largely complete and, as it lies on the western side of the dwelling, has resulted in a much closer relationship between the house and stables building.
- 3.3 A further application was also submitted in 2022 seeking planning permission for change of use of the paddock to the west of Cotswold House to residential garden (CDC Ref. 22/02987/FUL refers). Whilst minimal changes were to be made to the management and appearance of the land as part of the proposed change of use, concerns raised by the local planning authority over the landscape impact of the proposed change of use resulted in the application being withdrawn prior to determination.
- 3.4 Following withdrawal of the above application, a pre-application enquiry was submitted in respect of proposals for the change of use of a smaller area of the paddock, together with replacement of the stables building with an ancillary studio annexe sited slightly further to the west, but with an overlapping footprint (CDC Ref. 23/01812/PAYPRE refers).
- 3.5 The subsequent pre-application advice note provided by officers concluded that the proposed replacement building and change of use would harm the character and appearance of the Cotswolds AONB and Chedworth Conservation Area, with no mitigating circumstances identified that would justify the harm. A number of telephoto images were also included by officers in support of their conclusions, and the advice note also goes on to state that conversion of the existing stables building to an ancillary use is also unlikely to be acceptable *"..given the likely changes to the site context with regard to residential encroachment and erosion of the rural character of the site, whether through lighting (internal via windows or external), or domestic paraphernalia that this would result in"*. Whilst acknowledging the support within Local Plan Policy EC6, the advice note suggests that a simple change of use would still be considered harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Cotswolds AONB.

#### **4. THE PROPOSALS**

##### **Use/ Amount**

- 4.1 The proposals comprise the conversion of the redundant stables building to an ancillary studio, wine storage and plant room associated with Cotswold House.

##### **Layout, Scale, Siting and Appearance**

- 4.2 Unlike the replacement building proposed as part of the recent pre-application enquiry, no alterations are proposed to either the scale or siting of the building, with the only visible alterations comprising replacement of two stable doors with glazed panels. The internal partitioning will be largely removed to create an open-plan studio space, with associated storage, WC and 'wash-up' area.

##### **Access/Parking**

- 4.3 No alterations to the existing access and parking arrangements associated with Cotswold House are required as a consequence of the proposals. Access to the studio, plant room and wine storage will be on foot via the existing gated entrances into the paddock.

## 5. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms that where determination is to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan comprises the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 although policies set out within the NPPF also represent material considerations in their own right.

### Cotswold District Local Plan to 2031

#### Policy EN1 – Built, Natural and Historic Environment

5.2 This policy seeks to ensure that new development will, where appropriate, promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment. The policy's criteria include a requirement to ensure that design standards complement the character of the area and the sustainable use of the development.

#### Policy EN2 – The Built Environment

5.3 This policy is supportive of development which accords with the updated *Cotswold Design Code*. The policy requires that proposals should be of a design quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality.

5.4 The revised *Cotswold Design Code* emphasises the importance of designing development that either follows an authentic vernacular and traditional approach in line with local architectural character, or that it is designed in a high quality contemporary and innovative manner which reflects and respects local character. The plan recognises that the decision as to whether to adopt a traditional or contemporary approach will depend on the type of development proposed, the site and its setting.

#### Policy EN4 – The Wider Natural and Historic Environment

5.5 This policy outlines that development will only be permitted whereby it does not have a significant detrimental impact on the natural and historic landscape of Cotswold District or neighbouring areas. It also states that proposals will be expected to enhance, restore, and better manage this landscape, through settlement locations and patterns and their impact on the wider views of the area.

Policy EN5 – Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 5.6 This policy outlines the determining factors when considering developments within the Cotswolds AONB or its setting. It outlines that great weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, its character and special qualities.

Policy EN11 – Historic Environment: Designated Heritage Assets – Conservation Areas

- 5.7 This policy stipulates that development proposals which affect conservation areas or their settings will be permitted provided they comply with specific criteria which seek to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced.

Policy EC6 – Conversion of Rural Buildings

- 5.8 This policy confirms that the conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses will be permitted, subject to the following requirements being met:-

- a) *The building is structurally sound, suitable for and capable of conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or re-building;*
- b) *It would not cause conflict with existing farming operations, including severance or disruption to the holding that would prejudice its continued viable operation; and*
- c) *The development proposals are compatible with extant uses on the site and existing and planned uses in close proximity to the site.*

Policy INF4 – Highway Safety

- 5.9 This policy outlines that development will be permitted so long as it provides safe and suitable access that is well integrated with the existing transport network.

**Other Material Policy Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.10 The NPPF (September 2023) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (paragraph 2 of the Framework refers).

- 5.11 The NPPF reconfirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which encompasses the three overarching and interdependent economic, social and environmental objectives. It confirms that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions. In doing so, Local Planning Authorities are instructed to take local circumstances



into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9 of the Framework refers).

- 5.12 At the heart of the NPPF is a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development (see paragraphs 10 and 11). For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date (such as is in cases where there is no five year housing land supply), granting permission unless: policies in the Framework provide a clear reason for refusing the proposals; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits (NPPF para. 11 refers).
- 5.13 Paragraph 38 highlights that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions in a *'positive and creative way'*, using the full range of planning tools available to them. Additionally, the Framework requires LPAs to work proactively with applicants in order to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 5.14 Paragraph 39 confirms that early engagement has significant potential for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and encourages good quality pre-application discussions and, where appropriate, engagement with the local community (paragraph 40 refers).
- 5.15 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should promote the effective use of land, whilst para 81 confirms that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. In particular, significant weight should be placed upon the need to support economic growth and productivity, accounting for both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 5.16 With regard to the rural economy, para 84 states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, including through the conversion of existing buildings. Furthermore, para 85 confirms that planning decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found beyond existing settlements, and in locations not well served by public transport. The use of previously developed land should also be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

- 5.17 Para 110 outlines that planning decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. However, para 111 goes on to confirm that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.18 The updated NPPF attaches great importance to achieving well-designed places and making effective use of land (paragraph 119 refers). Paragraph 120 supports the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially where this would help to meet identified needs for houses where land supply is constrained. Paragraph 124 affirms that planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land whilst also taking into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 5.19 Para 126 highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and helps create better places to live and work. Accordingly, para 130 confirms that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments:-
- - *“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;*
  - - *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
  - - *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);*
  - - *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;*
  - - *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*
  - - *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 users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*
- 5.20 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF stipulates that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ‘protecting and enhancing valued landscapes’, and ‘recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside’.

Paragraph 176 goes on to state that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- 5.21 The NPPF confirms that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations (para 189 of the new Framework refers).
- 5.22 With regard to proposals affecting heritage assets, applicants are expected to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail expected of applicants should be proportionate to the asset's importance, and no more than is sufficient to be able to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (para 194 of the Framework refers). It is for LPAs to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset in order to avoid or minimise any conflict between the proposal and the asset's conservation (para 195 of the Framework refers).
- 5.23 When considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) irrespective of the level of potential harm (para 199 of the revised Framework refers).
- 5.24 Paragraph 200 of the new Framework confirms that any harm to or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset (e.g. from alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) requires clear and convincing justification, and that substantial harm should be exceptional. Where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (para 202 of the Framework refers).
- 5.25 Within Conservation Areas or within the setting of heritage assets, the Framework expects LPAs to look for opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF confirms that proposals that preserve elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset or which better reveal its significance, should be treated favourably.

## 6. PLANNING AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The material planning considerations of relevance to the assessment of this application are:-

- The Principle of Development;
- Design and Appearance;
- Biodiversity Considerations; and
- Site Access.

### **Principle of the Development**

6.2 As referred to in Section 5 above, Local Plan Policy EC6 states that the conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses will be permitted subject to compliance with the corresponding policy criteria.

6.3 It is first necessary to demonstrate that the building is structurally sound, and capable of conversion without substantial alteration, extension or re-building. This requirement is addressed by the Structural Engineer's report submitted in support of the application. The report concludes that the building has sufficient integrity and strength to adequately sustain its own weight, and that the primary loadbearing structural elements of the building can be retained to allow the proposed change of use without significant repair or extension.

6.4 Otherwise, the alternative use should cause no conflict with existing farming operations that would prejudice its continued viable operation and also be compatible with extant uses on the site. In this case, the only 'farming' operation relates to use of the land to the south of the house and stables as a vineyard and, as the proposals incorporate an area for wine storage, they are entirely compatible with it. Furthermore, the ancillary studio and plant room uses are also compatible with all other extant uses within the wider landholding.

6.5 As the proposed development is in full accordance with the relevant policy requirements, it is thereby acceptable in principle. The acceptability of the proposed development therefore rests on matters of detail, as explored below.

### **Design and Appearance**

6.6 The *Cotswold Design Code* (as embedded within Appendix D to the Local Plan) confirms that all good design is informed by the needs of the current and future users, and by a proper understanding of the site and its setting. In this case, the existing building is to be retained in its entirety, and the only alteration to its external appearance involves replacement of two

existing stable doors with glazed panels in order to increase the amount of natural light entering the building in support of its proposed use as an ancillary work studio.

- 6.7 Whilst it is evident from the photo survey undertaken in support of the application that the new glazed panels would be partially visible in some close-range views (primarily those from the lane to the west of the site), they will have no material impact on the overall character of the building, or its relationship to the site's wider context. Furthermore, the additional glazing will be barely discernible in long-distance views from the south side of the valley (see Photo Viewpoints 8-11 of the Photo Survey report). No external lighting is incorporated as part of the proposed conversion, and any internal lighting can be entirely mitigated by use of internal blinds or curtains. Therefore, the only reasonable conclusion which can be drawn is that the proposed conversion will cause no material harm to the natural beauty of the AONB or character and appearance of the conservation area and is in full accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policies EN1, EN2, EN4, EN5 and EN11.

#### **Biodiversity Considerations**

- 6.8 A survey was undertaken in August 2023 by a suitably qualified ecologist to establish the suitability or use of the building by birds and bats. The survey report confirms that no evidence of bats or nesting birds was found and that, when considering the lack of potential roosting features associated with the building combined with the lack of evidence, the building has a negligible potential to support roosting bats. Furthermore, as there are no means by which birds can gain access into the building, and no external gaps in which birds can nest, the building also has negligible potential to support nesting birds.
- 6.9 The report recommends that any lighting is kept to a minimum and should be designed in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidance and, whilst no external lighting is currently proposed, this recommendation can be suitably addressed by imposing a condition which requires details of any future external lighting scheme to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority prior to its installation.

#### **Site Access**

- 6.10 As confirmed in para 4.3 above, no alterations to existing access and parking arrangements are required as a consequence of the proposals. Access to the studio, plant room and wine storage will be on foot via the existing gated entrances into the paddock. Therefore, the proposals are in full accordance with Local Plan Policy INF4.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposals concern the change of use and conversion of a redundant stables and storage building to use as an ancillary studio, wine storage and plant room. They have been carefully designed to ensure that the only change to the external appearance is the replacement of two external doors with glazing panels and the building has been confirmed as capable of conversion without any substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding. Access arrangements relating to the proposed use are unaffected and are limited to pedestrian access via the existing gated entrances into the adjoining paddock.
- 7.2 Whilst the building is visible to some close-range and longer distance views, the fact that its appearance is largely unaltered, and the proposals involve no other changes to the character or appearance of the site, they are in full accordance with Local Plan Policy EC6 and all other relevant policy requirements. Planning permission should therefore be granted accordingly.